

# Fire Authority

## 3 September 2020



### Membership:

Councillors: Galley (Chairman), Lambert (Vice-Chair), Barnes, Dowling, Evans, Hamilton, O'Keeffe, Osborne, Peltzer Dunn, Powell, Pragnell, Scott, Sheppard, Smith, Taylor, Theobald, Tutt and West
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You are requested to attend this meeting to be held as a Virtual Meeting - go to <https://esfrs.webex.com/esfrs/j.php?MTID=eed428bdc5cf6a886118ddcce58bad1f6> or dial +44-20-7660-8149 at 10.30 am

### Quorum: 6

<b>Contact:</b>	Abigail Blanshard for more information on attending this meeting please email: <a href="mailto:democraticservices@esfrs.org">democraticservices@esfrs.org</a>
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## Agenda

### 77. Declarations of Interest

In relation to matters on the agenda, seek declarations of interest from Members, in accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct for Members.

### 78. Apologies for Absence

### 79. Notification of items which the Chairman considers urgent and proposes to take at the end of the agenda/Chairman's business items

Any Members wishing to raise urgent items are asked, wherever possible to notify the Chairman before the start of the meeting. In so doing they must state the special circumstances which they consider justify the matter being considered urgently

### 80. To consider any public questions

### 81. To receive any petitions

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| <b>82. Non-confidential Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b>  | <b>5 - 10</b>    |
| To approve the Minutes of the last meeting held on 11 June 2020.   |                  |
| <br>   |                  |
| <b>83. Callover</b>  |                  |
| The Chairman will call the item numbers of the remaining items on the open agenda. Each item which is called by any Member shall be reserved for debate. The Chairman will then ask the Fire Authority to adopt without debate the recommendations and resolutions contained in the relevant reports for these items which have not been called. |                  |
| <br>   |                  |
| <b>84. 2019/20 Annual Performance Outcome Report</b>   | <b>11 - 48</b>   |
| Report of the Assistant Director Planning & Improvement.   |                  |
| <br>   |                  |
| <b>85. IT Strategy 2020-2025</b>   | <b>49 - 76</b>   |
| Report of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.  |                  |
| <br>   |                  |
| <b>86. Revenue &amp; Capital Budget 2020/21 and Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25 Monitoring at Month 4</b>   | <b>77 - 98</b>   |
| Report of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.  |                  |
| <br>   |                  |
| <b>87. 2021/22 to 2024/25 Strategic Service Planning and Medium Term Financial Plan</b>  | <b>99 - 132</b>  |
| Report of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.  |                  |
| <br>   |                  |
| <b>88. Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2020-2025 'Planning for a Safer Future' - Consultation Results and Modified Proposals</b>  | <b>133 - 964</b> |
| Report of the Chief Fire Officer.  |                  |

**ABRAHAM GEBRE-GHIORGHIS**  
**Monitoring Officer**  
**East Sussex Fire Authority**  
**c/o Brighton & Hove City Council**

Date of Publication: 25 August 2020

## Information for the public

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service actively welcomes members of the public and the press to attend public sessions of its Fire Authority and Panel meetings.

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## FIRE AUTHORITY

### Minutes of the Virtual meeting of the FIRE AUTHORITY held at 10.30 am on Thursday, 11 June 2020.

Present: Councillors Galley (Chairman), Lambert (Vice-Chair), Barnes, Dowling, Evans, Hamilton, Osborne, Peltzer Dunn, Powell, Pragnell, Scott, Sheppard, Smith, Taylor, Theobald and Tutt

Also present: D Whittaker (Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive), M O'Brien (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), M Andrews (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), A Ghebre-Ghiorghis (Monitoring Officer), L Woodley (Deputy Monitoring Officer), D Savage (Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer), L Ridley (Assistant Director Planning & Improvement), H Scott-Youldon (Assistant Director People Services), M Matthews (Assistant Director Safer Communities), E Curtis (Communications & Marketing Manager), M McCorkell, S Philips, V Simpson, C Porter, E Simpkin and A Blanshard (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

#### 1 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

#### 2 Election of Chairman

The Fire Authority considered the report of the Monitoring Officer inviting the Fire Authority to elect a Chairman and to request, once elected that they advise on their preferred title. (*Copy in Minute Book*)

The Combination Order for the creation of the East Sussex Fire Authority set down the procedures for the election of the Chairman of the Authority.

The Standing Orders of the Fire Authority required a Chairman to be elected from its Members as the first item of business at the annual meeting.

**RESOLVED** – That the Fire Authority:

- i. appointed Councillor Roy Galley as Chairman of the Authority; and
- ii. the Chairman advised that his preferred title was that of 'Chairman',

#### 3 Election of Vice-Chairman

The Fire Authority considered the report of the Monitoring Officer inviting them to elect a Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year and, once elected to ask the Vice-Chairman to advise of their preferred title. (*Copy in Minute Book*)

**RESOLVED** – That the Fire Authority:

- i. appointed Councillor Carolyn Lambert as Vice-Chairman of the Authority; and

## Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Fire Authority

- ii. the Vice Chairman advised that her preferred title was that of 'Vice-Chair'.

### 4 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor O'Keeffe.

### 5 Notification of items which the Chairman considers urgent and proposes to take at the end of the agenda/Chairman's business items

The Chairman informed the Authority that Councillor Ebel had resigned her position on the Authority and thanked her for her hard work during her membership. He then welcomed Councillor Pete West who would be taking the newly vacant position on the Fire Authority as a representative of Brighton & Hove City Council.

The Chairman then read the following statement to those present:

*"As Members are aware, at the last meeting of the authority, we agreed to consult on the proposals regarding the IRMP. The consultation was launched under the title "Planning for A Safer Future."*

*Irrespective of Members' views on the merits or otherwise of the proposals, it is essential that the consultation is undertaken in accordance with legal requirements. Caselaw suggests that, for consultation to be valid, three criteria need to be satisfied:*

- (a) the consultee has to be given the necessary information,*
- (b) they should be given adequate opportunity to make representations or respond to the consultation; and*
- (c) the decision maker needs to take the representations into account **before** coming to a decision.*

*In addition to the legal requirements for consultation I just mentioned, we also need to have regard to the general law on pre-determination. Although Members are entitled to have a view or pre-disposition, they should not approach any decision-making with a closed mind. They need to retain an open mind, listen to the evidence and the debate and be prepared to be persuaded before coming to a decision.*

*I would therefore remind Members to be careful, in communicating their views in the media (whether they are for or against the proposals) not to give the impression that they have already made up their mind or that they have already decided how they are going to vote. Otherwise, there is a risk that to the validity of the decision-making process and it may not be appropriate for them to take part. If Members need further advice, I suggest they consult the Monitoring Officer."*

## **Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Fire Authority**

### **6 To consider any public questions**

There were none.

### **7 To receive any petitions**

There were none.

### **8 Non-confidential Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2020 be approved and signed by the Chairman. (*Copy in Minute Book*)

### **9 Callover**

Members reserved the following items for debate:

72 Political Representation on the Panels of the Fire Authority

73 Fire Authority and Panel Meetings 2020-2021

75 Review of the Constitution of the Fire Authority

76 Review of the Terms of Reference of Human Resources and Principal Officers Appointment Panels

**RESOLVED** – That all other reports be approved according to the recommendations set out.

### **10 Political Representation on the Panels of the Fire Authority**

The Fire Authority received the report of the Monitoring Officer (MO) seeking to secure political balance on Panels in accordance with the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 and agree the resultant membership to the Panels of the Fire Authority. (*Copy in Minute Book*)

The Fire Authority was required to keep under review the allocations of seats on Committees and other bodies to ensure, so far as practicable, that they reflected the political groups on the Authority. The rules governing this representation were outlined in the report.

There were four political groups on the Fire Authority, namely Conservative, Green, Labour and Liberal Democrat. There was also one Independent Member of the Fire Authority but single members cannot constitute a political group. The allocations to panel memberships had not altered and the proposed political proportionality for 2019/20 shown in Appendix 2 to the report. The Authority agreed to the proportionality, some political groups confirmed that their membership remained unchanged others were reminded to confirm memberships by the deadline contained in the report.

## **Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Fire Authority**

It was proposed that, as at the previous Annual meeting, there might be merit in the Authority again appointing the Chair of both the Policy & Resources and Scrutiny & Audit Panels at this meeting and letting the remaining Panels appoint at their first meetings. The Authority agreed that these two appointments be made at this meeting.

Councillor Peltzer Dunn was nominated as Chairman of the Policy & Resources Panel by Cllr Pragnell, seconded by Cllr Galley. The nomination was uncontested and passed by the Authority.

Councillor Barnes was nominated as Chairman of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel by Cllr Taylor, seconded by Cllr Lambert. The nomination was uncontested and passed by the Authority.

The Authority also agreed to the appointment of the following Member Lead roles:

Health & Safety – Cllr Lambert  
Assurance & Peer Review – Cllr Barnes  
Inclusion & Diversity – Cllr Osborne  
IT – Cllr Tutt  
Estates – Cllr Peltzer Dunn

An offer was made for additional involvement within the area of Inclusion & Diversity, the Lead Member and Assistant Chief Fire Officer agreed to follow this offer up after the meeting.

**RESOLVED** – That the Fire Authority:

- i. confirmed the Panel arrangements and political representation as set out in the Report;
- ii. agreed (with no Member voting against) that the political balance provisions shall not apply to the membership of the Principal Officer Appointments Panel; and
- iii. appointed Cllr Peltzer Dunn as Chairman of the Policy & Resources Panel and Cllr Barnes as Chairman of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel in accordance with Standing Order 41.13 and agreed that the appointment of the Chairman of the remaining Panels be appointed by the Panels at their first meeting in accordance with Standing Order 41.14.

## **11 Fire Authority and Panel Meetings 2020-2021**

The Authority received the Report of the Senior Democratic Services Officer which informed Members of the dates of meetings of the Fire Authority and Panels for the remainder of 2020 and 2021. (*Copy in Minute Book*)

**RESOLVED** – That the Fire Authority noted the dates of meetings of the Fire Authority and Panels for the next 12 months.

## Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Fire Authority

### 12 Treasury Management and Stewardship Report 2019-20

The Fire Authority received the Report of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer. The Annual Treasury Management Stewardship Report is a requirement of the Fire Authority's reporting procedures and informed Members of Treasury Management Performance for 2019/20 and compliance with Prudential Indicators. (*Copy in Minute Book*)

**RESOLVED** – That the Fire Authority noted the Treasury Management Performance for 2019/20.

### 13 Review of the Constitution of the Fire Authority

The Fire Authority considered the report of the Monitoring Officer (MO) which informed Members of the first stage of a review of the Fire Authority's constitutional arrangements and to propose some minor amendments to the Constitution of the Authority.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained that a project to review and update the Authority's constitutional arrangements had been initiated and was being undertaken by officers in the Legal team at Brighton & Hove City Council. The report sought approval for a series of minor amendments to the Constitution as part of stage 1 of the review. It was proposed that additional amendments to the Constitution be put to the Authority in due course as part of a second stage following consideration and input from a Member Working group. Members were keen that this Working Group be included within the resolutions to be approved at this meeting, Those Members that had previously taken part in Working Groups reminded their colleagues that attendance and participation in such groups was important. This amendment to the resolution was proposed by Cllr Galley, seconded by Cllr Barnes and agreed by the Authority.

A discussion followed regarding some Members concerns that the Constitution should be amended to include clear guidance regarding Environmental impacts, Sustainability and carbon reduction and that these matters should be considered and included in all future documents. This discussion resulted in agreement to examine the creation of a lead role for Environment & Sustainability, a paper would be submitted to a future meeting of the Fire Authority.

**RESOLVED** – That the Fire Authority:

- i. approved with immediate effect the changes to the East Sussex Fire Authority's Constitution outlined in paragraph 2.1(I to V inclusive) and in Appendices 1 to 3 inclusive;
- ii. authorised the Authority's Chief Fire Officer to take all steps necessary or incidental to the implementation of the changes agreed by the Authority, and to amend and re-publish the constitutional documents to reflect those amendments; and

**Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Fire Authority**

- iii. noted the intention to form a Constitution Working Group, with Fire Authority Member attendance, who would work to create a further Report to the Authority proposing additional updates to the Constitution.

**14 Review of the Terms of Reference of Human Resources and Principal Officer Appointment Panels**

The Fire Authority considered the report of the Monitoring Officer (MO) proposing changes to the Terms of Reference of the Human Resources and Principal Officer Appointment Panels. The Service's Disciplinary Procedures were incompatible with the Gold Book Terms and Conditions of Service, under which the Principal Officers were employed. The proposed minor changes to the Terms of Reference of both the Human Resources and Principal Officer Appointment Panels would address this issue.

**RESOLVED** – That the Fire Authority:

Approved with immediate effect the amended Terms of Reference for the Human Resources and Principal Officer Appointment Panels as set out in Appendix 1; and

Authorised the Assistant Director Planning & Improvement to amend and re-publish Section B of the Constitution to reflect those amendments.

The meeting concluded at 11.08 am

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

2020

**EAST SUSSEX FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

**Meeting** Fire Authority

**Date** 3 September 2020

**Title of Report** 2019/20 Annual Performance Outcome Report

**By** Liz Ridley, Assistant Director – Planning & Improvement

**Lead Officer** Sharon Milner, Planning & Intelligence Manager  
 Marcus Whiting, Performance Analyst

**Lead Member** Cllr John Barnes

**Background Papers** None

**Appendices** Appendix A – Annual performance outcome report 2019/20  
 Appendix B- Plain English indicator definitions

**Implications**

<b>CORPORATE RISK</b>		<b>LEGAL</b>	
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b>		<b>POLICY</b>	
<b>FINANCIAL</b>		<b>POLITICAL</b>	
<b>HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</b>		<b>OTHER (please specify)</b>	
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>		<b>CORE BRIEF</b>	

**PURPOSE OF REPORT** To present the annual performance results for 2019/20.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** This report provides the Fire Authority with details of East Sussex Fire Rescue Service’s performance for the period April – March 2019/20. Fourteen top level indicators improved or met the target set in 2019/20 (70%) and six indicators declined.

**RECOMMENDATION** The Fire Authority is asked to:

- i. consider the performance results and progress towards achieving the Service’s purpose and commitments; and
- ii. consider the performance results and remedial actions that have been taken to address areas of under performance in the Fire Authority’s priority areas.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report summarises the 2019/20 performance outcomes for East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. The report aims to provide a single view of information which allows Elected Members, Auditors and members of the public to hold the Service's senior managers and staff to account in terms of the provision and performance of their Fire & Rescue Service for 2019/20.
- 1.2 The report provides a comparison against last year's performance, whether or not the target was achieved, where one has been set, and the direction of travel from the previous year for example, improved, stayed the same or declined.
- 1.3 East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service results are compared against the results for Fire and Rescue Services in the rest of England on a scale of best to worst performance based on the 2018/19 national data sets which are the latest available.
- 1.4 The report highlights an increase on last year's performance as 70% of indicators improved or met the target as opposed to 42% the previous year.

## **2 MAIN ISSUES**

- 2.1 In 2017/18 the Scrutiny & Audit Panel set seven priority areas for the Service to concentrate on. This report provides detailed commentary against those areas. Additional commentary is also provided for other areas of interest.

The Fire Authority priorities areas are:

1. Reducing accidental dwelling fires
2. Confining the fire to the room of origin
3. Reducing attendance at false alarm calls
4. Increasing the number of home safety visits to vulnerable members of our community
5. Reducing sickness
6. Numbers of home safety visits
7. Increasing inspections in high risk premises

### **2.2 Reducing accidental dwelling fires**

- 2.2.1 Accidental dwelling fires have been a priority area for the Service for a number of years. Accidental dwelling fires have reduced by 48% from 2000/01 overall and have plateaued in recent years. However in 2019/20 ESFRS recorded the lowest number of accidental dwelling fires ever with 453. This is an 11% reduction against the previous year when 509 were reported. 66% of the accidental dwelling fires occurred in the kitchen, with cooking appliances responsible for 243 (82%) of these.
- 2.2.2 The accidental dwelling fire reduction group continues to proactively engage with our communities and there have been a number of social media campaigns, the latest being 'Look while you cook'. This on-line campaign was

run by our in-house Communications team and attracted more than 500 entrants into a competition and resulting in 2,367 web page hits.

2.2.3 From the campaign 438 entrants have now actively signed up to our newsletter, which will keep them up-to-date on any important key safety messages, alongside Service news.

## **2.3 Responding quickly to a fire to stop it spreading from the room it started in**

2.3.1 There was an increase in performance in comparison to last year, with 90.6% of fires confined to the room of origin in 2018/19 compared to 92.9% in 2019/20 we consistently perform well in this area. In real numbers this means that out of 453 fires attended we contained 421 to the room of origin.

## **2.4 Reducing false alarm calls, especially in properties with a previous history of this**

2.4.1 46.5% (4,711) of our total incidents in 2019/20 were to false alarm calls, of these 33.3% (3,372) were from automatic fire detector systems. An unwanted fire alarm signal is where an automatic fire alarm (AFA) system activates and initiates a response from the fire service and on attendance it is found to be a false alarm. A call challenge policy is in place with responsible premise owners being asked to confirm the need for an attendance. We are undertaking more targeted work to ensure that we continually review and improve efficiencies across the Service. A demand management review is ongoing as part of the Fire Authority's proposed Integrated Risk Management Plan, which will be agreed at the September 2020 Fire Authority meeting. By reducing the demand on our Service for calls that are not deemed appropriate to attend, we will free up our resources to undertake meaningful community safety work that will make people safer in our communities.

2.4.2 As detailed in the AFA Service position statement, work is underway to separate out unwanted fire alarm calls from those that are considered near misses as each require a very different response. For example, to treat a near miss as an unwanted fire alarm call would be wholly inappropriate as we would miss an opportunity for engagement with service prevention resources that could prevent a further more serious incident in the future.

## **2.5 Increasing the number of home safety visits that we complete with the more vulnerable members of our community**

2.5.1 We delivered 92.2% of our home safety visits to vulnerable people within our community 2019/20 which is a slight increase on last year (91.2%). This means that out of 10,098 visits 9,308 were to vulnerable people in the community which compares to 10,076 in the previous year.

## **2.6 Reducing the number of absences of our employees due to sickness.**

2.6.1 Sickness absence is another priority area for the service and performance has declined from the previous year, with 10.0 shifts lost against 8.8 in 2018/19. Of the 10.0 shifts lost per employee at the end of 2019/20, 5.0 of these are due to long term sickness, 2.4 due to medium term sickness and 2.5 due to short term sickness. By the end of 2019/20 Wholetime had lost 10.8 shifts per employee, Control 7.3 shifts per employee and support staff 8.8.

## **2.7 Number of Home Safety Visits**

2.7.1 Throughout 2019/20 10,098 Home safety visits were undertaken. This is a decline against 2018/19 when 11,085 were reported. As we become more sophisticated in targeting those most vulnerable, we are finding that more and more visits are requiring two staff to attend and therefore the same level of performance that has been determined would deliver 12,000 visits now results in 10,000; based on a S&W advisor/team delivering 84 visits a month.

2.7.2 The year end result would have been slightly higher had the level of work not been impacted by the home working rulings that the government introduced in relation to the COVID-19 response. Obviously this has meant that teams have not been able to access people's homes in the same way and particularly not vulnerable, possibly shielding members of our community. Ways of working are now being put in place for telephone HSVs where possible from the community safety advisors and station crews.

## **2.8 Inspections of high risk premises completed**

2.8.1 This priority area was introduced in 2017/18 and deemed critically important following the Grenfell Tower fire on 14 June 2017. At the end of 2019/20 449 Inspections of high risk premises had been reported by the business safety inspection team and a further 388 business safety audits had been completed by the operational crews, this is an overall increase of 28% on the previous year when 581 high risk and 114 operational business audits were undertaken.

2.8.2 The Service is reviewing the current national Risk Based Inspection program and has introduced Business Safety checks/audits by operational personnel. There are a number of areas that will help improve performance in this area including:

- The upgrade of the Customer Relationship Management database to help staff record audits quickly and effectively and it will be developed to deliver a qualitative risk based inspection program. The project will deliver a mobile digital platform to support efficiencies in the audit process.
- Competency-based Business Safety training has now been given to operational staff
- We will continue to identify and inspect premises at higher risk of fire
- We will provide all premises where the Fire Safety Order applies with a qualitative relative risk rating
- There are plans to use the inspection program to collect enhanced firefighter risk information

## **2.9 Other commentary**

### **2.9.1 Number of RIDDOR incidents**

2.9.2 The majority of the RIDDOR notifications to HSE are for incapacitation over 7 days. There has been an increase of 20% when compared to the previous year (12 against 10). The majority of RIDDORs reported this year were over 7 day injuries for manual handling injuries. It is hoped that, after all the work that has been done this year to address casualty handling and the change in the PDA to assisting with plus size casualties, that we will see a decline in this area next year.

### **2.9.3 Compliments and complaints**

2.9.4 The annual outcome report contains a summary of the complaints received against the Service. Effective complaint management is an important element of maintaining the Service's reputation. Complaints are also a valuable tool in helping to understand resident's expectations of service delivery and should be an essential part in identifying improvements across the organisation.

2.9.5 Complaints received are formally recorded by the Service Complaints Officer (SCO) and, as far as possible, dealt with immediately. Where this is not possible, complaints are:

- acknowledged within three working days
- responded to within one month of the complaint being received by ESFRS
- kept under review and the complainant kept informed of progress or any reasons which are causing a delay
- monitored by the SCO to identify problem areas.

2.9.6 There were 30 complaints received in 2019/20, the same number as in the previous year. Of the complaints, four were considered justified, six partially justified and three unjustified. A further 12 were logged for recording purposes another three were listed as being unsubstantiated, one was recorded as out of time of the policy and there is one that is on-going.

2.9.7 Upon analysis, poor driving standards and employee conduct were the highest causes for complaints in 2019/20. In order to raise awareness and address issues of poor driving standards complaints are now considered by the Operational Assurance Group chaired by the Assistant Director of Operational Support and Resilience.

2.9.8 During the year we received 194 "thank you" letters from various members of the public as opposed to 214 received last year. Compliments are circulated to staff through the service brief on a weekly basis and cover all aspects of our service provision including home safety visits, incidents attended, school visits, education events etc.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
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Complaints received	26	30	30
Compliments received	127	214	194

2.8 The performance outcome summary is set out in Appendix A attached as a separate document.

2.9 A list of useful definitions is attached at Appendix B.



**East Sussex**  
Fire & Rescue Service

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# **Annual Performance Outcome Report for 2019/20**

**SEPTEMBER 2020**

# Contents

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2 Operating Environment</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3 Summary of Achievement</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4 Performance Results 2019/20</b>	<b>5</b>
Our Purpose: We make our communities safer	6
4.1 Commitment 1: Delivering high performing services	6
4.2 Commitment 2: Educating our communities	7
4.3 Commitment 3: Developing a multi-skilled, safe and valued workforce	8
4.4 Commitment 4: Making effective use of our resources	9
<b>5 Detailed Performance Analysis</b>	<b>10</b>
5.1 Primary Fires	10-12
5.2 Accidental Dwelling Fires	13-15
5.3 Deliberate Fires	16-20
5.4 Primary Fire Fatalities and Injuries	21
5.5 Sickness	22
5.6 Health and Safety	22-23
5.7 Level 3 & 4 Incidents attended in 2019/20	24
<b>6 Compliments and Complaints</b>	<b>25-27</b>
Appendix B: Plain English descriptions of indicators	28-30

# 1. Introduction

This report provides details of East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service's performance for the period April – March 2019/20.

It provides a transparent, single view of information which allows Elected Members, Auditors and members of the public to hold the Service's senior managers and staff to account in terms of the provision and performance of their Fire & Rescue Service for 2019/20.

The Fire Authority's purpose is to 'make our communities safer'. We have developed four overarching commitments to the public as follows;

**Our Purpose is:** *We make our communities safer*

**Our Commitments are:** *Delivering high performing services*  
*Educating our communities*  
*Developing a multi-skilled, safe and valued workforce*  
*Making effective use of our resources*

**Our Core Values are:** *Proud*  
*Accountable*  
*Integrity*  
*Respect*

## 2. Operating Environment

East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service provides prevention, protection and response services to 848,114 people living in 368,978 households within the area of East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove. We work within a large and diverse area on the south coast of England, covering rural locations as well as a busy city centre and urban seaside towns.

The County of East Sussex experiences high levels of deprivation when compared to other counties in the South of England. Our larger towns and the City of Brighton & Hove are very popular tourist destinations and the summer population is enhanced significantly, with over 8 million visitors, along with the risk of fire and road traffic collisions. The main headlines for the Service's area are:

### Coastal and other influences

- At least 70% of the population lives along 47 miles of coast
- Our area provides almost every aspect of community risk including multiple harbours, with the inherent risk of ship fires and oil terminals leading into the city of Brighton & Hove
- The influence of the landscape and significant coastal and inland flooding causes risks
- ESFRS service area has an older age profile compared to England and the South East with 21.6% aged 65 or over, compared to 18.4% in England and 19.5% regionally.
- ESFRS service area is below the national average of 21.4% with 18.5% adults classified as physically inactive (this average brought down by the younger population of Brighton and Hove). Hastings is the only borough above the national average with 23.3%.
- East Sussex has no motorways and all the main 'A' roads suffer from congestion and traffic problems. East Sussex Local Authority area had a 0.9% decrease in ALL recorded road casualties from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020: 1,777 down to 1,761 and Brighton and Hove had a 3.6% decrease over the same period: 798 down to 769.
- 10.85 million tourists visit Brighton & Hove in 2016, of which 1.60 million were overnight visitors.

\* Data provided by ONS and CIFPA for mid-year populations 2019 and Dwellings 2018, East Sussex Local Transport Plan 3 2011-2026, Report of Findings for VisitBrighton, Brighton Visitor Survey 2018, Tourism South East Research; SSRPs Data Portal /Crashes monthly data & Public Health 2018/19 - Physical Activity.

### 3. Summary of Achievement

The table below provides a key summary of our achievement against targets, or where no target is set, our achievement against the previous year's result in our priority areas, and non-priority areas for 2019/20.

Our priority areas for 2019/20 were:

- Reducing accidental dwelling fires
- Responding quickly to a fire to stop it spreading from the room it started in
- Reducing false alarm calls, especially in properties with a previous history of this
- Increasing the number of home safety visits that we complete with the more vulnerable members of our community
- Reducing the number of absences of our employees due to sickness
- Increasing inspections in high risk premises and business audits carried out by station crews (Priority 7 and 7a combined)
- Numbers of home safety visits

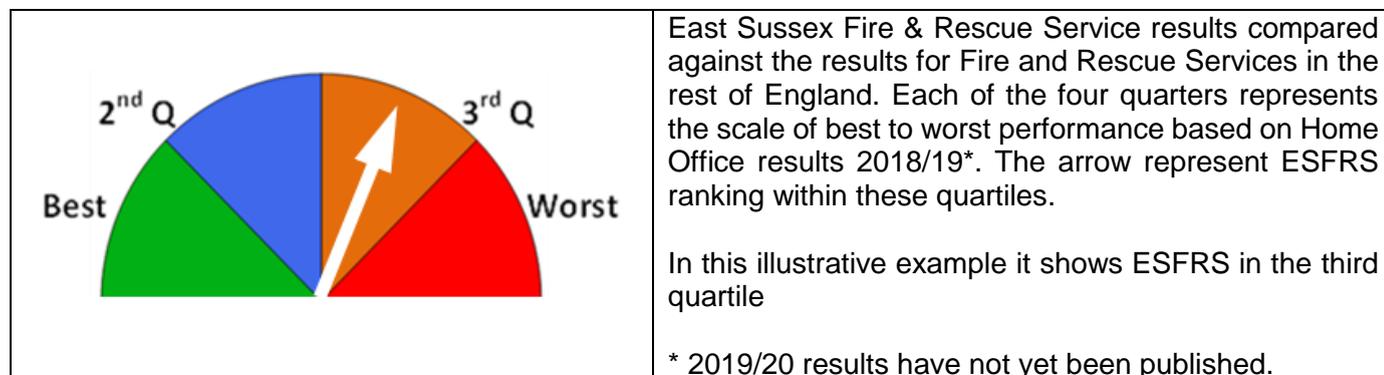
Indicator group	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indicators where the target has been met or performance exceeded the previous year	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indicators where target has not been met or performance declined against the previous year
Priority Areas	5 (71%)	2 (29%)
Non-priority areas	9 (69%)	4 (31%)
All Indicators	<b>14</b> <b>(70%)</b>	<b>6</b> <b>(30%)</b>

As can be seen from the above table, in 2019/20, 5 from 7 (71%) Priority Areas; 9 from 13 Non-priority (69%); and 14 from 20 (70%) All indicators met our target or performance exceeded the previous year.

- Achieved
- Not achieved

## 4. Performance Results 2019/20

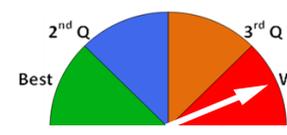
The following section contains the results against our strategic objectives. The tables give a comparison against last year's performance, whether or not the target was achieved and the direction of travel from the previous year.



# Our Purpose: We make our communities safer

We will do this by:

## 4.1 Commitment 1: Delivering high performing services

Indicator No.	How will we measure performance?	2018/19 Q4 result	2018/19 Year end result	National Quartile Position 2018/19	2019/20 Q4 result	2019/20 Year end result	Direction of travel from 2018/19 result
8	Total number of incidents attended	2,227	9,386		2,441	10,128	Declined
9	Number of deaths in primary fires	1	4		1	3	Improved
10	Number of injuries in primary fires	11	39		10	34	Improved
1 Priority	No of accidental dwelling fires	124	509		130	453	Improved
11	Number of primary fires	282	1,183		247	1,041	Improved
12	Number of deliberate fires	170	700		142	742	Declined
13	No of Industrial and Commercial fires	55	190		33	137	Improved
14	70% of the first arriving appliances at any incident from an 'On-Station response' within 10 minutes	76.8%	74.8%	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	78.0%	76.0%	Improved
15	70% of the first arriving appliances at any incident from an 'On-Call response' within 15 minutes	73.7%	74.1%	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	70.0%	73.0%	Declined

We will do this by:

## 4.2 Commitment 2: Educating our communities

Indicator No.	How will we measure performance?	2018/19 Q4 result	2018/19 Year end result	National Quartile Position 2018/19	2019/20 Q4 result	2019/20 Year end result	Direction of travel from 2018/19 result
2 Priority	% of Home Safety Visits to vulnerable people	90.8%	91.2%	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	91.6%	92.2%	Improved
6 Priority	Undertake 10,000 Home Safety Visits	3,478	11,085		2,360	10,098	Decline
7 Priority	Inspections of high risk premises completed	135	581		107	449	Decline
7a Priority	Business safety audits completed by Station crews	66	114	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	111	388	Improved
18	Number of business safety engagement events	6	17	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	4	30	Improved
19	Number of attendees at business safety engagement events	80	528	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	218	557	Improved

We will do this by:

### 4.3 Commitment 3: Developing a multi-skilled, safe and valued workforce

Indicator No.	How will we measure performance?	2018/19 Q4 result	2018/19 Year end result	National Quartile Position 2018/19	2019/20 Q4 result	2019/20 Year end result	Direction of travel from 2018/19 result
3 Priority	The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness not to exceed 7.5 per employee	2.5	8.8	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	2.6	10.0	Declined
20	Number of RIDDOR incidents	4	10		3	12	Declined
21	Number of workplace reported accidents / injuries	49	248		40	236	Improved

We will do this by:

#### 4.4 Commitment 4: Making effective use of our resources

Indicator No.	How will we measure performance?	2018/19 Q4 result	2018/19 Year end result	National Quartile Position 2018/19	2019/20 Q4 result	2019/20 Year end result	Direction of travel from 2018/19 result
4 Priority	A 32% reduction of automatic fire alarms (AFA) from the base year result of 2009/10	-28.8%	-35.4%	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	-23.0%	-30.4%	Decline
22	% of AFA mobilised calls to properties covered by the RRO that were classified as a primary fire	3.1%	2.2%	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	1.2%	1.4%	Improved
5 Priority	% of accidental dwelling fires confined to room of origin	91.9%	90.6%	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	92.3%	92.7%	Improved

## 5. Detailed Performance Analysis

After analysing the overall performance information we have identified a number of key indicators which we have undertaken additional and more detailed analysis upon.

These key indicators include:

- Primary Fires
- Accidental Dwelling Fires
- Deliberate Fires
- Primary Fire Fatalities
- Primary Fire Injuries
- Sickness Indicators
- Health and Safety

This analysis has looked at the following:

- Performance against previous year
- Main Types and causes of incidents
- Geographic analysis of the location of incidents.

The results of this detailed analysis are reported in the following section.

### 5.1 Primary Fires

#### Performance April-March 2019/20: 1,041 Fires

Reduced ✓ by 12.0% (142) since 2018/19 from 1,183 to 1,041 fires

Reduced ✓ by 34.2% (540) since the 2009/10 baseline of 1,581.

#### Main Types of Primary Fires *(percentage below not equal to 100% due to rounding)*

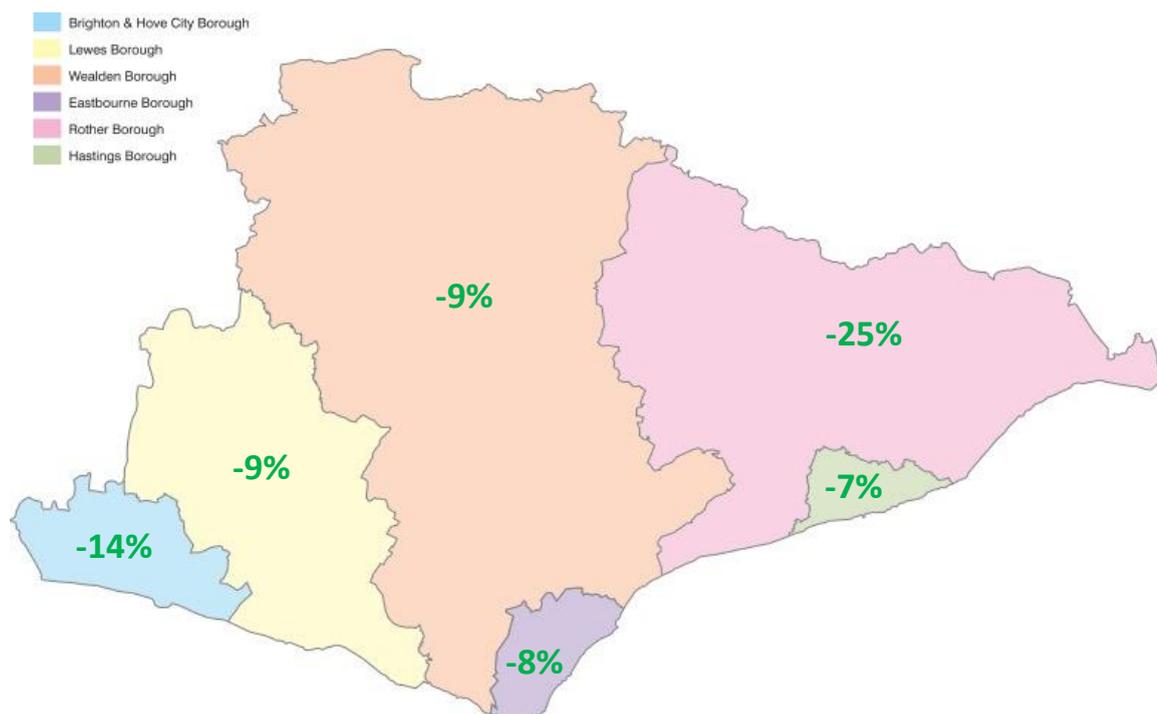
<p><b>48%</b> (504) Dwelling Fires</p> 	<p><b>21%</b> (222) Vehicle Fires</p> 	<p><b>13%</b> (137) Industrial/ Commercial Fires</p> 	<p><b>17%</b> (178) Other/ Outdoor Fires</p> 
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#### Main Cause of Fires

23.9% (249) were Deliberate

76.1% (792) were Accidental or Not known (main causes: Cooking with 146 incidents; Fault in equipment or appliance, 125; Combustible articles too close to the heat source or fire, 93; Overheating, unknown cause, 89; Careless handling, 79; Faulty fuel supply - electricity, 74; Accumulation of flammable material; 44 and Negligent use of equipment or appliance (heat source) 42.

## Primary Fires % change from 2018/19 to 2019/20 by Geographical Area



Borough	2018/19	2019/20	% Difference
B&H	385	332	-14%
Hastings	188	174	-7%
Eastbourne	184	169	-8%
Wealden	147	134	-9%
Lewes	140	128	-9%
Rother	139	104	-25%

### Additional information for decreases in Primary Fires from 2018/19 to 2019/20

Rother had the largest proportional decrease in Primary Fires with 25%. Brighton and Hove had the highest decrease in total with 53. A breakdown of the total Primary Fires in Brighton & Hove were as follows: 174 (52%) were in Dwellings, 67 (20%) in Vehicles, 54 (16%) were in Non-domestic Premises and 37 (11%) were Other/Outdoor Fires. Since 2018/19, fires have decreased by 46 in Dwellings, 11 in Non-domestic Premises, 2 in Other/outdoor properties but increased by 6 in Vehicles.

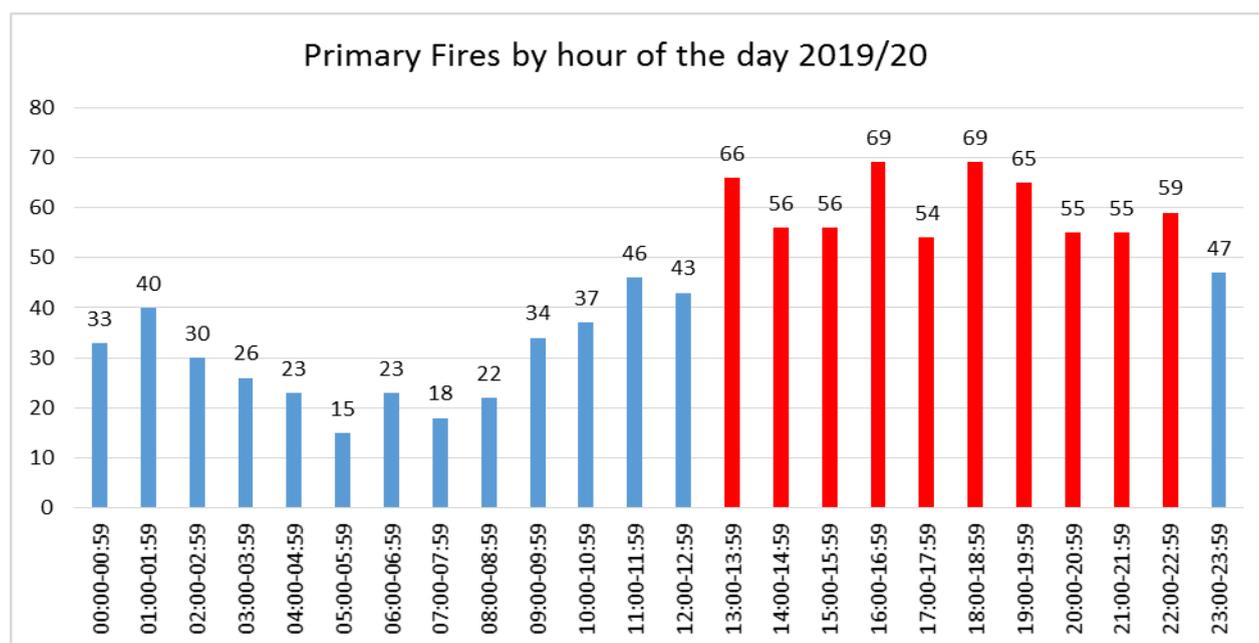
All information relating to trends is shared at the monthly Community Safety Performance meetings for note and action in the Groups.

## Main firefighting action by ESFRS fire crews at Primary Fires

Main firefighting actoin at Primary fires 2019/20	Total
None - No firefighting	379
Hosereel	350
Small means	149
Portable extinguishers	55
Main branch/Jet (J)	33
Foam	27
Not stated / not known	17
None - Burned out (Allowed to burn under control)	21
Other methods	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,041</b>

36% of the Primary Fires attended in 2019/20 required No firefighting by attending crews and a further 22% were dealt with by Small means, Portable extinguishers or were Allowed to burnout under the supervision of the crew. (Small means includes methods such as using a bucket of water, disconnecting a fuel supply or removing an item from a heat source for example.)

## Time of Fires



Between 13:00 and 22:59 there were 604 Primary Fires (58%). The total for this period of 10 hours if averaged out for the whole day would be 434. Therefore, there are an extra 170 fires (16%) occurring during this peak time throughout the year.

## 5.2 Accidental Dwelling Fires

Performance April - March 2019/20: 453

Reduced ✓ by 11.0% (56) since 2018/19 from 509 to 453 fires

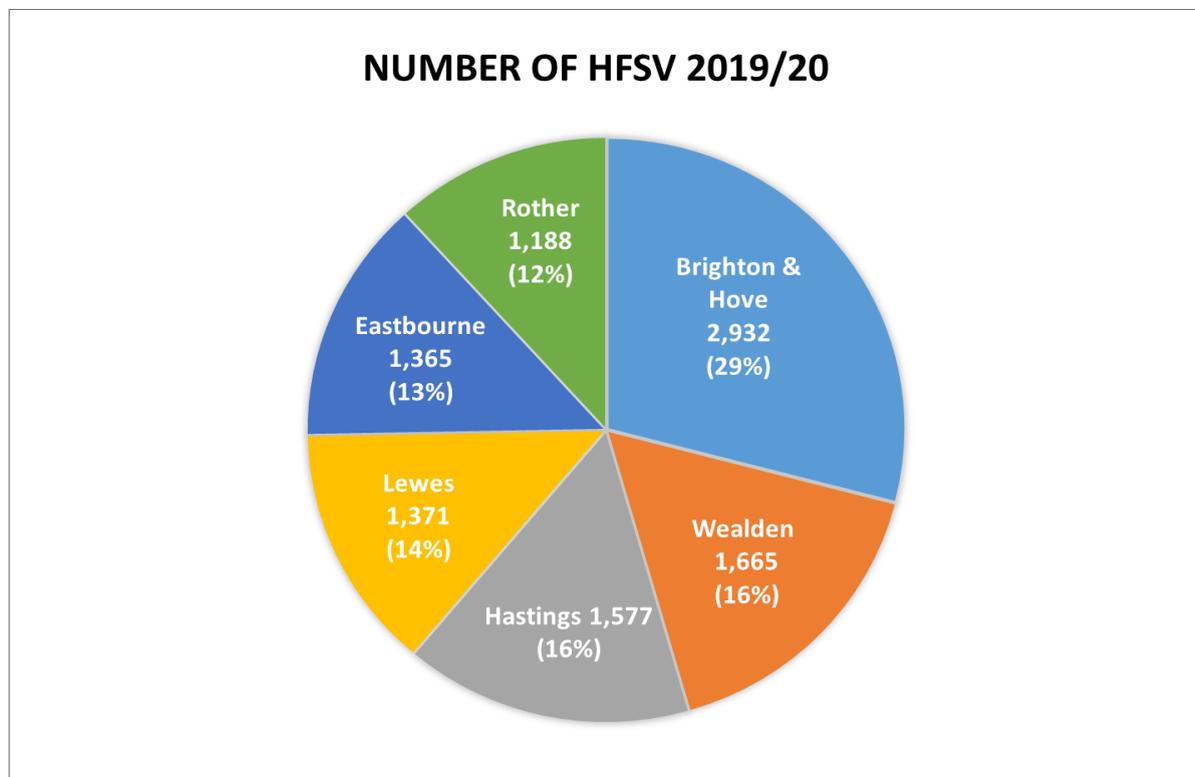
Reduced ✓ by 19.4% (109) since the 2009/10 baseline of 562

### Main Sources and Location of Accidental Dwelling Fires



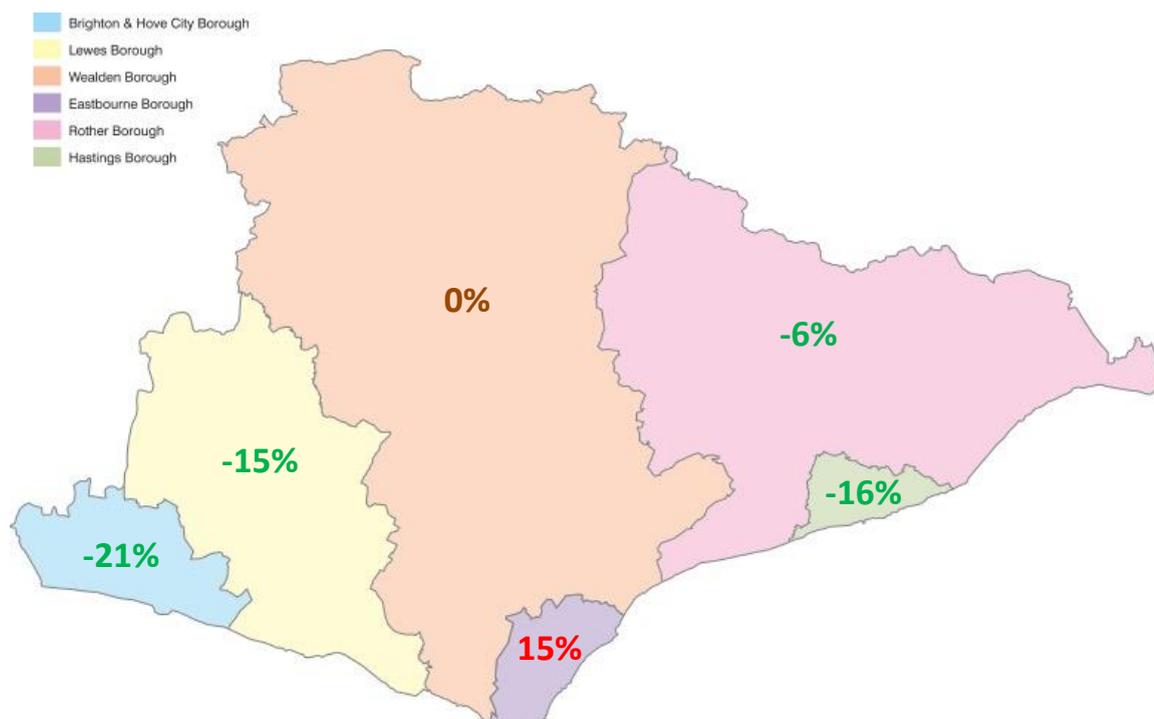
297 (66%) Accidental Dwelling Fires occurred in the kitchen, with cooking appliances responsible for 243 (82%) of these.

### Home Fire Safety Visits



Borough	Population 2019 MYE	No of HFSVs 2019/20	HFSVs per 10,000 population	East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service undertook 10,098 Home Fire Safety Visits between 1st April and 31st March 2019/20.
Hastings	92,661	1,577	170	
Lewes	103,268	1,371	133	
Eastbourne	103,745	1,365	132	
Rother	96,080	1,188	124	
Wealden	161,475	1,665	103	
Brighton & Hove	290,885	2,932	101	

## Accidental Dwelling Fires % Change from 2018/19 to 2019/20 by Geographical Area



Borough	2018/19	2019/20	% Difference
B&H	202	160	-21%
Eastbourne	72	83	15%
Hastings	87	73	-16%
Lewes	52	44	-15%
Rother	47	44	-6%
Wealden	49	49	0%

### Additional information for Accidental Dwelling Fires from 2018/19 to 2019/20

Eastbourne was the only borough that had an increase in Accidental Dwelling Fires with 11 (15%), whilst Brighton & Hove had highest decrease in both number and proportion, 42 (21%).

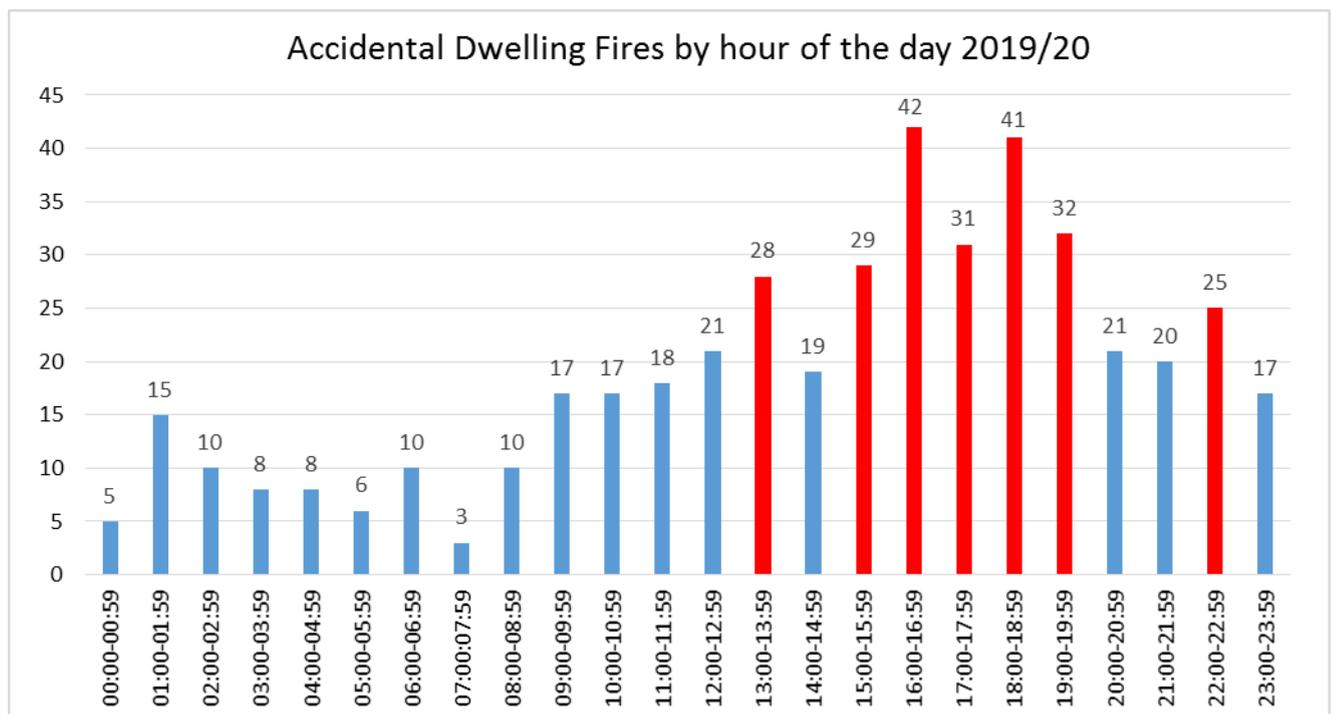
42% of all Accidental Dwelling Fires were either in a Single occupancy (Single family unit) house or Bungalow (198). This is a decrease of 17.5% compared to 2018/19 (240). However, there was an increase in Accidental Dwelling Fires in the following categories: Self contained Sheltered Housing, 30 to 35 (17%); Converted Flat/Maisonette with multiple occupancy (up to 2 storeys), 19 to 21 (11%); and Converted Flat/Maisonette with multiple occupancy (3 or more storeys), 57 to 62 (9%).

## Main firefighting action by ESFRS fire crews at Accidental Dwelling Fires

Main firefighting action at Accidental Dwelling Fires 2019/20	Total
None - No firefighting	229
Small means	89
Hosereel	80
Portable extinguishers	26
Main branch/Jet (J)	9
None - Burned out (Allowed to burn under control)	8
Not stated	5
Other methods	4
Foam	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>453</b>

51% of the Accidental Dwelling Fires attended in 2019/20 required No firefighting action by attending crews and a further 27% were dealt with by Small means, Portable extinguishers or were Allowed to burnout under the supervision of the crew. (Small means includes methods such as using a bucket of water, disconnecting a fuel supply or removing an item from a heat source for example.)

## Time of Accidental Dwelling Fires



Between 13:00 and 19:59 there were 222 Accidental Dwelling Fires (49%). The total for this period of 7 hours if averaged out for the whole day would be 132. Therefore, there are an extra 90 fires (20%) occurring during this peak time throughout the year.

### 5.3 Deliberate Fires

#### Performance April - March 2019/20: 742

##### Deliberate Primary Fires excluding Vehicle Fires

Unchanged = by 0% (0) since 2018/19 with 160 fires

Reduced ✓ by 45% (130) since the 2009/10 baseline of 289

##### Deliberate Primary Fires in Vehicles

Reduced ✓ by 2% (2) since 2018/19 from 91 to 89 fires

Reduced ✓ by 61% (141) since the 2009/10 baseline of 230

##### Deliberate Secondary Fires

Increased ✗ by 10% (44) since 2018/19 from 449 to 493 fires

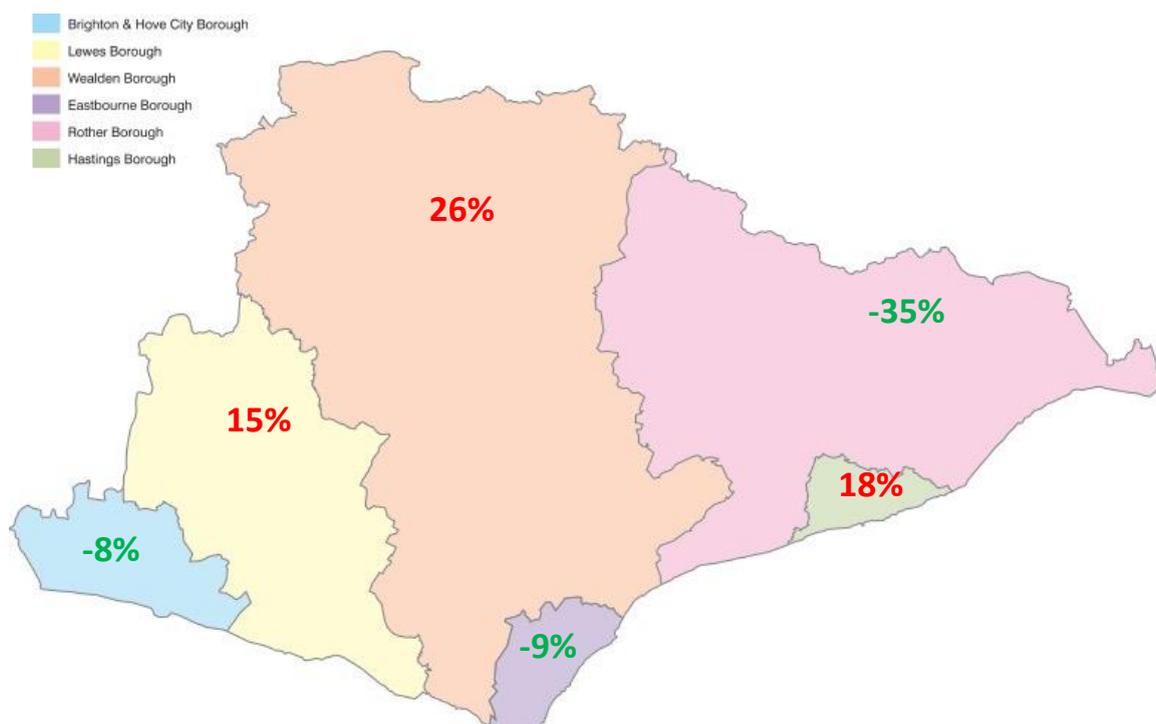
Reduced ✓ by 42% (360) since the 2009/10 baseline of 853

#### Main Types of Fire

**Deliberate Primary Fires – 249 fires: 34% of all Deliberate Fires** (percentage below not equal to 100% due to rounding)

<p><b>20%</b> (51) Dwelling Fires</p> 	<p><b>36%</b> (89) Vehicle Fires</p> 	<p><b>12%</b> (31) Industrial / Commercial Fires</p> 	<p><b>31%</b> (78) Other / Outdoor Fires</p> 
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## Deliberate Primary Fires % change from 2018/19 to 2019/20 by Geographical Area

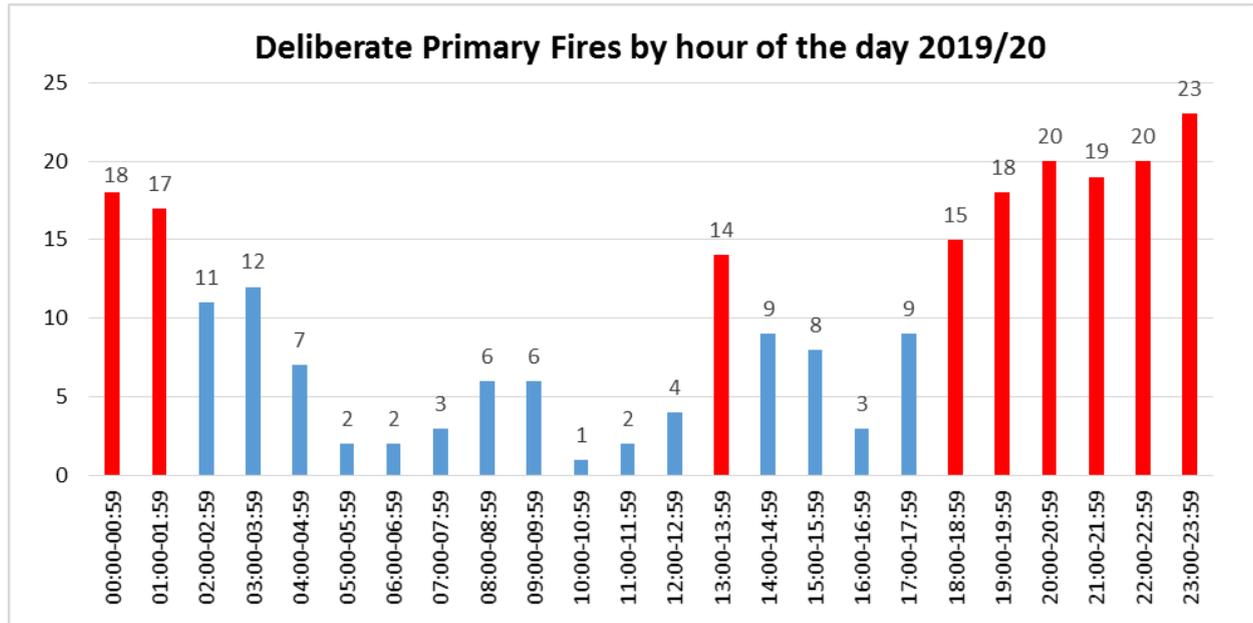


Borough	2018/19	2019/20	% Difference
Hastings	57	67	18%
B&H	61	56	-8%
Eastbourne	44	40	-9%
Lewes	33	38	15%
Rother	37	24	-35%
Wealden	19	24	26%

Hastings had the highest total increase in Deliberate Primary Fires with 10 fires. Wealden had the highest proportional increase with 26%. Rother had the highest proportional decrease and the highest total decrease with 35% and 13 respectively.

All information relating to trends is shared at the monthly Community Safety Performance meetings for note and action in the Groups.

## Time of Deliberate Primary Fires

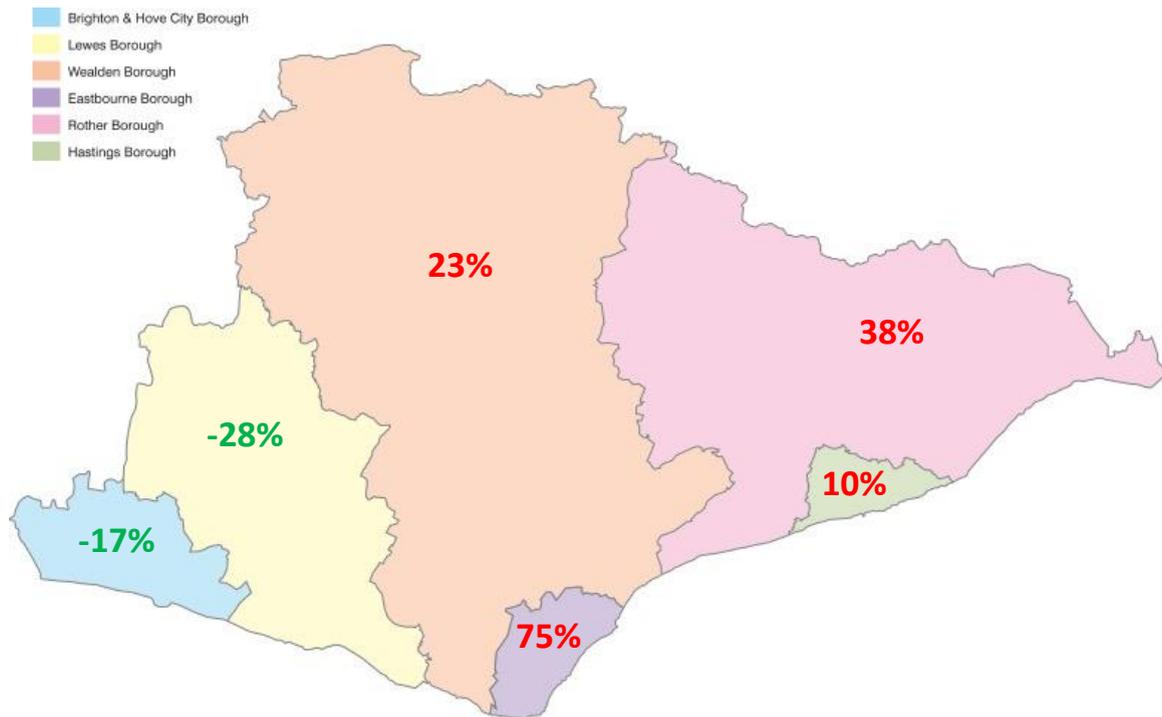


Between 18:00 and 01:59 there were 150 Deliberate Primary Fires (60%). Therefore, the majority of Deliberate Primary Fires were committed during the evening and early morning period. The total for this period of 8 hours if averaged out for the whole day would be 83. Therefore, there are an extra 67 fires (27%) occurring during this peak time throughout the year.

## Deliberate Secondary Fires – 493 fires: 66% of all Deliberate Fires

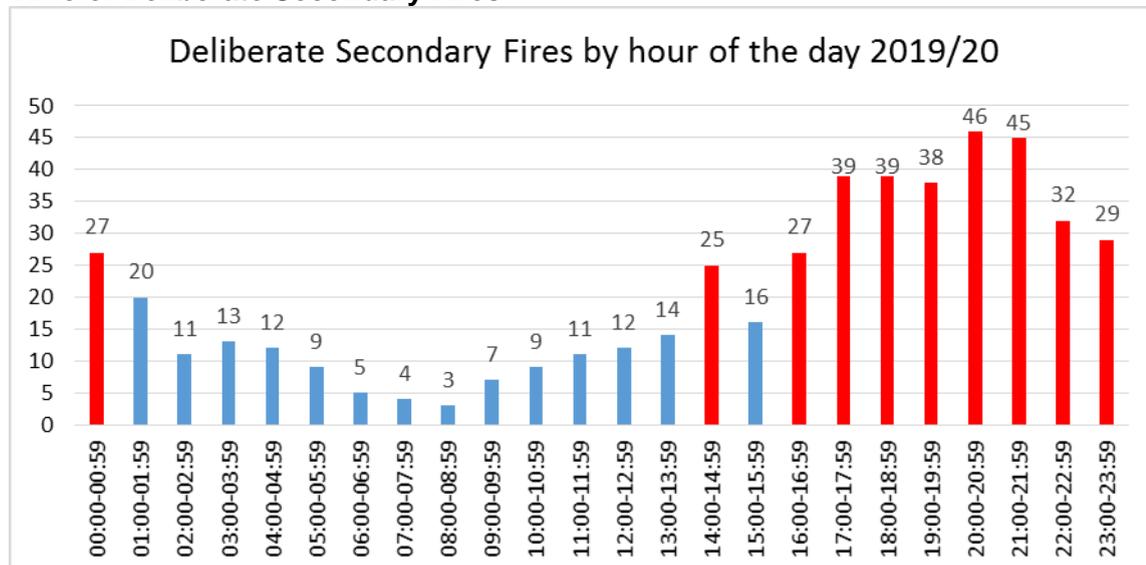
<p><b>30%</b> (148) Grassland Fires</p>		<p><b>24%</b> (117) Refuse / Bin Fires</p>		<p><b>46%</b> (228) Others</p>	
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## Deliberate Secondary Fires % change from 2018/19 to 2019/20 by Geographical Area



Borough	2018/19	2019/20	% Difference
Hastings	117	129	10%
B&H	131	109	-17%
Eastbourne	59	103	75%
Lewes	60	43	-28%
Rother	52	72	38%
Wealden	30	37	23%

## Time of Deliberate Secondary Fires



Between 16:00 and 00:59 there were 322 Deliberate Secondary Fires (65%), with a further peak at 14:00. The total for this period of 9 hours if averaged out for the whole day would be 185. Therefore, there are an extra 137 fires (28%) occurring during this peak time throughout the year.

## 5.4 Primary Fire Fatalities & Injuries

### Primary Fire Fatalities

#### Performance April - March 2019/20: 3

There were 3 Fire Fatalities at 3 incidents in 2019/20 which is a 25% (1) decrease ✓ since 2018/19.

The three casualties were all male.

#### Age Ranges

The victims' ages were 21, 41, and 64.

Two fatalities were the result of Deliberate Fires (Own property – a car and private shed) and one was the consequence of an Accidental Dwelling Fire.

### Primary Fire Injuries

#### Current Performance (April- March 2019/20): 34

There were 34 injuries in 2019/20 which is a 13% (5) ✓ decrease since 2018/19.

#### Main Injury Types

- 39.7% (13.5) Burns
- 39.7% (13.5) Overcome by Gas/Smoke
- 20.6% (7) Breathing difficulties

#### Age Ranges

- 5.9% (2) under 14
- 0.0% (0) between 14 and 24
- 20.6% (7) between 25 and 35
- 23.5% (8) between 36 and 45
- 11.8% (4) between 46 and 55
- 5.9% (2) between 56 and 65
- 14.7% (5) are 66 and over
- 17.6% (6) were not known

#### Gender

- 73.5% (25) were male
- 26.5% (9) were female

**20 (58.8%) of these injuries were in Accidental Dwelling Fires.**

## 5.5 Sickness Indicators

### Performance April - March 2019/20 10.0 Shifts lost per person

**All Staff Sickness** is 33% over the target (7.5) ✘ by 2.5 shifts and has: increased ✘ by 13.6% (1.2 shifts) since 2019/20 from 8.8 shifts lost per person to 10.0.

- **Wholetime Staff Sickness** increased ✘ by 13.7% (1.3 shifts) since 2018/19 from 9.5 to 10.8 shifts per person.
- **Control Room Staff Sickness** decreased ✔ by 24.7% (2.4 shifts) since 2018/19 from 9.7 to 7.3 per person.
- **Green Book (Non Uniformed) Staff Sickness** increased ✘ by 31.3% (2.1 shifts) since 2018/19 from 6.7 to 8.8 per person.

There have been 5,412.6 shifts lost in 2019/20 compared to 4,540.5 shifts lost in 2018/19.

### Long Term vs Short Term Sickness

- 50.4% of sickness is classed as Long Term (more than 28 days)
- 24.6% of sickness is classed as Medium Term (8 to 27 days)
- 25.0% of sickness is classed as Short Term.

## 5.6 Health and Safety

### Performance April - March 2019/20: 236 Accidents

- Decreased ✔ by 4.8% (12) since 2018/19 from 248 accidents to 236, and
- Increased ✘ by 95.0% (115) since 2010/11 from 121 accidents to 236. This is due to more detailed and accurate reporting.

The overall number of safety events has declined to 236 in 2019/20 compared with 248 in 2018/19. The figures over the previous five years have remained fairly constant which indicates that our reporting is now consistent.

For manual handling injuries, there is a significant increase of 13 (57%) in 2019/20 from 23 to 36 in the number of incidents reported compared to 2018/19, which is a 20% increase since 2015/16 (30) of 6 incidents. However it is hoped that this will decrease in 2020/21 with an increase in the pre-determined attendance and enhanced training on equipment and techniques for plus size casualties.

There has been a significant decrease in the number of slip, trips and falls reported. These occur for a variety of reasons from operational environments, poor housekeeping and environmental conditions. Last year's exceptional dry weather may have had an influence in the decrease of slips.

There has been a 10% decrease in the number of vehicle incidents compared to 2018/19.

Lost time incidents decreased by 23% since 2018/19 from 26 to 20 but this figure is still higher than the 16 in 2014-15.

Incidences of work related violence and stress remain consistently low but it is likely that these are under reported and so are not indicative of the extent of the occurrences of these types of safety events.

There has been a 63% increase in the number of near hits reported: 29 incidents up from 2018/19 and this can be taken as a positive indicator of better reporting. The reporting of near hits gives the Service greater opportunity to investigate and introduce control measures before an injury results.



## 5.7 Level 3 & 4 Incidents attended in 2019/20

A level 3 incident is one that is attended by between 7 and 9 appliances at one time.

A level 4 incident is one that is attended by 10 or more appliances at one time.

During 2019/20, ESFRS attended eight level 3 incidents and two level four incidents; below are the details of the level 4 incidents:

At 08:51 on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019, ESFRS were mobilised to The Claremont Hotel, Grand Parade, in Eastbourne where a fire was reported as a result of an explosion in the basement. Initially four pumps were sent out but it soon became apparent, particularly with a secondary fire located in an additional room that this fire was spreading fast, By 09:38 this incident had been upgraded to a 'Make Pumps 12', involving around 60 firefighters.

The Claremont Hotel, part of a Grade II\* listed building, was evacuated as soon as the fire was reported and all those who were in the hotel when the fire started were accounted for.

In addition, the neighbouring Burlington Hotel, Pier Hotel and Afton Hotel was evacuated and roads in the area closed with nearby residents advised to keep windows and doors closed.

Although the fire started in the basement, it soon was seen coming out of the roof and windows of the Grade II listed building. The fire continued to burn until the gas supply was successfully cut off on the evening of 24 November.

Despite ESFRS's ability to control the fire and stopping it affecting neighbouring buildings the Claremont Hotel was in a state of collapse and three months later had to be demolished as the structure left was unstable.

The cause of the fire is still under investigation.

At 20:23 on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019, ESFRS was mobilised to a fire at a residential block of flats (3 storeys) on Pankhurst Road, Brighton. The fire was seen on a balcony three floors up. Initially four pumps were sent but the incident was soon upgraded to a 'Make Pumps 10'.

Two people were rescued, the occupier without injury and a firefighter, who suffered slight burns whilst firefighting and given first aid at scene. 21 people were evacuated from the building, one with assistance.

The fire started on the balcony rapidly moving to the roof and other floor space. The following morning one aerial ladder platform and one appliance remained at the scene to deal with hot spots and damping down.

The cause of fire was careless disposal of smoking material on a balcony.

## 6. Compliments and Complaints received 2019/20

We received 30 complaints from members of the public this year, this was the same figure as 2018/19 and 194 compliments.

### Complaints Received against the Service 2019 - 2020

No.	Nature of Complaint	Substantiated?	Action Resulting / Comments
1	Conduct of ESFRS employee	Justified	Resolved and response issued. Apology given. Complaint withdrawn Reminder issued of the standards expected by ESFRS
2	Overgrown Station garden	Partially justified	Resolved and response issued
3	Mess left after hydrant test	Unsubstantiated	Resolved and response issued
4	Incident call handling	Unsubstantiated	Resolved and response issued
5	Communications process & Operation element	Partially justified	Resolved and response issued
6	Payment of Invoice	Unsubstantiated	Resolved and response issued
7	Fraud and deception	Partially justified	Appeal received complaint re-investigated. Apology sent and staff reminded of the standards expected by ESFRS. File passed to HR Department
8	Abuse of public trust	Logged for record purposes	Complaint considered withdrawn as complainant did not respond to telephone calls or letters
9	Insurance Claim	Partially justified	Resolved and response issued. Insurance claim settled
10	Misconduct & actions of employees	Out of time	Complaint received after twelve months, considered out of time as per our policy
11	Protocol for siren usage	Unjustified	Resolved and response issued. Drivers reminded of expected standards and procedures
12	Overgrown trees and hedges on a station	Justified	Resolved and response issued

No.	Nature of Complaint	Substantiated?	Action Resulting / Comments
13	Tacking of a fire at an incident	Partially justified	Resolved and response issued
14	Actions of employee	Justified	Resolved and response issued. Reminder issued of the standards expected by ESFRS
15	Appliance siren incident	Logged for record purposes	Logged for record purposes for future reference
16	Fire service access concerns	Logged for record purposes	Logged for record purposes for future reference
17	Fire Safety Management Enforcement	Logged for record purposes	Logged for record purposes for future reference
18	Appliances parked in car park of block of flats	Logged for record purposes	Logged for record purposes for future reference
19	Breaches at a property	Logged for record purposes	Passed to relevant department, does not fall under complaints process
20	Conduct of ESFRS employee	Unjustified	Resolved and response issued
21	Protocol for siren usage	Unjustified	Resolved and response issued. More and observation than a complaint
22	Request for information	Logged for record purposes	Passed to relevant department, does not fall under complaints process
23	Business Safety compliance	Logged for record purposes	Passed to relevant department, does not fall under complaints process
24	Placing of hydrant	Logged for record purposes	Passed to relevant department, does not fall under complaints process
25	Appliance manoeuvres	Ongoing	Investigation on hold due to Covid-19 pandemic
26	Driving Standards	Justified	Resolved and response issued. Reminder issued of the standards expected by ESFRS and training put in place
27	Driving Standards	Logged for record purposes – reported as an observation not a complaint	Resolved and response issued. Driver reminded of expected standards and procedures
28	Flashing blue lights	Partially justified	Crews reminded of consideration when using lights during hours of darkness

No.	Nature of Complaint	Substantiated?	Action Resulting / Comments
29	Staff Conduct	Logged for record purposes	Not deemed to be a complaint passed to relevant Department for resolution
30	Staff Conduct	Logged for record purposes	Closed no further information provided

## Appendix B - Plain English descriptions of indicators

Indicator	Plain English description	Rationale	Good Performance	
Number of Primary Fires attended	The number of major fires involving property, casualties or involving 5 or more appliances	This indicator measures the incidence of fire and related casualties, and is therefore a means by which individuals and communities can assess the fire safety support provided by ESFRS.	Lower numbers	
Number of deaths arising from Primary Fires	The number of people whose death was caused by fire in a major fire which involves property, casualties or 5 or more appliances  The death may occur weeks or months later.		Lower numbers	
Number of injuries (excl. Precautionary checks) arising from Primary Fires	The number of people who required medical treatment beyond first aid given at the scene of the fire per  Precautionary checks are persons sent to hospital or advised to see a doctor as a precaution, having no obvious injury or distress.		Lower numbers	
Number of Deliberate Primary Fires (excl. Primary Fires in Vehicles)	The number of fires where the cause of fire is suspected not to be an accident, involving property, casualties or involving 5 or more fire appliances		Deliberate fires are a key component of Anti-Social Behaviour which is a national priority for Government.	Lower numbers
Number of Deliberate Primary Fires in Vehicles	The number of fires in vehicles that are not derelict where the cause of fire is suspected as not to be an accident			Lower numbers
Number of Deliberate Secondary Fires (excl. in Vehicles)	The number of small fires where the cause of fire is suspected not to be an accident  These include fires to: Derelict Buildings, Grass/Heath/Railway, Straw/Stubble, Refuse/Container, Tree/Fence/Lamp.			Lower numbers

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Plain English description</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Good Performance</b>
Number of Deliberate Secondary Fires in Vehicles	The number of fires where the cause of fire was not an accidental in derelict vehicles.	Deliberate fires are a key component of Anti-Social Behaviour which is a national priority for Government.	Lower numbers
Number of Home Safety Visits (HSVs)	The number of home fire safety visits where the householder was given fire safety advice and or had a fire alarm installed.	To raise awareness of the potential fire risks within the home in order to make them safer.	Higher numbers
Percentage of HSVs to be delivered to vulnerable people	The number of home safety visits delivered to vulnerable people within our community.  Vulnerability is defined as lone pensioners, people over 65, people in rented accommodation, single parent families, hearing /sight impaired and those with a limiting long elderly.	In Rising to the Challenge, The Audit Commission reiterates that Home Fire Safety Checks should not be conducted indiscriminately, but targeted to those most at risk.	Higher percentage
Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires attended	The numbers of fires in houses where the cause was accidental	To ascertain the effectiveness of certain aspects of FRS activity including community safety education, where the public is prepared to cope with a fire event if it happens by closing doors and fitting smoke detection. And the rapid and effective response to the incident can confine the fire within the first compartment and reduce the damage and suffering.	Lower numbers
Number of Fires in Non-domestic Properties	The number of fires in buildings such as agricultural, Industrial properties, Trade, hotels, catering etc. per	To monitor the effectiveness of fire safety under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (RRO).	Lower number

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Plain English description</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Good Performance</b>
Number of Inspections of High Risk Premises to support compliance with the Fire Safety Order	The number of inspections undertaken in high risk premises	Inspections within those premises covered by the fire safety order should reduce the perceived risk. Consequently, over time FRSS should see a positive reduction in inspection compliance outcomes within premise groups.	Higher number
Percentage of Accidental Dwelling Fires confined to room of origin	The percentage of fires that did not spread past the room they started in.	To assess response effectiveness.	Higher percentage
Number of Working Days/Shifts lost due to sickness absence for all staff	The number of days/ shifts lost to sickness divided by the number of staff in post	Sickness absence reduces the effectiveness of an organisation	Lower number
Number of Workplace Reported Accidents / Injuries	The number of accidents/ injuries reported	Staff safety is paramount, and it is important that the service measures whether health and safety procedures and initiatives to reduce physical attacks on firefighters are working. This is particularly important in light of any changes to types of station, appliances and crewing arrangements.	Lower number
Number of RIDDOR incidents	The number of injuries, deaths and dangerous occurrences reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995		Lower number

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## EAST SUSSEX FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

**Meeting** Fire Authority

**Date** 20 August 2020

**Title of Report** IT Strategy 2020-2025

**By** Duncan Savage, Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer

**Lead Officer** Ken Pearce, IT & Governance Manager

**Background Papers** IT Strategy 2017-2022 v1.0 Apr 2017  
IT Strategy 2020-2025 Jun 2020 - Draft for Discussion

**Appendices** IT Strategy 2020-2025 v1.0 Aug 2020 for Approval

### Implications

<b>CORPORATE RISK</b>	✓	<b>LEGAL</b>	
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b>		<b>POLICY</b>	✓
<b>FINANCIAL</b>	✓	<b>POLITICAL</b>	✓
<b>HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</b>		<b>OTHER (please specify)</b>	
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>		<b>CORE BRIEF</b>	

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:** This report seeks Fire Authority approval for the East Sussex Fire & Rescue IT Strategy 2020-2025 and the associated funding requirement.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** The IT Strategy 2020-2025 builds on the significant progress made since the decision to outsource IT Services to telent in November 2016 and embark on a transformation programme of the core IT infrastructure and applications.

IT services are a key enabler to deliver the organisation's strategic objectives and the IT Strategy is the mechanism through which this will be delivered.

The IT Strategy deliverables have been developed in support of and aligned with the Corporate Plan and have been formulated and reviewed in conjunction with the Assistant Directors and Senior Officers. The deliverables also take into consideration the Integrated Risk Management Plan, Operational Response Review and the findings of the HMICFRS 2019 inspection report.

Project 21 and the tri-service Joint Fire Control collaboration with Surrey FRS and West Sussex FRS have been a major influence on the direction of the strategy concerning command and control systems and related IT infrastructure.

Technology trends such as the migration to cloud computing, advances in data analytics, the growth of flexible working and the rapid move to virtual working as a result of Covid-19 have been taken into account, along with the need to consider sustainability and to reduce the Service's carbon footprint.

The need to participate in and contribute to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) IT Managers' Forum and Digital & Data Programme has also been included in the IT Strategy Principles.

The technology deliverables required to facilitate the Corporate and Directorate strategies/plans have been categorised into business change projects with a known IT workstream and a series of specific IT projects.

Funding in support of the Service's ambition will undoubtedly always pose a challenge. Following a series of prioritisation meetings with the Assistant Directors the Service's technology ambition has been reduced, resulting in the removal of projects to align with available funding and priorities where practicable.

In June 2020 SLT agreed the priorities for available IT Strategy funding as:

- Mobilising Strategy Project 21
- CRM
- Firewatch
- Performance Management
- Electronic Document Management System (EDRMS)
- IT Infrastructure Projects / Office 365
- Information Security

A detailed prioritisation process conducted by the Assistant Directors which included scaling back of the Service's technology ambitions in line with the priorities, has reduced the project funding shortfall to £0.20m over the five years of the IT Strategy from 2020 to 2025.

The Service also wishes to complete the development of the new CRM Home Safety Visit (HSV) and Business Safety (BS) systems, which will see the removal of inefficient paper driven processes and the implementation of electronic data capture automating the flow of information. It is estimated that the

development, purchase of devices and other associated deployment costs could extend the IT Strategy funding gap by a further £0.82m, leading to the overall project funding pressure increasing from £0.20m to £1.02m.

Costed proposals for the development of CRM HSV and Business Safety are due to be presented to SLT in October 2020, including the prioritisation of 'Must Have' functionality to reduce the estimated cost.

IT operating costs will increase with the deployment of the new technologies with increases in licenses, support costs and the move to cloud computing. IT operating costs associated with the IT Strategy projects are estimated to exceed the approved 2020/21 IT revenue budget funding level by a total of £2.51m over the next five years (including CRM HSV & BS).

Estimated funding shortfall summary:

Excluding CRM HSV & Business Safety Systems)

IT Strategy One-Off Costs	£0.20m
IT Revenue Costs	£2.05m
<b>Total Shortfall 2020 to 2025</b>	<b>£2.25m</b>

Including CRM HSV & Business Safety Systems)

IT Strategy One-Off Costs	£1.02m
IT Revenue Costs	£2.51m
<b>Total Shortfall 2020 to 2025</b>	<b>£3.53m</b>

The funding shortfall needs to be resolved by the Service delivering financial efficiencies as a result of its technology investments and through the budget setting process.

The IT Strategy does not take account of the business resources and capacity needed to implement the projects.

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Fire Authority:

- approve the IT Strategy 2020-2025 and the use of existing funding of £7.79m, including the use of the previously Fire Authority approved P21 ESFRS IT integration funding £2.26m. Total approved funding £10.05m.
- note that further funding will need to be identified through delivering financial efficiencies and the budget setting process in order to resolve the combined one off and ongoing cost pressure of £2.25m (excluding CRM

HSV & Business Safety) or £3.53m (including CRM HSV & Business Safety);

- note costed proposals for the development of CRM HSV and Business Safety are due to be presented to SLT in October 2020;
  - note that regular reports on the delivery of the IT Strategy will be presented to SLT and the Scrutiny & Audit Panel; and
  - agree that business owners should now develop business cases, defining the business benefits, costs and efficiency savings for the projects included in the Strategy.
-



**East Sussex**  
Fire & Rescue Service

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# **Information Technology (IT) Strategy 2020-2025**

**August 2020**

**Version 1.0 – issued for approval**

## Table of Contents

1.	Foreword .....	1
2.	Strategic Context.....	2
3.	Purpose of the Strategy .....	3
4.	IT Transformation Programme (2016 – 2020) .....	3
5.	Sustainability & Carbon Footprint .....	4
6.	Approach to Efficiency .....	4
6.1.	Foundation Principles.....	4
6.2.	IT Architecture Guiding Principles.....	5
7.	Scope .....	6
8.	Deliverables.....	7
8.1.	Commitment 1 – Delivering high performing services .....	7
8.2.	Commitment 2 – Educating our communities .....	7
8.3.	Commitment 3 – Developing a multi-skilled, safe & valued workforce .....	8
8.4.	Commitment 4 – Make effective use of our resources.....	8
8.5.	ESFRS Line of Business Systems.....	10
8.6.	Plan on a Page.....	11
8.7.	Programme View.....	12
9.	Performance Management & Review .....	13
10.	Inclusion, Equality and Diversity .....	13
11.	Finances.....	14
11.1.	Project Funding Requirement .....	14
11.2.	IT Revenue Funding Requirement.....	15
12.	Conclusion.....	16
13.	Appendix 1 – Detailed Business Projects (One-off Costs) .....	17
14.	Appendix 1 – Detailed IT Projects (One-off Costs).....	18
15.	Appendix 2 – Business Strategies & IT Strategy Deliverables .....	20

## 1. Foreword

Information Technology is at the heart of everything that we do, and delivery of the IT Strategy over the next five years will ensure further improvement to the Service's technology and associated capabilities.

The IT Strategy sets challenging targets for improving the condition and functional suitability of the Service's back office and front-line systems and for having a positive impact on the environment. With this Strategy, appropriate investment can be properly targeted and I look forward to seeing continued improvement and development of technology which, for the Authority, is key to transforming the way we operate and collaborate to improve efficiency and deliver the best service we can to the community we serve.

Cllr Tutt  
**Lead Member for IT**

Since 2016 the Service has delivered on its commitment to replace core Information Technology (IT) infrastructure and we have seen an increase in reliability and flexibility. ESFRS is continuing to invest in a major IT refresh and new capabilities to support the business needs of our service. We will continue to work closely with our outsourced IT service provider, telent to ensure we deliver efficiently, effectively and maximise digital and technological opportunities.

The IT Strategy will deliver further improvements to our systems over the next five years, ensuring our staff have the right IT systems and information to carry out their roles and tackle incidents effectively. Along with advancements in security, IT infrastructure and firefighter safety, health and well-being, the IT Strategy will ensure that we have the best possible environment for our colleagues and partners for the future in order to support the delivery of services to the public.

Dawn Whittaker  
**Chief Fire Officer**

## 2. Strategic Context

The direction of the IT Strategy 2020-2025 is driven by the organisational purpose of 'making our communities safer' and our four key commitments:

- Delivering high performing services
- Educating our communities
- Developing a multi-skilled, safe & valued workforce
- Making effective use of our resources

Since the last IT Strategy was published in 2017, East Sussex Fire Authority has overseen an ambitious change programme in how its fire and rescue services are provided across East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove.

A series of new service strategies are now in place, which set out what the organisation aims to achieve in terms of our People, Inclusion and Diversity, Health, Safety and Wellbeing, Information Management, Procurement, Estates and Communication and Engagement. Service delivery priorities have been reset in the new Safer Communities Strategy in order to explicitly demonstrate how we are responding to the risks with targeted response, prevention and protection work.

A Service Delivery structure review has been completed with the involvement of colleagues, focusing on wellbeing, effectiveness and efficiency. This provided a more agile and enabling structure that compliments the development of supporting processes and systems (Support and Delivery Framework). During 2019 the Service completed an overarching Operational Response Review, which will ultimately feed into the new Integrated Risk Management Plan.

In 2019 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) completed an independent inspection of ESFRS, as part of its overall programme of inspections of all English Fire and Rescue Services to assess progress against the Government fire reform agenda of accountability and transparency, efficiency, collaboration and workforce reform. The inspection produced a series of recommendations, including the importance of ensuring IT investments support efficient or effective working for front line colleagues.

The nature of the Fire & Rescue Service continues to change, with an emphasis on prevention and protection activities. These activities highlight the risks to our community and addresses them through proactive education and training campaigns. This increasing engagement drives the need for better integrated information and more complex analysis. It also requires us to put in place more effective social media and other technologies to help the community engage with the Service.

The focus remains on keeping our firefighters and community safe. This means a programme of continual improvement to the systems we use to make sure our firefighters have the right information to tackle incidents effectively, and ensuring our firefighters are properly trained and competent in all systems, processes and protocols.

The functions that support the operation of the Service and front lines colleagues range from Human Resources to Engineering, Communications to Finance, Procurement and more. The IT Strategy deliverables, driven by the Corporate Plan and department strategies, has been formulated to ensure that colleagues have the systems and tools required to be effective in their roles.

The Fire Authority still faces financial challenges in the face of continued uncertainty on funding with the forecasted need to save between £0.6m and £3.7m over the medium term, which is in addition to savings of £8.7m delivered since 2010. This continues to drive the need

to deliver more efficient business practices, which requires the Service to implement digital technologies and automated workflow in order to remove paper driven processes.

### **3. Purpose of the Strategy**

The IT Strategy 2020-2025 builds on the significant progress made since the decision to outsource IT Services to telent in November 2016 and embark on a transformation programme of the core IT infrastructure and applications.

The IT services are a key enabler to deliver the organisation's goals and the IT Strategy is the mechanism through which this will be delivered.

The IT Strategy deliverables have been developed to support and align with the Corporate Plan and have been formulated with and reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and senior managers, to establish the key strategic goals of the organisation to ensure alignment with the associated technology.

The IT Strategy quantifies the investment required over the next five years arising from the Service's 'demand' for IT improvements and the prioritisation of such investments.

The strategy also recognises the increased drive to work in partnership and collaboration with other fire and rescue services and public bodies, as demonstrated by the Surrey Joint Fire Control project (Project 21) and to share information with adjacent county councils, health services and police forces.

### **4. IT Transformation Programme (2016 – 2020)**

In 2015 the Service recognised that its systems were fragmented, ageing and in many cases the IT infrastructure and applications were end of life. Combined with an internal IT team with limited capacity, it was not possible to support the Service change programme.

The Service commissioned an IT Transformation Programme with support from external consults with objectives to:

- Implementing a modern ICT infrastructure to enable smarter and more efficient ways of working
- An infrastructure that provides secure and resilient ICT services
- A transition of the management of ICT services to an appointed third party technology provider telent Technology Services (November 2016)
- Supported by a new IT Strategy and a commitment to invest £8.8m during a five year programme approved in June 2017).

telent Technology Services were appointed as outsourced service delivery partner in November 2016 and at the same time the new internal Information Technology Governance (ITG) function was established to work closely with colleagues and telent to deliver new infrastructure and systems.

Technology already delivered in the period between 2016 and 2020 includes:

- Resilient dual data centres, together with new networking infrastructure and IT security.
- New telent Flexicloud replaced physical end of life hardware with a modern virtualised environment, including a new Microsoft Exchange email system
- Significantly improved resilience and IT Disaster Recovery capability
- Mobile and home working capability, with 299 laptops and 52 tablets deployed to colleagues
- TomTom Officer Navigation devices deployed in officers' cars, improving effectiveness by delivering system generated voice updates from the control room en route to incidents.

- Business cases approved and project mobilisation completed for replacement of key line of business applications (CRM, Firewatch and Performance Management)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> party Information Security consultancy (Aristi) contracted to assist the service with improving its information and cyber security, aligned to Cyber Essentials Plus and ISO27001 certifications
- Office 365 license agreement signed to provide productivity tools for digital transformation (Sharepoint, Workflow)

More recently Cisco Webex virtual meeting and instant messaging has been deployed across the Service and used to a significant degree during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic.

The programme undertaken in partnership with telent between 2016 and 2020 has laid the foundations for the next steps in transforming the organisations IT systems, allowing the Service to leverage value from further investment through the IT Strategy 2020-2025.

## 5. Sustainability & Carbon Footprint

The IT Strategy is designed to ensure that technologies are implemented to further enhance flexible working in order to reduce the need for travel, and when combined with the move to cloud computing services in place of on premise systems, assist in reducing the Service's overall carbon footprint, therefore helping to minimise the impact on the environment. Other options to improve sustainability and reduce carbon footprint will be explored with the Service's provider, telent, as the projects within the Strategy are developed.

## 6. Approach to Efficiency

There are a number of principles (Foundation and IT Architecture) which we propose to use to guide decisions, technical design, projects and approach to service delivery, in order to maximise the return on IT investments and reduce the total cost of ownership to the Service.

### 6.1. Foundation Principles

- Facilitate the delivery of department strategies: we must align with the Corporate Plan and Department Strategies on an annual basis, to agree and plan the associated technologies required.
- Value for Money: we must ensure all IT services offer value for money, either in themselves or by enabling wider service and process efficiencies.
- Ensure we can enable growth: IT services should continue to support improved flexibility and responsiveness to meet future business requirements in an agile and structured manner.
- Resilience: services will continue to be reliable, resilient and secure, with appropriate IT disaster recovery plans in place.
- Total cost of ownership: we will simplify the technology portfolio to reduce complexity and make service management more efficient.
- Collaboration: we will actively participate in and contribute to the The Link Consortium, the British Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (BAPCO), the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) IT Managers Forum and NFCC Digital & Data Programme.
- Governance: business strategies are clearly defined, business case led IT investments decisions. Prioritisation provided by the ESFRS Change Board and SLT.
- Planning: mature programme approach to planned demand / supply management, closely aligned with the ESFRS business planning process.

## 6.2. IT Architecture Guiding Principles

Developed and agreed by ITG and telent Technical Design Authority to ensure that new technology will be sourced and delivered as part of an overall technology architecture.

Principle	Rationale
Commercial Cloud Considered	Develop the utilisation of commercial cloud services to lower cost of ownership and implement a more cost-effective support model.
Commercial Off The Shelf	Foster the utilisation of suppliers' off the shelf supported software where suppliers have provided non-bespoke or in house developed applications or services. Ensuring scalable support and cost-effective support model. Consideration should also be given for COTS packages already deployed in the Fire Sector.
Business Requirements Based Change	Develop a culture where the information environment changes in response to the needs of the business, where cost effective, rather than having the business change in response to IT changes.
Responsive Change Management	Ensure changes to the information environment are implemented in a timely manner so that if colleagues are expected to work within the information environment, that information must be responsive to their needs.
Control Technical Diversity & Compatibility	This principle will limit the number of supported components, which will simplify maintainability and reduce ongoing cost of ownership. Technology will not be introduced without ensuring appropriate support available. Nor will technology be implemented that relies on legacy IT infrastructure.
Interoperability	Implement established IT standards to help ensure consistency, improving the ability to manage systems and improve user satisfaction and protect IT investments, therefore, maximising return on investment and reducing costs. This will include the standardisation of interfaces and the ability to share information with other systems and support collaboration with other agencies.
Information Security First	This principle will foster the utilisation of security architecture and standards such as ISO27001 alignment, Cyber Essential Plus accredited services as well as alignment with Emergency Services Network architecture patterns. This includes a new statutory or regulatory mandate, threat realised or experienced.
Resilience by Design	Resilience should be commensurate with the criticality of the services supported.

## 7. Scope

The strategy recognises the need to develop an integrated, cohesive and flexible platform to better support the Service, front line colleagues and ultimately the community moving forward.

IT services across ESFRS still lack the integration required and in some areas application functionality and automation remains limited, resulting in a continued reliance on paper forms and legacy manual processes. In some cases, such as the lack of integration between the resource management system (Firewatch) and the mobilising system, it means significant levels of manual status changes, additional checks and numerous interactions between the control room and frontline colleagues. This issue will be addressed within the first 18 months of this IT Strategy via the Firewatch and P21 projects, which are already underway.

The IT Strategy recognises the challenge associated with the pace of technological change affecting fire services and society generally, which will only be accelerated as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. Linked with the importance of delivering new technologies that positively improve the experience of frontline colleagues in delivery of their roles on a day to day basis.

Remaining challenges that this strategy seeks to address can be summarised as follows:

Technology Area	Challenge
Technology Foundations	To complete the replacement of end of life infrastructure such as end user desktops, including the rollout of Windows 10, Office 365, WiFi and Station End Equipment replacement programme. Continue to develop virtual meeting and mobile working technologies as part of the Service's Covid-19 Recovery Plan
Line of Business Applications	To complete the change projects underway to further reduce risk whilst delivering operational efficiencies. Projects include CRM, Firewatch, Fire Ground Radio and Project 21.
Application Integration	Application integration is still limited, leading to significant levels of manual entry/duplicated effort and a reliance on paper driven processes. In turn this limits the ability to deliver efficiencies.  No integration between Firewatch and the mobilising system (addressed by Project 21). No integration between the CRM and the mobilising system (being addressed by the CRM Project & Project 21).  Weaknesses in the interface of incident data from the mobilising system to the IRS reporting system (addressed by Project 21).
Performance Management / Business Intelligence and Analytics	Availability of application analytics and aggregation of information sources remains a limitation. Currently being addressed by the Performance Management project and implementation of application specific analytics e.g. CRM and Firewatch analytics
Collaboration Technologies	The introduction of Webex, Office 365 and Sharepoint now provides the platform to facilitate digital collaboration and optimised digital workflows, digital signatures. Allowing the removal of significant volumes of legacy paper forms and related manual processes.
End User Computing / Flexible Working	Complete replacement of end of life PCs/workstations across the Service and the rollout of Windows 10, Office 365, along with tablet devices for Home Safety Visits and Business Safety.

## 8. Deliverables

### 8.1. Commitment 1 – Delivering high performing services

Objective	Business Outcomes
Project 21 – Joint Fire Control	Complete the onboarding to Surrey Joint Fire Control. Resulting in a modern supported mobilising solution, enabling Operational efficiencies & better utilisation of resources through the tri-service partnership
Improve the maturity of the Service's information security by aligning with ISO27001	Improvements in Information Security achieved, reducing the risk to service data & systems. By achieving Cyber Essentials Plus Certification, along with annual IT Health checks & ISO27001 assessments
Complete the replacement of Station End IT infrastructure	Resilient IT station equipment and reduced risk to mobilising. Lifting policies are in place for the scheduled replacement of such equipment
Rollout of Windows 10, Office 365, Sharepoint and replacement of end of life desktops & laptops	Colleagues have secure and fit for purpose workstations & laptops facilitating an efficient working environment. Ensuring supported technologies are in place by modernising technologies deployed
Maximise efficiencies (cashable/non-cashable) from IT Strategy investments	Related business cases detail cashable / non-cashable benefits, which are then reported on a quarterly basis
Establish IT enterprise architecture	Effective system integration & efficient business processes. Cost effective IT systems & fit for purpose architecture.
Emergency Services Network (ESN)	ESN Business Case including business & technology impacts and associated implementation estimates

### 8.2. Commitment 2 – Educating our communities

Objective	Business Outcomes
Utilise virtual meeting platforms to organise 'virtual' education hubs with the community	Recognise and utilise societal changes as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically the move virtual meetings and video calls across all age groups

### 8.3. Commitment 3 – Developing a multi-skilled, safe & valued workforce

Objective	Business Outcomes
Expansion of E-Learning	Crews have better access to information and improved methods of learning available through the expansion of E-Learning, supporting the maintenance of competences
Fire Ground Radio	Digital fit for purpose fire ground radios, improving firefighter safety and effectiveness on the fire ground
Implementation of a new Hydrant Management system	Improved accuracy and management of hydrant data reducing risk
Corporate Wi-Fi	Greater mobility & flexibility for colleagues, also facilitating the efficient use of appliance MDTs.
One to Many video conferencing	Improved collaboration and meeting effectiveness
Improve the service's efficiency and effectiveness through investment in core line of business systems - Customer Relationship Management	<p>Improved Community Safety, Business Safety and SSRI business processes and workflows that enable a more efficient use of resources. Reduction in the time taken to collate and communicate Site Specific Risk Information.</p> <p>Effective targeting and use of Business Safety and Community Safety resources to deliver Safer Community services to the community. Capacity released and focused on risk reduction.</p> <p>Paper-based processes eliminated improving efficiency, by removing data double entry and in reduction of data entry errors. Business processes underpinned with mobile working, digital workflows, providing timely communication of individual, community and premises risks.</p>

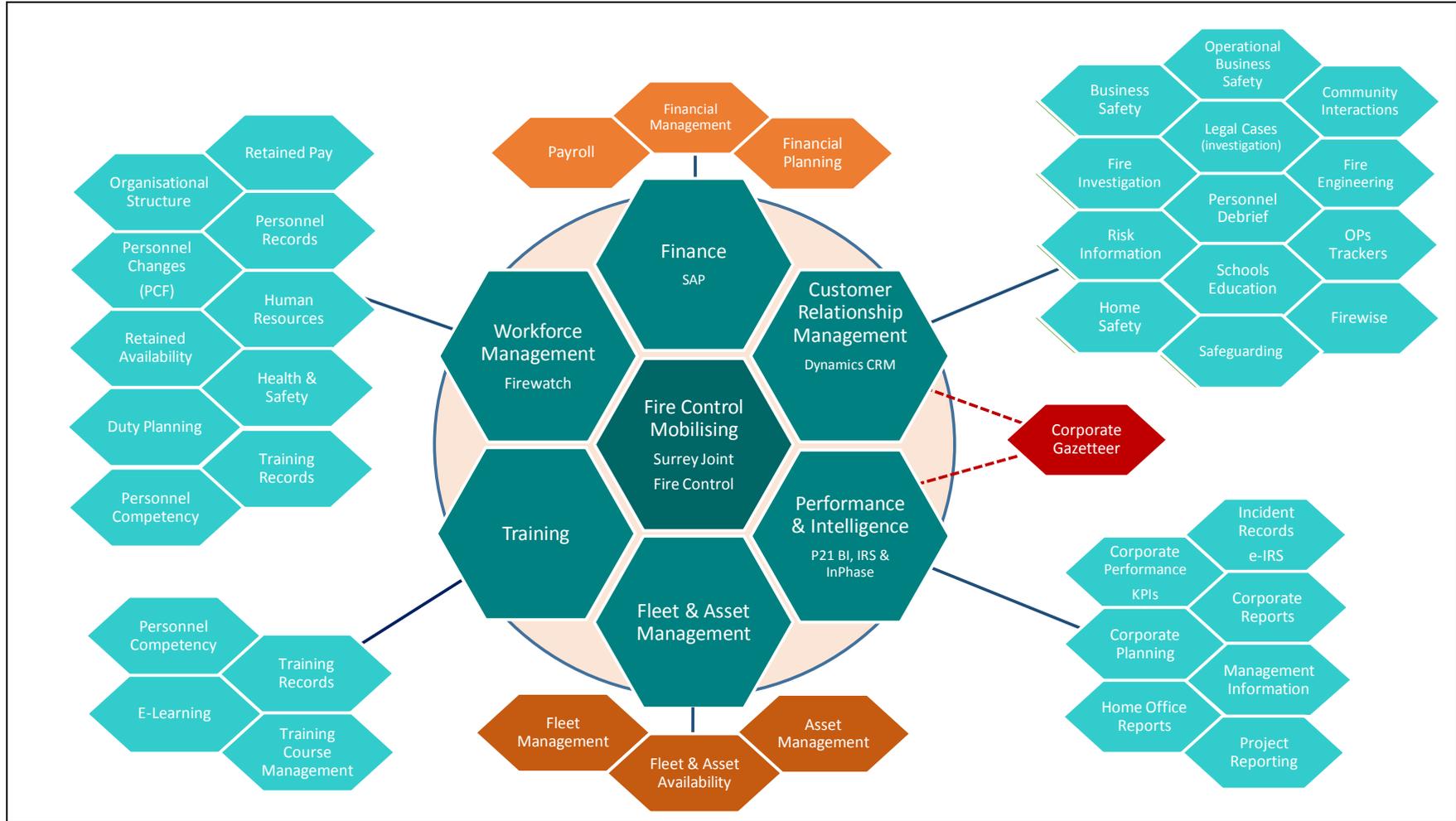
### 8.4. Commitment 4 – Make effective use of our resources

Objective	Business Outcomes
Improve the service's efficiency and effectiveness through investment in core line of business systems - Firewatch	<p>Integration with the mobilising system allowing FireWatch to automatically update the mobilising system with crewing and availability and then for the mobilising systems to automatically update FireWatch incident data.</p> <p>RDS Pay implemented, delivering increased data accuracy at reduced cost through reduction in manual processes and data entry. Timeliness of On Call claims ensuring On Call Firefighters receive correct and appropriate remuneration.</p> <p>Crewing of specialist officer and vehicles on FireWatch, ensuring competency training</p>

	<p>requirements are monitored. Consistent approach to recording of training on FireWatch. Improved accuracy of crewing availability through use of qualification exclusion functionality will be in line with EFSRS policies and training competencies.</p> <p>Self Service improving integrity of employee data held on FireWatch, enabling On Call personnel to view shifts remotely and to remotely book holiday</p>
<p>Improve the service's efficiency and effectiveness by digitising processes – Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS)</p>	<p>Reduction in paper forms and reduced multiple handling of data and improved data accuracy</p> <p>A workplace environment that is increasingly anchored in the digital workplace, supporting the transition to enhanced ways of working delivering increased effectiveness and efficiency</p> <p>Introduction of a document management and workflow systems based on Sharepoint ensuring accurate records management and optimised digital workflows, whilst facilitating enhanced information sharing with other public service partners</p>
<p>Improve the service's efficiency and effectiveness through investment in Finance &amp; Procurement systems and processes</p>	<p>Migration to new finance system as part of the ESCC led MBOSS project to replace SAP.</p> <p>Streamlined Finance and Procurement processes in place along with enhanced financial integrity and efficiency. Improve integration between finance &amp; other systems</p>
<p>Improve the service's efficiency and effectiveness through investment in core line of business systems - Performance Management System</p>	<p>Improved Strategic Business Planning and providing greater access to strategic reporting and management information. Facilitating development of business objectives and focus for corporate KPI's</p> <p>More effective risk management through providing greater access to risk registers and in supporting definition of actions for mitigation to corporate risks in a timely manner. Providing appropriate levels of management information to managers that enable informed decision making</p> <p>Wider distribution of performance information improving Service Delivery by service personnel through visibility of station specific activities and performance. Audience specific dashboards to highlight areas of performance of direct interest and a fully integrated Business Intelligence system to ensure more targeted publication of reports</p>

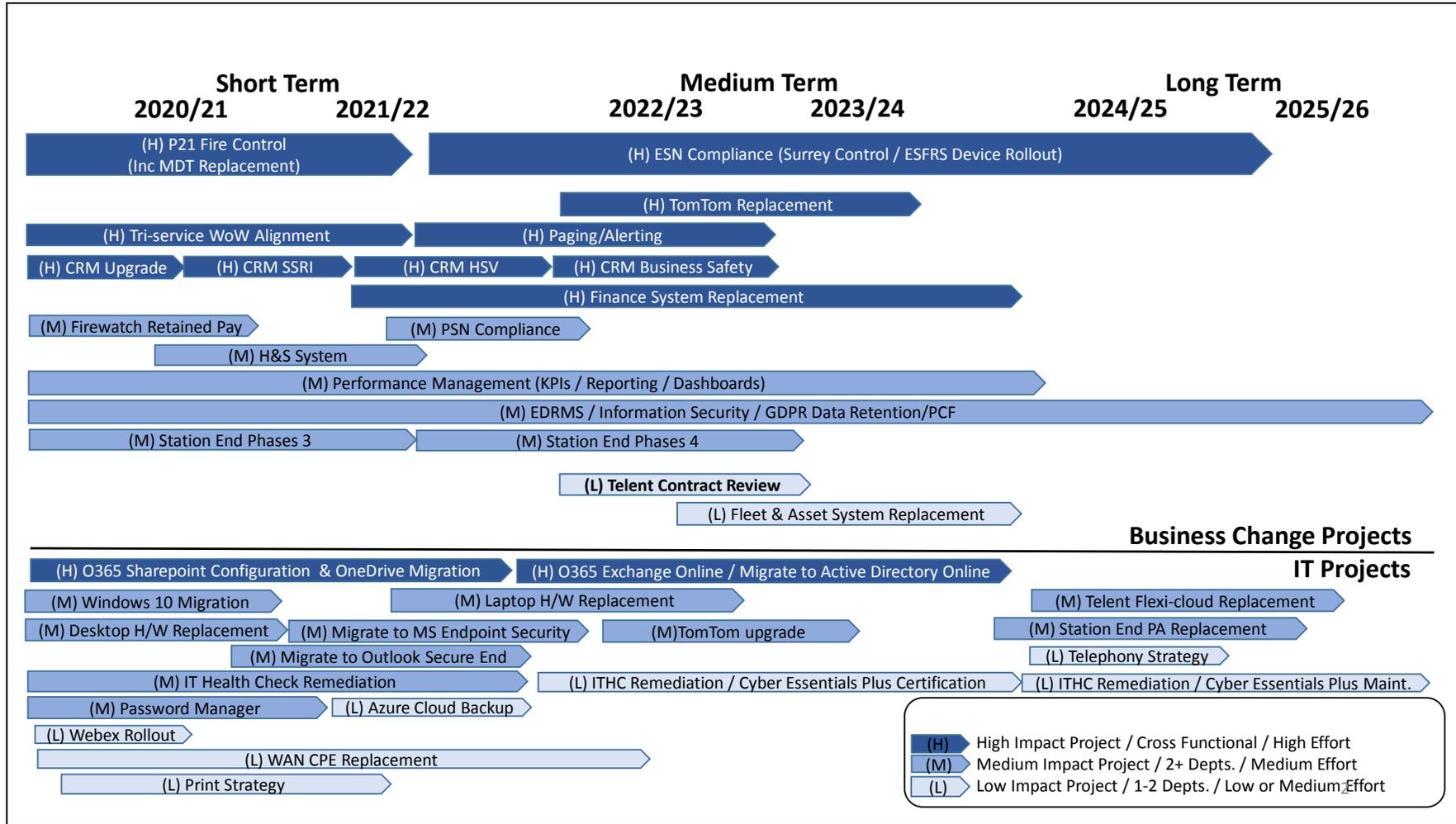
### 8.5. ESFRS Line of Business Systems

The diagram below illustrates the core Line of Business Systems, which are priorities for the IT Strategy 2020-2025 and associated investments.



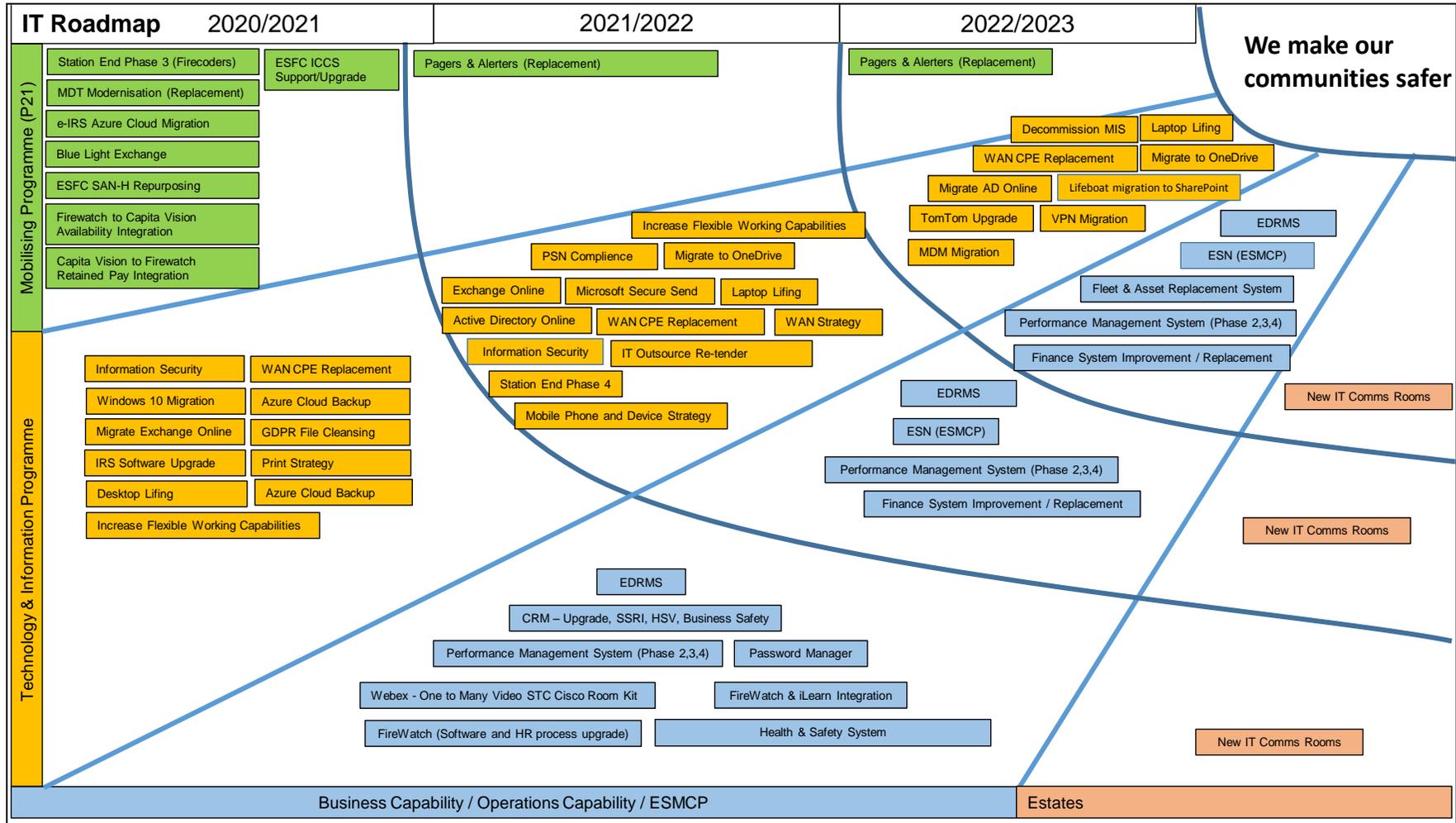
8.6. Plan on a Page

The diagram below illustrates how the organisation's priorities will be achieved through a set of project deliverables with an indicative timeline. The schedule will be delivered through a structured and prioritised set of programmes according to PMO processes and approvals.



8.7. Programme View

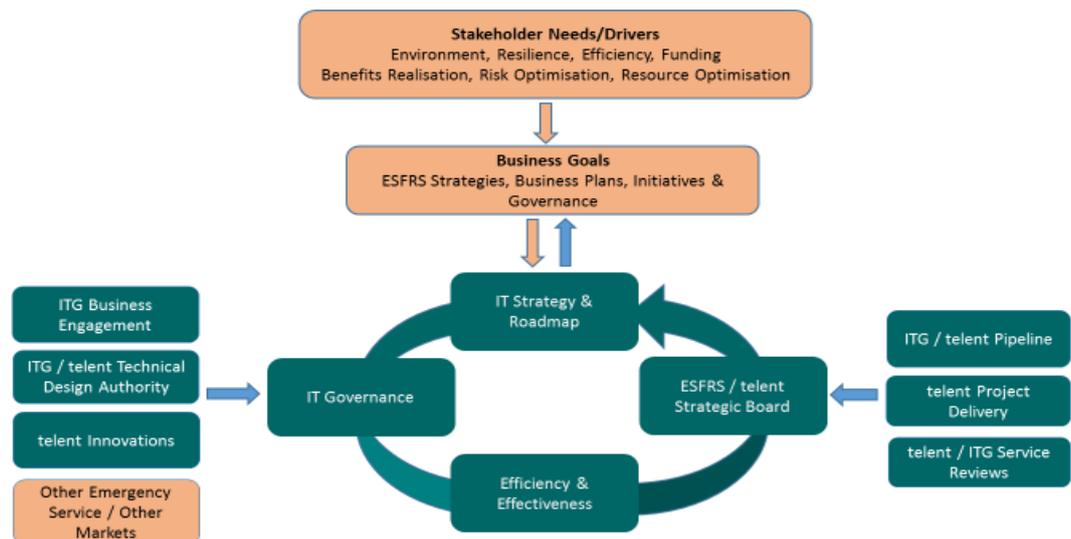
The diagram below illustrates the IT Strategy deliverables organised into the existing PMO Clusters.



## 9. Performance Management & Review

The ESFRS / telent IT Strategic Board exists to provide senior level guidance, leadership and strategy for the overall delivery of the Services from telent and to act as the point of escalation; it provides an environment for review, discussion and consideration with final decision making subject to the decision routes within the respective organisations.

- Receiving and reviewing service reports from the telent Service Manager and reviewing recommendations on technology, service and other developments that offer potential for improving the benefit that ESFRS is receiving, in particular value for money.
- Identifying strategic business opportunities which IT can support, highlighting duplication or misalignment of objectives and priorities which have an IT dependency, and providing guidance on matters which may impact on the implementation of the IT services, to inform SLT.
- Ensuring a single approved programme and project pipeline in close coordination with ESFRS ITG, PMO and SLT.



## 10. Inclusion, Equality and Diversity

We know that understanding inclusion, equality and diversity are an integral part of keeping our communities safer, stronger and healthier.

We will work to achieve the aims of the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Inclusion, Equality and Diversity Strategy 2017-2021.

The Inclusion, Equality and Diversity strategy has five performance areas;

- Knowing your communities
- Leadership, partnership and service commitment
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services
- A skilled and committed workforce

This IT Strategy is designed to facilitate and support the Service's IE and D strategy.

## 11. Finances

Realising the ambition that the Service has for its business systems and IT infrastructure between 2020 and 2025 is not without its financial challenges.

The technology deliverables required to facilitate the ESFRS Corporate and Directorate strategies/plans have been translated into a series of prioritised business change projects with an IT workstream and a series of specific IT projects. The business projects, associated technology deliverables and desired timescales have then been prioritised during interviews with Assistant Directors and senior managers.

The summary financial schedules below include inflight business projects such as CRM, Firewatch, Performance Management and Project 21. The schedules also include candidate projects with a technical workstream considered as dependencies required to deliver the Service's business plans, such as a new Paging & Alerting solution.

IT projects contained within the financial schedules include existing technology deliverables such as Information Security and the Windows 10 rollout. The schedules also include the technical projects considered by ITG and telent as essential to address the remaining weaknesses in the Service's IT infrastructure, such as the need to replace end of life legacy PCs/laptops and complete the rollout of Office 365 and Sharepoint.

### 11.1. Project Funding Requirement

In June 2020 SLT agreed the IT related priorities for available funding as:

- Mobilising Strategy Project 21
- CRM
- Firewatch
- Performance Management
- Electronic Document Management System
- IT Infrastructure Projects / Office 365
- Information Security

Following prioritisation by the Assistant Directors and scaling back of the Service's technology ambitions in line with the agreed priorities, it leaves an estimated project funding shortfall of £0.20m over the five years of the IT Strategy to 2025 (see Table 1)

<b>Table 1 Project Summary One-off Costs £000's</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>Total</b>
Existing Business Projects	1,243	1,125	360	130	0	2,858
Existing IT Project	307	387	0	0	0	694
ESN Readiness	0	713	712	0	0	1,425
P21- ESFRS IT Integration	2,260	0	0	0	0	2,260
New Business Project	265	45	220	0	0	530
New IT Project	176	459	461	380	1,005	2,481
<b>Total Requirement</b>	<b>4,251</b>	<b>2,729</b>	<b>1,753</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>1,005</b>	<b>10,248</b>
<b>Source of Funding</b>						
IT Strategy Reserve	(1,871)	(2,016)	(1,041)	(510)	(802)	(6,240)
ESN Readiness Reserve	0	(713)	(712)	0	0	(1,425)
Mobilising Strategy (P21)	(2,260)	0	0	0	0	(2,260)
Protection Surge Grant	(120)	0	0	0	0	(120)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(4,251)</b>	<b>(2,729)</b>	<b>(1,753)</b>	<b>(510)</b>	<b>(592)</b>	<b>(10,045)</b>
<b>Total Funding Shortfall</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>203</b>
<b>Project Funding Shortfall over 5 years</b>	<b>203</b>					

The Service also wishes to complete the development of the new CRM Home Safety Visit (HSV) and Business Safety systems, which will see the removal of inefficient paper processes and the implementation of automated workflow and electronic data capture. It is estimated that the development, purchase of devices and other associated deployment costs could increase the project funding shortfall by a further £0.82m from £0.20m to £1.02m.

Costed proposals for the development of CRM HSV and Business Safety are due to be presented to SLT in October 2020, including the prioritisation of 'Must Have' functionality in order to reduce the estimated cost and a review of benefits identification and realisation.

## 11.2. IT Revenue Funding Requirement

IT operating costs are due to increase in line with the deployment of the new technologies, mainly due to increases in license, support costs and the move to cloud computing.

IT operating costs are estimated to exceed the current IT revenue budget funding by a total of £2.51m over the next five years – including CRM HSV and Business Safety. Or alternatively £2.05m excluding CRM HSV and Business Safety (see Table 2).

This will result in a £0.11m pressure on the IT revenue budget starting in 2020/21 rising to £0.56m in 2021/22 and £0.72m by 2024/25.

The pressure in the 2020/21 IT revenue is caused by greater than expected Station End Phase 3 and MDT running costs and the impact of a number of P21 related projects that will go live before 2021/22.

<b>Table 2 IT Revenue Ongoing Costs £000's</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>Total</b>
Existing Business Projects	343	404	404	404	412	1,967
Existing IT Project	200	223	223	223	223	1,092
ESN Readiness	0	0	0	0	0	0
Telent Outsource	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	6,000
P21- ESFRS IT Integration	55	145	145	145	145	920
New Business Project	0	74	74	74	74	298
New IT Project	56	445	455	445	602	1,993
<b>Total Requirement</b>	<b>1,854</b>	<b>2,491</b>	<b>2,491</b>	<b>2,491</b>	<b>2,656</b>	<b>11,985</b>
<b>Source of Funding</b>						
Existing IT Revenue	(1,744)	(1,744)	(1,744)	(1,744)	(1,744)	(8,720)
ESN Revenue (Tbc)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mobilising Strategy (P21)	0	(190)	(190)	(190)	(190)	(760)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(1,744)</b>	<b>(1,934)</b>	<b>(1,934)</b>	<b>(1,934)</b>	<b>(1,934)</b>	<b>(9,480)</b>
<b>Funding Shortfall</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>2,505</b>
<b>IT Revenue Funding Shortfall over 5 years</b>	<b>2,505</b>					

The migration to cloud based technologies will see a move from capital investment to increased revenue spend over the next five years. This is part of a technology trend seen throughout the Commercial and Public sectors.

The one-off project funding gap and the ongoing IT revenue pressures will need to be addressed through the budget setting process and reflected in the Revenue Budget 2021/22 and the Medium Term Finance Plan 2021/22 – 2025/26. Consideration will also be given to whether any of the proposed one off costs in the Strategy should be capitalised.

## 12. Conclusion

The IT Strategy 2020-2025 builds on the significant progress made since the decision to outsource IT Services to telent in November 2016 and embark on a transformation programme of the core IT infrastructure and applications.

IT services are a key enabler to deliver the organisation's strategic objectives and the IT Strategy is the mechanism through which this will be delivered.

The IT Strategy deliverables have been developed in support of and aligned to the Corporate Plan and have been formulated and reviewed in conjunction with the Assistant Directors and Senior Officers, taking into consideration the Operational Response Review and the findings detailed in the 2019 HMICFRS inspection report.

Project 21 and the tri-service Joint Fire Control collaboration with Surrey FRS and West Sussex FRS have also been a major influence on the direction of the strategy in relation to fire control systems and related IT infrastructure.

Technology trends such as the migration to cloud computing, advances in data analytics, the growth of flexible working and the rapid move to virtual working as a result of Covid-19 have been considered.

The working lives of colleagues will be affected, for the better, with the introduction of new technologies outlined in this strategy.

Funding in support of the Service's ambition will always pose a challenge.

A detailed prioritisation process conducted by the Assistant Directors and scaling back of the Service's technology ambitions in line with the agreed priorities, has reduced the funding shortfall (project and IT revenue costs) to £2.25m for the five years of the IT Strategy.

The shortfall (project and IT revenue costs) will be increased to £3.53m for the five years of the IT Strategy, should the Service wish to complete the development of the CRM HSV and Business Safety systems.

Further funding will be identified through the budget review process in order to resolve the funding shortfall.

The IT Strategy does not take account the business resources and capacity that will be required to implement the Service's ambitions in this area.

Finally, SLT have committed to develop detailed business cases to justify investments, defining the associated business benefits and efficiency savings.

### 13. Appendix 1 – Detailed Business Projects (One-off Costs)

Item	Appendix 1 – Detailed Project Budget Business Projects One-Off Costs	P21	Existing Project	Budget Confidence (%)	20/21 £000's	21/22 £000's	22/23 £000's	23/24 £000's	24/25 £000's
2	Pagers and Alerters	Y	Y	50	0	223	230	0	0
1	Station End IT Refresh (Phase 3 & 4)	Y	Y	100	207	222	0	0	0
3	MDT Modernisation (Hardware & Software)	Y	Y	80	430	0	0	0	0
5	CRM	N	Y	60	870	0	0	0	0
6	EDRMS	N	Y	100	300	300	0	0	0
8	Finance System Improvement / Replacement	N	Y	60	0	130	130	130	0
10	ESN (ESMCP)	N	Y	100	0	713	712	0	0
11	FireWatch (Software and HR process upgrade)	N	Y	100	27	0	0	0	0
12	PSN Compliance	N	Y	80	0	250	0	0	0
16	Integrated Health & Safety System	N	N	20	130	0	0	0	0
17	Fleet & Asset Replacement System	N	N	10	0	0	200	0	0
53	One to many video STC Cisco Room Kit	N	N	70	20	0	0	0	0
58	FireWatch Appliance Availability Integration	Y	Y	60	31	0	0	0	0
59	FireWatch Retained Pay Integration	Y	Y	60	55	0	0	0	0
61	GDPR File Cleanse	N	Y	100	46	0	0	0	0
78	Performance Management System (Phase 2,3,4)	N	N	10	30	20	20	0	0
80	iLearn & FireWatch Integration	N	N	50	60	0	0	0	0
84	Project 21 - ESFRS IT Integration Costs	Y	Y	100	1537	0	0	0	0
85	Increase Flexible working capabilities	N	N	10	25	25	0	0	0
14	Information Security	N	Y	100	50	50	0	0	0
	<b>Total:</b>				<b>3,818</b>	<b>1,933</b>	<b>1,292</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>0</b>

Less source of funding from IT Strategy Reserve	(1,438)	(1,221)	(580)	(130)	0
Less source of ESN Grant	0	(713)	(712)	0	0
Protection Surge Grant	(120)	0	0	0	0
Less source of FA agreed funding for P21 (ESFRS IC)	(2,260)	0	0	0	0
<b>Total net one off costs / (saving):</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

#### 14. Appendix 1 – Detailed IT Projects (One-off Costs)

Page 72

Item	Appendix 1 – Detailed Project Budget (Continued) IT Projects One-Off Costs	P21	Existing Project	Budget Confidence (%)	20/21 £000's	21/22 £000's	22/23 £000's	23/24 £000's	24/25 £000's
25	Migrate to Windows 10	N	Y	60	132	0	0	0	0
26	Migrate to OneDrive	N	N	60	0	50	50	0	0
27	Migrate to Outlook Secure Send	N	N	75	0	10	0	0	0
30	Implement Sharepoint Online	N	N	50	0	0	0	0	25
32	Migrate to Exchange Online	N	N	75	10	40	0	0	0
35	Decommission MIS	N	N	10	0	0	40	0	0
36	eIRS software Upgrade	N	N	70	57	0	0	0	0
37	Upgrade TomTom Bridge	N	N	20	0	0	100	0	0
40	Laptop Lifing	N	N	90	0	160	90	0	0
41	Desktop Lifing	N	Y	90	125	0	0	0	0
42	Migrate Lifeboat to Sharepoint Online (Document Management Solution)	N	N	25	0	0	65	0	0

44	Migrate to AD Online	N	N	40	0	30	25	0	0
45	Station IT Replacement (Station UPS Replacement)	N	N	90	0	0	0	0	125
47	Station PA System Replacement	N	N	75	0	0	0	0	80
48	WAN CPE Replacement	N	N	60	56	59	31	0	0
49	IT Outsource re-tender	N	N	60	0	50	0	0	250
55	Implement Password Manager	N	N	90	38	0	0	0	0
60	Azure Cloud Backup	N	N	90	5	0	0	0	0
63	Mobile Phone and Device Strategy / replacement	N	N	75	0	60	0	0	0
64	Lewes HQ Network Lifing	N	N	90	0	0	0	30	0
66	IP Telephony Strategy	N	N	20	0	0	0	350	0
67	Primary Data Centre Infrastructure lifing	N	N	50	0	0	0	0	250
68	Printing Strategy	N	N	20	10	0	0	0	0
69	Secondary Data Centre Infrastructure lifing	N	N	50	0	0	0	0	100
70	WAN strategy	N	Y	90	0	337	0	0	0
71	VPN Migration	N	N	75	0	0	20	0	0
72	MDM Migration	N	N	50	0	0	40	0	0
74	Station End IT Refresh (Switch Replacement)	N	N	90	0	0	0	0	175
	<b>Total:</b>				<b>433</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>1,005</b>
	Less source of funding from 2017-2022 IT Strategy Reserve				<b>(433)</b>	<b>(796)</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>(380)</b>	<b>(802)</b>
	<b>Total net one off costs / (saving):</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>203</b>
	<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>203</b>
	<b>Grand Total over 5 Years</b>						<b>203</b>		

## 15. Appendix 2 – Business Strategies & IT Strategy Deliverables

Appendix 2 – Directorate Strategies / Plans & Dependencies with IT Strategy Projects							
Item	Description	Operational Support & Resilience	HR & Organisational Development	Planning & Improvement	Resources / Treasurer	Safer Communities	Training & Assurance
1	Station End IT Refresh (Phase 3&4)				x		
2	Pagers and Alerters					x	
3	MDT Modernisation (Hardware & Software)	x					
5	CRM					x	
6	EDRMS				x		
8	Finance System Improvement / Replacement				x		
10	ESN (ESMCP)	x					
11	FireWatch (S/W and HR process upgrade)		x				
12	PSN Compliance				x		
14	Information Security				x		
16	Integrated Health & Safety System						x
17	Fleet & Asset Replacement System	x					
25	Migrate to Windows 10				x		
26	Migrate to OneDrive				x		
27	Migrate to Outlook Secure Send				x		
30	Implement Sharepoint Online				x		
32	Migrate to Exchange Online				x		
35	Decommission MIS				x		
36	eIRS software Upgrade					x	
37	Upgrade TomTom Bridge	x					
40	Laptop Lifing				x		
41	Desktop Lifing				x		

42	Migrate Lifeboat to Sharepoint Online				x		
44	Migrate to AD Online				x		
45	Station IT Replacement				x		
47	Station PA System Replacement				x		
48	WAN CPE Replacement				x		
49	IT Outsource re-tender				x		
53	One to many video STC Cisco Room Kit				x		
54	BlueLight Exchange	x					
55	Implement Password Manager				x		
58	FireWatch Appliance Availability Integration	x					
59	FireWatch Retained Pay Integration		x				
60	Azure Cloud Backup				x		
61	GDPR File Cleanse		x				
63	Mobile Phone and Device Strategy				x		
64	Lewes HQ Network Lifting				x		
66	IP Telephony Strategy				x		
67	Primary Data Centre Infrastructure lifing				x		
68	Printing Strategy				x		
69	Secondary Data Centre Infrastructure lifing				x		
70	WAN strategy				x		
71	VPN Migration				x		
72	MDM Migration				x		
74	Station End IT Refresh (Switch Replacement)				x		
78	Performance Management System 2,3,4)			x			
80	iLearn & FireWatch Integration						x
84	Project 21 - ESFRS IT Integration Costs				x		
85	Increase Flexible working capabilities				x		

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## EAST SUSSEX FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

**Meeting** Fire Authority

**Date** 3 September 2020

**Title of Report** Revenue and Capital Budget 2020/21 and Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25 Monitoring at Month 4 (end July)

**By** Duncan Savage, Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer

**Lead Officer** Parmjeet Jassal, Finance Manager

**Background Papers** High Level Review of Revenue Budget 2020/21 and Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25

**Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Revenue Budget 2020/21 Objective
- Appendix 2: Savings Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25
- Appendix 3: Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25
- Appendix 4: Capital Budget 2020/21
- Appendix 5: Engineering Capital Budget 2020/21
- Appendix 6: Reserves 2020/21

### Implications

<b>CORPORATE RISK</b>		<b>LEGAL</b>	
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b>		<b>POLICY</b>	
<b>EQUALITY IMPACT</b>		<b>POLITICAL</b>	
<b>FINANCIAL</b>	✓	<b>OTHER (please specify)</b>	
<b>HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</b>		<b>CORE BRIEF</b>	
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>			

**PURPOSE OF REPORT** To report on the findings of the month 4 monitoring undertaken on the Revenue and Capital Budget 2020/21.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** This is the first report to Fire Authority for the 2020/21 financial year and highlights the findings from the Month 4 monitoring undertaken on the Revenue Budget 2020/21 and 5 year Capital Programme, approved by the Authority in February 2020.

A net Revenue underspend to the sum of £7,000 has been identified as summarised in Appendix 1. This is a significant shift from the pressure identified in the last report to SLT of

£824,000 (one-off £668,000, ongoing £156,000). This is mainly because of the application of funding solutions approved by Policy & Resources Panel on 23 July 2020: Contingency (£329,000), General Fund Reserves (£47,000), Covid-19 Grant (£437,000). In year Budget Savings of £69,000 have been identified to mitigate the remaining gap of £94,000, leaving £25,000 (savings at risk) to be identified. Ongoing pressures will need to be considered alongside other priorities, as part of the budget setting process 2021/22+.

Performance against the Savings Programme is summarised in Appendix 2 and detailed in section 4.

Revenue and Capital programme risks are detailed in section 3, focusing specifically on areas that are subject to further investigation and the outcome could result in significant additional pressures in the current and future financial years. These include the impact of Covid-19 on both the Business Rate and Council Tax Collection Funds and the potential continuation of historical pressures in Engineering and Safer Communities.

The overall 5 year Capital Programme has increased by the 2019/20 slippage brought forward of £447,000 to £24,492,000. There is also a change in funding of £452,000 from Planned Revenue Contributions to Capital Receipts as summarised in Appendix 3. Overall, the Capital Programme is forecasted to be on budget.

A review of the current year Capital Projects has concluded that a net £2,502,000 (previously £1,064,000) is projected to underspend and a net £2,460,000 (excluding £42k projected savings) should be slipped into 2021/22, mainly due to the impact of Covid-19. Detailed information is contained within section 7 and summarised in Appendix 4.

The updated position on reserves shows an opening balance of £23,233,000 including an adjustment of £48,000 to fund the provisional outturn 2019/20. The forecast drawdown is £9,759,000, a reduction of £2,372,000 and an estimated closing balance of £13,474,000, as detailed in section 8 and summarised in Appendix 6. Further work is required to review likely drawdown of reserves during the current year and any requirement on the ITG strategy refresh will be included after approval is secured.

There is a reduction in the interest receivable on the Authority's cash investments of £24,550,000 due to the Bank of England lowering its' base rates to invigorate the economy due to the impact of Covid-19. Interest payments on fixed rate loans of £10,773,000 are unaffected. One loan of

£75,000 will mature this year for which payment arrangements are in hand, as detailed in Section 9.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Fire Authority is recommended to note:

- (i) the risks to Revenue Budget and the projected underspend;
- (ii) the risks to the Capital Programme and the projected in year underspends;
- (iii) the reduced net drawdown from reserves;
- (iv) the monitoring of savings taken in 2020/25 including those savings at risk;
- (v) the current year investments; and
- (vi) that the underspends of £35,000 on travel & subsistence for April to September will be transferred into the Corporate Contingency.

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Original Revenue Budget 2020/21 and Capital Strategy 2020/21 to 2024/25 was approved at the meeting of the Fire Authority on 13 February 2020.
- 1.2 This is the first report to Fire Authority, for the 2020/21 financial year, and highlights the findings from Month 4 monitoring undertaken on the Revenue Budget 2020/21 and Capital Programme 2020/21. It should be noted the review is based on currently available information and the result may change as new information emerges during the year.

	This Fire Authority report £'000	Last P & R report £'000	Movement £'000
Revenue (see section 2)	(7)	824	(831)
Capital in year (see section 7)	(2,502)	(1,064)	(1,438)

- 1.3 The Revenue Budget, approved by the Fire Authority in February was a net expenditure requirement of £39,370,000. This has increased by £565,000 to £40,302,000 taking into account the additional Section 31 grant for 2020/21 which has been transferred to BRR reserve to finance future pressures.
- 1.4 A net underspend to the sum of £7,000 has been identified. This is a significant shift to that previously reported (£824,000: one-off £668,000, ongoing £156,000) mainly due to the application of funding approved by Policy & Resources Panel on 23 July 2020 as follows:-
  - (i) **Covid-19 Grant:** £437,000 including circa £83,000 for loss of Treasury Management income which if we do cover with the Covid grant would

deliver us additional flexibility (i.e. unbudgeted income) to cover pressures as detailed in section 5 below.

(ii) **Corporate Contingency:** £329,000 to finance one-off pressures as detailed in section 6 below.

(iii) **General Fund Reserve:** £47,000 pay award deficit funded for 1 year only. An ongoing budget is to be identified as part of the budget setting requirement for 2021/22 as detailed in section 8 below.

(iv) **Revenue Budget** - £94,000 ongoing pressures – Savings to the sum of £69,000 have been identified within the current year's budget to mitigate pressures (£51k training underspend, sources of funding for abatement costs £18k), leaving £25,000 (saving at risk) to be found. Ongoing pressures are to be included within the budget setting requirement for 2021/22.

1.5 The net saving is reflected in the Revenue Budget 2020/21 objective summary at Appendix 1.

1.6 The savings requirement 2020/21 is £426,000 and indications are that £371,000 savings are on course to be successfully delivered, whilst £55,000 savings are at risk as detailed in Appendix 2 and section 4 below. The maritime savings of £30,000 have been funded through contingency leaving £25,000 as unfunded pressure.

1.7 The five year Capital Strategy 2020/21 to 2024/25 was approved by the Fire Authority in February 2020 at £24,045,000 and revised to £24,492,000 including slippage of £447,000 brought forward from 2019/20 by Policy & Resources Panel at its meeting on 23 July 2020. A change in source of funding to the sum of £452,000 from revenue to capital receipts in 2020/21 was also approved as detailed in section 7 and summarised in Appendix 3. Overall, the 5 year Capital Programme is projected to come within budget.

1.8 There is an estimated underspend of net £2,502,000 (£2,460,000 slippage, £42,000 savings) on the Capital Budget 2020/21 which is mainly due to delays in capital projects as a result of the impact of covid-19 and the review of Service requirements in Engineering. Detailed information is contained within section 7 and summarised in Appendix 4.

1.9 A number of Revenue Budget and Capital Programme risks are set out in section 3 which will be monitored throughout the year. The updated position on Contingency, Reserves, Borrowing and Investments is provided at sections 6, 8 and 9 respectively.

## **2 REVENUE BUDGET COMMENTARY**

2.1 The Revenue Budget is projected to underspend by a net £7,000 (previously reported overspend £824,000: one-off £668,000, ongoing £156,000). This is a favourable variation of £831,000 from the forecasted pressure reported to SLT in June 2020 and is mainly due to the application of funding sources (Covid-19 grant,

Contingency, Reserves) approved by Policy & Resources Panel on 23 July 2020. The net underspend of £7,000 is summarised across divisions in Appendix 1 and detailed explanations provided in section 2 below.

- 2.2 **People Services:** People Services are projecting a balanced budget (previously overspend of £240,000) and is due mainly to funding identified pressures through Contingency, Reserves and Covid-19 grant. There is currently a large underspend showing on Training as during the Covid pandemic the delivery of training has had to be reduced. In order to recover there is a requirement to review how we deliver training which has been postponed. This needs to consider the fact that where courses traditionally could have been anything from individuals to 20+ delegates at a time, our delivery for face to face training will lead to us having to run more courses due to number restrictions which in turn will lead to an increase in comparative costs to deliver the same training requirement. The Service is also having to move to the procurement of digital delivery methods in an attempt to recover some of the training pressures which again, could lead to a different cost pressure. The budgetary impact of Covid-19 in training is yet to be confirmed and the recovery process will determine whether decisions are made to write off training (unlikely) or look to cover the requirement. In the forecast it is assumed that the underspend on training delivery will at least offset the loss of commercial training income. This will free up C19 grant to cover other pressures.
- 2.3 **Resources/Treasurer:** There is a projected overspend of £81,000 (previously reported as £92,000 overspend) as follows
- 2.3.1 **Treasurer: £29,000** The savings from Senior Management Restructure (£5,000) are at risk and currently unfunded. In addition, an ongoing budget calculation error has been identified causing a new pressure of £24,000.
- 2.3.2 **ITG: £32,000** The ITG Manager has reported new pressures due to additional ongoing costs of £27,000 for Packnet charges 2018 to 2020 and Telent in-phase support £5,000.
- 2.3.3 **Estates: £20,000** The Estates Manager has reported a balanced budget.
- 2.3.4 **Procurement:** pressure of £20,000 (savings at risk) on the PPE budget as a result of continued use of FTCs and assistant instructors at STC.
- 2.4 **Planning and Improvement:** A budget of £35,000 was awarded on a one-off basis to fund preparations for the next inspection which was due Spring 2021 and is now likely to be around 12 months later so is declared as an underspend (previously £99,000 overspend).
- 2.5 **Safer Communities:** The overall position is a balanced budget (previously an overspend of £29,000). Further work is required to identify the potential ongoing impact of pressures in the previous financial year. These include £99,000 in Community Safety where the budget manager has identified posts that may not be properly reflected in the budget and this is currently being investigated by Finance. The additional On-call Firefighter pension costs, funded through pension fund grant, are also being reviewed by Finance to ensure the grant is correctly applied. It appears that the pressure is not directly related to On-call pension costs

but reflects a mismatch between the grant and overall FPS pension costs and some issues with the data used to allocate the grant across cost centres.

- 2.6 **Operational Support:** The Operational Support budget is projecting a budget underspend of £66,000 (previously £43,000 overspent). This comprises of savings on whole-time salaries of £29,000 (budget assumes level B compared to 3 staff at development rates and overtime), underspend of £49,000 due to delays to specialist training, offset by a projected overspend on Support salaries of £12,000 due to being over establishment.
- 2.6.1 **Engineering:** The Engineering budget is currently projected to be on line, the budget has recently been reviewed, with budgets being reallocated and because there have been delays with ordering, equipment orders are now being placed and a full update will be in the September SLT report. There is a current underspend on Fuel as the Covid-19 situation has resulted in reduced mileage and the BP free fuel offer has also contributed. Some of this underspend will be used in restocking the new Fuel tanks (part of the ITF project) as the new tanks cannot be refilled with old fuel. A review of all commitments against the repairs and maintenance budget is in progress and appropriate actions will be undertaken to ensure that the overspend in 2019/20 is not repeated.
- 2.7 **Treasury Management:** This is projected to come in on budget. Interest rates on investments have reduced considerably following the reduction in the Bank of England base rate. Although the interest received will be considerably reduced, it is forecast to meet the £75,000 interest budget. The loss of Treasury Management income of circa. £83,000 which if we do cover with the Covid-19 grant would deliver us additional flexibility (i.e. unbudgeted income) to cover pressures.
- 2.8 **Non Delegated Costs:** These central budgets are projected to come in on budget.
- 2.9 **Corporate Contingency:** This budget is intended to provide some flexibility for SLT to manage in-year budget pressures and was set at £454,000 for 2020/21. There is a remaining balance of £112,000 to finance new one-off pressures (refer to section 6 for detailed commentary).
- 2.10 **Transfer to and from Reserves:** there is net reduction in drawdown from reserves of £2,372,000 mainly due to a delay in capital projects and the consequent requirement in the use capital receipts (refer to detailed commentary in section 8).

### **3 REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME RISKS**

- 3.1 **Covid 19:** The immediate financial impact of Covid 19 has been funded by grant from Government. There may be delays to capital projects and Covid 19 will continue to impact on the Authority's finances through 2020/21 and more markedly into 2021/22 where impact on both the Business Rate and Council Tax Collection Funds will be felt. Initial monitoring by NFCC and HO focussed on the period March 2019 – September 2020 but this is now being extend to cover the whole of the current financial year. There is a risk that if Covid 19 costs continue

at the current rate that the spend will exceed the grant allocation and the Service may need to consider options to reduce ongoing costs or other mitigating actions.

- 3.2 **ESFC / P21:** The Authority has made provision in its revenue budget to support the running of the interim ESFC service through 2020/21 and to fund investment in the transitional new tripartite service in September 2021. Further work is required to consolidate the financial baseline for P21 and the funding within the SCC and Mobilising Strategy Reserve.
- 3.3 **Engineering:** There is risk that overspends seen in 2019/20 will carry on into 2020/21 and beyond. A joint comprehensive review of the budget and commitments is being undertaken by Engineering and Finance staff to identify and manage these issues.
- 3.4 **Safer Communities:** This is the largest and most complex budget which has seen improvement in control over whole-time establishment and staffing costs over recent years and continues to benefit from additional resilience funding. Work is underway to validate funding for a number of Community Safety posts and also to understand an apparent spike in RDS pension costs in 2019/20.
- 3.5 **Pension Costs:** There is continued reliance on one-off grant to fund increased contributions for FPS as well as the uncertainty on the cost and funding of the remedy from the Sargent case (initial estimate of historic liability approx. £5m, ongoing costs £0.9m p.a.). For the latter it is now understood that the cost will impact through the next quadrennial scheme valuation i.e. from 2023/24 onwards. In addition, there is a risk around LGPS (triennial review concluded in 2020 contribution rates which started in April 2020, but the LGPS (East Sussex Pension Fund) are considering whether to undertake an interim review of contribution levels following Covid-19 impact on Fund asset values. At this stage it is understood that any impact is unlikely to be until 2021/22.
- 3.6 **External Audit Fees:** Our external auditors Ernst & Young (E&Y) are reviewing fees for their public sector assignments through the PSAA contract. They have proposed a significant increase in fees of circa £30,000. We are awaiting further information from them and will be engaging with PSAA who must approve any fee variation.
- 3.7 These risks will continue to be monitored in 2020/21 and should they materialise the Authority will need to determine how the financial impact is to be managed. The Authority has a number of options open to it to manage budget pressures: Identification of additional savings or managed underspends, use of the Corporate Contingency and/or use of General Balances.

#### **4 SAVINGS PROGRAMME 2020/21**

- 4.1 Appendix 2 summarises the savings requirement 2020/21 of £426,000. Early indications are that £371,000 savings are course to be successfully delivered, whilst £55,000 savings are at risk as follows:-

(i) Management restructure - £5,000 (ongoing) is at risk due to the outcome of the Principal Officer Appointment Panel review of senior officer terms and conditions;

(ii) Personal Protective Equipment - £20,000 (ongoing) is at risk due to the continuing use of FTCs and assistant instructors at STC.

(iii) Maritime Savings - £30,000 (one-off) due to the pay protection period for Maritime Allowance at Newhaven is likely to extend to the end of the financial year. This is funded from contingency.

4.2 The management restructure and PPE savings (£25,000) at risk are identified as pressures within the Resources/Treasurer's budget, for which mitigations are required.

4.3 Through the NFCC / HO Covid 19 monitoring we are tracking three areas of spend where Covid 19 is resulting in underspends as follows based on the 8 July return for the period April – September 2020:

- Training = £235,000
- Fuel = £28,000
- Travel & Subsistence = £35,000

4.4 Further analysis is required to determine the extent of actual savings versus delayed spend on the first two, however, the saving on travel and subsistence is deliverable and it is recommended that SLT agree that relevant budget headroom for this period is transferred into the Corporate Contingency.

## **5 GRANTS**

5.1 The Government has awarded the following grants for use on specific purposes and your officers will ensure these are delivered in accordance with grant conditions:

5.2 **Covid-19:** – This is to alleviate an increase in expenditure and shortfall in income relating to Covid-19. £137,000 was allocated toward the end of 2019/20 and almost all (£136,000) has been brought forward in an earmarked reserve. The allocation for 2020/21 is £633,000 and for the purpose of this exercise, it is assumed it will all be spent. It is imperative that we are able to identify and evidence relevant net additional expenditure so that we avoid unnecessary costs against the base budget and retain this grant funding. The Policy & Resources Panel, at its meeting held on 23 July approved the funding of £534,000 pressures from Covid-19 grant.

5.3 **Surge Protection Grant Funding:** – the allocation for this Service is £510,000 specifically to deal with inspections for high rise buildings and other high risk buildings. The grant conditions have been received, including the deadline of December 2021 by which the high rise element of the grant must be spent. A project group has been set up, and, a delivery plan is being drawn up, to ensure full use of the grant.

5.4 **New Protection Fund 2020/21:** the allocation of £67,944 is to help support FRS to increase resilience in managing a major fire, focusing on communications, infrastructure, management of multiple life safety calls and smoke hoods.

5.5 **Fire Fighter Pension Scheme:** the allocation of £1,734,984 is used towards the shortfall in employer’s pension contributions.

**6 CONTINGENCY 2020/21**

6.1 The Fire Authority maintains a contingency in order to assist it in managing one-off unforeseen pressures and making investments within the financial year. At its meeting held in February 2020, the Fire Authority agreed a contingency of £454,000 for the 2020/21 financial year. Commitments total £342,000, leaving a remaining contingency balance of £112,000 at end July. Details on commitments can be found in paragraphs 6.2 to 6.6 below and summarised in the table overleaf.

		<b>£'000</b>
<b>Opening Balance 1 April 2020</b>	<b>AD</b>	<b>454</b>
Maritime saving at risk	RF	30
Pension manager extension	HSY	45
Training and Assurance Secondment	HSY	60
GM ORR extension	LR	47
Swift Water Rescue	MM	10
New Workwear	DS	60
IRMP consultation	LR	30
Leadership & Behavioural framework	HSY	50
10 Internal Audit days (Approved SLT / S&A April 2020)	DS	4
NFCC VFM Framework (Approved SLT June 2020)		6
<b>Total Commitments</b>		<b>342</b>
<b>Contingency Remaining end July 2020</b>		<b>112</b>

6.2 **Extensions to secondments:** £152,000 for Pension Manager, Training and Assurance SM and GM ORR.

6.3 **Swift Water Rescue:** £10k one-off this risk crystallised during 2019/20 following the resolution of a challenge by the FBU regarding Additional Availability Allowances and majority of costs (for historic liabilities) were accrued for in 2019/20. A small pressure of £10,000 will also impact in 2020/21.

6.4 **New Workwear:** £60,000 one-off – relating to the roll out of new workwear using a new national contract.

6.5 **IRMP consultation:** £48,000 one-off – as agreed by Fire Authority, of which £18,000 is additional cost arising from Covid 19 and will be funded from the Covid 19 grant. The remainder £30,000 is funded from Corporate Contingency.

6.6 **Leadership and Behavioural Framework:** £50,000 one-off for training and communications as part of roll out agreed by SLT is funded from Corporate Contingency.

## **7 CAPITAL PROGRAMME COMMENTARY**

7.1 The 2020/21 Capital Budget and five year Capital Strategy was approved by the Fire Authority in February 2020. The revised Capital programme 2020/21 to 2024/25 is £24,492,000, including slippage of £447,000 brought forward from 2019/20. This is funded by Capital Receipts £8,018,000, Reserves £4,208,000, Planned Revenue contributions and New Borrowing £10,458,000, as approved by Policy and Resources Panel at its meeting on 23 July 2020 and summarised in Appendix 3. Overall, the 5 year Capital Programme is forecasted to come in on budget.

7.2 The Capital Budget for 2020/21 is £6,439,000, including slippage of £447,000 from 2019/20 and is fully funded through capital receipts. Overall, projected expenditure for the year is £3,937,000 resulting in a projected underspend of £2,502,000 (39% of budget). The Capital Programme has 2 main components: Estates / Property and Engineering / Fleet & Equipment which are projecting underspends of a net £723,000 (£1,208,000 less £485,000) and £1,779,000 respectively. These are summarised in Appendix 4.

7.3 **Estates / Property:** The Estates team has reviewed the impact of Covid-19 on the Estate's Capital Programme and identified further revisions that are necessary. Projected expenditure is £2,163,000 against the Capital budget 2020/21 of £2,886,000, which results in a projected net underspend of £723,000 (25% of budget). Again most of this projected underspend is likely to result in seeking approval to slip budget into the next financial year. It should be noted there are 2 projects totalling £485,000 (design guide scheme £420,000 security £65,000) that are planned to be brought forward and a budget transfer is required from 2021/22 into the current financial year.

7.4 **Engineering:** A detailed review of the Engineering Capital Programme has recently been completed jointly by Finance and Engineering officers. The Engineering budget 2020/21 is £3,553,000 including slippage from 2019/20 of £161,000. Projected expenditure against this budget is £1,774,000 resulting in an underspend of £1,779,000 (previously reported at £1,064,000). The majority of this underspend (£1,737,000) is due to delays in completing projects and likely to result in slippage into the 2021/22 financial year. However, projected net savings to the sum of £42,000 have been identified which remain within the capital programme pending decisions. Elsewhere on your agenda today, there is a report entitled "Fleet & Engineering Capital Programme Change" which discusses the potential use of these savings and other capital budgets towards new capital proposals. The position per project and/or vehicle is summarised in Appendix 5.

7.5 The updated Capital Programme is summarised in the table below.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Original Approved Programme	5,992	6,767	4,461	3,906	2,919	24,045
Slippage from 2019/20	447	0	0	0	0	447
<b>Capital Programme</b>	<b>6,439</b>	<b>6,767</b>	<b>4,461</b>	<b>3,906</b>	<b>2,919</b>	<b>24,492</b>
Slippage 2020/21 to 2021/22 - Engineering	(1,737)	1,737	0	0	0	0
Slippage 2020/21 to 2021/22 - Estates	(1,208)	1,208	0	0	0	0
Budget brought forward - Estates	485	(485)	0	0	0	0
<b>Updated Capital Programme</b>	<b>3,979</b>	<b>9,227</b>	<b>4,461</b>	<b>3,906</b>	<b>2,919</b>	<b>24,492</b>
<b>Funding:</b>						
Government Grants	0	0	0	0		0
Capital Receipts	3,979	4,039	0	0	0	8,018
Reserves	0	2,708	500	500	500	4,208
Planned Revenue Contributions	0	452	452	452	452	1,808
New Borrowing / Need to Borrow	0	2,028	3,509	2,954	1,967	10,458
Internal Borrowing	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>3,979</b>	<b>9,227</b>	<b>4,461</b>	<b>3,906</b>	<b>2,919</b>	<b>24,492</b>

## 8 RESERVES 2020/21

- 8.1 The Fire Authority maintains Reserves in order to assist it in managing its specific spending plans across the financial year (Earmarked Reserves), making provisions for the financial risks it faces (General Fund Reserves) and making investments (Capital Receipts Reserve).
- 8.2 The opening balance at 1 April is £23,233,000 including a contribution from general fund reserve of £48,000 to finance the provisional net overspend 2019/20 as approved by Policy and Resources Panel on 23 July 2020.
- 8.3 The planned net transfer from reserves of £12,131,000 includes the transfer of £138,000 into general fund reserve, as approved by CFA September 2020, which was missed out in error in the last report to SLT.
- 8.4 Actual net transfers from reserves total £9,759,000 (net reduction in drawdown of £2,372,000) resulting in an estimated balance at 31 March 2021 of £13,474,000, as summarised in the table overleaf and detailed in Appendix 6.
- 8.5 The net changes are explained in section 8.6 below and it should be noted the impact on reserves arising from the ITG strategy refresh will be reflected once approval is secured. Work continues with budget managers to confirm the planned use of revenue reserves in 2020/21.

		Planned Net Transfers	Actual Net Transfers	Net change	Month 4
	Balance @ 1 April 2020	2020/21	2020/21		Balance @ 31 March 2021
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Earmarked Reserves	13,808	(6,584)	(5,726)	858	8,082
General Fund	1,869	(7)	(54)	(47)	1,815
<b>Total Revenue Reserves</b>	<b>15,677</b>	<b>(6,591)</b>	<b>(5,780)</b>	<b>811</b>	<b>9,897</b>
Total Capital Reserves	7,556	(5,540)	(3,979)	1,561	3,577
<b>Total Usable Reserves</b>	<b>23,233</b>	<b>(12,131)</b>	<b>(9,759)</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>13,474</b>

8.6 The overall net reduction in drawdown from reserves of £2,372,000 is as follows:-

8.6.1 **Earmarked Reserves Decrease of £858,000** - due to retaining the anticipated surplus of £565,000 on Section 31 grant in the Business Rate Relief (BRR) reserve to contribute towards potential shortfalls in 2021/22 arising from Covid-19, and no drawdown on sprinklers of £293,000 due to delays in delivery of the projects we are match funding.

8.6.2 **General Fund Reserve Increase of £47,000** - The pay award was allowed for in the 2020/21 at 2% increase. However, the employer's side has offered a Green Book pay award of 2.75%, which would result in a 0.75% budgeted deficit estimated at £47,000. This is fully funded by general fund reserve in 2020/21 and future years will be built into the budget requirement.

8.6.3 **Capital Reserves Decrease of £1,561,000** - due to the use of capital slippage from 2019/20 £447,000, the increase in capital financing of £452,000 from planned revenue contributions, less the net capital slippage into 2021/22 of £2,460,000 (refer to capital section 7 above).

8.6.4 **Section 31 Grant:** there is an anticipated surplus in grant of £565,000 during the year which is placed into the Business Rates Reserve (BRR) earmarked reserve as it reflects losses that will form part of the Collection Fund deficit distributed in 2021/22.

## 9 **BORROWING AND INVESTMENT**

9.1 As at 30 June, the Authority held cash balances of £24,550,000 which are invested in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy, as follows.

	£m
Aviva Cash Money Market Fund (overnight access)	4.00
Aberdeen Cash Money Market Fund (overnight access)	2.30
Santander 95 day notice	4.00
Barclays 95 day notice	4.00
Goldman Sachs 95 day notice	4.00

Lloyds / HBOS 175 day notice	4.00
Dudley MBC 18 month deposit (matures 25 October 2021)	2.25
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>24.55</b>

- 9.2 Further work is in progress to confirm the forecast level of drawdown from reserves during the year. The Authority's budget anticipated a reduction from £19,800,000 to £7,500,000 and this will mean the need to liquidate investments during the year. Finance is working with the ESCC Treasury Management team to improve cash-flow monitoring to facilitate this. Notice has been given on the Lloyds / HBOSS 175 day notice account. .
- 9.3 The Bank of England reduced the base interest rate from 0.75% to 0.10% to invigorate the economy due to the impact of Covid -19. We are beginning to see an impact as Banks start to reduce their rates on investments, resulting in lower interest receivable. We are awaiting further modelling but at this stage we expect to be able to deliver budgeted interest receipts of £75,000. If interest rates had stayed at their prevailing rates, we would have seen additional income of approximately £75,000, similar to that realised in the last two financial years, to use towards managing current pressures. It is possible that the Covid 19 grant may compensate for part of this loss in income.
- 9.4 The Authority has debts totalling £10,773,000 and there is no impact on the interest payable, as these are subject to fixed interest rate deals. £75,000 of the debt will mature at the end of the current financial year for which payment arrangements are in hand.

Revenue and Capital Budget 2020/21 and Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25  
Monitoring at Month 4 (end July)

Revenue Budget 2020/21 – Objective Summary

	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Projected Outturn	Variance	Variance	Variance last report to SLT
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000
Peoples Services	3,641	3,785	3,785	0	0.0%	240
Resources/Treasurer	7,507	7,602	7,683	81	1.1%	92
Planning and Improvement	1,274	1,311	1,276	(35)	-2.7%	99
<b>Total Deputy Chief Fire Officer</b>	<b>12,422</b>	<b>12,698</b>	<b>12,744</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>431</b>
Safer Communities	21,015	21,245	21,245	0	0.0%	29
Operational Support	4,300	4,301	4,235	(66)	-1.5%	43
<b>Total Assistant Chief Fire Officer</b>	<b>25,315</b>	<b>25,546</b>	<b>25,480</b>	<b>(66)</b>	<b>-0.3%</b>	<b>72</b>
CFO Staff	705	731	744	13	1.8%	0
Treasury Management	839	839	839	0	0.0%	0
Non Delegated costs	(1,058)	(1,162)	(1,162)	0	0.0%	0
Corporate Contingency	454	121	121	0	0.0%	0
Transfer from Reserves	(627)	(723)	(723)	0	0.0%	(47)
Transfer to Reserves	1,687	2,252	2,252	0	0.0%	565
<b>Total Corporate</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>2,058</b>	<b>2,071</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>518</b>
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>	<b>39,737</b>	<b>40,302</b>	<b>40,295</b>	<b>(7)</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>1,021</b>
Financed By:						
RSG	(3,208)	(3,208)	(3,208)	0	0.0%	0
Council Tax	(27,931)	(27,931)	(27,931)	0	0.0%	0
Business Rates	(7,714)	(7,714)	(7,714)	0	0.0%	0
S31 Grants	(799)	(1,364)	(1,364)	0	0.0%	(565)
Collection Fund	(85)	(85)	(85)	0	0.0%	0
Surplus/Deficit						
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>(39,737)</b>	<b>(40,302)</b>	<b>(40,302)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>(565)</b>
<b>Total Over / (Under) Spend</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(7)</b>	<b>(7)</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>456</b>

## APPENDIX 2

### Revenue and Capital Budget 2020/21 and Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25 Monitoring at Month 4 (end July)

#### Savings Programme 2020/21

		2020/21 Savings	2020/21 Projection	2020/21 At Risk
Description	Responsible Officer	£,000	£,000	£,000
Management Restructure	Corporate	(5)	0	5
Engineering - cutting equipment purchased early (1 year only)	RF	(60)	(60)	0
PPE & Workwear	DS	(91)	(71)	20
Fire Brigade Union (FBU) post	MM	(20)	(20)	0
Going digital on CFA agendas implementation of Modern.Gov	LR	(3)	(3)	0
Reduction in administration costs in Safer Communities	MM	(25)	(25)	0
Use of BR Pooling to support service delivery	DS/MM	(50)	(50)	0
Estates Strategy revenue maintenance savings.	DS	(20)	(20)	0
Business Rates overstated pressure.	DS	(67)	(67)	0
FPS administration moving to West Yorkshire Pension Fund	DS	(24)	(24)	0
Webex savings from each directorate.	Corporate	(12)	(12)	0
Primary Authority income target	MM	(19)	(19)	0
Maritime	RF	(30)	0	30
		<b>(426)</b>	<b>(371)</b>	<b>55</b>

\*£30k Maritime funded by contingency

\*\* £25k Management restructure and PPE remain as unfunded pressures within the Resources budget

## APPENDIX 3

### Revenue and Capital Budget 2020/21 and Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25 Monitoring at Month 4 (end July)

#### Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25

	Responsible Officer	Original 2020/21 £'000	Slippage 2019/20 £'000	Revised Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25 £'000	Capital Programme Projected Spend £'000	Variation £'000	Variation %
<b>Property</b>							
<b>Shared Investment Schemes</b>							
Integrated Transport Project	DS	1,000	0	1,000	1,000	0	0
- Partner contribution	DS						
<b>Integrated Transport Project net cost</b>	<b>DS</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>One Public Estate</b>							
- Heathfield		40	10	50	50	0	0
- Partner contribution							
<b>- Heathfield net cost</b>	<b>DS</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
- Lewes		230	16	246	246	0	0
- Partner contribution		0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>- Lewes net cost</b>	<b>DS</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
- Preston Circus		2,969	90	3,059	3,059	0	0
- Partner contribution							
<b>- Preston Circus net cost</b>	<b>DS</b>	<b>2,969</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>3,059</b>	<b>3,059</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
- Uckfield		90	10	100	100	0	0
- Partner contribution							
<b>- Uckfield net cost</b>	<b>DS</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Shared Investment Schemes</b>		<b>4,329</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>4,455</b>	<b>4,455</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Strategic Schemes</b>							
- Replacement Fuel Tanks		330	83	413	413	0	0
- Partner contribution		(330)	137	(193)	(193)	0	0
<b>- Replacement fuel tanks net cost</b>	<b>DS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Design Guide Schemes		2,313	(20)	2,293	2,293	0	0
BA Chambers works		0	6	6	6	0	0
Sustainability		376	20	396	396	0	0
Security		134	0	134	134	0	0
<b>Total Strategic Schemes</b>	<b>DS</b>	<b>2,823</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>3,049</b>	<b>3,049</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>General Schemes</b>	<b>DS</b>	<b>4,099</b>	<b>(65)</b>	<b>4,034</b>	<b>4,034</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Property</b>	<b>DS</b>	<b>11,251</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>11,538</b>	<b>11,538</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

APPENDIX 3 cont.

Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25 continued.

	Responsible Officer	Original 2020/21 £'000	Slippage 2019/20 £'000	Revised Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25 £'000	Capital Programme Projected Spend £'000	Variation £'000	Variation %
<b>Total Property</b>	<b>DS</b>	<b>11,251</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>11,538</b>	<b>11,538</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Information Management</b>							
- Sussex Control Centre		0	37	37	37	0	0
- Grant funds		0	(37)	(37)	(37)	0	0
<b>Sussex Control Centre net cost</b>	<b>DS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Fleet and Equipment</b>							
- Vehicle cameras		118	0	118	118	0	0
- Grants funds		(118)	0	(118)	(118)	0	0
<b>- Vehicle cameras net cost</b>	<b>RF</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
- BA & Ancillary Equipment		0	157	157	157	0	0
- grant funds							
<b>- BA &amp; Ancillary Equipment Net cost</b>	<b>RF</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Aerial Ladder Platform		958	(10)	948	948	0	0
Aerial Rescue Pump		0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Appliances		7,358	0	7,358	7,358	0	0
Ancillary Vehicles		2,669	(21)	2,648	2,648	0	0
Cars		1,008	0	1,008	1,008	0	0
Vans		731	34	765	765	0	0
Telemetry		70	0	70	70	0	0
<b>Total Fleet and Equipment</b>	<b>RF</b>	<b>12,794</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>12,954</b>	<b>12,954</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>24,045</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>24,492</b>	<b>24,492</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Revenue and Capital Budget 2020/21 and Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25  
Monitoring at Month 4 (end July)

Capital Budget 2020/21

Capital Programme Expenditure	Budget 2020/21 £'000	Projected 2020/21 spend £'000	Variance 2020/21 £'000	Variance %	Last SLT report £'000
<b>Property</b>					
<b>Shared Investment Schemes</b>					
Integrated Transport Project	100	50	(50)	(50)	
- Partner contribution	0		0		
<b>Integrated Transport Project net cost</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>(50)</b>	<b>(50)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>One Public Estate</b>					
- Heathfield	50	10	(40)	(80)	
- Partner contribution	0		0		
<b>- Heathfield net cost</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>(40)</b>	<b>(80)</b>	<b>0</b>
- Lewes	116	10	(106)	(91)	
- Partner contribution	0		0		
<b>- Lewes net cost</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>(106)</b>	<b>(91)</b>	<b>0</b>
- Preston Circus	840	200	(640)	(76)	
- Partner contribution	0		0		
<b>- Preston Circus net cost</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>(640)</b>	<b>(76)</b>	<b>0</b>
- Uckfield	70	25	(45)	(64)	
- Partner contribution	0	0	0		
<b>- Uckfield net cost</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>(45)</b>	<b>(64)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Shared Investment Schemes</b>	<b>1,176</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>(881)</b>	<b>(75)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Strategic Schemes</b>					
- Replacement Fuel Tanks	413	193	(220)	(53)	
- Partner contribution	(193)	(193)	0	0	
<b>- Replacement fuel tanks net cost</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(220)</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>0</b>
Design Guide Schemes	10	430	420	4,200	
BA Chambers works	6	0	(6)	(100)	
Sustainability	340	320	(20)	(6)	
Security	0	65	65	100	
<b>Total Strategic Schemes</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>General Schemes</b>	<b>1,134</b>	<b>1,053</b>	<b>(81)</b>	<b>(7)</b>	
<b>Total Property</b>	<b>2,886</b>	<b>2,163</b>	<b>(723)</b>	<b>(25)</b>	<b>0</b>

**Revenue and Capital Budget 2020/21 and Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25  
Monitoring at Month 4 (end July)**

**Capital Budget 2020/21 continued**

	Budget 2020/21 £'000	Projected 2020/21 spend £'000	Variance 2020/21 £'000	Variance %	Last SLT report £'000
<b>Total Property</b>	<b>2,886</b>	<b>2,163</b>	<b>(723)</b>	<b>(25)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Information Management</b>					
- Sussex Control Centre	0	37	37		0
- Grant funds	0	(37)	(37)		0
<b>Sussex Control Centre net cost</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Fleet and Equipment</b>					
- Vehicle cameras	118	0	(118)	(100)	0
- Grants funds	(118)	0	118	100	0
<b>- Vehicle cameras net cost</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
- BA & Ancillary Equipment	157	157	0	0	0
- grant funds					
<b>- BA &amp; Ancillary Equipment Net cost</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Aerial Ladder Platform	190	190	0	0	
Fire Appliances	1,717	560	(1,157)	(67)	
Ancillary Vehicles	994	474	(520)	(52)	(994)
Cars	179	168	(11)	(6)	
Vans	246	225	(21)	(9)	
Telemetry	70	0	(70)	(100)	(70)
<b>Total Fleet and Equipment</b>	<b>3,553</b>	<b>1,774</b>	<b>(1,779)</b>	<b>(50)</b>	<b>(1,064)</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>6,439</b>	<b>3,937</b>	<b>(2,502)</b>	<b>(39)</b>	<b>(1,064)</b>

## Revenue and Capital Budget 2020/21 and Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25 Monitoring at Month 4 (end July)

### Engineering Capital Budget 2020/21

	Base Budget 2020/21 as per FA Feb 20	Slippage from 2019/20	Total budget 2020/21	Projected Spend	Variance 2020/21	Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	
Vehicle Cameras	118,000		118,000	0	(118,000)	Slippage into 2021/22
Grant	(118,000)		(118,000)	0	118,000	Slippage into 2021/22
<b>Aerial Ladder Platform GX04BMY STN 76</b>	200,000	(10,000)	190,000	190,000	0	Completion 2020/21
<b>Fire Appliances</b>						
Appliances 19/20 GX55AAE	280,000		280,000	280,000	0	Completion 2020/21
Appliances 19/20 Concept 12t	300,000		300,000	0	(300,000)	Slippage into 2021/22
Appliances 19/20 GX05ABZ	280,000		280,000	280,000	0	Completion 2020/21
Appliances 20/21 GX56NWP	285,600		285,600	0	(285,600)	Slippage into 2021/22
Appliances 20/21 GX57EUK	285,600		285,600	0	(285,600)	Slippage into 2021/22
Appliances 20/21 GX57EUR	285,600		285,600	0	(285,600)	Slippage into 2021/22
<b>Ancillary Vehicles</b>						
Replacing Honda GU16 LVJ	12,200		11,200	12,200	1,000	Completion 2020/21
Animal Rescue GX51 UBM	107,000	(23,000)	84,000	84,000	0	Completion 2020/21
Replacing Land Rover GX53 AXM	100,000		100,000	0	(100,000)	Slippage into 2021/22
Ancillary Vehicles 2019/20 GX53AZU			0	2,000	2,000	Overspend
Replacing Land Rover GX53 AZV	100,000		100,000	0	(100,000)	Slippage into 2021/22
Replacing Landrover GX02AZO	61,500	2,000	63,500	63,500	0	Completion 2020/21
Replacing Land Rover GX53 AZW	100,000		100,000	0	(100,000)	Slippage into 2021/22
Replacing Y87 GNJ GP Truck STN 84	178,000		178,000	178,000	0	Completion 2020/21
Replacing foam special (OSU) OU04 VNW STN 87	200,000		200,000	0	(200,000)	Slippage into 2021/22
Ancillary Veh 20/21 - POD 001	125,000		125,000	125,000	0	Fleet & Eng Capital Programme Changes
Ancillary Veh 20/21 - Boat SWR	10,900		10,900	2,900	(8,000)	Savings
Ancillary Veh 20/21 - SWR boat/Trailer	6,600		6,600	6,600	0	Fleet & Eng Capital Programme Changes
Ancillary Veh 20/21 - TRA 11 decon	4,400		4,400	0	(4,400)	Savings
Ancillary Veh 20/21 - TRA 8 Road safety	10,400		10,400	0	(10,400)	Slippage into 2021/22
<b>Cars</b>						
Cars 19/20- GX66JKYCF0	36,000		36,000	30,500	(5,500)	Fleet & Eng Capital Programme Changes
Cars 19/20 -GX66JOU ACFO	36,000		36,000	30,500	(5,500)	Fleet & Eng Capital Programme Changes
Cars 20/21 - GV63 HUH response car	26,500		26,500	26,500	0	Completion 2020/21
Cars 20/21 - GV63 HUA response car	26,500		26,500	26,500	0	Completion 2020/21
Cars 20/21 - GX13 FNL	10,700		10,700	10,700	0	Awaiting decision on replacement vehicle
Cars 20/21 - GX13 FNH	10,700		10,700	10,700	0	Completion 2020/21
Cars 20/21 - GX13 FNF	10,700		10,700	10,700	0	Awaiting decision on replacement vehicle
Cars 20/21 - GX13 FNG	10,700		10,700	10,700	0	Awaiting decision on replacement vehicle
Cars 20/21 - GU63 NNZ	10,700		10,700	10,700	0	Awaiting decision on replacement vehicle
<b>Vans</b>						
Replacing Movano GX60 PUV		4,000	4,000	6,500	2,500	Overspend
Replacing Movano GX60 PUY		4,000	4,000	6,500	2,500	Overspend
Replacing Vivaro GX60 PTJ		11,000	11,000	0	(11,000)	Saving
Replacing Vivaro GX60 PVJ		13,000	13,000	0	(13,000)	Saving
Replacing Corsa GX11 HAA		3,000	3,000	0	(3,000)	Saving
Vans 20/21 - GX13 FNO BA Van	35,700		35,700	35,700	0	Completion 2020/21
Vans 20/21 - GX15 JJK SSO van	37,700		37,700	37,700	0	Completion 2020/21
Vans 20/21 - GX13 FNN	13,900		13,900	13,900	0	Completion 2020/21
Vans 20/21 - GX13 FNM	13,900		13,900	13,900	0	Completion 2020/21
Vans 20/21 - GX63 RHO	40,800		40,800	40,800	0	Completion 2020/22
Vans 20/21 - RDS - GX13 FNK	17,500		17,500	17,500	0	Completion 2020/21
Vans 20/21 - RDS - GX13 FNJ	17,500		17,500	17,500	0	Completion 2020/21
Vans 20/21 - RDS - GX13 FNE	17,500		17,500	17,500	0	Completion 2020/21
Vans 20/21 - RDS - GU63 NOF	17,500		17,500	17,500	0	Completion 2020/21
<b>RPE project</b>		157,000	157,000	157,000	0	Completion 2020/21
<b>Telemetry</b>	70,000		70,000	0	(70,000)	Slippage into 2021/22
<b>Total Fleet and Equipment</b>	<b>3,393,300</b>	<b>161,000</b>	<b>3,553,300</b>	<b>1,773,700</b>	<b>(1,779,600)</b>	

## APPENDIX 6

### Revenue and Capital Budget 2020/21 and Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25 Monitoring at Month 4 (end July)

#### Reserves 2020/21

Description	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21+	Projected Closing Balance
	Opening Balance 01/04/20	Original Planned Transfers In	Original Planned Transfers Out	Original Planned Transfers Net	Actual Planned Transfers In	Actual Planned Transfers Out	Actual Planned Transfers Net	Month 4 Closing Balance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Earmarked Reserves</b>								
Improvement & Efficiency	471	500	(90)	410	500	(90)	410	881
Sprinklers	640	0	(293)	(293)	0	0	0	640
Insurance	249	0	0	0	0	0	0	249
RPE and Comms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ESMCP ESFRS readiness	1,425	0	(1,425)	(1,425)	0	(1,425)	(1,425)	0
ESMCP Regional Programme reserve	566	0	(259)	(259)	0	(259)	(259)	307
Responding to new risks Revenue	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	18
Business rates Pool Reserve		0	(155)	(155)	0	(155)	(155)	(155)
IT Strategy	3,351	549	(2,032)	(1,483)	549	(2,032)	(1,483)	1,868
Wholetime Firefighter recruitment	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	40
SCC Reserve	622	0	0	0	0	0	0	622
Mobilising Strategy	3,553	0	(3,329)	(3,329)	0	(3,329)	(3,329)	224
Business Rates Retention Pilot, financial stability	587	0	(480)	(480)	565	(480)	85	672
Business Rates Retention Pilot, economic development	86	0	(70)	(70)	0	(70)	(70)	16
Safer Business Training	355			0			0	355
Covid-19	136			0			0	136
Carry Forwards	0			0			0	0
Capital Programme Reserve	1,709	500	0	500	500	0	500	2,209
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>13,808</b>	<b>1,549</b>	<b>(8,133)</b>	<b>(6,584)</b>	<b>2,114</b>	<b>(7,840)</b>	<b>(5,726)</b>	<b>8,082</b>
<b>General Fund</b>	<b>1,869</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>(145)</b>	<b>(7)</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>(192)</b>	<b>(54)</b>	<b>1,815</b>
<b>Total Revenue Reserves</b>	<b>15,677</b>	<b>1,687</b>	<b>(8,278)</b>	<b>(6,591)</b>	<b>2,252</b>	<b>(8,032)</b>	<b>(5,780)</b>	<b>9,897</b>
Capital Receipts Reserve	7,518	0	(5,540)	(5,540)	0	(3,979)	(3,979)	3,539
Capital Receipts Unapplied Reserve	38			0		0	0	38
<b>Total Capital Reserves</b>	<b>7,556</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(5,540)</b>	<b>(5,540)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(3,979)</b>	<b>(3,979)</b>	<b>3,577</b>
<b>Total Usable Reserves</b>	<b>23,233</b>	<b>1,687</b>	<b>(13,818)</b>	<b>(12,131)</b>	<b>2,252</b>	<b>(12,011)</b>	<b>(9,759)</b>	<b>13,474</b>

\*General Fund starting balance at 1 April 2020 includes a contribution from GF of £48,000 to finance the provisional 2019/20 net overspend and £138,000 contribution into GF missed out in error in the last report.

\*\*the impact on reserves arising from the ITG strategy refresh will be updated once approval has been secured.

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## EAST SUSSEX FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

<b>Meeting</b>	Fire Authority
<b>Date</b>	3 September 2020
<b>Title of Report</b>	2021/22 to 2024/25 Strategic Service Planning and Medium Term Financial Plan
<b>By</b>	Duncan Savage, Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Parmjeet Jassal, Interim Finance Manager

<b>Background Papers</b>	Bank Of England Quarterly Monetary Policy Report August 2020. Fire Authority 13 February 2020
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<b>Appendices</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Refreshed Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25</li> <li>2. LGA / NFCC CSR Submission</li> </ol>
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### Implications

<b>CORPORATE RISK</b>		<b>LEGAL</b>	
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b>		<b>POLICY</b>	✓
<b>FINANCIAL</b>	✓	<b>POLITICAL</b>	✓
<b>HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</b>		<b>OTHER (please specify)</b>	
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>		<b>CORE BRIEF</b>	

<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	To roll forward the Fire Authority's medium term service planning strategy and medium term financial plan for 2021/22 to 2024/25.
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** Whilst the main purpose of this report is to set the financial context for the service planning process, through an update of the Medium Term Finance Plan (MTFP), the fundamental aim of the process is to determine how best to deliver the Authority's Purpose and Commitments, the IRMP and the targets and priorities that underpin them, within the context of the current estimate of available financial resources for the period 2021/22 to 2024/25. Given the level of uncertainty we have not rolled forward to 2025/26 but will do so as part of the budget setting process.

Closer alignment of business and resource (including finance) planning is necessary to ensure that the Authority

can continue to deliver its corporate strategy and Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) outcomes more effectively. This will continue for the 2021/22 budget setting process.

There remains uncertainty about the future of local government funding and this has only been increased as a result of the current Covid-19 pandemic. The Government has commenced a comprehensive spending review (CSR) covering a 3 year period from 2021/22. The fire sector has made a strong submission to CSR but the timetable is unclear and it is unlikely that the outcome will be known until later in the autumn with the provisional settlement expected in late December. Nationally the sector remains reliant on significant one off funding for pensions costs and investment in protection services, and locally forecasting of future income from Council Tax and Business Rates remains limited. This makes planning for the 2021/22 budget and beyond extremely difficult.

In this uncertain context this report seeks to identify the potential scale of the financial challenge facing the Authority over the next four years, but particularly for 2021/22. It builds on the existing Medium Term Finance Plan (MTFP) mid-case scenario and updates the assumptions that underpin it where that is possible, highlighting emerging pressures and potential risks. The revised MTFP indicates a revised funding gap of £1.659m in 2021/22 rising to £2.967m in 2024/25. In addition it is recommended that the Authority plans for a scenario where the current one off pensions grant does not continue into 2021/22. This would add a further £1.735m to the savings required in each year.

The Authority will need to continue to drive, through the service and budget planning process, identification of pressures and savings, and cashable efficiencies sufficient to provide the Authority with options to balance the budget in 2021/22 and beyond. However it is clear that if the scale of the potential financial challenge facing the Authority is as set out in this paper that efficiencies alone will not be sufficient to bridge the funding gap. The Authority will therefore need to consider a wider range of options beyond its Efficiency Strategy. This will enable the Authority, as far as is possible, to make informed choices about both balancing its budget over the medium term and delivering efficient and effective services once the position for 2021/22 and beyond is clearer.

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**RECOMMENDATION**

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- (i) approve the updated Medium Term Financial Plan for 2021/22 to 2024/25 and its underlying assumptions;

- (ii) consider and comment upon the risks set out in section 4.6; and
- (iii) consider their policy preferences for Council Tax, should the Government set the referendum threshold higher than the 2% currently included in the MTFP

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## **1 MEDIUM TERM SERVICE PLANNING**

- 1.1 Whilst the main purpose of this report is to set the financial context for the service planning process, through an update of the MTFP, the fundamental aim of the process is to determine how best to deliver the Authority's Purpose "to make our communities safer", it's supporting commitments, it's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), and the targets and priorities that underpin them, within the available resources. This process has become even more important in recent years in the light of the sustained reduction in public sector funding and the consequent need to deliver significant savings over the period of the MTFP.
- 1.2 Members and officers will need to ensure that the service planning process, which is driven through our purpose and commitments and the IRMP, delivers sustainability in the medium term for both the revenue and capital budgets, and the Service as a whole. Officers continue to develop the service planning process to ensure that strategic planning and resource allocation processes (including financial planning / budget setting) are better aligned, ensuring that agreed policy priorities and key outcomes are properly resourced and can be delivered more efficiently and effectively. As a result of this any proposed new pressures, savings and investments will be included in future reports for Member approval.

## **2 ECONOMIC OUTLOOK**

- 2.1 The outlook for the UK and global economies remains unusually uncertain as a result of the global Covid-19 pandemic. At the end of this year, GDP is projected to be 5% below its level a year earlier. There is higher uncertainty than usual around the outlook for unemployment. It is forecast to rise to around 7½% in Q4, before gradually declining. Over 2021, spending remains weaker than it would have been in the absence of Covid-19. Uncertainty is assumed to fade gradually, and the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) forecasts that GDP does not exceed its level in 2019 Q4 until the end of 2021. In addition there remains uncertainty about the nature and impact of the UK's exit from the EU on 1 January 2021.
- 2.2 CPI inflation is projected to remain well below the MPC's 2% target in the near term, largely reflecting the direct and indirect effects of Covid-19. These include the temporary impact of lower energy prices and cut in VAT, as well as downward pressure from spare capacity in the economy. As these effects wane, inflation

rises. In the central projection, inflation is projected to be around 2% in two years' time. Interest rates are not expected to rise from their historic low of 0.1% for the next 18 months.

### **3 NATIONAL FUNDING ISSUES**

- 3.1 There is considerable uncertainty in the national funding arena. Prior to Covid-19, the Spending Round 2020 announced on 4 September 2019 set out a more positive settlement for the fire sector nationally than had been anticipated, with a commitment to increase settlement funding assessment (SFA) by inflation for 2020/21
- 3.2 The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), originally meant to be published in July 2020 was delayed so the Government could focus on dealing with Covid-19. CSR will set UK Government departments' revenue budgets for the years 2021/22 to 2023/24 and capital budgets for the years 2021/22 until 2024/25. The exact timetable for the review is not clear but, external stakeholders will need to submit representations early September. The joint NFCC / LGA submission for fire has already been submitted and is included at Appendix 2. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement is not expected to be announced until late December when budget plans are close to being finalised ready for Authority consideration in mid-February.
- 3.3 Due to the unprecedented uncertainty, the Chancellor did not fix a set spending envelope for CSR, but confirmed that departmental spending (both capital and resource) will grow in real terms across the CSR period and that the government will deliver on the commitments made at Budget to level up and invest in the priorities of the British people. Given the split of fire funding across both the HO and MHCLG the sector is competing against other policy commitments e.g. for policing and the Border Force and local government more generally.
- 3.4 The uncertainty continues with both the Formula Funding review (FFR) and Business Rates Reform (BRR) delayed until 2022/23 at the earliest.
- 3.5 The fire fighters pension grant was provided in 2019/20 in order to mitigate most of the increase in the employer contribution rate following the most recent valuation process. This one off grant was extended into 2020/21 and will be considered as part of CSR. The MTFP assumes that the grant will continue into 2021/22 at the same value for the life of the MTFP (£1.735m). However there is a potential risk attached to this that will only be resolved once the outcome of CSR is known.
- 3.6 Whilst there is uncertainty on the cost and funding of the remedy resulting from the Sargent case, it is expected that this will be picked up in the next quadrennial review and impact on employer contributions from 2023/24. No financial impact is reflected in the MTFP and the sector position is that any additional cost should be funded by Government.
- 3.7 A new Covid-19 grant was awarded to alleviate an increase in expenditure and shortfall in income relating to Covid-19. £137,000 was allocated toward the end

of 2019/20 and the allocation for 2020/21 is £633,000. It unclear whether any further grant to support the ongoing costs of the pandemic will be forthcoming.

- 3.8 Surge Protection Grant Funding of £510,000 was awarded specifically to deal with inspections for high rise buildings and other high risk buildings by December 2021 post Grenfell. In addition, one-year New 2020/21 Infrastructure Fund with an allocation of £67,944 is to help support FRS to put in place a local Grenfell Inquiry recommendations co-ordination function which will help co-ordinate local activity and support the national work led by the NFCC; drive progress on local improvements and ensure funding for smoke-hoods and other technical investments. CSR will consider whether any of this funding will be baselined to sustain improvements in Business Fire Safety and reflect the impact of changes in legislation, on the fire service, post Grenfell Tower. It is likely we will need additional capacity to respond to the two new Bills going through the parliamentary process. An October briefing has been arranged for MPs.
- 3.9 There has been no provision for capital or transformation grants within the fire sector since 2015/16. The fire sector CSR submission highlights the need for new capital funding to replace end of life national resilience assets for which there is no local provision. The cost of replacing those assets current allocated to this Authority is approximately £1m.

## **4 LOCAL POSITION**

### **4.1 Medium Term Finance Plan**

- 4.1.1 The refreshed MTFP is included at Appendix 1. The MTFP was previously updated when the 2020/21 Budget was set in February 2020. At that stage there was forecast to be a balanced budget for 2020/21 but given the level of uncertainty about future funding we modelled a range of scenarios which highlighted the potential need to make further savings of between £0.7m and £3.6m by 2024/25. In preparing the refreshed MTFP the main issues considered are set out in the following paragraphs, but we have adopted the mid-case scenario, which was based on a 5% year on year reduction in Settlement Funding Assessment (a combination of funding from business rates and core grant i.e. RSG). The Authority must also consider the risks set out in paragraph 4.6 below when considering its financial planning.

### **4.2 Expenditure**

- 4.2.1 The level of pay award for the fire & rescue service will be determined nationally through the National Joint Council (NJC). The refreshed MTFP has a provision for pay inflation of 2.0% for the duration of the MTFP. The Government have relaxed the public sector pay cap but has made it clear that higher awards should be funded from efficiencies. The FBU is seeking significant pay increases for its members. For each 0.5% increase in pay-award, this is equivalent to £157,569 on the employee base 2020/21 (adjusted for an additional 0.75% anticipated increase for support staff over and above the 2% original MTFP assumption). The sector's CSR submission makes it clear that any pay award above 2% is unaffordable, however to be prudent and recognising there is pressure in the system the provision has been increased by 0.5% each year across all staff.

4.2.2 The MTFP currently provides 2.0% p.a. for price inflation on goods and services which has been rolled forward to 2024/25. Each 1% increase in prices is equivalent to £121,000. We are working with the procurement team to assess the level of indexation on our major contracts and understand whether there is an opportunity to reduce our provision for non-pay inflation in 2021/22 in the light of the MPC's forecast for lower than 2% inflation in the near short term.

4.2.3 To provide Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with flexibility in managing budget in-year there is a Corporate Contingency included in the Revenue Budget and MTFP. This is set at £454,000 for 2020/21, falling to £308,600 in 2021/22 before rising slowly to £327,500 by 2024/25.

### 4.3 Emerging Pressures

4.3.1 The following emerging pressures have been identified through the high level review of the budget reported to Policy & Resources Panel in July and subsequent budget monitoring. At this stage we have not included the potential pressure arising from the IT Strategy paper elsewhere on this agenda:

- **ESFC / P21:** The Authority has made provision in its revenue budget to support the running of the interim East Sussex Fire Control (ESFC) service through 2020/21 and to fund investment in the transition to a new tripartite service in September 2021. Further work is required to consolidate the financial baseline for this project (P21) and the funding within the SCC and Mobilising Strategy Reserve. The delay in go live date from March to September 2021 means that the interim service will need to run for a further 6 months. An initial impact of the additional cost has been made at approximately £0.3m and will be funded from the P21 risk contingency and drawn down from the Mobilising Strategy Reserve. It is currently estimated that an additional £0.070m per annum needs to be made available to fund operation of the new service, due to the original budget provision for 2021/22 being understated.
- **Engineering:** There is risk that overspends seen in previous years will continue into 2021/22 and beyond estimated at £80,000. Work is ongoing between the finance and engineering teams to confirm this position and the extent to which increased spend on external repairs and maintenance can be managed / mitigated and the outcome will be fed into the budget setting process
- **Safer Communities:** This is the largest and most complex budget, which has seen improvement in control over whole-time establishment and staffing costs over recent years and continues to benefit from additional resilience funding. Work is underway to validate funding for a number of Community Safety posts and also to understand a pressure on pension costs in previous years of around £100,000.
- **External Audit Fees:** Our external auditors Ernst & Young (E&Y) are reviewing fees for their public sector assignments through the PSAA contract. They have proposed a significant increase in fees of circa £30,000.

We are awaiting further information from them and will be engaging with PSAA who must approve any fee variation.

- **Unachievable Savings:** This includes the impacts of a review by Principal Officer Appointment Panel of senior officer terms and conditions on the final tranche of savings from the 2016 management restructure (£29,000) and a reduction in savings from the new PPE contract due to higher than anticipated issue levels as a result of continued use of fixed term contracts and assistant instructors at Service Training Centre (£20,000)
- **Outdated income budgets:** a review of income budgets for our Covid-19 return has identified a number of historic income budgets that are no longer achievable and need to be corrected (£51,000)

#### **4.4 Capital Strategy**

4.4.1 The Authority has been conducting a number of reviews that will impact on its future investment plans and potentially its future revenue costs:

- IT Strategy Refresh 2020-25 – this is reported elsewhere on this agenda and if approved presents a one-off funding pressure of £0.2m and an ongoing revenue pressure of £0.7m by the end of the MTFP. Further work is required to determine what projects within the Strategy could be treated as capital.
- Fleet & Equipment – these strategies are under review and the review of special appliances is expected to be reported to SLT in the autumn. The intention is to contain any changes within the existing scheme budgets.

The Authority will need consider the funding implications, including capital investment requirements that result in its budget proposals and MTFP. For every £1m borrowed, this will cost an estimated £70,000 per annum in interest payments and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) to repay the loan upon maturity.

#### **4.5 Reserves and Balances**

4.5.1 Reserves and balances are held in accordance with the Authority's agreed policy. The planned use of reserves and balances will be reviewed as part of the service planning process in light of the savings requirement, any changes to the Capital Strategy, the outcome of grant funding bids to Government, and, the need to fund the costs of up-front investment to support the delivery of savings proposals.

4.5.2 The level of reserves held is expected to reduce significantly over the next four years and by 2024/25 is forecast to comprise primarily an unallocated risk provision (General Balance 88.9% of total reserves and 5.2% of the total General Fund Revenue Budget in 2024/25) of £2.2m and no resources to fund the Capital Strategy without recourse to borrowing.

#### **4.6 Risks**

4.6.1 There are a range of risks that have the potential to impact on the Authority's ability to deliver its budget plans over the medium term to which Members must give consideration, some of which are discussed in more detail elsewhere in this paper, primarily:

- Our ability to identify and deliver the savings required to balance the budget over the medium term through the Efficiency Strategy and the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP);
- The impact of additional budget pressures for example, the net cost of the revised IRMP proposals in the short term and the revenue impact of continued investment in IT;
- The impact on Covid 19 on income from Council Tax and Business Rates and potential ongoing cost pressures e.g. additional cleaning, loss of Treasury Management income, loss on commercial training income
- Uncertainty over the impact of the remedy to the transitional protections in place for local government and firefighters pension schemes;
- Lack of clarity about the financial impact of the national Emergency Service's Mobile Communication Programme;
- The potential for a national pay award to exceed the 2% provision in the budget;
- Uncertainty about future governance and funding including:
  - o the three year Comprehensive Spending Review
  - o the impact of the Fairer Funding Review
  - o proposals for further (75%) localisation of business rates
- The potential impact of the UK's decision to leave the EU including the impact of currency movements on the cost of goods and services purchased from the EU and more widely on the economy and the Governments fiscal objectives
- The impact of local growth and additional housing, road and commercial risks;
- Any further development of local devolution proposals;
- Any further proposals by the Police & Crime Commissioner for changes to fire service governance in Sussex;
- Outcomes for the fire service nationally and locally from the HMICFRS inspection process;
- Potential changes to the role of the Authority resulting from the Hackitt and Moore-Bick inquiries.

## 4.7 **Financing**

### **Council Tax Increase**

4.7.1 It is assumed the Authority will increase council tax by 1.99% for the duration of the MTFP following the council tax referendum threshold set at 2% for fire authorities in 2020/21. Through CSR the sector is lobbying for precept flexibility of £5 in order to improve local flexibility and financial sustainability without the need for a costly referendum.

4.7.2 If the Government was to allow an increase in the council tax referendum threshold to 3%, this would generate estimated additional CT precept of £282,945 whilst a change to £5 per council tax payer would result in an additional

£1,114,842 in 2021/22. The latter is considered regressive since the impact is felt equally on households regardless of household income and tax banding leading to a greater percentage increases for those in the lower tax bandings, however it would have a significant impact on funding sustainability.

### **Council Tax Base**

- 4.7.3 Although there is currently limited information coming from the billing authorities, given the uncertainty and impact of Covid-19 on the economy, the tax base is expected to reduce in the short-term. However in the MTFP we have assumed that growth in Council Tax base will fall from our current assumption of 1% to 0.3% in 2021/22 and 0.5% in 2022/23, followed by a continuation of 1% year on year growth 2023/24 onwards, this would mean an estimated reduction in Council Tax income of around £199,405 (2021/22), £351,113 (2022/23) rising to £372,588 (2024/25).

### **Council Tax and Business Rates Collection Funds**

- 4.7.4 It is highly likely the collection funds for council tax and business rates will be affected by Covid-19 and will impact on 2021/22 allocations. Our current estimate based on a combination of local and nation data forecast a 5% drop in collection rates. If this assumption comes true, and, is replicated across the Districts and Boroughs, it could mean a loss in the range of £1,500,000 to £2,000,000 in 2021/22. The Government has indicated it may provide cover for lost business rates and council tax income similar to the guarantee scheme on sales, fees and charges. We are awaiting detail on the protection / tax guarantee that might be offered through CSR. Previously the Government had indicated that councils could account for council tax and business rates deficits over three years instead of one. On this basis we have modelled a loss of £0.6m each year for the period 2021/22 to 2023/24.

### **Business Rates**

- 4.7.5 Business rates income is based on the mid case scenario where total Settlement Funding Assessment reduces by 5% year on year. However, we have revised our assumption regarding S31 grants for business rate reliefs and have modelled them continuing at the level forecast in the MTFP but reducing by 5% each year in line with the SFA. This increases funding by £0.759m in 2021/22 reducing to £0.651m by 2024/25.

## **4.8 Savings Plans and Efficiency Strategy**

- 4.8.1 Between 2010/11 and 2019/20 the Authority has made savings of approximately £9.2m. In 2017 the Authority determined to take a more holistic and strategic approach to delivering efficiencies that moved beyond previous approaches that had focussed on delivering savings necessary to balance the revenue budget. Officers remain committed to delivering on this approach, but it is clear that the enabling activities, for example CRM, Firewatch and Business Intelligence projects, as well as partnership projects such as ITF have required increased investment and longer delivery times to put in place. Alongside delivery activity SLT and project boards continue work to identify and deliver improved return on

investment and increased cashable efficiencies. An updated mapping of potential efficiencies is set out in table 1 overleaf.

4.8.2 However it is clear that if the scale of the potential financial challenge facing the Authority is as set out in this paper that efficiencies alone will not be sufficient to bridge the funding gap. The Authority will therefore need to consider a wider range of options beyond its Efficiency Strategy and this will include:

- Opportunities to reduce costs by 5 / 10 / 15 % across all services as part of the budget setting process
- Reverting to the original IRMP proposals as set out elsewhere on this agenda
- Reducing its ambition to invest through its Estates, IT and Fleet & Equipment Strategies
- The use of reserves to smooth the savings requirements in the early years of the MTFP (albeit the Authority has fully committed its Earmarked Reserves and its General Balances are currently at / below its agreed Policy minimum).

4.8.3 Proposals will be developed through the budget setting and service planning process and reviewed for impact and deliverability through Star Chambers before presentation to SLT in November. These proposals will be reported to the Authority in January and February 2021 for review and approval.

**TABLE 1: POTENTIAL CASHABLE EFFICIENCIES**

Potential Cashable Efficiencies		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Service Area	Description	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Income Generation	Income Generation - Primary Authority	19	19	19	19	19	19
Other	New Dimensions / CERA (20/21 only)	452					
Support Services	Estates Strategy	20	40	120	240	360	485
Support Services	Firefighter Pension Scheme Administration	24	24	24	24	24	24
<b>Total already included in the MTFP</b>		<b>515</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>528</b>
IRMP	IRMP (subject to approval)			74	171	424	525
Improvement & Efficiency	Firewatch		25	25	25	25	25
IT Strategy	CRM		23	23	23	23	23
IT Strategy	Hydrant Management		5	5	5	5	5
Support Services	Insurance - CCTV on fleet		20	20	20	20	20
<b>Total potential cashable efficiencies identified</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>598</b>

**REFRESHED MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2019/20 - 2024/25**  
**Mid case scenario – 5% per annum reduction in SFA 2021/22 onwards**

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Net Existing Budget Requirement (Mid-case Scenario)</b>	<b>40,386</b>	<b>41,322</b>	<b>42,205</b>	<b>43,054</b>
Resulting Savings Requirement	1,239	1,827	2,310	2,708
<b>Funding</b>	<b>39,147</b>	<b>39,495</b>	<b>39,895</b>	<b>40,346</b>
<b>Updated Assumptions</b>				
Council Tax base	199	351	362	373
Council Tax & Business Rates collection	600	600	600	0
Continuation of S31 Grant for Business Rate Reliefs at level assumed in MTFP for 2020/21 with adjustment for 5% reduction in SFA	(759)	(721)	(685)	(651)
<b>Potential Loss (Surplus) in Funding</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>(278)</b>
<b>Updated Assumptions</b>				
Pay award additional 0.5%	158	148	151	154
<b>New Pressures:</b>				
External Audit Fees	30	30	30	30
Non realisation of savings	49	49	49	49
Safer Communities	100	100	100	100
Engineering	80	80	80	80
P21 - operation of new service	70	70	70	70
Outdated Income Budgets	51	51	51	51
<b>Total Additional Expenditure</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>380</b>
<b>Net Additional Pressures</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Refreshed MTFP Net Budget Requirement (Mid-case Scenario)</b>	<b>40,806</b>	<b>41,932</b>	<b>42,862</b>	<b>43,156</b>
<b>Revised MTFP Forecast Savings Requirement</b>	<b>1,659</b>	<b>2,437</b>	<b>2,967</b>	<b>2,810</b>
<b>Pension Grant at Risk</b>	<b>1,735</b>	<b>1,735</b>	<b>1,735</b>	<b>1,735</b>

## **Appendix 2**

Refer to separate document

Fire Spending Review Proposal - Collaborative LGA and NFCC Submission for SR 2021

# Fire Spending Review Proposal

COLLABORATIVE LGA AND NFCC SUBMISSION FOR SR2021

AMY WEBB

## Table of Contents

1. The base case for Fire and Rescue funding .....	2
1.1. Resourcing to Risk .....	2
1.2. Resilience in times of crisis. ....	5
1.3. Productivity: Capacity to deliver increased fire prevention and protection activity.....	7
1.4. Productivity: impact and outcomes .....	8
1.5. Efficiencies: Delivering collaborative procurement .....	8
1.6. Efficiencies: Delivering technological improvement.....	9
2. Significant Cost pressures .....	10
2.1. Pay.....	10
2.2. Pensions .....	10
2.2.1. GAD revaluation .....	10
2.2.2. McCloud/Sargeant .....	10
2.2.3. O'Brien/Matthews .....	11
2.3. Impact of COVID-19 on Collection funds .....	11
2.4. National Resilience.....	11
2.5. Emergency Services Network.....	11
3. Improvement Activity .....	12
3.1. Focus on Protection .....	12
3.1.1. 2020-21 Grant Funding .....	12
3.1.2. Investment needed .....	13
3.2. Fit for the Future.....	14
3.2.1. 2020-21 Grant Funding .....	14
3.2.2. Investment needed .....	14
3.3. Leadership development .....	15
3.3.1. Investment needed .....	15
4. Summary .....	17
Annex 1 – Fire funding proposal .....	18
Annex 2 – Fit for the Future Improvement Objectives .....	19
Annex 3 - Notes.....	20

## Introduction

This document represents the fire sector request for funding to inform the Spending Review 2020-21. It has been developed in collaboration with colleagues in the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and Local Government Association (LGA) and will focus on three key elements:

1. The base case for Fire and Rescue funding and productivity opportunities
2. Significant cost pressures
3. Improvement activity arising from the Grenfell Tower and other Recommendations

These elements are well aligned with the ministerial priorities of People, Professionalism and Governance.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) State of Fire Report identified that Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) funding position and pressures vary widely, with some services struggling to meet operational requirements. Given that the process for establishing a new Fire Funding Formula has been paused and is not covered in this proposal, changing referendum limits to allow Council Tax precept flexibility of £5 for all FRS is the only viable option for addressing local funding issues.

### 1. The base case for Fire and Rescue funding – Securing an inflationary increase to FRS funding to maintain firefighter numbers

A decade of austerity measures has had significant impact on fire and rescue services under all governance models. As some fire and rescue services (FRS) in embedded governance models such as county councils and are part of a wider budget where data can be inconsistent and not readily available, figures quoted here are for the 29 standalone Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs). In 2009/10 core spending power was estimated at £1,523m, falling to £1,373m in 2020/21<sup>i</sup>, equating to a cut of 28.55%<sup>ii</sup> in real terms.

FRS capabilities are built around our people. Staff costs make up a large proportion of fire and rescue service budgets and therefore it is inevitable that staff numbers have declined whilst services have had to make cuts, with full time equivalent firefighter numbers declining from 41,201<sup>iii</sup> in 2010/11 to 32,233 in 2018/19, a fall of 21.77%. Despite this, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) found in their 2018/19 State of Fire report that the sector is generally effective in responding to fires and other emergencies<sup>iv</sup>. This shows the sector's ability to deliver savings whilst maintaining response services. The picture is not the same for Fire Protection (fire safety audit of buildings), a vital part of integrated service delivery and risk reduction.

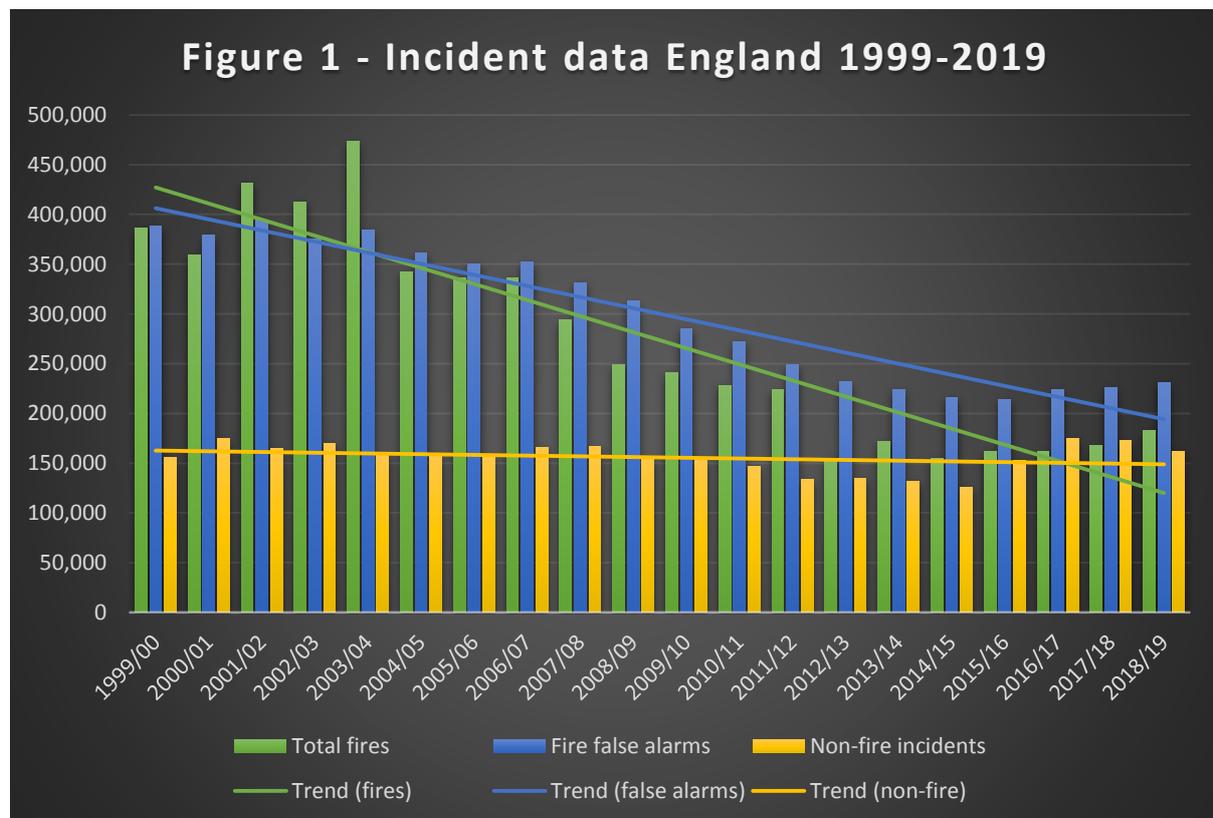
The Inspectorate, and the sector, have identified a number of areas for improvement (which will be covered later in this report) but it is clear that improvement activities cannot be delivered if staff numbers are reduced further due to a) needing a base of resource to respond to risk and b) needing the capacity to deliver improvement activity.

#### 1.1. Resourcing to Risk

Unlike some public services which are demand led, we need to have enough resources available to provide an emergency response even in times of exceptional demand. This includes the ability to deal with large scale emergencies and/or a range of smaller incidents but all occurring simultaneously and/or incidents that are of extended duration.

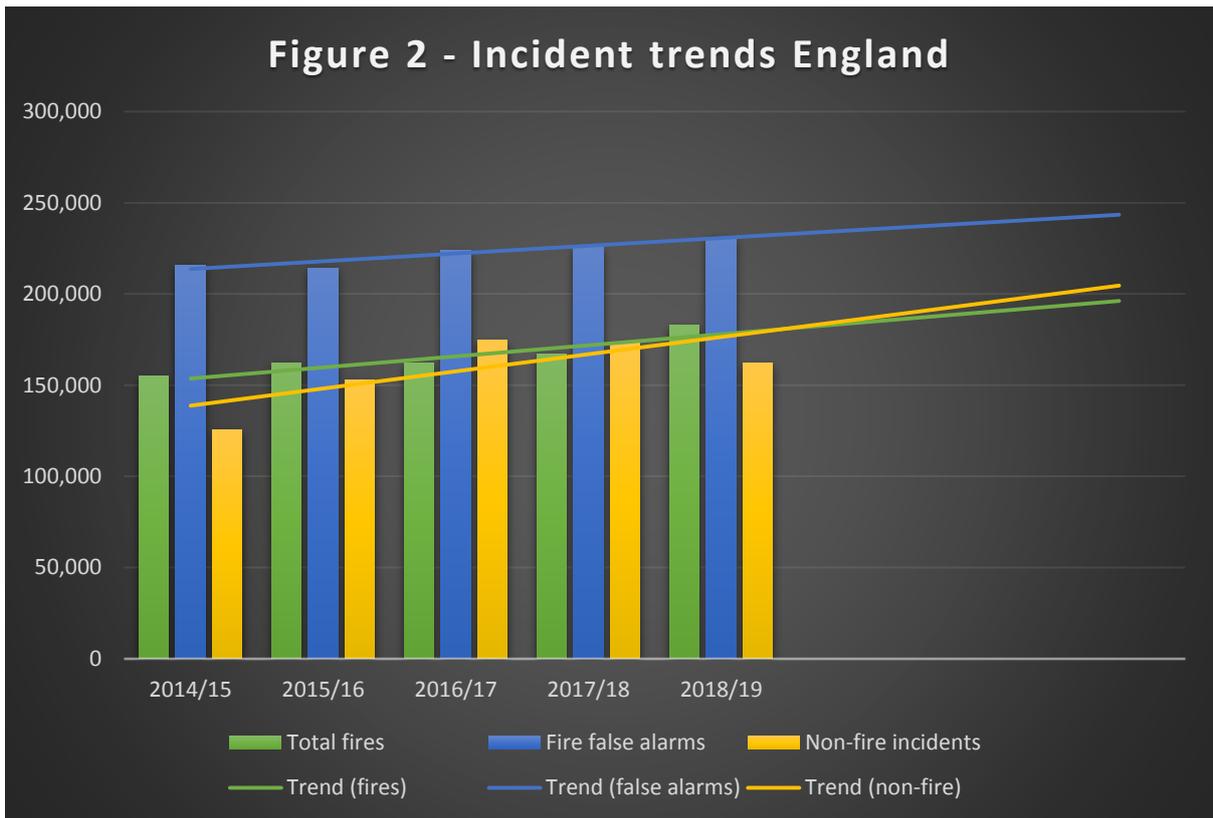
This resilience is vital to ensuring safe systems of work for our people, enables cross-border working (such as that seen in recent wildfires and flooding incidents such as the Whaley Bridge dam collapse) and has enabled significant support for other agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic. FRS are needing to plan, train and respond to an increasing number of weather related incidents such as flooding and wildfire and these risks are likely to increase due to climate change. The LGA and NFCC would welcome a review of Fire and Rescue Statutory duties to include response to flooding. Whilst many FRS have some capability to respond to these incidents, support for a consistent approach based on risk is needed and would require a capital investment similar to that made by the Welsh Government.

Whilst over the long-term incident numbers are down, there is evidence that this trend is reversing, demonstrating the need for continued resourcing for both service response and preventative activities.<sup>v</sup>



Cutting firefighter numbers further at this time would prohibit FRS ability to meet the inherent risk and have a negative impact on the sectors aspiration to create a more diverse workforce by having fewer vacancies which can be filled by people from under-represented groups.

The benefits of a diverse workforce are well documented; engendering trust by representing the communities we serve, creating positive culture, removing barriers to potential high quality recruits and bringing diversity of thought to planning and decision making. Developing a workforce for the future is a key area of reform for FRS and high up the LGA<sup>vi</sup> and NFCC agenda<sup>vii</sup>. We need to do more to support staff and improve culture, progress towards which will be inhibited if there are further cuts to funding.



Initial analysis of response times when compared to firefighter numbers has shown significant correlation between a reduction in English firefighter full time equivalent (FTE) and slower response times, since 2009<sup>viii</sup>. This data suggests that a further reduction in FTE firefighters of approximately 6,000 England-wide corresponds to an increase in average response times of 30 seconds<sup>ix</sup>. Whilst this correlation does not directly indicate the cause of slower response times which may be impacted by factors such as traffic, funding pressures have resulted in greater use of On Call (part-time) staff which inevitably slows response. There are inherent risks with the On Call model of resourcing as FRS are struggling to maintain reliable response due to the appeal of the role, commitment required, financial reward and changes to lifestyles and primary working arrangements reducing availability of On Call staff. There are significant differences with how the system works across England, with some FRAs concerned about the future of the on-call system, and some experiencing a good availability of staff. Therefore, more work is necessary to see how we can ensure that the system can be sustainable for everyone into the longer term. Government support for a review of the system would be welcomed. However, it is clear that any alternative to the current system would have cost implications and require funding to deliver.

## 1.2. Resilience in times of crisis.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic FRS have demonstrated their ability to flex their resources, with minimal additional financial support, to support other agencies in time of crisis. This is in addition to the ongoing support that FRS give other blue light services; with medical co-responding and gaining entry activity common. Few other agencies have the geographical spread of local resources that FRS do, with good levels of public trust<sup>x</sup> which enables support to vulnerable people in our communities. To the end of June 2020 FRS had delivered considerable additional activity as shown in figure 3.

The NFCC has evidenced how it can support individual FRS and national government by co-ordinating efforts. It has issued communication and guidance to assist fire and rescue services to see their way through this national health emergency, whilst working with partners in other agencies; including nationally with the National Police Chiefs Council and Ambulance Chief Executives, which complemented the local work of FRS through the local resilience forum or similar.

The NFCC, National Employers and Fire Brigades Union have evidenced how they can support individual FRS and national government through the unprecedented tripartite agreements which have been generated to enable such activity.

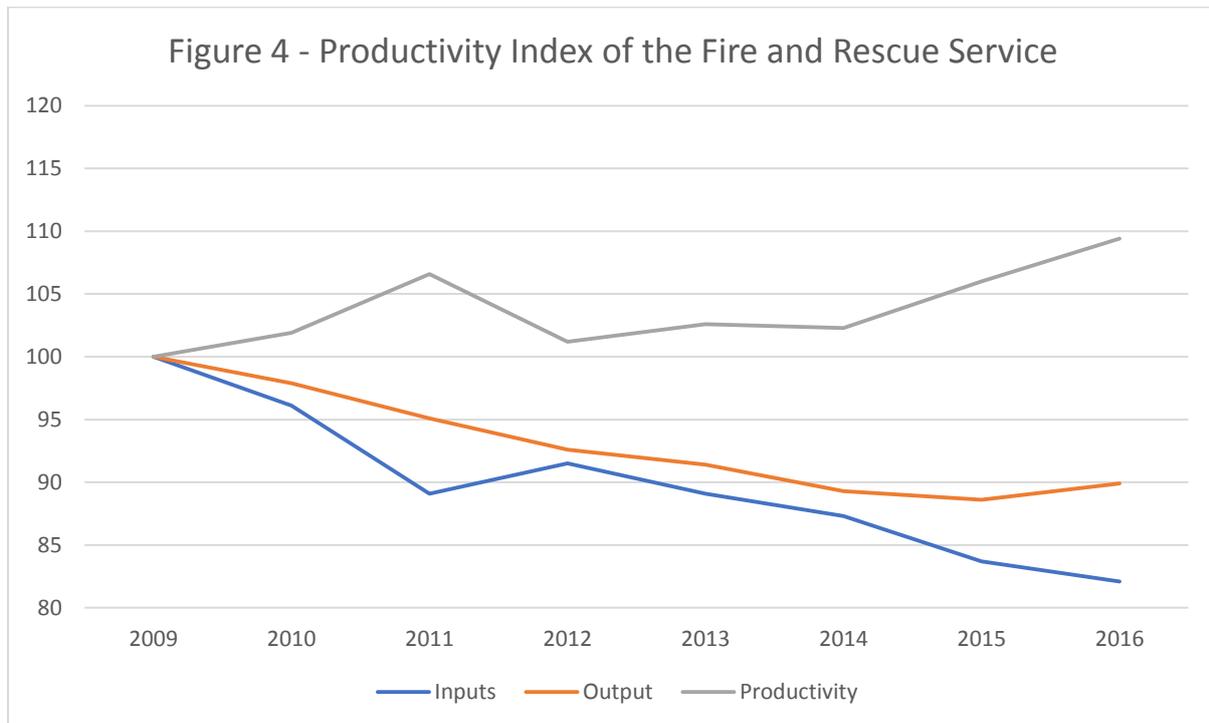
Figure 3 – TRI-PARTITE AGREEMENT COVID-19 Additional Activity delivery March – June 2020



### 1.3. Productivity: Capacity to deliver increased fire prevention and protection activity

We understand that all public services are under pressure to deliver more effectively and efficiently in light of the economic climate and public scrutiny. There are however opportunities to improve FRS by making incremental improvements within existing resources.

HMICFRS found that many services are under-resourcing prevention and protection and need to make sure their workforces are more productive. Office of National Statistics data<sup>xi</sup> shows that productivity of FRS has improved since 2009, perhaps inevitably as a result of reduced staffing numbers.



FRS already use their station based staff to deliver targeted fire prevention and protection in their local areas. There is an opportunity to better utilise the fire station based workforce to conduct more home and business fire safety checks in the community. This would have a positive impact on productivity and morale whilst providing an opportunity for FRS to invest in the development and training of staff. One outcome of having fewer fires to attend has been the need to increase training so firefighters are safe as possible when they do attend emergency incidents. Fire station based personnel carrying out more routine fire protection work will improve their knowledge of the built environment and free up higher trained inspecting officers and fire engineers to deal with more complex buildings to support the new building safety regime.

We know that the number of home fire safety checks carried out by fire and rescue services has reduced by a quarter since 2011<sup>xii</sup> and that fire safety audits have reduced by 42% over the same period<sup>xiii</sup>. We believe that FRS have the capacity to deliver a significant productivity increase within existing resources over the three year spending review. Directing 3% of wholetime capacity to these interventions would give FRS the opportunity to deliver up to 523,000 additional hours of activity nationally<sup>xiv</sup> which would equate to an additional 18,000 basic fire safety audits<sup>xv</sup> (with more complex activity being undertaken by specialist protection teams, who will be freed up by the increase in capacity to undertake lower level audits) and 65,000 home safety checks per year<sup>xvi</sup>.

There may be further opportunities to improve workforce productivity by diversifying the work undertaken by staff, in line with 'Fit for the Future'.

#### 1.4. Productivity: impact and outcomes

It is estimated that, in addition to making communities safer and reducing harm from dwelling fires, 65,000 home safety checks will deliver an economic benefit of £127m<sup>xvii</sup>. It is not so easy to identify the direct impact of regulatory fire safety audits and inspections on fires given the very different nature of the sectors that those buildings represent (that range from large hospital complexes to small takeaway food outlets). It is evident that more regulatory fire safety audits will increase the rate at which issues with the built environment, identified through the Government's Building Safety Programme, are able to be addressed. Over the 10 years between 2009/10 and 2018/19 there have been 3,631 fewer accidental fires across England in non-domestic buildings. At 2019 prices, this represents an estimated economic saving to society of £370 million, this reduction is supported by the inspection and enforcement work undertaken by FRS.

The Outcomes of this additional work are expected to be:

- Reduction in number of fires in domestic premises
- Reduction in deaths from these fires
- Reduction in injuries
  - By targeting specific vulnerable groups e.g. elderly and disabled people
  - Providing community safety checks, like smoke alarm etc.
- Reduction in damage to properties from fires as there are fewer domestic fires and less damage as fires that do happen cause less damage
- Advise wider cross Government policies such as security, crime prevention and health and well-being
- Audits resulting in
  - Eventually, a greater proportion of satisfactory fire safety audits
  - publicity - using media to increase the deterrent effect

#### 1.5. Efficiencies: Delivering collaborative procurement

The NFCC established its national procurement programme in 2015, with individual FRS taking a lead on each category of major expenditure. The programme resources were boosted by transformation grant funding awarded by the Home Office in 2016-17, with the programme expected to deliver savings from collaborative procurement of £27m by 2024-25 and the National Procurement Strategy for Fire published in 2018. As transformation funding was exhausted during 2019-20, the programme is now resourced by the sector and the national savings register has evidenced savings of £13m.

The Fire Commercial Transformation Programme operates under 3 key principles:

- Standardised requirements: developing agreed standard specifications that are operationally driven rather than procurement-led.
- Aggregated volumes: FRS that bring larger volumes to market typically get better deals. Where possible, i.e. non-fire specific goods and services, consider the wider purchasing power of other public sector organisations.
- Collaboratively managed contracts and suppliers: joined-up strategic engagement, supplier performance and contract management

The programme is therefore on track to deliver the remaining £14m of savings over the spending review period, which will be utilised by FRS to offset internal cost pressures. Further investment will generate even bigger savings.

## 1.6. Efficiencies: Delivering technological improvement

HMICFRS found that the use of technology in FRS varies considerably, and that whilst there are pockets of innovation the sector as a whole can use technology better. This view is supported by a recent study by Leeds University<sup>xviii</sup> which found that the condition of FRS ICT infrastructure differs greatly across England with a number of services facing significant ICT challenges. The NFCC have responded to this by launching its Digital and Data Programme<sup>xix</sup> to support services.

It is apparent that in order to deliver transformative technology which will support business operations, promote productivity, operational decision making and service improvement to the public, significant investment will need to be in FRS technological capability. FRS have already identified improvements needed and have incorporated digital transformation into their change programmes, often funded by reserves<sup>xx</sup> This investment will not be possible if baseline funding is cut and therefore reserves will be required to support revenue budgets rather than make sustainable changes.

## 2. Significant Cost pressures – funding for national issues which are putting long-term pressure on FRS budgets

There are a number of issues impacting on the financial sustainability of FRS (amongst other public services) which could have a detrimental impact on the ability of FRS to maintain their services to the public.

### 2.1. Pay

Firefighters have been subject to pay freezes and below-inflationary increases during austerity and the sector is under significant pressure from unions to deliver a large pay rise in 2020. The National Employers' position, following consultation with Chairs and CFOs, is that any pay rise beyond 2% in 2020/21 would be unaffordable for the sector without additional government funding. Any agreements will be subject to the NJC negotiation process. It is estimated that a 2% increase would cost the sector at least £25m<sup>xxi</sup> per year, representing more than 1% of total funding for FRS. Beyond 2020/21 it is expected that the pressure for pay awards above 2% will increase.

Looking forward, it is clear that the sector would need an increase in central FRS funding if it is going to reform firefighters' roles in line with ongoing and emerging objectives. Any further reforms would need to be supported and sustained by Government funding, previous costing estimates for this have been in the region of 15% of firefighter pay.

### 2.2. Pensions

Pension cost pressures and administration issues are a significant risk to FRS budgets. Local administration carries inherent risks, particularly around discrepancies in treatment of pension administration changes and whilst there have been several joint procurement exercises between FRS, there is further opportunity to seek collaborative solutions to pension administration.

#### 2.2.1. GAD revaluation

The 2016 GAD revaluation resulted in a headline rate increase of 12.4% of employer pension costs, which in 2019-20 equated to £125m. The Home Office have agreed to fund £115m of this pressure in 2019-20 and 2020-21 but this will need to be added to base budgets rather than offered as a grant to ensure financial sustainability and FRS ability to plan their resources. As pay costs increase, so do employers' pension costs and therefore this would also need to be reflected in funding.

#### 2.2.2. McCloud/Sargeant

There are two issues arising from the potential remedy for discriminatory conditions of tapering in to the 2015 firefighters pension scheme (FFPS):

1. Pension administration costs; amendments to software capability will be chargeable as a special project by third party administrators and it is estimated that will cost the sector in the region of £1.2m<sup>xxii</sup>, given the proposed implementation date of 1 April 2022, work will need to commence early in 2021.
2. Increased employer contributions which are likely to impact on FRS budgets in the next valuation, with rates being implemented from 2023-24 and therefore within the three year spending review period. At the moment the sector has no information on what the costs of remedy to Firefighter and Local Government Pensions schemes will be, but given central estimates of £2.5bn per year for all schemes<sup>xxiii</sup> it is clear that this cost pressure cannot be borne by FRS as there will be a significant impact on delivery of services to the public.

### 2.2.3. O'Brien/Matthews

There are three issues arising from the potential remedy for discriminatory conditions against part-time workers prior to 2000:

1. Pension administration costs; amendments to software capability will be chargeable as a special project by third party administrators and it is estimated that will cost the sector in the region of £1.2m<sup>xxiv</sup> the timing of which is subject to timescales of remedy
2. Pension administration costs; experience of the 2006 modified pension exercise was that this was a considerable burden for those FRS with high numbers of on call staff. It is likely that there will be further take up as any additional employees pension contributions can be deducted from pension due, so at no detriment to the pensioner. It is estimated that this burden will fall to FRS payroll, HR and finance teams at a further cost of approximately £1.4m<sup>xxv</sup> to English services
3. Increased employer contributions which are likely to impact on FRS budgets in the next valuation, with rates being implemented from 2023-24 and therefore within a potential three year spending review period. At the moment the sector has no information on what the costs of remedy will be (and this is also likely to be tied up in the wider scheme valuation).

### 2.3. Impact of COVID-19 on Collection funds

The COVID pandemic has had a significant impact on FRS, with business continuity processes being in place since March 2020. Whilst the impacts of the pandemic and subsequent lockdown are yet to be fully understood, the resulting recession will impact on households' and business' ability to pay their Council Tax and Business Rates. The impact will be felt across the sector, with FRS picking up a proportion of the collection fund deficit from 2021-22, there may be a higher degree of impact on embedded FRS which have conflicting priorities such as adult social care and children's services.

It is currently difficult to collate data from billing authorities but national forecasts for income losses in 2020-21 are<sup>xxvi</sup>

- 4.54% of Business Rates = **£31.1m** for standalone FRAs
- 2.88% of Council Tax = **£24.5m** for standalone FRAs

For context, these losses of £55.6m are equivalent to 1,300<sup>xxvii</sup> firefighters or around 6% of the wholtime workforce<sup>xxviii</sup> in just one year. Whilst the MHCLG announcement in July allowing local authorities three years to settle collection fund deficits is welcome, we request funding equivalent to, or protection from collection fund losses to prevent cuts to front line services being made as a result of the pandemic. Given there will be local variation in collection rates, precept flexibility for fire would also support the ability of FRS to set balanced budgets over the medium term.

### 2.4. National Resilience

New Dimensions assets are now coming to the end of their life and require replacement at an estimated cost of £100m. We are clear that financial responsibility for New Dimensions national resilience capability sits with the Home Office and should not become a burden on FRS. The sector positions is that future funding should not be subsumed into the Revenue Support Grant where transparency around the amount and allocation will be lost.

### 2.5. Emergency Services Network

The Emergency Services Network should improve digital capability in FRS. The delay in roll out of ESN is well documented and we are clear that additional costs arising from central issues with the programme should not become a burden on FRS. Recent research has found that the length of the

ESN programme is creating inertia and restricting innovation by suppliers as well as the potential financial impact. Clarity is needed on the impact at local FRS level to support planning and risk awareness.

### 3. Sector Improvement – delivering enhanced building safety and ensuring FRS are Fit for the Future

#### 3.1. Focus on Protection

The HMICFRS State of Fire report found that “Many services don't do enough to make sure premises comply with fire safety regulations “, “There is an inconsistent approach to the number of inspections services carry out” and “The lack of fire safety enforcement is a concern”. Protection teams have been disproportionately affected by funding cuts within FRS over the last decade, partly due to the rise of prevention since 2000 and more recently as FRS commit to protect frontline operational firefighters in response to public consultation. Consequently, the number of Protection staff have reduced by as much as 32% in the last eight years<sup>xxix</sup>, resulting in a loss of specialist skills and experience throughout FRS. This shows that there has been an underinvestment in fire safety under the existing regime.

There is a clear need to invest more in protection activity as the sector responds to systematic deficiencies highlighted by the Grenfell Tower Investigation (GTI), with particular focus on high risk, high rise buildings. Dame Judith Hackitt’s recommendations in the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety – Building a Safer Future and resulting legislative changes have increased the duties and responsibilities for Protection teams.

The fire sector is progressing work to build understanding, capacity and capability to meet the requirements of the Building Safety Programme and recent findings for more complex buildings. Whilst there is an opportunity to boost the number of inspections delivered using existing staff as outlined in section 1.5, targeted investment is needed to ensure that services are able to deliver against the new fire safety regime in a safe and sustainable way.

##### 3.1.1. 2020-21 Grant Funding

In the 2020-21 financial year, £20m has been granted to the sector for enhanced protection activity with a further £10m available for implementation of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report, of which £1.6m is being retained by the Home Office to deliver Control Room ICT infrastructure enhancements.

£21.4m in total has been granted directly to FRS support specific pieces of work, to deliver:

- Building Risk Review Exercise via MHCLG grant - £6m
- The Protection Uplift Programme - £10m
- Recommendations from GTI phase 1 report including purchase of smoke hoods - £5.4m

£7m has been granted to the NFCC (via CFOA Charity) in addition to established £1.5m funds for leadership and standards

- £4m for the Fire Protection Hub and Building Safety Team, including support to FRS for the work above, via MHCLG grant, the benefits of which were outlined in the Protection Board: Programme Business Case finalised on 6 March 2020 and delivery to date of:
  - Framework for Managing Risks for High-rise Residential Buildings with ACM Cladding
  - High-rise Residential Buildings Interventions Feasibility and Impact Assessment
  - Costs for Safety Interventions in High Rise Residential Buildings
  - Risk Assessment Process for High Rise Residential Buildings for the Protection Board Building Risk Review Process

- £3m uplift for Improvement Capability of the sector, to include recruitment of specialist expertise, NFCC capacity and enhance Programme Management Office programme plans, which is covered in more detail on pages 11-13 of this report

### 3.1.2. Investment needed over the spending review period

Whilst this one-off funding is welcome and will deliver significant improvement to the sector’s protection capacity as well as specific pieces of work (such as assurance on high risk, high rise buildings), it is the first investment in fire protection via FRS for many years and represents only 1.3% of core spending power<sup>xxx</sup>. Sustained investment will support continued delivery against priorities already identified through legislative review, which align with ministerial priorities:

- Building upon 2020-21 Grant funded activity to consolidate FRS protection teams’ competence and capacity to respond to new legislative environment – maintaining the £10m Protection Uplift Programme to support sustainable recruitment in to specialist roles.
- It is assumed that the *High Rise High Risk Review* exercise was a one-off pending introduction of new legislation. If this work is to continue, ongoing funding of £6m is required
- The current Protection Board Programme is planned to run until December 2021; Augmenting the £0.7m NFCC funded Building Safety Team via a £3m per year grant (£0.75m in year 1) to the Fire Protection Hub will maintain capability in key specialist areas to support new legislative requirements – this represents a £1m saving against the initial investment as individual FRS build their capacity and capability in Fire Safety

Figure 5 – Building Safety Team – planned annual investment

Data & analytics	Fire safety	Central Policy	Comms & education
current staff	current staff	current staff	current staff
new analysts	new legal advisers	new policy/admin staff	new comms/ed staff
IT and software	contracted services	hub leadership	learning
expenses	flexible resource, FRS	miscellaneous	engagement
<b>£0.52m</b>	<b>£0.67m</b>	<b>£0.89m</b>	<b>£0.92m</b>

The board aims to strengthen protection activities across FRSs in England and is charged with delivery of the ministerial commitment to increase the pace of inspection activity across high rise/high risk buildings to inspect or assure these properties no later than December 2021. The board has been developing a programme of work to meet this new expectation and increase the capacity of services ahead of the new Building Safety Regime, helping to identify and help resolve fire safety issues before other major incidents occur. The work of the board will be essential in supporting the new Building Safety Regime going forward, central support capacity will continue to be needed alongside:

- New burdens are being placed upon FRS through the introduction of new legislative requirements. The Fire Safety Bill familiarisation costs are expected to be £0.7m in year 1, with ongoing costs of fire safety inspections increasing by £0.7m<sup>xxxi</sup>
- The draft Building Safety Bill has identified in its central case £30.3 - £44.7m of ongoing costs<sup>xxxii</sup> for FRS to support the safety of 1.7m homes
- The impact assessment for the uplift to the Fire Safety Order and changes to building control consultations with FRS are still unknown but will not be insignificant

### 3.2. Fit for the Future – enhancing professional expertise

HMICFRS has identified an urgent need for the sector to enhance its capability to deal with existing and emerging issues: the assessment of risk, data needed to inform decision making, developing a diverse and inclusive workforce which is appropriately trained to prevent and respond to incidents and incorporates learning. These issues are well highlighted by the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Lord Greenhalgh’s ministerial priorities, the LGA Fire Service Management Committee and previous reviews of Fire (such as Thomas/ Knight). The NFCC, LGA and National Employers (England) have therefore developed a “Fit for the Future” plan which identifies sector improvement objectives.

The NFCC Central Programme Office (CPO) coordinates the multiple improvement programmes of work on behalf of the NFCC. This overarching coordination helps the NFCC avoid duplication; prioritise work more effectively; and develop solutions and tools more efficiently which support fire and rescue services where a national approach would be beneficial. The NFCC CPO also provides support to the Fire Standards Board and coordinates the development of the full suite of Fire Standards. The guidance that underpins each Fire Standard will be developed by the subject matter expertise drawn from the NFCC network of services and other relevant stakeholders. All NFCC products and Fire Standards will be subject to Quality Assurance to ensure those products have been produced efficiently and effectively involving all stakeholders and are fit for use. Use of those products, especially when they underpin fire Standards, will help bring about national consistency and drive transformation across services<sup>xxxiii</sup>.

Development of guidance and standards works well but it has been identified that the FRS needs a central resource to aid implementation and support consistency. The NFCC working with the LGA is well placed to provide this implementation support, subject to funding.

#### 3.2.1. 2020-21 Grant Funding

In the 2020-21 financial year, a £3m grant has been provided as an uplift for Improvement Capability of the sector, to include recruitment of specialist expertise, NFCC capacity and enhance Programme Management Office programme plans. This funding is in addition to the £1.5m funding available for the Fire Standards Board. The deliverables against this funding have been identified in the Home Office Grant Conditions<sup>xxxiv</sup> and performance against plans will be monitored on a quarterly basis.

#### 3.2.2. Investment needed over the spending review period

Whilst this one-off funding is welcome and will deliver significant improvement to the sector’s capability and capacity as well as specific pieces of work (such as fire standards), sustained investment will support continued delivery against priorities already identified through legislative review.

- The Fire Standards Board will continue to require funding and support by the CPO as this is ongoing work
- The current programme of deliverables is due to complete by Q1 of 2021-22; Augmenting the £1.1m NFCC funded CPO via a £2.5m per year grant (£1.5m in year 1) to enable further activity– this represents a £0.5m saving against the initial investment as individual FRS build their capacity and capability in these key areas
- This will also need to fund a team of implementation officers - embedded within the LGA and NFCC - to support roll out of the established programmes in to FRS If supported by further funding, the CPO has identified specific deliverables<sup>xxxv</sup> which cannot be supported by the current programme, which will be aligned to the key areas of
  - Leadership
  - Digital & Data

- Community Risk
- Culture & Ethics

### 3.3. Leadership development

Governance is a central pillar of the fire sector and elected members have a key role to play setting the policy direction of their services and challenging them to make improvements where necessary. The LGA as the representative body for 44 out of 45 English authorities provides a voice for the sector and supports member development through a sector improvement offer. The LGA offer is open to elected members from all fire authority types and helps to develop leadership and governance skills, and to promote an understanding of key issues like building safety and diversity and inclusion. This is done through a series of activities including training, such as the Leadership Essentials programme for fire and rescue authority members, Oversight of performance training events and the Diversity and Inclusion Champions Network. It is vital that the LGA is able to continue to support members in this way and to ensure members have access to resources that can help them govern their authorities well.

The HMICFRS' inspections identified the governance as an area of tension and the NFCC and LGA are working together to address this by defining a shared set of principles which underpin good decision-making in all the fire and rescue services. To support the work of fire and rescue authorities and senior officers, the LGA has commissioned a series of video resources which will include these principles and maintaining effective member/officer relations. However, sustained activity to embed these principles will be required to create the desired impact.

#### 3.3.1. Investment needed over the spending review period

Previously this work has been funded through other departmental grants, however, responsibility for the member development offer should sit within the Home Office fire budget.

- This work will continue to require funding and support by the LGA to ensure that we can provide ongoing development for members. A grant of £120,000 over the spending review period would allow the LGA to continue to provide the member development offer and to work with the NFCC to develop and support the development of a programme of activity around principles of good governance and decision-making and to develop training events for members and officers to embed those principles.

## CPO Activity Plan beyond grant funding

Activity/Project	Deliverables
Developing effective communications and data sharing (including improving site specific information to operational crews) at operational incidents	Review of the nature and structure of communication between incident ground and control rooms considering technical solutions, message discipline and existing changes in technology.
Developing effective communications and data sharing (including improving site specific information to operational crews) at operational incidents	Conduct feasibility study and survey into existing technical solution and impact upon command and control structure.
Reviewing National Operational Guidance (NOG)	NFCC guidance on risk inspection visits and ensure all actions relating to plans and 7(2)(d)s are incorporated.
Review of National Operational Learning system and arrangements	Recommendations for expansion of National Operational Learning (NOL) to accommodate organisational learning inputs
Supervisory Leader Development Programme	A development programme to nurture leadership at the first level of management with an FRS organisation.
Direct Entry Pathways	A Direct Entry Pathway to include a training programme for entrants on operational duties above firefighter level.
Organisational Learning project	To be scoped
Culture (diagnostic tools)	To be scoped - review of the diagnostic tools available to fire service organisations that support cultural improvement
Health & Wellbeing	To be scoped - would include research projects to provide the evidence-base to support delivery of standards and improved practice in the physical and mental health and wellbeing.
Training courses procurement framework	To be scoped - A procurement framework that aligns National Operational Guidance against training courses bringing consistency and best value.
Immersive technologies	To be scoped - A review and research project into the immersive technologies available (such as virtual reality) and how they might translate to address some of the challenges around maintaining the competency of the workforce.

Fire Protection national guidance	Develop Fire Protection national guidance to support changes made following recommendations by MHCLG Building Safety Programme Resident's Voice Work stream. Development will follow the NFCC Quality Assured approach, hosted on a digital platform using the same integrated approach and accessibility as NOG.
Enforcement toolkit	To maintain a toolkit that can be used by services to improve the consistency and effectiveness of enforcement.
Online public services	Equitable online access to the public for all non-response services.
Data skills	All fire and rescue service staff have a level of data literacy appropriate to their role.
Application development guidance	Standards for local development of software and applications to enable sharing and scalability across services.
Evaluation	Areas of best practice within the UK fire and rescue service will be identified and scaled to be made available to all, improving consistency and maximising existing investment.
Evaluation	Consistent and comparable methodologies to evaluate the performance of local activities.
National Organisational Learning	Evolution of National Operational Learning into National Organisational Learning platform
Digital information service	A national Digital Information Service provides clear direction and consistency in relation to the use and implementation of data analytics within the UK fire and rescue services.

## 4. Summary

Integrated Review; The FRS has demonstrated through national incidents such as flooding and the C19 pandemic its ability to step up and meet demands placed on the country. Within this the FRS has demonstrated its expertise in command and control and logistics. With further development there is no doubt that the FRS can be the primary rescue organization for the UK, with control of the inner cordon at major incidents and a more significant role in command, logistics and resourcing of national emergencies.

A decade of austerity measures and the localism agenda has had a significant impact on the way that fire and rescue services operate and their financial sustainability. Because FRS are resourced to risk rather than demand, focus must be placed on delivering greater consistency and productivity whilst maintaining essential cover across England. There are clearly opportunities for increased collaboration and more efficient ways of working. However any resulting savings are tiny when compared to the amount of investment needed to deliver against the new legislative requirements alongside legacy improvements and reform.

The sector is responding to these challenges using a coordinated approach to deliver sustainable change to fire and rescue services and ultimately improved outcomes for the public.

## Annex 1 – Fire Sector funding proposal<sup>xxxvi</sup>

Funding Requirement	Recipient	Sector proposal for Spending Review (£m)				Notes
		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
Baseline FRS Funding	FRS (SFA)	1.70%	2.12%	2.12%	2.07%	Inflationary uplift
Flooding Capability	FRS (Capital)	-	30.0	-	-	Purchase of response assets to meet new duties
Precept Flexibility	FRS	2.00%	£5 flexibility			
Pay	FRS	2.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	Estimate - subject to negotiations over reformed role
GAD revaluation	FRS (SFA)	115	117.4	119.9	122.4	Inflationary uplift as a minimum - should track pay
McCloud Sargeant	FRS	n/a	1.2	-	-	Admin cost
Resulting revaluation and compensation	FRS	n/a	compensation	compensation	revaluation	In base funding
O'Brien/Matthews	FRS	n/a	1.3	1.3	1.3	Admin - Assumes implementation 2022-23
Resulting revaluation	FRS	n/a	-	-	revaluation	In base funding
Collection Fund Deficits 2020/21	FRS	n/a	18.5	18.5	18.5	Third of calculated figures in section 2.3, to be updated by Home Office
Collection Fund Deficits 2021/22	FRS	n/a	-	?	?	To be assessed by Home Office
Collection Fund Deficits 2022/23	FRS	n/a	-	-	?	To be assessed by Home Office
National Resilience	FRS	10.01	10.2	10.4	10.6	support required to project and FRS grant funding
Protection Capacity	FRS	16	10	10	10	Assumes high risk high rise one off exercise
Building Safety Programme	NFCC	4	3	3	3	
Fire Safety Bill	FRS	-	1.4	0.7	0.7	
Building Safety Bill	FRS	-	30.3	30.3	30.3	Assumes implementation 2021-22
Fire Safety Order	FRS	-		?		
Leadership Capability uplift	LGA	-	0.12	-	-	
Leadership Capability uplift	NFCC	3	2.5	2.5	2.5	
Fire Standards Board	NFCC	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	

## Annex 2 – NFCC, LGA and National Employers (England) Fit for the Future Improvement Objectives

1. Fire and rescue services have evidence based, high quality and consistent risk management plans that encompass all aspects of service deployment and delivery, addressing issues of local risk and ensuring they are resilient to national risks and threats including terrorism.
2. Fire and rescue services refocus their investment in the selection, training, development and support of employees to maintain, support and improve their skills and knowledge throughout their careers.
3. Fire and rescue services have access to a comprehensive national infrastructure and repository of standards, guidance and tools that are embedded in their own local service delivery.
4. Fire and rescue services support new and innovative ways to prevent fires and other emergencies. Firefighters work with people who are at risk in local communities to make them safer in all aspects of their lives, not only from fire.
5. Fire protection activity carried out by fire and rescue services is redefined and expanded by using new professional standards, competence requirements and training for firefighters and specialist protection staff assisted by a significant reallocation of resources through increases in productivity.
6. The benefits of all fire and rescue service activity are measured and evaluated so that decision making about resource allocation can be improved.
7. Prospective employees are attracted to fire and rescue services as an employer of choice where inclusive recruitment practices and the available diverse roles and responsibilities help the service manage risk in the local community.
8. An inclusive culture is at the heart of every fire and rescue service. They are a welcoming and supportive place to work for the widest variety of people from all backgrounds.
9. Political leaders, governments and fire and rescue service officers use a single leadership framework that sets out clearly a suite of service values, expectations and behaviours which all can promote and support. It is the basis on which fire and rescue services and all their employees operate.
10. Working with others in all aspects of fire and rescue service activity is core business, based on solid evidence and data that determines the most efficient and effective use of resources to ensure firefighter and public safety.
11. The National Employers (England), LGA and the NFCC jointly own and maintain an organisational learning system that will promote continuous improvement at a strategic level.

## Annex 3 - Notes

<sup>i</sup> Core Spending Power supporting detail - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/core-spending-power-provisional-local-government-finance-settlement-2020-to-2021>

<sup>ii</sup> Indexation of Core Spending Power against CPI April 2009 to April 2020

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/datasets/consumerpriceinflation>

<sup>iii</sup> [https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/lgastandard?mod-metric=964&mod-period=11&mod-area=E92000001&mod-group=AllRegions\\_England&mod-type=namedComparisonGroup](https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/lgastandard?mod-metric=964&mod-period=11&mod-area=E92000001&mod-group=AllRegions_England&mod-type=namedComparisonGroup)

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.justiceinspectores.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/state-of-fire-and-rescue-2019-2.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> Fire 0102 updated 14 May 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fire-statistics-data-tables#incidents-attended>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.local.gov.uk/inclusive-service-twenty-first-century-fire-and-rescue-service>

<sup>vii</sup>

[https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/NFCC%20Guidance%20publications/NFCC%20Position%20papers%202020/People/NFCC\\_Equality\\_and\\_Diversity\\_position\\_statement.pdf](https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/NFCC%20Guidance%20publications/NFCC%20Position%20papers%202020/People/NFCC_Equality_and_Diversity_position_statement.pdf)



FRA Response  
Times and Staffing.r

<sup>viii</sup> Somerset Technical Team report “FRA Response Times and Staffing”, July 2020

<sup>ix</sup> Somerset Technical Team report “FRA Response Times and Staffing”, July 2020

<sup>x</sup> <https://www.justiceinspectores.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/public-perceptions-of-fire-and-rescue-services-in-england-2019-report.pdf>

<sup>xi</sup> ONS presentation “Fire & Rescue Productivity measure”

<sup>xii</sup> <https://www.justiceinspectores.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/state-of-fire-and-rescue-2019-2.pdf>

<sup>xiii</sup> FIRE1202 comparison of 2010/11 to 2018/19 total audits <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fire-statistics-data-tables#fire-prevention-and-protection>

<sup>xiv</sup> Based on 3% of 22,801 FF (assumed 50% station based) at 70% active time = 522,872 hours per year / crew of 4 [https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/lgastandard?mod-metric=964&mod-period=1&mod-area=E92000001&mod-group=AllRegions\\_England&mod-type=namedComparisonGroup](https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/lgastandard?mod-metric=964&mod-period=1&mod-area=E92000001&mod-group=AllRegions_England&mod-type=namedComparisonGroup)

<sup>xv</sup> Home Office statistics (FIRE1204) are considered for 2018/19 it can be seen that there were 33,265 satisfactory audits which took FRS in England 120,701 hours to complete therefore 3.63 hours per audit

<sup>xvi</sup> Estimate of 45 minutes per visit from NFCC, made an hour inc. travel time



Illustration of

<sup>xvii</sup> 65000 more HFSC.dc

<sup>xviii</sup> [https://business.leeds.ac.uk/downloads/download/187/aimtech\\_-\\_delivering\\_and\\_implementing\\_ict\\_in\\_the\\_fire\\_and\\_rescue\\_services\\_across\\_england\\_-\\_key\\_findings\\_and\\_recommendations](https://business.leeds.ac.uk/downloads/download/187/aimtech_-_delivering_and_implementing_ict_in_the_fire_and_rescue_services_across_england_-_key_findings_and_recommendations)

<sup>xix</sup> <https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/digital-and-data>

<sup>xx</sup> NFCC Reserves Surveys 2018 and 2019 identified 18% of reserves for change programmes and a further 2% for specific digital enhancements

<sup>xxi</sup> CIPFA Fire and Rescue Services Statistics 2019 – 2% of operational pay bill inflated by 2% for 2020

<sup>xxii</sup> 50% of grossed up admin cost per <http://www.fpsboard.org/images/PDF/Surveys/Aonreportfinal.pdf>

<sup>xxiii</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/900766/Public\\_Service\\_Pensions\\_Consultation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/900766/Public_Service_Pensions_Consultation.pdf), page 31 para 2.58

<sup>xxiv</sup> 50% of grossed up admin cost per <http://www.fpsboard.org/images/PDF/Surveys/Aonreportfinal.pdf>

<sup>xxv</sup> 2 x grossed up admin costs per <http://www.fpsboard.org/images/PDF/Surveys/Aonreportfinal.pdf>

<sup>xxvi</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-covid-19-financial-impact-monitoring-information>

<sup>xxvii</sup> Using pay including on costs of £41,100 = 1,352 FF

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<sup>xxviii</sup> % of 22,108 FF per [https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/lgastandard?mod-metric=964&mod-period=1&mod-area=E92000001&mod-group=AllRegions\\_England&mod-type=namedComparisonGroup](https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/lgastandard?mod-metric=964&mod-period=1&mod-area=E92000001&mod-group=AllRegions_England&mod-type=namedComparisonGroup)

<sup>xxix</sup> HMICFRS State of Fire 2019 “In the 27 services that provided comparable data, the number of appropriately trained staff who were allocated to protection work had reduced from 655 in 2011 to 450 in 2019. Another problem the sector faces is the number of qualified protection staff who move to more lucrative posts in the private sector. With inspecting officer qualifications taking at least 18 months to complete, services don’t have a quick fix to fill staffing shortfalls.” (p87, para 3.)

<sup>xxx</sup> £30m / £2.367bn from Fire Core Spending Power spreadsheet

<sup>xxxi</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-01/0121/20200316FireSafetyBill2020IA.pdf>

<sup>xxxii</sup> “Further Costs to the FRS” Page 48 of [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/901866/20200708\\_Fire\\_Safety\\_Order\\_2005\\_Uplift\\_Consultation\\_IA.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/901866/20200708_Fire_Safety_Order_2005_Uplift_Consultation_IA.pdf)



<sup>xxxiii</sup> NFCC Plan on a Page 2020-21.docx



<sup>xxxiv</sup> CFOA GRANT CONDITIONS- FINAL

<sup>xxxv</sup> CPO Deliverables list for Grant Conditions, July 2020 filtered by “Red” funding status and no timeline allocated

<sup>xxxvi</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gdp-deflators-at-market-prices-and-money-gdp-june-2020-quarterly-national-accounts>

## EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>Meeting</b>	Fire Authority
<b>Date</b>	3 September 2020
<b>Title of Report</b>	Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2020-2025 'Planning for a Safer Future' – Consultation Results and Modified Proposals
<b>By</b>	Dawn Whittaker, Chief Fire Officer
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Mark O'Brien, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

<b>Background Papers</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CFA report - 23 April 2020, Agenda Item 59 - Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025</li> <li>2. CFA report - 23 April 2020, Agenda Item 60 - Communications and Consultation Plan for the IRMP</li> </ol>
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<b>Appendices</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025</li> <li>(B) Communications and Consultation Plan for the IRMP</li> <li>(C) ORS IRMP Questionnaire</li> <li>(D) Stakeholder List</li> <li>(E) ORS Stakeholder Presentation</li> <li>(F) Copies of letters, emails and phone calls received</li> <li>(G) Full Consultation report from Opinion Research Services</li> <li>(H) IRMP Media Coverage</li> <li>(I) Revised Equality Impact Assessment for the IRMP</li> <li>(J) Staffing changes comparison</li> </ol>
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### Implications

<b>CORPORATE RISK</b>	✓	<b>LEGAL</b>	✓
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b>		<b>POLICY</b>	✓
<b>FINANCIAL</b>	✓	<b>POLITICAL</b>	✓
<b>HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</b>	✓	<b>OTHER (please specify)</b> <b>Service Delivery</b>	✓
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>	✓	<b>CORE BRIEF</b>	
<b>EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b> ✓			

**PURPOSE OF REPORT** This report presents the results of the public consultation on the proposals laid out in the Fire Authority's draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025. The first part of the report presents the views of staff, stakeholders, and our communities, and part 2 (section 10 onwards) presents a modified set of proposals based on the feedback from the consultation exercise and engagement with staff and representative bodies.

The report seeks the agreement of the Fire Authority on the new set of proposals in order to allow a final IRMP, covering the period 2020 to 2025, to be published.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

It is a statutory requirement of the Fire Authority to publish an IRMP. The current IRMP expires this year (2020).

On 23 April 2020, this Authority agreed to commence an 8-week public consultation on the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2020-2025 'Planning for a Safer Future'.

The consultation programme was adapted in light of the restrictions that COVID-19 and the associated lockdown brought. Guidance was sought from professional bodies including the Consultation Institute and our consultation services provider, Opinion Research Services. In addition, the Monitoring Officer gave legal advice on the COVID guidance for local authorities.

The consultation programme ended on the 19 June 2020 and the following report includes:

- a breakdown of the level and type of consultation undertaken
- a full representation of responses received
- a modified set of proposals which have been developed by officers following constructive engagement with officials of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), and which address many of the concerns raised through the consultation exercise

In total, 2,047 responses were received:

- 836 questionnaire responses were received
- 620 telephone surveys were completed
- 40 residents attended the focus groups or undertook a depth interview
- 38 stakeholders attended the webinar
- 360 unique submissions, 152 standardised submissions<sup>1</sup> and one petition were received.

This is the highest number of responses received in any IRMP consultation exercise undertaken to date by this Authority.

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<sup>1</sup> This was essentially a pre-populated questionnaire response

The following report details the results of the consultation process for the Fire Authority to consider. It also outlines how a number of the original draft proposals have been modified following public, stakeholder and staff feedback, and recommends an amended and modified set of proposals for Fire Authority consideration.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- i) consider the results of the public consultation exercise and the views raised by staff, public and stakeholders for each of the original proposed changes in the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025;
- ii) note the modified set of proposals that are detailed in section 11 of this report which were developed based on ongoing consultation and engagement with staff groups and union representatives throughout the process; and
- iii) agree the final IRMP proposal for change as follows:
  - (a) agree to the introduction of Proposal 1 - the Operational Resilience Plan (ORP) – which will enhance our operational resilience by increasing our core number of fire appliances available at the start of the day from 15 to 18. Agree the associated staffing and contractual arrangements to facilitate the ORP including the introduction of a flexible crewing pool and enhancements to on-call contracts to improve appliance availability – as outlined in paragraph 11.2 onwards.
  - (b) agree to the modified Proposal 2 changes to day crewed stations – To introduce a one-watch duty system at Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven and Uckfield to work over 7 days with an establishment of 9 and; introduce a one-watch duty system at Battle Fire Station to work over 5 days with an establishment of 7 - as outlined in paragraph 11.11 onwards.
  - (c) agree to the modified Proposal 3 removal of second fire appliances – The second appliances at Bexhill, Crowborough, Uckfield, Newhaven, Lewes, Battle and Rye will be removed and these stations will be formally designated as single appliance stations. In addition, Heathfield, Seaford and Wadhurst (former maxi-cab stations) will be designated as single appliance stations. However, through an overall

redistribution of operational vehicles, Bexhill, Crowborough, Uckfield and Newhaven will be designated 1 pump resilience stations and will therefore have access to an additional fire appliance located at the stations. These will be utilised as flexible Service-wide assets providing part of the Service's spare appliance fleet, as well as being operationally available at the stations for response to incidents, if required. Lewes, Battle, Rye, Heathfield, Seaford and Wadhurst will also have access to specialist operational vehicles to maintain at least two operational vehicles at the station, and these vehicles will also be operationally available at the stations for response to incidents, if required. As outlined in paragraph 11.19 onwards.

- (d) agree to the modified Proposal 4 changes to the appliance and staffing arrangements in Hastings – A second full-time fire appliance will be introduced at Bohemia Road Station, increasing the staffing levels at that station. The Ridge fire station will change to a 7 day a week “day crewed” system with a 1 watch staffing level of 9. The dedicated crewing for the Bohemia Road Aerial Ladder Platform will be maintained to provide immediate high-reach cover to the eastern part of our county area. To facilitate this the overall number of operational staff across both Hastings stations will be increased by 1. As outlined in paragraph 11.28
- (e) agree to the modified proposal 5 – aerial appliances and other specialist vehicles - to maintain three aerial ladder platforms (ALPs) two as primary crewed in Brighton and Hastings, and place a dedicated ALP at Eastbourne with a shared crewed and second fire appliance; and noting that further work on the provision and disposition of specialist capabilities is underway and will report to SLT in September.
- (f) agree to proposal 6 previous IRMP decisions– smaller appliances will not be progressed. Also, in relation to the following demand management arrangements, agree the following:
  - 1. The Service will no longer automatically attend fire alarms operating in low risk commercial premises. Plans will be developed to work with businesses in order to reduce the numbers of unwanted fire signals (AFAs) attended through a range of measures.

2. The Service will reduce its attendance at lift releases through engaging and communicating with business owners to ensure they are improving the maintenance of their lifts and have in place arrangements for release. A delayed attendance in certain circumstances will be considered where people are not vulnerable or in distress to give business owners time to resolve the issue themselves.
  3. The Service will no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting.
- (g) agree to modified proposal 7 – changes to wholetime duty systems –noting the proposal to introduce option B, group crewing in the City, only. However, we will reinvest 2 of these posts back into the City Business Safety hub, to enhance our overall business safety capacity in the City.
- iv) Note that, subject to agreement, the above recommendations will replace the draft proposals contained within the draft IRMP and this will be updated prior to publication; and
  - v) Note the revised Equality and Finance Impact Assessments for the IRMP attached as Appendix I.
  - vi) Agree to the required changes to the revenue budget and capital programme as a result of the implementation of the final proposals.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 East Sussex Fire Authority (ESFA) is required to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) to describe how it will keep its residents, and those who work or travel through its area, safe over the coming years. The next plan - called Planning for a Safer Future (IRMP 2020-25) - describes the main risks to East Sussex and Brighton & Hove's communities, and details how ESFRS plans to use its resources efficiently to reduce those risks.
- 1.2 In order to understand views on the proposals included in the draft IRMP, a formal consultation was undertaken by ESFA between 24 April and the 19 June 2020. East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS) commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS) to undertake a programme of key consultation activities and to report respondents' views.
- 1.3 Opinion Research Services

Opinion Research Services (ORS) is a social research company that works mainly for the public sector to conduct important applied research in health, housing, local government, police and fire and rescue services across the UK. They have worked extensively with fire and rescue services (FRSs) across the UK since 1998.

- 1.4 While working with FRSs across the UK, ORS has specialised in designing, implementing and reporting employee, stakeholder and public consultation programmes for a wide range of integrated risk management plans (IRMPs). In addition, ORS has extensive experience of statutory consultations about education, health and housing, and many other issues, including budgetary consultations.
- 1.5 Respondents' views were gathered through an open consultation questionnaire, a telephone residents' survey, six online focus groups and seven depth interviews with members of the public, and a stakeholder webinar. Moreover, ESFRS received submissions via email, letter and telephone from residents, staff, organisations and stakeholders, the themes from which were categorised by ESFRS staff - and have been tabulated and summarised by ORS in Section 6 of this report.
- 1.6 This report also outlines (from section 10 onwards) how the original draft proposals have been modified following public, stakeholder and staff feedback, and recommends an amended and modified set of proposals for Fire Authority consideration.

## **2 CONSULTATION OVERVIEW**

- 2.1 On 23 April 2020, East Sussex Fire Authority (ESFA) agreed to a public consultation on its draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2020-2025 'Planning for a Safer Future' (Appendix A). The key good practice requirements for consultation programmes are that they should: be conducted at a formative stage, before decisions are taken; allow sufficient time for people to participate and respond; provide the public and stakeholders with enough background information to allow them to consider the issues and any proposals intelligently and critically; and be properly taken into consideration before decisions are finally taken. The consultation reported here meets all these requirements.

## **3 PRE-CONSULTATION FEEDBACK**

- 3.1 A programme of pre-consultation and engagement activities was held over the 12 months prior to the launch of the formal public consultation process, in order to help shape the strategic direction of the IRMP outlined within the draft plan. The feedback received was considered by the IRMP team, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and by Members of the Fire Authority informally via seminars, briefing sessions and workshops.
- 3.2 Pre-engagement with the public

In order to carry out pre-engagement on the IRMP, a survey was available on the Service's website and advertised through social media. There were 100 respondents and the headline results are as follows:

- 80% of respondents agreed that we should align our resources to the areas of highest risk
- 72% agreed we should invest in more prevention schemes and campaigns such as our schools' programmes, Safety in Action and Safe Drive Stay Alive
- 86% agreed we should invest more in improving business fire safety of buildings through, for example, inspections and advice for building owners
- 76% answered 'yes' when asked if they thought the cost for a Band D property is £1.84 a week or £95.53 to pay for the fire and rescue service provided good value for money.

### 3.8 Pre-engagement with staff

Staff and representative body engagement took place in order to share initial thinking and considerations. Very early engagement was undertaken starting in October 2018 and was tied in with the HIMCFRS inspection communication plan. Every watch in the Service was visited. The main Operational Response Review (ORR) report, the related individual station profiles, and the areas of investigation were shared with staff on a dedicated web page throughout the review and the opportunity for staff to feed back with questions and ideas was promoted. Station visits were completed, focus groups were established and the proposals shared with staff and unions before being submitted to the Fire Authority. This process led to a shaping of the original proposals through officers introducing 'Option B' on two of the proposals (proposal 2 – changes to day-crewing, and proposal 7 – alternative wholetime duty systems).

- 3.9 These pre-consultation and engagement activities proved very beneficial. Individual watches on each station were visited and a number of workshops were held with members of staff. A mailbox was also set up so that questions could be asked and responded to electronically.

## 4 FORMAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Formal public consultation on the Fire Authority's draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2020-2025 'Planning for a Safer Future' commenced on 24 April 2020 and ran for an 8-week period.

- 4.2 There were a total of 8 responses received prior to the go-live date of consultation. The views expressed in these responses were primarily against going out to consult during a national lockdown, and that the service should halt consultation and wait to see what the outcome of the pandemic would bring.

- 4.3 These concerns were discussed at the CFA meeting on 23 April 2020, particularly the impact that COVID-19 would have on the public consultation process as the nation was in full lockdown at that time.

4.4 A full copy of the pre-consultation responses can be found in Appendix F.

#### 4.5 Consultation Overview

Officers are confident that the consultation undertaken met the key principles of consultation, and that members of the public, staff and stakeholders incl. representative bodies were afforded the opportunity to express their views, both at the early formative stage (see pre-consultation feedback above) and throughout the formal public consultation period as well as the post-consultation period before any decisions are taken. The views expressed throughout the whole period have been subject to thorough analysis and used to further shape Service thinking. This is reflected in the development of the modified proposals described later in this report.

4.6 The consultation and engagement process included the collection of opinions from staff, partners, stakeholders and the public using the following methods:

- Publication of the review and all supporting documents on the Service web site
- An online questionnaire hosted by an external company, Opinion Research Services (ORS)
- Various Service Brief publications inviting staff to consult on the review
- Dedicated mailboxes set up for receiving both staff questions and consultation responses.
- Emails/letters to over 650 local councillors, businesses, stakeholders and community groups inviting them to view and consult on the review online and/or to attend the stakeholder webinar
- Fire Authority Member engagement
- IRMP briefing sessions undertaken by local station managers
- Station Manager engagement with local organisations
- 6 online public focus groups facilitated by ORS
- 1 online stakeholder webinar facilitated by ORS
- A representative residents' telephone survey to 600 residents
- 10,000 letters sent to targeted households where there was a higher likelihood of residents not having access to the internet/email/social media.

4.7 In addition to the 10,000 letters above, a further 10,000 letters were issued in the latter half of the consultation period which were targeted in specific areas (Crowborough, Newhaven and Uckfield) with the intention to invite the residents to review the official consultation material which documented all of the proposals, and to complete the online survey. We used Mosaic Public Sector lifestyle data to identify households in these areas which had strong community roots (and therefore likely to have views/opinions regarding the local area).

## 5 CONSULTATION PROPOSALS

5.1 The draft IRMP that went out to public consultation covers a five-year period and shows how the Service aims to balance prevention, protection and response, mitigating risk within available resources. The IRMP aims to ensure that the

Authority's strategies, projects and day to day business underpins the Authority's commitments, and ensures that the Authority can fulfil its purpose.

5.2 The key outcomes of the IRMP alongside the proposed changes to the Service's service delivery model, focusing on re-allocating resources more effectively against the risk profile, were outlined in the draft IRMP as well as the previous CFA report (CFA report 23 April 2020, agenda item 59 – see background papers previously provided to Members)

5.3 Members will note that there were 7 key areas of proposed change which were put before the Fire Authority and which were recommended for public and stakeholder consultation:

1. *Introduction of an Operational Resilience Plan (ORP)*
2. *Changes to day-crewed duty stations*
3. *Removal of second fire engines at day-crewed and on-call stations and reclassification of three "maxi-cab" stations*
4. *Changes to the resources in Hastings*
5. *Special vehicles – including aerials (high-reach vehicles)*
6. *Review of previous IRMP decisions*
7. *Changes to full-time staff duty systems*

Full details of the original proposals can be found on pages 40-54 of the draft IRMP (Appendix A)

5.4 In addition to the 7 key areas of proposed change, views were also sought from staff, the public and stakeholders regarding other issues raised in the IRMP, such as the undertaking of more building inspections and home safety visits, increasing council tax, and whether the Service offers value for money.

5.13 A copy of the ORS questionnaire is attached as Appendix C. It should be noted that proposal 5 (specialist appliances and aerial appliances) was not included as a specific question as these proposals relate to internal operational matters and therefore there were no resulting questions. However, information on the proposal is found in the consultation document.

5.14 The residents' telephone survey conducted by ORS asked similar questions with a few exceptions. This is because the questions needed to be streamlined to ensure the telephone survey could be completed in a timely manner. These changes were collaborated on by Opinion Research Services and ESFRS and agreed ahead of the go-live of the telephone surveys commencing, and are explained in the full report produced by ORS (Appendix G).

## **6 SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION FINDINGS**

6.1 The following sections summarise the main consultation findings. However, Members are referred to the detailed report for a full account of people's views, attached as Appendix G.

### **6.2 Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan**

***ESFRS plans to increase the number of immediate response (or 'core') fire engines available at the start of the day from 15 to 18***

6.3 Open consultation questionnaire

Overall, more than two thirds (71%) of respondents to the consultation questionnaire agreed with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day, whilst around 1 in 5 (21%) disagreed, and less than 1 in 10 (8%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.4 Residents' Survey

The vast majority (93%) of residents agreed with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has at the start of the day from 15 to 18. Less than 1 in 20 (3%) disagreed, with also less than 1 in 20 (4%) neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

6.5 Public focus groups/depth interviews

When polled<sup>2</sup>, 24 of the 40 public participants strongly agreed with the proposed ORP, 14 tended to agree and two neither agreed nor disagreed. No-one opposed the Plan.

6.6 In discussion, the ORP was considered on its own merit and generally supported as a means of increasing the number of fire engines guaranteed to be available at the start of each day, of improving coverage across the city and county, and of introducing a necessary degree of flexibility to the Service overall through the introduction of resilience appliances. People were also pleased to see the commitment of on-call firefighters being better recognised and “valued” through salaried contracts, which they also suggested would aid both recruitment and retention in light of reduced incidents and thus (under the current system) reduced pay.

6.7 Despite the general positivity about the ORP, there were concerns around: potential on-call recruitment difficulties and whether the proposed salaried contracts would be sufficiently attractive to overcome these; the potentially detrimental impact of the more ad-hoc ‘flexible crewing pool’ on team cohesion; and whether the delayed turn-out option for the resilience appliances will work in practice given the changes being made in some areas of the Service.

6.8 Stakeholder webinar

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<sup>2</sup>A series of ‘polls’ were run during the sessions and due to the interdependencies between Proposals 1 and 2 (that is, in the opinion of officers, the former cannot be achieved without implementing the latter), participants were asked to cast their ‘votes’ after being given the background information on both, rather than take them in isolation. This ensured they were aware that increasing the number of ‘core’ fire engines available at the start of each day would only be possible by making changes elsewhere in the Service.

Of the 17 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 11 agreed with the proposal, two disagreed and two neither agreed nor disagreed. There were also two 'don't knows'. In discussion, a number of clarification questions were asked around the specifics of the ORP, particularly in relation to the recruitment of on-call staff (and the reasons why it might be problematic), the proposed new on-call contracts, and attendance times.

6.9 The main issues raised in relation to this proposal were around: how a “*guaranteed service*” can be provided in view of the difficulties involved in recruiting and retaining on-call staff; whether the proposed new on-call contract will be as effective as ESFRS hopes; service-wide resilience in the event of a large and/or protracted incident and to ensure adequate cover for ‘non-core’ stations; and ensuring team cohesion within the flexible crewing team.

#### 6.10 Submissions

The ORP was supported in some submissions as an attempt to improve county-wide FRS coverage, but opposed in others as disingenuous. Indeed, it was said that the promise of 18 immediate response fire engines at the start of each day under is “*misleading*” as only 14 will be crewed by on-station firefighters responding to an incident within a minute. The remaining would be either be available on a five-minute turnout or share/jump crewed with an aerial ladder platform, and so potentially unavailable.

#### 6.11 **Proposal 2: Changes to day-crewed fire stations**

*ESFRS is proposing to change to ‘day-only’ crewing at its current ‘day-crewed’ fire stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield*

#### 6.12 Open consultation questionnaire

Overall, around a quarter (24%) of respondents agreed with the proposal to change the crewing system from ‘day-crewed’ to ‘day-only’ at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, whilst 7 in 10 (70%) disagreed and just over 1 in 20 (6%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

#### 6.13 Residents’ Survey

Overall, three fifths (60%) of residents agreed with the proposal to change the crewing system from ‘day-crewed’ to ‘day-only’ at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, whilst 3 in 10 (30%) disagreed, and 1 in 10 (10%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.14 Residents living in Rother were significantly less likely to agree with changing the crewing system, compared to the average.

#### 6.15 Public focus groups/depth interviews

8 of the 40 public focus group attendees and depth interviewees strongly agreed with Proposal 2, and a further 24 tended to agree. 4 neither agreed nor disagreed, 3 tended to disagree and there was 1 'don't know'.

6.16 There was widespread agreement that the proposed crewing change is acceptable to facilitate the coverage improvements identified in Proposal 1 – the transfer of resources to prevention and protection and the 'flexible crewing pool' in particular. It was also said, though, that this proposal will be difficult to 'sell' to the wider public if taken in isolation without understanding its potential benefits.

6.17 As for concerns, longer response times were an inevitable worry for many, and several sought clarification on what exactly 'slightly longer' means in this context and about the exact implications of additional minutes on fire spread. Other worries were around: the loss of experienced full-time firefighters from local areas to the 'flexible crewing pool'; the potential for difficulties as a result of separating day- and night-time crews; and the impact of population growth on future incident numbers.

6.18 In terms of the impact on staff and staffing, there was some debate as to whether the proposed change would be beneficial or detrimental. A few people considered the day-only system to be a marked improvement on day-crewing inasmuch as the latter appears over-burdensome in terms of hours worked, whereas others foresaw some "push-back" from existing day-crew firefighters who might be reluctant or unable to change from a system they are familiar with and have built their lives around – particularly considering some would eventually (following 3 years pay protection) lose a significant proportion of their income (circa £6,000 per annum) through no longer being eligible for a housing allowance.

6.19 Furthermore, there was disagreement as to whether day-only staffing would be better for recruitment purposes: some felt it would assist in attracting a more diverse workforce to the full-time Service (mothers of school-age children for example), whereas others worried that on-call recruitment may be more difficult if asking for evening and weekend cover only.

6.20 Finally, the importance of regularly monitoring the impact of any change such as this was stressed.

#### 6.21 Stakeholder webinar

Of the 19 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, five agreed with the proposal, 10 disagreed (7 strongly) and there were 4 'don't knows'.

6.22 In their questions and comments, several stakeholders referred to both proposals 2 and 3 together. For example, there was significant concern about the proposed change to crewing arrangements at, and the loss of the second fire engine from, Crowborough Fire Station – primarily due to its location at the extremity of the county, its proximity to Ashdown Forest and the A26, and the town's significant population and development increases.

6.23 With specific regard to changing crewing systems from day-crewed to day-only, a few stakeholders sought clarification as to exactly what 'slightly longer'

response times will entail, as well as why they are justifiable during the daytime on weekends. There was also some concern about low on-call firefighter numbers and availability; and the loss of full-time firefighter posts locally.

#### 6.24 Submissions

There was significant opposition to this proposal in the submissions. The most common reasons for rejecting the proposed change from day-crewed to day-only duty systems at the six relevant fire stations were: the prospect of longer response times on weekends during the day; the difficulties likely to be involved in recruiting sufficient on-call staff to cover those periods; and the possible impact on wholetime shift stations if having to travel into day-crewed areas (and indeed to the on-call areas currently covered by day-crewed stations) when there is no immediate response available. It was also said that the current day-crewed stations house most of ESFRS' special vehicles, and that it will be difficult to ensure on-call firefighters' competencies on all of them due to their availability and capacity.

#### 6.25

*ESFRS proposes the following two options for change:*

*Option A (6 staff with 8.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 33 posts)*

*Option B (7 staff with 10.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 27 posts)<sup>3</sup>*

#### 6.26 Open consultation questionnaire

The vast majority (91%) of respondents, overall, preferred Option B (7 staff with 10.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 27 posts), whilst less than 1 in 10 (9%) respondents preferred Option A (6 staff with 8.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 33 posts).

#### 6.27 **Proposal 3: Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines**

*ESFRS is proposing to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations, and re-classify the three "maxi-cab" stations at Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations<sup>4</sup>*

#### 6.28 Open consultation questionnaire

Overall, just under 1 in 5 respondents (19%) agreed with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven,

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<sup>3</sup>Please note that due to time constraints, these options were not discussed in the telephone residents' survey or at any of the deliberative events (the focus groups and webinar).

<sup>4</sup>Please note that due to time constraints, the latter proposal was not discussed in the telephone residents' survey or at any of the deliberative events (the focus groups and webinar).

- Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations, whilst more than three quarters (77%) disagreed with the proposal, and 4% neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 6.29 Over a quarter of respondents (28%) agreed with the proposal to re-classify the three “maxi-cab” stations at Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations, whilst just under three fifths (58%) disagreed with the proposal, and more than 1 in 8 (14%) neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 6.30 Residents’ Survey
- Overall, just less than a third (27%) of residents agreed with the proposal to remove the second fire engine from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations, whilst three fifths (60%) disagreed, and around 1 in 10 (11%) neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 6.31 Public focus groups/depth interviews
- 29 of the 40 public focus group participants and depth interviewees agreed with removing the second fire engines from the seven affected stations: 14 strongly agreed and 15 tended to agree. 6 people neither agreed nor disagreed, 4 tended to disagree and 1 strongly disagreed.
- 6.32 The proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations was supported by a majority of participants across all six focus groups as a sensible redistribution of under-used resources. In particular, people were seemingly convinced by the statistics around critical incidents, low appliance availability and the fact that currently, 74% of incidents in these areas are dealt with by one fire engine (though there was a minority view that the latter figure is unacceptably low).
- 6.33 This is not to say, though, that there were no concerns or anxieties, for there were several – most notably in relation to second fire engine response times, particularly to the more rural areas served by the seven affected stations. Indeed, this was the main reason why some people opposed this proposal. The other main concern was a potential lack of resilience as a result of removing the seven fire engines, both in terms of attendance at incidents and for stand-by moves to cover ‘gaps’ across the area.
- 6.34 Other worries were that: it will be difficult to reintroduce the “capital equipment” once it has been disposed of, even in the event of rising incidents; increased use of back-up appliances from other areas could mean a lack of local knowledge among those attending incidents; and that future demographic changes may not have been sufficiently considered.
- 6.35 Stakeholder webinar
- Of the 19 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, only 1 agreed with the proposal, 2 neither agreed nor disagreed and 14 disagreed (12 strongly). There were a further 2 ‘don’t knows’.

6.36 Some of the issues raised in relation to Proposal 3 have been reported above for the reasons explained, but there was some worry about the loss of second appliances in isolation. Longer second fire engine response times from neighbouring stations were a concern, as was the fact the second fire engines under threat themselves provide back up to other areas (Crowborough to Forest Row for example).

6.37 While it was recognised that 74% of incidents in the affected areas are dealt with by one fire engine, this was considered too low a figure to justify removing resources that are required over a quarter of the time. It was also again suggested that the figures being used to justify the proposal are “*out of date*” – and that they may be somewhat misleading if they relate to incidents as opposed to mobilisations.

#### 6.38 Submissions

There was significant opposition to this proposal in the submissions, largely on the grounds that the second appliances offer significant county-wide resilience and allow swift safe systems of work at serious incidents. It was said that whenever these resources are available, residents in their areas get a faster two pump attendance and fire cover within five minutes if the primary appliance is unavailable. Furthermore, standby moves would not be required, thus maintaining cover on other station grounds that would otherwise be negatively impacted.

#### 6.39 **Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings**

*ESFRS is proposing to change the way it crews its stations in Hastings, and to introduce an additional fire engine to the town*

#### 6.40 Open consultation questionnaire

Overall, around half (49%) of respondents agreed that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road, whilst around 1 in 3 (31%) respondents disagreed, and 1 in 5 (20%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.41 Just over half (52%) of respondents living Hastings agreed with the proposal, whilst a third (33%) disagreed, and 15% neither agreed nor disagreed.

#### 6.42 Residents' Survey

Overall, nearly 9 in 10 (87%) residents agreed that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road. Around 1 in 20 (6%) disagreed, with the same proportion (6%) neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

6.43 Around one eighth (13%) of residents in Hastings disagreed with the proposal, which is significantly more than the overall average.

6.44 Public focus groups/depth interviews

Over 8 in 10 (33) of the 40 public focus group participants strongly agreed with the proposed changes at Hastings. A further 5 tended to agree, 1 neither agreed nor disagreed and 1 tended to disagree.

6.45 In discussion, it was clear that there was very little disagreement with this proposal: the vast majority of participants considered it common-sense in ensuring the right resources are in the right place. People were also reassured that both Hastings stations would continue to support each other and that, overall, the town would be adequately (some felt better) resourced.

6.46 There was some negative opinion in the Hastings and Rother groups, mainly around cover for areas to the east of Hastings (out towards Rye) during the evening and on weekends. With regard to Rye itself, it was said that the proposed removal of the second fire engine from the area would mean The Ridge having to travel there more frequently, which again led to concern about longer response times outside daytime hours.

6.47 Stakeholder webinar

Of the 17 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 7 agreed with the proposal, 2 neither agreed nor disagreed and 2 disagreed (1 strongly). There were a further 6 'don't knows'.

6.48 Submissions

The proposals for Hastings were mentioned 38 times in the submissions, with 21 respondents opposing the proposed crewing change at The Ridge (from wholetime to day-crewed) again on the general grounds of longer response times meaning greater risk to life – and more specifically as the station covers Hastings Old Town with its many listed buildings and “back to back” layout. The potential for longer response times was an issue not only for respondents from Hastings itself, but also for those from the more rural areas out towards Rye to which The Ridge responds currently.

6.49 **Proposal 5a: Changes to the provision and crewing of aerial appliances<sup>5</sup>**

6.50 Submissions

Many staff members and the representative bodies objected to the proposals for Aerial Ladder Appliances (ALPs), particularly that those at Eastbourne and Hastings would, in future, be share crewed with a fire engine at those stations. Their primary objection was that the use of either vehicle would put the other out of action, resulting either in potentially unsafe practices at high-rise incidents (if the fire engine is out and the ALP is unavailable) or delays at incidents requiring

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<sup>5</sup>Proposals 5a and 5b were not formally consulted on as they relate to internal operational matters and therefore there were no resulting questions. However, they were frequently referenced in the submissions.

a standard appliance (if the ALP is out and the fire engine is unavailable). In light of this, many demands for ALPs to be primary crewed were made.

6.51 In this context, there was particular concern around share crewing the Hastings ALP with the proposed second appliance at Bohemia Road in light of the fact the latter would likely be more frequently mobilised on evenings and weekends if The Ridge becomes a day-crewed station (thus incapacitating the ALP).

6.52 **Proposal 5b: Changes to the provision and crewing of other specialist appliances**

6.53 Submissions

There was worry among some respondents about losing 4x4 off-road vehicles from service, particularly that at Wadhurst Fire Station. Its removal was considered unacceptable, primarily due to the wildfire risk posed by Ashdown Forest and the rurality of the area and its difficult terrain. The retention of the swift water rescue team in light of climate change and more frequent flooding events was also strongly advocated in several submissions.

6.54 **Proposal 6: Demand management**

*ESFRS is aiming to manage demand for its services in three low-risk areas (automatic fire alarms, lift rescues and trapped birds) to reduce the impact on its other work*

6.55 **Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)**

6.56 Open consultation questionnaire

Overall, over 2 in 5 (43%) respondents agreed that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises, whilst 2 in 5 (46%) respondents disagreed, and around 1 in 10 (11%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.57 Public focus groups/depth interviews

29 of the 40 members of the public strongly agreed with ESFRS' proposals in relation to AFA activations. A further 7 tended to agree, 2 neither agreed nor disagreed and 2 tended to disagree.

6.58 Most participants recognised (some through first-hand experience) that AFA activations are a significant drain on ESFRS' resources and so supported the proposal not to automatically attend those in low-risk commercial premises.

6.59 There was, though, some associated worry about non-attendance at activations outside "office hours" when there may be no-one around to make a confirmation call, and about the 4% of calls that turn out to be actual fires. Moreover, reassurance was sought that 'person risk' would be fully considered at locations

such as nightclubs and shops with residential accommodation attached – and that the importance of ‘heritage risk’ would be recognised.

6.60 Stakeholder webinar

Of the 21 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 12 agreed with the proposal and 7 disagreed. There were a further 2 ‘don’t knows’.

6.61 Despite the majority agreement, there were concerns around: the 4% of “*real incidents*”; fire spread in dense commercial/residential areas; and how operators of commercial premises will be informed about any change in procedure.

6.62 **Lift rescues**

6.63 Open consultation questionnaire

Overall, just over 2 in 5 (42%) respondents agreed that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners time to resolve the issue in the first instance, whilst just less than half (48%) disagreed, and less than 1 in 10 (9%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.64 Public focus groups/depth interviews

33 members of the public agreed with ESFRS delaying responses to lift releases in certain circumstances, 24 strongly. 2 people neither agreed nor disagreed, 3 tended to disagree and 2 strongly disagreed.

6.65 Those in agreement with the proposal considered it wholly appropriate that building owners/managers should attempt to resolve issues with broken lifts themselves in the first instance, instead of immediately defaulting to FRS response. There was also a feeling that implementing a delayed response policy may encourage better equipment maintenance on the part of those responsible for it.

6.66 Those who disagreed or had worries about the proposed change were primarily concerned about the wellbeing of those trapped in lifts, even if they are not vulnerable or in significant distress. As such, they sought clarification around exactly how delayed the response would be given contractors are not often on-scene very quickly – and that some owners/managers apparently do not have any procedures in place at all.

6.67 Whatever is ultimately decided, it was considered imperative that any changes are widely communicated so that people know what to do and who to contact in the event of becoming trapped in a lift – and to ensure that building owners/managers can make alternative (or improved) arrangements if necessary.

6.68 Stakeholder webinar

Of the 20 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 10 agreed with the proposal, 1 neither agreed nor disagreed and 7 disagreed. There were a further 2 ‘don’t knows’.

6.69 **Trapped birds**

6.70 Open consultation questionnaire

Overall, exactly half (50%) of respondents agreed with the proposal that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting, whilst just under 2 in 5 (39%) disagreed, and around 1 in 10 (11%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.71 Public focus groups/depth interviews

34 of the 40 public participants agreed with the proposal (24 strongly), two neither agreed nor disagreed and four disagreed.

6.72 There was strong agreement that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting: several participants commented that this should not be its responsibility, but rather that of animal rescue charities.

6.73 Some, though, caveated their agreement, stating that their support was conditional on animal rescue charities having the capacity to take sole responsibility for bird rescues. If they do not, then a delayed response approach such as that proposed for lift rescues was suggested – or at least some training and/or investment to increase other organisations' ability to deal with such incidents. Indeed, those who disagreed with this proposal did so on the grounds that animal rescue charities almost certainly do not have the resources or capacity to respond to calls to trapped birds that would ordinarily have attracted an ESFRS response, particularly since the advent of the Covid-19 crisis.

6.74 Informing the public about what they should do in the event of finding a trapped bird was also considered essential if a policy change is implemented.

6.75 Stakeholder webinar

Of the 20 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 14 agreed with the proposal (8 strongly), 2 neither agreed nor disagreed and 3 disagreed. There were a further one 'don't know'.

6.76 Although there was a high degree of support for this proposal, there was some worry that members of the public or wildlife organisations may attempt risky bird rescues themselves in lieu of FRS attendance.

6.77 Residents' Survey<sup>6</sup>

Overall, more than two thirds (69%) of residents agreed that ESFRS should stop attending to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises, delay responding to releasing people from lifts if the people are not vulnerable or in distress and no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting. Around one fifth (21%) of residents disagreed that ESFRS should stop attending these types of calls, whilst 1 in 10 (10%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

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<sup>6</sup>Residents were asked about the three areas of demand management as part of one question.

6.78 Residents living in Brighton & Hove were significantly more likely to agree that the ESFRS should stop attending certain calls in order to release capacity, compared to the average.

6.79 Submissions

While there was some support for ESFRS no longer routinely attending AFA activations and incidents involving trapped birds and delaying its response to lift rescues in the submissions – many staff members, representative bodies and other stakeholders advocated a continuance of current policy. Their main reasoning was that: it can never be known at the outset whether an AFA activation is an actual fire and fire spread in dense commercial areas can be swift; confinement in a lift can be traumatic and so a swift response should be seen as a humanitarian gesture; and knowing the FRS will not be attending to a trapped bird might result in members of the public and animal charities putting themselves in danger while attempting a rescue.

6.80 It was also often said that these types of incidents enable firefighters to familiarise themselves with their built environments and interact with businesses, organisations and communities – and that bird rescues in particular are a positive means of real-life training with the ALP outside the ‘emergency’ environment.

6.81 **Proposal 7: Changes to the four-watch duty system**

*ESFRS is proposing to make changes to the duty system at five of the six fire stations that are currently crewed on the traditional 4-watch system*

6.82 Open consultation questionnaire

Overall, less than a third (29%) of respondents agreed with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at Preston Circus and Roedean (both in Brighton), Bohemia Road (in Hastings), Eastbourne and Hove. Just under half (48%) of respondents disagreed with the proposal, while more than 1 in 5 (23%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.83 Of the respondents from Brighton & Hove, less than a third (29%) agreed with the proposal, while almost two thirds (65%) disagreed, and around 1 in 20 (6%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.84 Of the respondents from Eastbourne, over half (56%) agreed with the proposal, while less than a third (31%) disagreed, and around 1 in 8 (13%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.85 Residents’ Survey

Overall, just under two thirds (64%) of residents agreed with the proposal for ESFRS to look at ways to change its 24/7 crewing arrangements, whilst more than 1 in 5 (23%) disagreed, and around 1 in 8 (13%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.86 Public focus groups/depth interviews

Members of the public were asked whether, in principle, they agreed or disagreed with ESFRS reviewing crewing changes at five of its wholetime shift fire stations. 18 strongly agreed, 14 tended to agree and 8 neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.87 For several participants, this proposal represents an internal matter on which that felt they could not, or indeed should not, comment. Others did venture an opinion however, with some suggesting that the current system seems somewhat outdated and inefficient (both financially and in terms of firefighters being able to work to the best of their ability by the end of their last night shift). As such, they supported at least a review of the system to look at more flexible alternatives.

6.88 If the decision is taken to make changes to the four-watch duty system, it was considered imperative that ESFRS fully engage its staff in the process at all stages – and that the Service continuously monitors the effectiveness or otherwise of any new arrangements.

6.89 Stakeholder webinar

Of the 21 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 8 agreed with the proposal, 4 neither agreed nor disagreed and 5 strongly disagreed. There were a further 4 ‘don’t knows’.

6.90

***If the crewing arrangements are changed, ESFRS has offered two options:***

***Option A - a “Flexible rostering Duty System” at all five fire stations***

***Option B - a “Group Crewing System” at the three city stations<sup>7</sup>***

6.91 Open consultation questionnaire

Just under 3 in 5 (57%) respondents preferred Option A, a ‘Flexible Rostering Duty System’ at all five fire stations, whilst just over 2 in 5 (43%) preferred Option B – a ‘Group Crewing System’ at the three city stations.

6.92 Public focus groups/depth interviews

There was some disagreement as to the benefits or otherwise of a flexible duty system to firefighters themselves. Some felt that being able to plan shifts between themselves could result in a better work-life balance for staff, and that offering more flexibility may be what is required to attract a more diverse workforce to ESFRS. Others, though, could foresee difficulties in implementing changes to a system that has been in place for a long time – and which wholetime firefighters

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<sup>7</sup>Please note that due to time constraints, these options were not discussed in the telephone residents’ survey.

have based their lives around in terms of, for example, childcare and possible secondary employment.

6.93 There were also some worries around the mechanics of the flexible crewing system in particular: a few people suggested that without strong management it could lead to unfairness if the more desirable shifts are 'cherry-picked' by more senior or forthright staff members. Moreover, a loss of crew cohesion as a result of no longer operating a watch-based system was a concern for one participant.

#### 6.94 Submissions

Staff and representative bodies in particular criticised the proposed move away from the four-watch duty system toward a 'less family friendly' flexible rostering system, which they said would also result in the 'destruction' of the watch system that "*is the bedrock of the fire service and contributes enormously to our effectiveness*" (staff member).

#### 6.95 **Other issues: Building and home inspections**

*ESFRS is proposing to review its response models (as above) to release resources for more prevention and protection work, and to have capacity for more inspections and visits*

#### 6.96 Open consultation questionnaire

Overall, around 4 in 5 (79%) respondents agreed that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety, whilst around 1 in 10 (11%) respondents disagreed, and 1 in 10 (10%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

#### 6.97 Residents' Survey

Overall, around 9 in 10 (88%) residents agreed that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety, whilst 1 in 20 (5%) disagreed, and just less than 1 in 10 (8%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.98 Residents living in Rother were significantly less likely to agree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety, when compared to the districts and city overall.

#### 6.99 Public focus groups/depth interviews

All public participants agreed that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety – 36 strongly

6.100 The old adage 'prevention is better than cure' was frequently raised across all discussions. Indeed, the overwhelming opinion was that it is better to prevent

incidents before they occur to improve both public and firefighter safety and economic efficiency – and the Grenfell disaster was noted several times as a reason for more building inspections in particular.

6.101 Stakeholder webinar

Of the 21 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 18 agreed, 2 neither agreed nor disagreed and 1 strongly disagreed that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety.

6.102 It would seem that only those with reservations around more building and home inspections commented at this juncture though, primarily suggesting that any increase in prevention and protection should not be made at the expense of front-line response.

6.103 Submissions

Home and building inspections were supported as an important means of prevention and protection in the submissions, though there were some comments that they should not be increased at the expense of front-line response services.

6.104 **Other issues: Finances and investment**

*ESFRS is considering options for future council tax rises in light of funding uncertainties beyond 2020/21*

6.105 Open consultation questionnaire

More than 4 in 5 (83%) respondents would be willing to pay more in council tax for their local fire and rescue service (ESFRS) next year, whilst 17% would not be willing.

6.106 Residents' Survey

Around 4 in 5 (81%) residents would be willing to pay more in council tax for their local fire and rescue service next year, whilst around 1 in 5 (21%) residents would not.

6.107 Residents living in Eastbourne were significantly more likely to being willing to pay more in council tax for their local fire and rescue service next year, when compared to the districts overall.

6.108 Public focus groups/depth interviews

All but three public participants said they would be willing to pay more for ESFRS next year (one said they were not prepared to and there were two 'don't knows').

6.109 The few who objected to a rise did so on the grounds that they already pay a significant amount of council tax – and even a few of those who would be prepared and able to pay more acknowledged that others would not be. There was also

concern that other local services would request similar precept rises, further impacting on affordability.

6.110 Many participants across the spectrum of views felt strongly that more money should be forthcoming from central government – and several urged ESFRS and ESFA to lobby for this. It was, though, acknowledged that the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the public purse makes it highly unlikely that further funds will be available in the near future.

6.111 Stakeholder webinar

Of the 19 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 8 agreed (7 strongly) that they would be willing to pay more in council tax for ESFRS next year, 5 neither agreed nor disagreed and 2 disagreed. There were 4 ‘don’t knows’.

6.112

*If you are willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire service next year, what level of increase would you accept?*

*Option A - an increase up to 3% depending on what the Government allows*

*Option B - an increase more than a 3%<sup>8</sup>*

6.113 Open consultation questionnaire

Of the respondents who would be willing to pay more in council tax for their local fire and rescue service next year, just over half (55%) preferred Option A (an increase of up to 3% depending on what the Government allows), whilst just under half (45%) preferred Option B (an increase of more than 3%).

6.114 Public focus groups/depth interviews

Among the 37 public participants who were prepared to bear an increase, opinion was almost equally split between those who would tolerate an up to 3% rise (18) and those who would tolerate an over 3% rise (19).

6.115 Those who supported a more than 3% rise typically commented that the weekly increase would be ‘less than a cup of coffee’ and considered it a more than reasonable price to pay for an “essential” public service.

6.116 Those who supported a less than 3% increase did so on the grounds of affordability, for themselves and for others – and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on people’s finances was raised in the context of keeping increases to a minimum currently.

6.117 Stakeholder webinar

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<sup>8</sup>Please note that due to time constraints, these options were not discussed in the telephone residents’ survey.

16 of the 19 stakeholders offered a view as to the level of increase they would be prepared to tolerate: 5 opted for an up to 3% rise; 4 for more than 3%; and there were 7 'don't knows'.

6.118

### ***The extent to which ESFRS offers value for money***

6.119 Open consultation questionnaire

Around three quarters (74%) of respondents agreed that ESFRS offers value for money, whilst less than 1 in 10 (7%) disagreed, and around 1 in 5 (19%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.120 Residents' Survey

Almost 9 in 10 (88%) residents agreed that ESFRS offers value for money, whilst only 2% disagreed, and 1 in 10 (10%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.121 Residents living in Wealden were significantly more likely than average to agree that ESFRS offers value for money, compared to overall.

6.122 Stakeholder webinar

Of the 19 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 12 agreed (7 strongly) that ESFRS offers value for money, 4 neither agreed nor disagreed and 1 disagreed. There were 2 'don't knows'.

6.123 In discussion, there were questions and comments around the level of "back-office" and other non-operational savings considered, and the need to lobby central government for more funding.

6.124 Submissions

Those who commented in the submissions generally felt that ESFRS does currently provide value for money, but some said that perceptions might change in future if the Planning for a Safer Future proposals are implemented.

6.125

### ***Ways ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future<sup>9</sup>***

6.126 Open consultation questionnaire

Overall, the most common suggestions respondents made for ways ESFRS can make savings were: focusing on preventative measures through education and home safety visits; reducing its management roles; and promoting voluntary work.

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<sup>9</sup> Please note that due to time constraints, this was not discussed in the telephone residents' survey or at any of the deliberative events (the focus groups and webinar).

6.127 **Other issues: ESFRS' purpose and commitments<sup>10</sup>**

*ESFRS has a strong purpose and clear commitments to help make East Sussex safer by:*

*Delivering high performing services by using its resources to achieve the best level of safety for people and business.*

*Engaging with its communities by using its trusted reputation to deliver educational initiatives and campaigns.*

*Having a safe and valued workforce by ensuring the people of East Sussex are safe and are provided with the right equipment, training and skills.*

*Making effective use of its resources by ensuring all its resources are managed effectively, improving its productivity and seeking new sources of income and funding.*

6.128 Open consultation questionnaire

Overall, more than two thirds (69%) of respondents agreed that ESFRS' purpose and commitments are appropriate, whilst just over 1 in 8 (15%) respondents disagreed, and 16% neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.129 **Other issues: Hearing about the consultation<sup>11</sup>**

6.130 Open consultation questionnaire

Overall, most respondents (44%) had heard about the consultation through social media. Around 1 in 6 (17%) heard about it via a letter from ESFRS. Slightly fewer (14%) found out through ESFRS staff, whilst around 1 in 8 (12%) heard via a local councillor or through the ESFRS website.

6.131 **Other issues: Equalities impacts<sup>12</sup>**

6.132 Open consultation questionnaire

An occasional response to the consultation questionnaire touched upon equalities matters: for example, one respondent felt that rural communities, whose populations are generally older, were being treated unfairly compared to the towns. Another comment referenced the importance of considering school safety, with the implication that ESFRS might need to consider the potential impacts on younger people. One respondent also stated that ESFRS already provides

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<sup>10</sup> See above

<sup>11</sup> As above.

<sup>12</sup> As above.

“wonderful” support to elderly and vulnerable people, and therefore should not be “meddled with”.

## 7 **COMMUNICATIONS**

7.1 An integrated multi-channel communications plan was launched when the consultation opened. It had the following objectives:

- To publicise the plan and its proposals
- To encourage participation in consultation and any stakeholder events
- To conduct a series of senior officer led engagements
- To set out next steps
- To help the public understand fire service issues

7.2 It was recognised that the consultation presented different challenges to previous exercises:

- A careful explanation was required to ensure that the public understand that we are committed to keeping people safe and want to get our priorities right to do this.
- Consultation taking place during an unprecedented period of national lockdown.
- The IRMP proposals were both holistic and inter-connected which made the explanation of the full set of proposals as a package more challenging to portray to less well-informed members of the public.
- Changes to the numbers of operational resources across the ESFRS area would likely impact on the public’s perception of risk

7.3 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was recognised that the consultation will be affected by the limitations that the pandemic created. Due to lockdown and social distancing rules, we would not be able to offer roadshows or face to face interactions with the public, stakeholders or staff. We therefore made the decision to invest more heavily in activities such as webinars, social media engagement and phone calls/interviews than previously, to ensure that we could feel confident the public were aware of our plans. Three key audiences and relevant communication tools were identified, as set out below.

7.4

Communication tools		
<b>Stakeholders</b> Emails Letters Webinar	<b>Public</b> Media Website Twitter Facebook Mail-outs Online Focus Groups Telephone Survey	<b>Staff</b> Emails Watch Visits IRMP Briefings Service Brief

## 7.5 Stakeholders

7.6 Stakeholder engagement was a key strand of this communication plan. In order to support stakeholder engagement, we produced the following supporting materials:

- Press releases to be used for newsletters and websites
- Online stakeholder webinar

When the consultation commenced in April, we contacted over 650 stakeholders and groups inviting them to take part in the consultation survey and to attend a stakeholder webinar. The majority were contacted by email. We contacted a small number by post where we did not have an email address available. Appendix D portrays the stakeholders that were contacted

7.7 The stakeholders included Parish and local Councils, MPs, charities and support groups and partners.

7.8 Printed copies of the consultation were sent to stakeholders if requested.

7.9 We provided all Fire Authority members and senior members of staff with information packs containing copies of the consultation. We asked that they help promote the consultation where they could.

### 7.10 Stakeholder webinar

7.11 The online stakeholder webinar was held on 04 June. There were 69 registrations of interest, 48 booked the event (held on Zoom) and 38 attended on the day, with some of those who were unable to do so submitting questions or comments via email following the event.

7.12 Opinion Research Services (ORS), which facilitated the event commented:

*“In ORS’s extensive experience of IRMP consultations, the ESFRS ‘Planning for a Safer Future’ webinar held on 4th June is one of, if not the, best attended stakeholder sessions we’ve ever conducted. There were 38 ‘on the day’ attendees, and several others who registered but were unable to attend have requested copies of the notes from the session. Levels of engagement were high, with just short of 100 questions asked and comments made – either in advance of, during and following the session. Participants were also encouraged to respond formally after the event via the online questionnaire.”*

7.13 Attendees included an MP and local councillors, representatives of partner organisations (such as local councils, Sussex Police, SECAMB and Southern Water) and other fire and rescue services, and representatives of other local organisations (such as the University of Brighton, Ashdown Forest Conservators, Brighton and Hove Speak Out, the Chinese Association and Optivo).

7.14 ORS gave a presentation outlining the IRMP proposals, attached as Appendix E.

- 7.15 Participants were encouraged to ask questions for clarification, both in advance and throughout the meeting itself. They were also encouraged to give their views via the online chat and Q&A functions, as well as via online polls that were designed to gather a sense of the balance of opinion among attendees on the proposals.
- 7.16 Just shy of 100 questions were asked, a significant proportion of these were answered within the session. The full set of Q&As were supplied to all 69 stakeholders after the event. These can be found in Appendix 1 of ORS's main report, attached as Appendix G.
- 7.17 In addition to the stakeholder webinar, a number of individual or group briefings were undertaken throughout the consultation period by the CFO and DCFO. These included briefings to local MPs, City/Town Councils, strategic partners and other stakeholder groups.
- 7.18 **Press and media**
- 7.19 Media - Interviews and press releases were made available.
- 7.20 Overall, the consultation resulted in coverage in the following outlets:
- The Argus
  - BBC Sussex (radio)
  - Bexhill Observer
  - Brighton and Hove News
  - Eastbourne Herald
  - Hastings Observer
  - Heart FM (radio)
  - ITV Meridian (TV)
  - Kent and Sussex Courier
  - Rye & Battle Observer
  - Splash FM (radio)
  - Sussex Express
  - Uckfield News
- 7.21 To put this into context:
- ITV Meridian News has a daily viewing figure of 340,000
  - The Argus online has a daily reach of up to 32,000 readers across Sussex.
  - The Argus Newspaper has an approximate daily circulation of 9262.
  - BBC Radio Sussex has approximately 223,000 listeners per week.
  - Heart FM (Surrey & Sussex) has approximately 301,000 listeners per week.
  - The Eastbourne Herald has a monthly reach of 49,000 readers in Eastbourne.
  - The Observer Series has a reach of 18,000 readers across Battle, Bexhill, Eastbourne, Hastings, Heathfield, Mayfield, Robertsbridge, Burwash, Rye, Tenterden and Wadhurst.

7.22 Over the course of the consultation period, we released six press releases:

- <https://www.esfrs.org/news/2020-news/proposals-for-east-sussex-fire-and-rescues-future/> - **305 hits**
- <https://www.esfrs.org/news/2020-news/service-statement-on-consultation-decision/> - **608 hits**
- <https://www.esfrs.org/news/2020-news/planning-for-a-safer-future/> - **326 hits**
- <https://www.esfrs.org/news/2020-news/response-to-fbu-press-release-3-june-2020/> - **178 hits**
- <https://www.esfrs.org/news/2020-news/deadline-approaches-to-take-part-in-planning-for-a-safer-future/> - **38 hits**
- <https://www.esfrs.org/news/2020-news/planning-for-a-safer-future-consultation-closure/> - **39 hits**

A full list of IRMP media coverage is attached as Appendix H.

### 7.23 **Social media**

7.24 Social media was used to drive traffic towards the website.

7.25 During the consultation period, we posted ten main posts on Twitter (not including tweets in response to followers). We received the following totals:-

#### 7.26 **Impressions: 40,457**

An impression means a tweet has been delivered to a Twitter account's timeline. Not everyone who receives a tweet will read it, but it's possible they could.

#### 7.27 **Total engagements: 2,741**

**Total link clicks: 218**

**Retweets: 42**

**Likes: 28**

7.28 During the consultation period, we posted eleven main posts on Facebook. We received the following totals:

#### 7.29 **People reached: 23,449**

**Engagements: 1,408**

**Shares: 52**

**Likes: 51**

7.30 We also posted on Facebook groups to help reach specific audiences who may be affected by the changes. These groups include Wadhurst and Newhaven. We are unable to obtain the engagement figures for these posts as we are not the authors of these pages.

7.31 Social media was our key contact point for the public during this consultation and was vital in directing them to the official consultation survey rather than alternative petitions created by others. Social media was key in signposting the public to information about the IRMP and ways in which they could ask further questions if required.

7.32 **ESFRS Website**

7.33 The website acted as a central hub for information about the consultation and IRMP proposals and also linked to the externally-hosted questionnaire.

7.34 A new section was created on the ESFRS website to host the information [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture). The page was essentially a library of information relating to the IRMP including the main consultation document and associated analytical reports and fire station risk profiles from the Operational Response Review, as well as bite-size videos breaking down each proposal, Frequently Asked Questions and a link to the online questionnaire.

7.35 There were a total of **8,872** hits to the [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture) page. **1,333** of these hits derived from Facebook posts and a further **505** from Twitter posts

7.36 **Partner Websites**

7.37 The IRMP Team contacted colleagues within the City/County and the local borough/district councils to ask for support with promoting our consultation on their respective consultation portals/pages. Material was supplied.

7.38 **Focus Groups**

7.39 A programme of six deliberative online focus groups was undertaken with a diverse and broadly representative cross-section of residents across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. ORS worked in collaboration with ESFRS to prepare informative stimulus material for the groups before facilitating the discussions and preparing an independent report of findings.

7.40 The focus groups were designed to inform and ‘engage’ participants with the issues set out in the IRMP. This was done by using a ‘deliberative’ approach to encourage people to question and reflect on the proposals in detail. The meetings lasted for two hours and were attended as below:

Area	Time and Date	Number of Attendees
<b>Brighton &amp; Hove</b>	Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2020 6:15pm - 8:15pm	3 (+ 4 depth interviews)
<b>Lewes</b>	Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2020 6:15pm - 8:15pm	7
<b>Eastbourne</b>	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 6:15pm - 8:15pm	5 (+ 2 depth interviews)
<b>Wealden</b>	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 6:15pm - 8:15pm	6
<b>Hastings</b>	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 6:15pm - 8:15pm	5 (+1 depth interview)

<b>Rother</b>	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 6:15pm - 8:15pm	7
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>40</b>

- 7.41 The attendance target for the focus groups was around 6-8 people, which was evidently not achieved in some areas. In order to boost the numbers, ORS undertook a series of depth interviews (four in Brighton & Hove, two in Eastbourne and one in Hastings) using exactly the same discussion guide as at the focus groups. Overall, the 40 participants who took part represented a broad cross-section of residents from the local areas, and particular care was also taken to ensure that people were recruited from the areas most affected by the proposals.
- 7.42 Participants were recruited by random-digit telephone dialling from ORS' Social Research Telephone Unit. Once participants had been initially contacted by phone, all participants were then written to - to confirm the invitation and the arrangements; and those who agreed to come then received telephone or written reminders shortly before each meeting. Such recruitment by telephone is an effective way of ensuring that the participants are independent and broadly representative of the wider community. As standard good practice, people were recompensed for their time and efforts in travelling and taking part.
- 7.43 Although, like all other forms of qualitative consultation, focus groups cannot be certified as statistically representative samples of public opinion, the meetings reported here gave diverse groups of people from East Sussex and Brighton & Hove the opportunity to participate. Because the recruitment was inclusive and participants were diverse, we are satisfied that the outcomes of the meeting are broadly indicative of how informed opinion would incline based on similar discussions.
- 7.44 The full report can be found in Appendix G.
- 7.45 **Telephone Survey**
- 7.46 The second form of quantitative engagement (the online questionnaire being the first) was the telephone survey, undertaken with residents aged 18 and over. The purpose of the survey was to achieve a representative profile of opinions across East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove using broadly the same core questions as in the open consultation questionnaire. A short summary of the proposals was included to be 'read out' within the survey for the benefit of respondents who had not had the opportunity to read the consultation document or to otherwise find out about the proposals.
- 7.47 ORS social research telephone unit staff undertook 620 structured telephone interviews over a period of nearly 5 weeks beginning on 19th May 2020, using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing ('CATI') technology. The survey was conducted using a quota-controlled sampling approach, to ensure a broadly representative sample of residents aged 18 or over across the FRS area.
- 7.48 The telephone survey was designed to provide an estimate of the views one would obtain if it were possible to survey all residents in the relevant population

(in this case, the five East Sussex districts/boroughs plus the city of Brighton & Hove). However, this relies on achieving a sample that properly reflects the population. In practice, due to imperfections in the practical application of any survey and sometimes by the design of the sample, there are usually a number of inherent biases that need to be addressed and corrections that need to be made to the sample design.

7.49 For this survey a decision was made that the sample should be designed so that the target number of interviews for the 6 districts should be large enough to allow for a reasonably robust comparison of views (approx. 100 interviews in each).

7.50 Subsequently, the demographic characteristics of the respondents were compared with data for the whole adult (18+) population. Statistical weighting was applied in order to identify and correct any under (or over) representation of any particular demographic groups due to 'response bias'. The statistical weighting was applied to the results using data from the 2011 census for the profile groups Working Status and Ethnic Group, and 2017 Population Estimates, for Gender, Age and District populations.

7.51 After taking account of the weighting process, we can be 95% confident that the telephone survey results (at overall level) will be within +/- 5 percentage points (depending on the exact sample sizes and opinion splits on particular questions).

7.52 The full report can be found in Appendix G.

### 7.53 **Member Engagement**

7.54 Fire Authority Members were provided with information packs, leaflets and posters to enable them to raise awareness of and encourage participation in our consultation. A variety of methods of engagement were used by Members.

Members received a significant amount of communication from staff and local residents, as well as from fellow councillors and MPs. A volume of responses were compiled directly by Members and a number of communications were forwarded directly to the designated consultation mailbox to inform the published Frequently Asked Questions.

### 7.55 **Mail-out (x 2)**

7.56 ESFRS targeted 20,655 households across the Service area in a series of mail-outs.

### 7.57 1<sup>st</sup> Mail-out

In addition to the telephone survey which took place in direct response to the limitations posed by the national lockdown, letters were sent to 10,743 households across the Service area, informing them of the consultation and how they could get involved. These households had been specifically identified as low likelihood of using or having access to technology such as email, internet and social media using in-house analytical tools and data sets including Mosaic Public Sector lifestyle data.

#### 7.58 2<sup>nd</sup> Mail-out

A further 9,912 letters were sent out in the latter part of the consultation period, in response to concerns from specific areas following counter-material being circulated in those areas. This mail-out was confined to households in the station areas of Crowborough, Uckfield and Newhaven. Residents with strong community roots, combined with their use of social media were targeted, excluding any which had previously been contacted in the 1<sup>st</sup> mail-out.

#### 7.59 **Staff**

Copies of the consultation material were made available via our intranet and staff were signposted to the dedicated IRMP consultation page and questionnaire via service-wide email. Staff were also encouraged to take part in the consultation through regular messages in our weekly staff newsletter 'Service Brief'.

7.60 Senior and middle managers were briefed and provided with information packs to assist with presenting the IRMP proposals to their respective staff groups and to facilitate discussion. Members of the Planning & Intelligence team assisted and supported local station managers in the delivery of the IRMP proposals as required. Questions arising from these meetings were sent through to the dedicated consultation mailbox for the Planning & Intelligence Team to respond to. Where questions related to recurring themes, these were compiled into a set of internal 'Frequently Asked Questions'.

7.61 Local station managers were also encouraged to use their existing links with local organisations, partnerships and stakeholders to promote the IRMP proposals. Information resources and materials were supplied by the Planning & Intelligence teams to assist with this.

#### 7.62 **Audiences Reached**

7.63 The following is an estimate of how many people the communication methods used will have reached. It is possible that we may have reached some people twice via the methods employed.

#### 7.64 **Newspapers online/print**

- The Argus Newspaper- weekly circulation of 55,572
- Bexhill-on-Sea Observer – weekly circulation of 6,000
- Rye Observer – weekly circulation of 6,000
- Eastbourne Herald – weekly circulation on 21,400

#### **Social Media**

##### Twitter

- Total link clicks 218
- Impressions: 40,457
- Total engagements: 2,741

## Facebook

- People reached: 23,449
- Engagements: 1,408

## **Mail-out**

Total households reached: **20,655**

## **Total overall reach of communications activities >170,000**

### 7.65 Counter-material and other areas of note

7.66 Throughout the formal consultation period, there were a variety of other electronic and physical counter-materials that were produced and distributed. In the view of officers, some of these materials were potentially misleading or inaccurate. Comments received from both public and stakeholders were identified as being directly in response to the counter-material that had been produced. Unfortunately, some of the counter-material only provided links to online petitions and this therefore likely drew people away from giving us their informed views through the formal channels.

7.67 The Fire Brigades Union released a Vote of No Confidence in the IRMP proposals on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June stating that *'the delays proposed within these plans will directly contribute to the unnecessary loss of life at incidents we attend in the future'* and called for *'an immediate suspension and a full review of all of the proposals.'*

7.68 Consultation on the proposed changes also made national news:

- Prime Ministers Questions  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-52911345/pmqs-russell-moyle-and-johnson-on-fire-services-cuts>
- Sky News  
<https://twitter.com/fbunational/status/1265644334608678912>

## **8 POST-CONSULTATION**

8.1 Formal public consultation on the Fire Authority's draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2020-2025 'Planning for a Safer Future' closed on 19 June 2020.

8.2 There were a total of ten responses received up to 10 days after official close date which have also been included in the report. Eight of these were from members of public, with three of these writing in response to the letter they had received (the 2<sup>nd</sup> mail-out of the 10,000 that we sent out). The remaining two late responses were from Battle Town Council and the MP for Bexhill and Battle. The full responses can be found in Appendix F.

8.3 The teams involved in facilitating the consultation and communications processes have fully debriefed. Learning and suggestions for improvement will be

documented and developed to ensure that acquired (learned) knowledge from this consultation exercise can be applied in future consultation and engagement processes.

## 9 **CONSULTATION COSTS**

9.1 The Fire Authority approved the consultation and communication plan for 'Planning for a Safer Future' at its meeting on 23 April 2020. It was recognised at the time that the consultation plan had to be reviewed due to Covid-19 restrictions. This meant that the original costs of £27,000 increased to £45,700 which includes the additional spend of a residents' telephone survey, sending the second targeted letter in Uckfield, Crowborough and Newhaven, plus the full analysis and reporting on submissions by email, letter or telephone by ORS.

9.2 A budget of £30,000 for IRMP consultation was provided for in 2019/20 and carried forward into 2020/21. The balance of £19,000 will be funded from the grant provided by Government to alleviate the short-term increase in expenditure and shortfall in income relating to Covid-19.

9.3 The table below shows spend on consultation activities since 2010 and the respective response rates.

9.4

<b>Consultation</b>	<b>Cost £'000</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<i>Planning for a Safer Future 2020-2025 original costs</i>	27 <i>(23K ORS, 4K in house)</i>	
Additional cost attributed to COVID-19 revision of a telephone survey, targeted mail-outs & additional reporting	46 <i>(38K ORS, 8K in house)</i>	2,047
Attendance standards review 2018	22 <i>(18K ORS, 4K in house<sup>^</sup>)</i>	675
Your Service Your Voice 2017/20 IRMP	10 <i>(6K ORS, 4K in house<sup>**</sup>)</i>	588
Changing the Service Shaping our Future IRMP 2014	22	655
Hastings Review 2012	19	504
Rural Review 2010	30	347
<sup>^</sup> Excludes Facebook advertising costs due to inaccessibility & staff time		
<sup>**</sup> All other reviews included externally facilitated focus groups, this one did not		

## 10 **PART 2 - OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND MODIFIED PROPOSALS**

10.1 As outlined above, the public consultation process has been extremely comprehensive with valuable contributions received from partners, members of the public, and other organisations. In addition, significant feedback has been received from our staff and our representative bodies and, in parallel to the public consultation, senior officers have been engaged in meaningful and constructive dialogue with staff representative groups and trade unions, specifically with senior officials of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU).

- 10.2 Based on both the early findings of the consultation process and this ongoing dialogue with the FBU, officers have developed a set of modified proposals. The modified proposals address many of the concerns raised through the consultation process, as well as reduce a number of the impacts on our workforce; and it is those modified proposals which are presented here for Fire Authority decision.
- 10.3 It is vital that our available resources are used in the most effective way to mitigate the risks our communities face. In developing the modified proposals, officers have therefore remained focused on the original objectives and outcomes. This is critical, as this IRMP will take the Authority through the next five years to 2025 and will need to demonstrate how the Service will balance prevention, protection and response, mitigating risk within available resources, as well as forming the base on which to address the areas for improvement identified through the HMICFRS report.
- 10.4 As a reminder to Members, the key outcomes which would be achieved through the original proposals were detailed in CFA report 23 April 2020, agenda item 59 (see background papers previously provided to Members). The original proposals outlined a number of changes to the Service's service delivery model required in order to deliver these improvements, re-allocating resources more effectively against the risk profile. The 7 key areas of proposed change, which formed the basis of the public, stakeholder and staff consultation, are detailed above in para 5.3.
- 10.5 Whilst it is the view of officers that the underpinning risk and evidence base presented in the draft IRMP consultation remains valid, it is clear from the consultation responses that many respondents were concerned about a number of matters related to the original proposals and expressed concerns about them being progressed.
- 10.6 Discussions with the trade unions, specifically the FBU, have been constructive and meaningful. In parallel to the discussions on the main IRMP proposals, officers and FBU officials have been seeking to reach agreement on a range of new ways of working, policy changes and contractual arrangements which will be introduced in parallel with the implementation of the modified proposals. These agreements will bring about improved availability of our fire appliances, a significant increase in the level of prevention and protection activity, and greater emergency response resilience. It is on the basis of a number of these discussions, that officers have been able to re-work and modify the original proposals.
- 10.7 The modified proposals are derived from the options consulted on and the related consultation responses, and aim to strike the balance between driving necessary change and enabling reallocation of resources to risk, specifically providing more prevention and protection activity and better operational coverage across the Service and in Hastings. Effectiveness and efficiency will be improved, and our core on-call stations will have better availability and be more resilient. This, in turn, will enhance prevention, protection and response performance.
- 10.8 Aimed at enhancing our Service to the public, the modified proposals, if agreed by the Fire Authority, will be delivered through a five-year programme in order to

ensure the right resources are in the right place at the right time based on risk and evidence. The purpose of consultation is to listen to views and consider alternative approaches. Given the alternative views expressed by staff together with the strong feedback from the public and other organisations, the following options are recommended for approval by the Fire Authority.

## **11 MODIFIED PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE**

11.1 The following sections outline the final IRMP proposals for change, including identifying where the original proposal has been modified as a result of the consultation and engagement process outlined above.

Subject to agreement, the following recommendations will replace the original proposals contained within the draft IRMP and the formal Fire Authority document will be updated prior to publication.

### **11.2 Proposal 1 – Operational Resilience Plan (ORP)**

11.3 **This proposal remains unchanged**

11.4 We propose to enhance our operational resilience by increasing our core number of fire appliances available at the start of the day to 18. The Service's current approach, underpinned by operational policies, looks to provide 15 appliances. We are proposing to improve this.

11.5 Data analysis has clearly demonstrated that providing 18 fire appliances at strategic locations around the Service, will have the biggest impact on community risk, population and density index, overall activity and ability to reach critical incidents etc. This is the fundamental basis of the proposed ORP.

11.6 We will also plan to secure a further 6 fire appliances as far as possible for operational resilience purposes. These identified appliances do not cover such high-risk areas; however, they are still required to be available in times of high demand to provide resilience to the 18 immediate response appliances. The ORP will ensure these 6 appliances are maintained by introducing greater flexibility into the mobilising arrangements (giving longer for the crew to respond and therefore creating greater flexibility for our on-call staff) and through introducing improved 'on call' contracts.

11.7 Both the 18 immediate response and 6 resilience appliances will continue to be supported by the remaining 'on call' stations and appliances as they are today, and the availability of those stations will continue to be monitored through our central and local operations teams.

11.8 In order to support the delivery of these new arrangements we are proposing a number of new approaches to staff resourcing. We are proposing to enhance the flexibility of our workforce availability through the introduction of a "flexible resourcing pool" consisting of firefighters who will be posted to stations as necessary to cover for staff absences due to sickness, training or other matters affecting availability. In addition, and as an outcome of the ongoing dialogue,

these staff will also be available to provide specialist prevention and protection work in certain situations, enhancing our capacity in those areas.

11.9 We are also proposing to introduce new contractual arrangements for our on-call firefighters in order to enhance their availability. These contractual improvements will form part of an overall approach to focused recruitment and retention initiatives across our on-call service. We will therefore look to introduce:

- new contracts where required which are aligned to periods where cover is needed to maintain fire appliance availability
- a phased implementation of on-call “combined payment contracts” at those stations which support the 18 ORP appliances.

11.10 This proposal remains fundamentally unchanged. However, through dialogue and discussion, we have identified further contractual and resourcing options which will provide even greater opportunity to ensure the maximum number of fire appliances can be available more often.

11.11 **Proposal 2 - Changes to day crewed duty stations**

11.12 **This proposal has been modified from the original**

11.13 We are proposing to change staffing arrangements at our current day crewed fire stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield.

11.14 As detailed in the original report from April (see background papers), on these stations, firefighters currently work a combination of “positive” and “standby” hours over a 24-hour period. Positive hours are worked on the fire station and standby hours are worked on call from a location within a five minute ‘turn in’ time of the station (in the same way our on-call firefighters do). Two workgroups or “watches” of 6 staff cover an average of 42 daytime hours per week and remain on-call during evening periods helping to guarantee fire appliance availability.

11.15 In the original proposal we were considering introducing a ‘day only’ crewing model maintaining a 24/7 response from these stations through a different crewing structure. In that arrangement, full time firefighters would be on-station during the daytime Monday to Friday, with on-call firefighters providing cover in the evening and at weekends. From the public’s perspective, the only difference between the current day-crewed duty system and the proposed ‘day-only’ duty system, would have been the change from an on-station response during the day time at the weekend, to an on-call response during the ‘day time’ at the weekend.

11.16 Following feedback, dialogue and consultation, this original proposal has now been modified to enable continuation of a 7 day a week “day crewed” system, with immediate on-station response during the day at weekends, at the following stations:

- Bexhill
- Newhaven
- Crowborough

- Lewes
- Uckfield

Changes to the staffing compliment and working patterns will be brought forward with these stations migrating, over time, from the current 2 watch system utilising 12 staff, to a 1 watch system utilising 9 staff.

- 11.17 In line with the original proposal and as a consequence of its specific risk and demand profile, it is still recommended that Battle changes to a 5 day day-crewed system with an on-call response at weekends. The recommendation is that this would be in line with “option B” as detailed in the previous IRMP report presented to members in April (see background papers). This option involves one watch of 7 staff, providing and on-station response for 10.5 hours every weekday on a self-rostering shift pattern, as well as an out of hours off-station response in the evenings in the same way they do now. Cover over the weekend period will be provided by on-call staff who will also provide additional cover to the station during other periods.
- 11.18 Members will recognise the potential impacts on our staff from this proposal. The IRMP team and officers have been considering options to mitigate the impacts of these changes on staff and to develop a constructive consultation process with trade unions. Any necessary HR “protections” will be subject to further consultation and agreement and will be further developed over the coming months. The important point to note is that officers are now recommending that all existing day crewed staff retain their related allowances. This is because they will still be required to provide an off station on-call response overnight in the same way they do now. This recommendation substantially decreases any impact on current day crewed staff. Equally, there will be no requirement to impose compulsory transfers; existing staff will be able to remain on the station, on their current terms and conditions (albeit they will work a different working pattern) for as long as they wish to remain on that station. If further staff movements drop the staffing level to 8, the Service will consider, on a case by case basis, whether that new vacancy needs to be filled with a “day crewed” member of staff (providing out of hours off-station response and attracting the resultant allowances), or whether that vacancy can be filled with a day only member of staff, who would not provide out of hours off-station response and would therefore not attract the allowance. This is in recognition of our aging workforce and would support those members of staff who no longer wish to provide an operational response overnight. The criteria for allowing this will be predicated on sufficient on-call staffing across the station and other matters to be agreed.
- 11.19 **Proposal 3 – Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the operational fleet**
- 11.20 **This proposal has been modified from the original**
- 11.21 Every one of our 24 fire stations have at least one fire appliance and 9 stations have two appliances. Officers reviewed the usage and availability of these second fire appliances against the risk profile and concluded that the provision of

- a second appliance at day-crewed and on-call stations was an over provision based on the risk and demand profile.
- 11.22 This proposal would affect: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield; along with the three maxi-cab stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst.
- 11.23 The original proposal looked to remove the 7 second appliances from these stations in order to ensure a more efficient use of our resources, lessening the demand on our future capital programme, reducing the need to borrow in the future, and allowing us to reinvest in other proposals being put forward (i.e. to fund the additional fire appliances in Hastings and Eastbourne, alongside a new ALP for Eastbourne)
- 11.24 Following feedback, dialogue and consultation, we have been able to amend the overall allocation of fleet resources to fire stations, in a way that will provide cover and provision in a different way to that originally proposed, whilst still allowing the Service to make best use of all of our operational vehicles.
- 11.25 Under the modified proposals, Bexhill, Crowborough, Uckfield and Newhaven will have an additional fire appliance located at the station. These appliances will be utilised as flexible Service-wide assets providing part of the Service's spare appliance fleet, as well as being operationally available at the stations for response to incidents, if required.
- 11.26 Other stations will also have access to an additional specialist operational vehicle so that Lewes, Battle, Rye, Heathfield, Seaford and Wadhurst maintain at least two operational vehicles, which will be operationally available at the stations for response to incidents, if required.
- 11.27 **Proposal 4 - We are proposing to change the way we crew stations in Hastings and introduce an additional fire appliance**
- 11.28 **This proposal has been modified from the original**
- 11.29 Both Bohemia Road and The Ridge community fire stations currently each have one fire appliance on an immediate 24-hour response.
- 11.30 In the original proposal, we proposed to:
- Introduce a 'day-crewed' system at The Ridge in Hastings, which would maintain a 24/7 response through a different crewing arrangement; and
  - Introduce a second, additional, fire appliance at Bohemia Road which would provide an enhanced 24/7 response; and
  - Change the crewing of the aerial ladder platform (ALP, high-reach vehicle) at Bohemia Road to a "shared crewing" model.
- 11.31 The Operational Response Review main report and corresponding individual station profiles, identified that Bohemia Road has a significantly higher risk profile than The Ridge and an opportunity was identified to realign our resources

accordingly. Bohemia Road station area ranks 2nd across the Service for the highest number of critical incidents and has had the most life-risk fire incidents over the last 9 years, surpassing Preston Circus in Brighton. It is a high-risk area and given its resource provision compared to the City, there is an imbalance, hence the proposed changes.

- 11.32 The key purpose of the proposed changes in Hastings were to facilitate the provision of a second, full time, fire appliance at Bohemia Road, increasing the staffing levels at that station accordingly. Introducing this additional appliance will significantly improve the risk cover for both Hastings station areas, building more resilience in the area.
- 11.33 Following feedback, consultation and dialogue, it is still recommended to enhance cover in Hastings through introducing a second full time fire appliance at Bohemia Road and increasing the staffing levels at that station.
- 11.34 It is still recommended that The Ridge fire station changes to a 7 day a week “day crewed” system, albeit with a 1 watch staffing level of 9 rather than 12 as originally suggested.
- 11.35 However, by modifying the overall staffing numbers across the 2 stations, we propose to maintain the dedicated “primary” crewing for the Bohemia Road ALP to provide immediate high-reach cover to the eastern part of our county area. In order to facilitate this aspect of the modified proposal, we need to increase the overall number of operational staff across both Hastings stations by 1.
- 11.36 **Proposal 5 – We are proposing to make changes to how we provide and crew specialist vehicles including aerial (high-reach) appliances**
- 11.37 **Aerial Appliances**
- 11.38 **This proposal has been modified from the original (see also Proposal 4 above)**
- 11.39 An Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) differs from a conventional fire appliance and is designed for operations where working from height is advantageous or a necessity. These appliances typically reach up to 32 metres in height (9-10 storeys) and are able to supply water or foam jets as well as a stable rescue platform. We propose to maintain three aerial appliances based, as now, in Brighton, Eastbourne and Hastings to ensure response is matched to risk, considering the different local risk profiles in the ORR.
- 11.40 Our analysis suggest we do need to make some improvements in Eastbourne. We are proposing to put a second, dedicated, fire appliance into Eastbourne and swap the existing aerial rescue pump (ARP) for a dedicated aerial ladder platform (ALP) in order to provide a better mix of resources based on the risks and demand profile within the town and surrounding areas.
- 11.41 Following consultation feedback and dialogue we propose to crew these aerals as follows:

- The City of Brighton & Hove                      Dedicated crew
- Hastings    Dedicated crew
- Eastbourne     Shared crewing model

**11.42 Other specialist capabilities**

11.43 As reported to Members previously, we also have a number of other “special” vehicles and capabilities. Many of these support our day to day core operational duties, others are there to provide an appropriate response to infrequent rescue scenarios such as large animal rescue or building collapse. The data analysis found that the majority of our specialist capabilities are already well placed.

11.44 We currently have a range of different vehicles, equipment and capabilities and we will look to continually review our options available to us so that we can tailor our approach to best suit each emergency. Specifically, there is further work being carried out in relation to our “technical rescue” capability. Technical rescue relates to a range of low frequency but complex rescue scenarios such as building collapse, road traffic collisions involving large goods vehicles etc.

11.45 The review of technical rescue capability, and broader specialist capability requirements, is ongoing and will report to the Operations Committee and then onto SLT in September. The outcomes of that work will link into the modified proposal 3 outlined above in relation to the provision of additional operational vehicles at certain stations.

**11.46 Proposal 6 – Previous IRMP Decisions**

**11.47 The proposals remain unchanged**

11.48 Previous IRMPs committed the Service to a number of initiatives and programmes of work. Most have been completed, however there are some which were ‘on hold’ until such time as the more comprehensive and current risk assessment had been completed through the ORR.

**11.49 Appliance Design**

11.50 A previous IRMP suggested that a smaller type of fire appliance could be provided to Preston Circus and The Ridge fire stations. This proposal was later subsumed into a broader project to review appliance sizes and capabilities across the whole Service. This, in particular, was looking at options to introduce a “three-tiered approach” to appliance design; essentially, small, medium and large appliances. This was in line with changes taking place nationally and was seeking to ensure that appliances were designed and built in the most economical way based on local need.

11.51 The evidence from the ORR, alongside the impact of the other proposals for change in this IRMP, mean that it is no longer necessary or effective to pursue such a change.

11.52 Following the consultation process, this proposal has not changed and the recommendation to the Fire Authority remains that the Service does not look to introduce a three-tiered approach to appliance design at this stage.

**11.53 Managing Demand**

11.54 The current IRMP (Your Service Your Voice 2017-2020) noted that by reducing the demand on our Service for calls that are not deemed appropriate to attend, we will free up our resources to undertake meaningful community safety work that will make people safer.

11.55 The related work was completed and as a result, the Service is recommending managing demand across three operational areas to reduce the number of unnecessary mobilisations which impact on our other work, businesses and commerce. These changes will release capacity into prevention, protection and training.

**11.56 Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)**

**11.57 This proposal remains unchanged.**

11.58 We average around 9,200 operational responses to incidents each year. Automatic fire alarm (AFA) systems account for 34% of all these calls. 96% of the calls initially categorised as AFAs turn out to be false alarms – these are often described as “unwanted fire signals”.

11.59 Only 2% of calls to AFAs in non-domestic premises turn out to be fires (average of 32 per year). Of these 32 fires, 20 do not require any firefighting action (the fire will already be out when the crews arrive). The remaining 12 require varying amounts of firefighting action, ranging from an item being taken outside, use of portable extinguishers, and use of main jets. On average, only one call per year to an AFA in non-domestic property requires use of main firefighting jets.

11.61 Members will note that our HMICFRS report was critical of the Service in relation to this matter. We have the largest number of AFA calls compared to our family group average (our family group of comparable and similar sized fire and rescue services) and attendance at these particular call types are widely considered to be an unnecessary drain on valuable fire service resources.

11.62 They divert essential service resources rendering them unavailable, with the possibility of delayed attendance at genuine emergencies; they create unnecessary risk to fire crews and members of the public when appliances are responding under emergency conditions; they are disruptive to work routines, particularly community and business fire safety activity, and training; they have a demoralising effect on personnel attending a high number of false alarms, and instil a culture of complacency with an expectation of a wasted trip; they impose an additional financial burden on the Service, particularly salary and vehicle fleet costs; and they adversely impact upon other employers who release on-call staff for such calls.

- 11.63 Many other Services have already introduced sweeping changes to how they manage calls to premises with AFA systems. A number have simply stopped attending completely and will only attend if there is a confirmed fire at all premises with AFA systems.
- 11.64 We are proposing a more measured and risk-based approach. This includes appointing a subject matter expert on a fixed term contract to lead an engagement and education project with property owners and responsible persons, in order to allow them to better understand and comply with their responsibilities. Further, we will be introducing a more robust call challenge process via our control centre in line with best practice.
- 11.65 In relation to non-attendance, we are proposing that the Service no longer automatically attend calls to fire alarms operating in low risk commercial premises. These premises are classified as commercial (non-domestic) premises with no sleeping risk, such as offices, shops, factories, pubs, clubs and restaurants. In these premises, when people are present, they are able to check for fire and call back on 999 to confirm; we would then attend as a confirmed fire call with the full attendance of appliances. When people are not present, such as when the business is closed at night, then the life risk is very low.
- 11.66 Finally, we are also reviewing whether, at some point in the future, we should charge a fee for attending unwanted fire signals in some other premises types, in some circumstances. If the Fire Authority are minded to consider such an approach, this would be subject to a separate public consultation in due course.
- 11.67 **Lift releases**
- 11.68 **This proposal remains unchanged.**
- 11.69 We are regularly called to release people from lifts that have malfunctioned. We want to engage and communicate with building owners to ensure that they are improving the maintenance of their lifts and have in place suitable arrangements for releasing people in their lifts.
- 11.70 We are proposing to develop a risk assessed operational policy which would introduce a delay in responding to some incidents where people are not vulnerable or in distress, to give the building owner time to resolve the issue themselves in line with their responsibilities. We are also considering whether, at some point in the future, we should charge a fee for attending such calls. This would bring us in line with a significant number of other fire and rescue services. If the Fire Authority are minded to consider such an approach, this would be subject to a separate public consultation in due course.
- 11.71 Members will want to note that we will continue to attend calls to release vulnerable members of the public from lifts when appropriate and necessary.
- 11.72 **Trapped birds**
- 11.73 **This proposal remains unchanged.**

- 11.74 We already work alongside animal charities to reduce the number of calls we get to birds trapped in netting. However, we continue to attend a small number which tie-up our resources for a period of time and restrict our ability to attend incidents involving risk to human lives. It is often necessary to use aerial ladder platforms and other specialist equipment, making this service disproportionately time consuming and expensive. Therefore, we are proposing that we should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting in the future.
- 11.75 **Proposal 7 – We are proposing to make changes to the duty system that is operated at our six fire stations that are crewed 24/7 on the traditional 4 watch system**
- 11.76 **This proposal has been modified**
- 11.77 This proposal is about the contractual arrangements of the firefighters who work on our six full time shift fire stations at Bohemia Road Hastings, Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus, Roedean and The Ridge Hastings; and the resulting and crewing arrangements.
- 11.78 The current wholetime shift duty system requires a firefighter to work two day shifts followed by two night shifts, then with four days off duty. There are now alternatives to this system in operation across the country and this IRMP process has provided an opportunity to examine if an alternative system would improve how we might deliver our services in a more efficient manner, without detriment to the speed or weight of our operational response.
- 11.79 With the exception of The Ridge (which we propose will become a day crewed station - see Proposal 4), the original proposals identified two options for change. One option (option A) would impact on the remaining 5 shift stations; the second option (option B) would only impact on the three stations in the City.
- 11.80 **Option A**
- 11.81 Option A would be to implement a “Flexible Rostering Duty System” at 5 shift fire stations.
- 11.82 **Option B**
- 11.83 Option B would be to implement a “group crewing” system at Preston Circus, Hove and Roedean. This system enables the Service to provide the same level of response with marginally fewer posts. The term “group crewing” indicates that resources are reduced in one station and enhanced in another, in order to allow the group of stations to operate on a self-sufficient basis for managing operational cover.
- 11.84 Following consultation, feedback and dialogue, the modified proposals will no longer propose changes to the staffing arrangements on all shift stations and, instead, will recommend option B - a change to “group crewing” in the three City stations only.

- 11.85 Group crewing in the City will change the staffing numbers across the three City stations from 104 to 100. Two of the four released posts will be transferred into business fire safety in the City, and the other two posts will be transferred to the flexible resourcing pool in order to improve Service wide operational cover.
- 11.86 These changes will facilitate additional resources being put into business fire safety inspection work, which is fundamental to enhancing safety in the City.

## 12 **OUTCOMES ACHIEVED**

12.1 As outlined earlier, in developing the modified proposals, officers have remained focused on the original objectives; keeping in mind what was hoped to be achieved through the original proposals. The following table highlights the extent to which that has been achieved:

12.2

Outcome	Original Proposals	Modified Proposals
Operational Resilience Plan	✓	✓
Flexible Resourcing Pool	✓	✓
Combined salary contracts	✓	✓
2 <sup>nd</sup> fire appliance into Bohemia Road	✓	✓
More efficient use of fleet including ability to fund new vehicles without borrowing	✓	✓
Eastbourne resources appropriate to risk	✓	✓
Increased capacity to do more prevention and protection work	✓	✓
Improvements to on-call (part time) service	✓	✓
Flexibility to meet financial challenges	✓	Alternative options will need to be prepared

- 12.3 It is the view of officers, that the modified proposals still deliver the original outcomes but do so in a way that addresses many of the concerns raised during the consultation, mitigate risk and reduce impact on our staff.
- 12.4 However, it is important to note that, whilst the original proposals were not designed as a savings programme, it was the case that if all the original proposals had been taken together, they would have presented the Fire Authority with significant flexibility in terms of managing any future financial pressures.
- 12.5 Members will be aware that, in line with the rest of the public sector, there is a high level of uncertainty over future public sector funding, and this uncertainty is

increasing as we begin to understand the short term and longer-term impacts of COVID19.

- 12.6 Whilst the modified proposals do now more clearly separate out this IRMP from future financial planning, it is the case that the Fire Authority will need to consider further options for change in the future, if it is to be able to set a balanced budget through the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- 12.7 This may require the Fire Authority to revert, in a phased and risk-based way, to the original IRMP proposals, and it will certainly require the Authority to consider alternative and additional service-wide savings options which will inevitably affect the range of services the Fire Authority will be able to offer.
- 12.8 An indication of the resulting financial impact of the modified proposal in relation to the original proposals will be outlined later in this paper (see section 14) and also be reflected in the MTFP paper later on today's agenda.
- 12.9 Members will note that the change in the financial impacts of the proposals stem from the change in the number of posts potentially released through the modified proposals. Subject to agreement, the final number of posts released through the modified proposals would be 10. This compares to circa 27 under the original proposals. Further details are provided in Appendix J.

### **13. HIGH-LEVEL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

- 13.1 Analysis of the modified proposals as outlined above has included a full revision of the original a high-level impact analyses undertaken against six key areas (equalities, training, HR, engineering services, estates and finance).
- 13.2 Outcomes from these revisions have not presented any fundamental barriers to progressing with the new modified proposals. However, the process has enabled a detailed series of actions to be identified which will be used during the detailed "design" phase of the implementation project in order to support successful implementation.
- 13.3 The revised high-level equalities impact assessment encompassing all of the modified proposals is attached as Appendix I. Emerging evidence from the consultation process has enriched the EqIA and its action plan. Although no additional adverse impacts to our staff or communities have surfaced, the action plan will be central to the design of each IRMP workstream subject to Fire Authority approval.
- 13.4 More detailed equalities impact assessments specific to each of the proposals will be further developed and refined during the design phase of project implementation.
- 13.5 A detailed financial assessment is provided later in this report (see section 14).
- 13.6 The key headline from the remaining impact assessments is that there are no legal, operational, financial, or resourcing barriers which would prevent the modified proposals, as outlined, being implemented. There are, of course,

significant impacts to consider, particularly in relation to HR matters, which will require further analysis through the design phase of the implementation project in order to support a robust and evidence-based delivery plan. As with all the impact assessments, the development of a detailed implementation timeline will be critical to successfully managing impacts and implications.

- 13.7 This work will be undertaken in collaboration with staff groups and representative bodies during the “design” phase of the implementation project subject to Fire Authority approval of the recommended options. An outline assessment has been made of the project implementation and planning requirements and the headlines in relation to this are provided in section 15 below.

## **14 FINANCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 14.1 The finance impact assessment has been based both on the core proposals within the IRMP and the other functional impact assessments completed as part of the review. This has proved complex and it is clear that further refinement will be required especially after more detailed implementation planning is completed in the design phase.

- 14.2 Nevertheless, it seeks to assess the material financial implications of the proposals, in revenue terms over the period to 2025/26 when implementation will be complete (and full savings will be realised), and in capital terms over the life of the current five-year capital programme.

- 14.3 In consultation with the ORR Board and other stakeholders, a number of key assumptions have been made which underpin the assessment, as follows:

- The proposed flexible resourcing pool will be populated using any posts released from other proposals, until the maximum level of 8 is achieved. The successful implementation of the ORP (proposal 1) is linked to this assumption.
- Posts will be moved on the establishment to ensure only vacant posts are either removed as savings or reallocated to new functions e.g. flexible resourcing pool.
- Changes to day crewed stations will be implemented in a way that aims to ensure that no staff are displaced against their wishes, or require pay protection arrangements.
- Hastings improvements will be delivered together to minimise the impacts on post holders at these locations. Movements of resources into Business Safety will be implemented after the flexible resourcing pool is populated.
- The implementation time-line is indicative until the completion of the design phase, however it is anticipated that implementation of the proposals will begin in April 2021.

- 14.4 Final proposals from the review of special appliances have yet to be presented and are not reflected in the impact on the Capital Programme.

- 14.5 Changes to ways of working, policy and contractual arrangements which have been developed following engagement with the FBU will be introduced in parallel

with the implementation of the modified proposals but are not at this stage included in the assessment of the impact on the revenue budget. They have the potential to provide further flexibility either to manage future financial savings requirements or re-investment in the Service.

14.6 The financial impact of the modified proposals on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme is summarised in the table below. From a revenue perspective the modified proposals deliver a reduction in cost of £0.525m by 2025/26 or a total of £1.125m over the period (original proposals £2.032m and £5.660m – see also Appendix J). The cost of the Capital Programme reduces by £0.568m over the period (original proposals £0.603m). This has the potential to reduce forecast borrowing costs by approximately £0.040m per annum by the end of the period.

14.7 If the modified proposals are approved, the revenue and capital impacts will be built into the budget proposals for 2021/22 and the revised Medium Term Finance Plan. The revenue impact in 2020/21 will be treated as a budget pressure and will be managed by SLT within the existing approved revenue budget.

#### 14.8 Summary of Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Impacts

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
<b>Revenue Impact</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Modified Proposals	25	44	-74	-171	-424	-525
Original Proposals (Upper forecast)	25	-83	-592	-1,261	-1,610	-2,139
Difference	0	127	518	1,090	1,186	1,614
	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Capital Impact</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Modified Proposals	71	-74	-600	35	0	-568
Original Proposals	86	-74	-685	70	0	-603
Difference	-15	0	85	-35	0	35

14.9 As noted elsewhere in this report, there remains significant uncertainty about future funding for the fire service and this has only been exacerbated by the impact of Covid 19. The outcome of the Spending Review being conducted by Government, which will cover a three-year period from 2021-22 onwards, is unlikely to be known until late autumn and we are not expecting the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement until late December. A paper elsewhere on this agenda sets out the potential scale of the savings required to balance the budget (up to circa £1.6m in 2021/22 and £2.8m by 2024/25). This may require the Authority to reconsider the original IRMP proposals which have the potential to release further revenue savings of the order of £1.5m over and above those set out in the table at para 14.8.

## 15 IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT PLANNING

- 15.1 Based upon the magnitude and complexity of the range of modified proposals, it has been important to prepare an indicative timeline to help understand the interdependencies between each proposal.
- 15.2 This has helped to identify timeframes where definition, design and delivery can take place without compromise, dictating a pace of change that maximises the opportunity to achieve the projected outcomes.
- 15.3 Further detailed work will be required in relation to the impact assessments, planning assumptions, policy implications, delivery timeline and implementation options. This work will be completed principally during the 'design' phase of the implementation project subject to Fire Authority approval of the recommended options.
- 15.4 Governance arrangements that oversee implementation and delivery of each IRMP workstream will be supported by a medium-term project plan to capture emerging issues and maintain the pace of change.
- 15.5 It is likely that the first proposal will 'go live' from the 1st April 2021.

## **16 CONCLUSION**

- 16.1 The Service has recognised through the Integrated Risk Management Planning process that change to the service delivery operating model is required to enable reform and improve our service to the public of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.
- 16.2 In June 2019, HMICFRS undertook an inspection of the Service and publicly reported its finding in December 2019, identifying a number of areas for improvement. The modified proposals in this IRMP, if agreed, will make a positive impact in these areas as follows:
- *The service needs to improve its approach to preventing fires and other risks. It should make sure that staff complete home safety visits promptly.* – the additional resources and ways of working delivered through the IRMP will support all functions of the Service including prevention.
  - *The service needs to improve the ways in which it protects the public through fire regulation.* – the additional resources and ways of working delivered through the IRMP will support all functions of the Service including protection.
  - *The service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands the benefits better.* – the additional resources and ways of working delivered through the IRMP will support all functions of the Service including prevention.
  - *The service could do more to reduce the number of fire false alarms it attends, as these are a burden on its resources* – proposal 6 will contribute to improvement in this area.
  - *The service should improve the availability of its on-call fire engines to respond to incidents* – Proposal 1, specifically the ORP, plus the

various other improvements identified to support our on-call service will support improvement in this area.

- *The service needs to ensure that it allocates its resources appropriately and prioritises activities that address the risks identified in its integrated risk management plan* - the additional resources and ways of working delivered through the IRMP will support all functions of the Service including protection.

HMICFRS will be returning in 2021/22 and will be expecting to see how those areas for improvement have been addressed.

- 16.3 The outcomes of the public consultation have been independently reviewed and have been considered, with the purpose of the consultation to allow the public and staff an opportunity to comment on the proposals and present other ideas as to how the Service may be able to meet those requirements, outcomes and benefits. The modified proposals support the delivery of the Authority purpose and commitments
- 16.4 At its meeting on 23 April 2020, the Authority agreed to commence public consultation on the draft IRMP. This gave a valuable opportunity for consultees to respond within the confines of the proposals identified by the Service as meeting the Integrated Risk Management Plan requirements. The above sections of this report reflect that feedback and demonstrates that implementation of a revised set of proposals, based on those elements that have been subject to consultation, will satisfy the risks identified in the Integrated Risk Management Plan, many of the HMICFRS findings and the purpose and commitments of this Fire Authority.
- 16.5 The adoption of the final and modified proposals will result in the following benefits, helping us to and deliver our purpose of “making our communities safer” through “Planning for a Safer Future”.
- 16.6
- We are proposing to maintain 24 fire stations
  - We are proposing to improve our risk cover and resilience by enhancing the 24/7 availability of some fire appliances that have historically had limited availability.
  - We will balance our resources across the Service to reinvest in more:
    - prevention work (e.g. home safety)
    - protection work (e.g. business safety)
    - training (e.g. firefighter safety)
  - We are proposing to have the right specialist vehicles and equipment so we are ready to respond to all types of incidents.
  - We are proposing to introduce a second fire appliance into Hastings Bohemia Road to improve risk cover and make residents in that area even safer.
  - We are proposing to introduce another dedicated fire appliance into Eastbourne and swap the existing aerial rescue pump (ARP) for a dedicated aerial ladder platform (ALP).

- 16.8 If agreed, the draft IRMP document (see appendix A) will be updated to reflect the changes made and published as the Authority IRMP 2020-2025.

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# Planning for a Safer Future

Integrated Risk Management  
Plan 2020-25

Page 187

Consultation Draft



Appendix 1

# Alternative formats and translation

- Albanian** Me kërkesë, një përmbledhje e këtij dokumenti gjendet edhe në gjuhën shqipe.
- Arabic** ملخص لهذه الوثيقة متاحاً أيضاً باللغة العربية عند الطلب.
- Bengali** এই ডকুমেন্টের সারাংশও অনুরোধে বাংলায় পাওয়া যায়।
- Cantonese** 本文件的摘要也可應要求製作成中文(繁體字)版本。
- Farsi** خلاصه شده این مدرک هم در صورت درخواست به فارسی موجود است.
- Russian** Краткое содержание настоящего документа по отдельному запросу предоставляется также на русском языке.
- Gujarati** આ દસ્તાવેજનો સૂક્યાર વિનંતી કરવાથી ગુજરાતીમાં પણ મળી રહેશે.
- Kurdish** كورتیهکی ئەم بەلگهیه ههروههها به پیی داواکاری به زمانی کوردی دهس دهکەویت
- Portuguese** Encontra-se também disponível um sumário deste documento em Português, a pedido.
- Polish** Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany w języku polskim.

## 0303 999 1000

The following formats are available on request:

### Large print

(reformatted and increased to 18 point sans serif font)

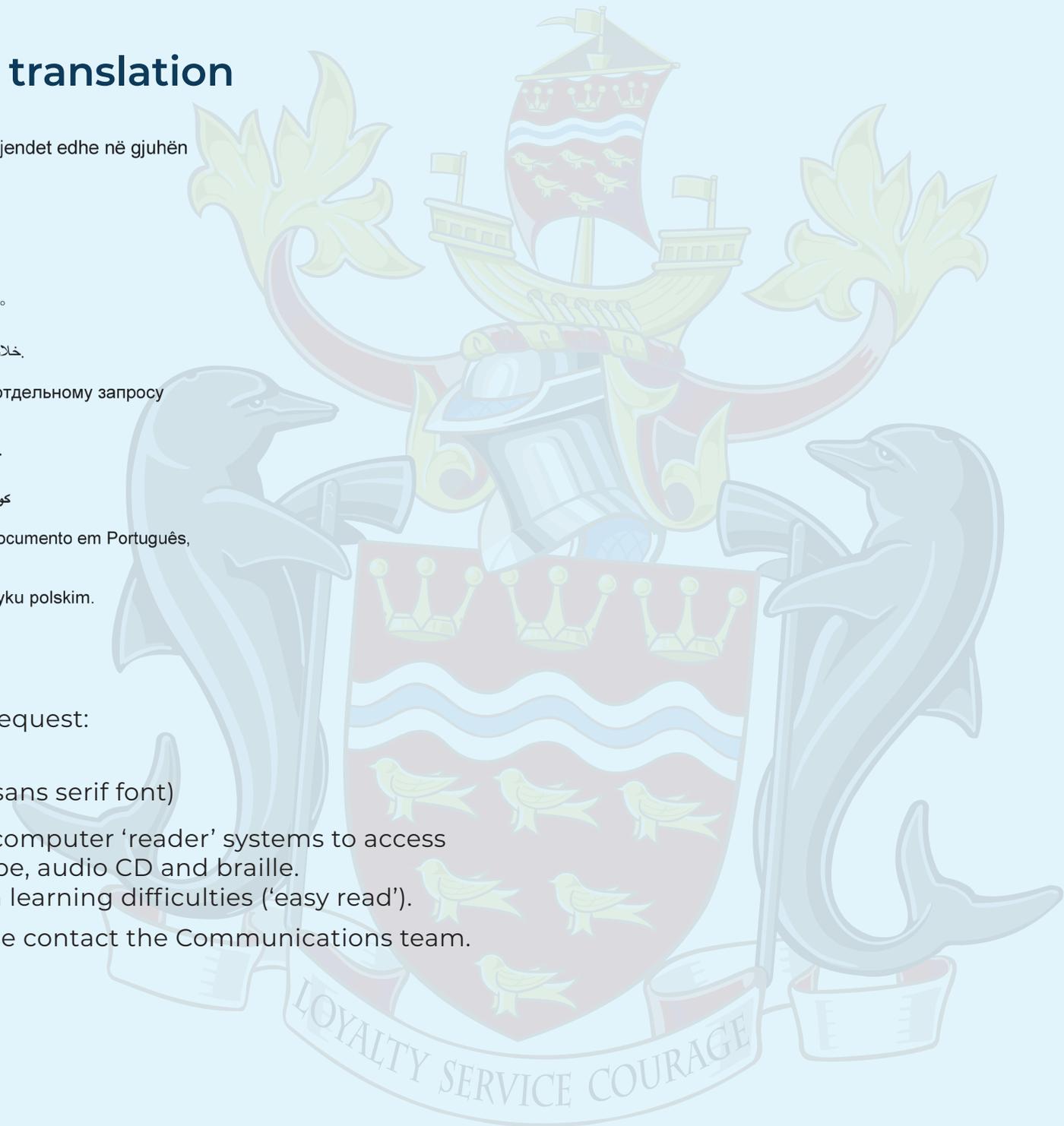
CD ROM in plain text format to enable computer 'reader' systems to access and translate the information. Audio tape, audio CD and braille.

Pictorial format suitable for people with learning difficulties ('easy read').

For translations of this document, please contact the Communications team.

**Tel:** 0303 999 1000

**Minicom:** 01323 462003



# Contents

Purpose of this document	4
Our equality and inclusion commitment	5
Welcome	6
Our purpose, commitments and values	8
How we plan	11
What do we mean by risk?	12
Our risks – past, present and future	13
Building a picture of the types of risk	14
Our communities now and in the future	20
Management of risks – prevention, protection and response	24
Prevention	25
Operational Response Review outcomes	28
Prevention - Our main areas of work for the next five years are.....	30
Protection	32
Protection - Our main areas of work for the next five years are.....	34
Response	36
Planning for a Safer Future – our proposals	38
Proposal 1	40
Proposal 2	42
Proposal 3	44
Proposal 4	46
Proposal 5	48
Proposal 6	50
Proposal 7	53
Our People	55
Safe Person Principles	68
Finance and Support Services	59

# Purpose of this document

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Every fire and rescue service is required to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). It outlines how we will meet the Government's expectations of Fire and Rescue Authorities as described in the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2018.

It is a key planning document and describes how we will keep our residents, and those that work or travel through our area, safe over the coming years. It describes the main risks to our communities and how we are proposing to use our available resources efficiently to reduce those risks.

This plan is our public consultation document which starts on 24 April 2020 until 19 June 2020.

To take part in the consultation, you can do the following things.

- You can respond at: [www.esfrs.org](http://www.esfrs.org)
- You can email us and we will respond accordingly [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org)
- You can telephone and leave us a message on **0303 999 1000**
- You can write to us with a question at

**Planning for a Safer Future**

**East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service**

**Headquarters**

**Church Lane**

**Lewes**

**East Sussex**

**BN7 2DZ**

In line with Public Health England guidelines would encourage you to email rather than post letters and we will not be holding public events. Should you wish to partake in the consultation questionnaire please ring the number above, leaving your contact details and a member of the team will capture your responses.

# Our equality and inclusion commitment

We actively support equality and inclusion as everyone's responsibility and we do this not only in terms of thinking, language, behaviour and values but also through ensuring that our policies and processes are fair, impartial and compliant with legislation. The decisions we make about our Service must consider the needs of everyone. We strive to achieve equality of access, equality of impact and equality of outcome for the services we provide. Our staff use 'people impact assessments' to ensure that any decisions consider the needs of all the people we serve.

Page 191



# Welcome

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We are very pleased to be introducing jointly Planning for a Safer Future 2020-2025, our Integrated Risk Management Plan.

We want to make sure we put our resources in the right place, at the right time to deal with emergencies and help prevent them in the first place through engagement and regulation.

This plan sets out how we will do this.

At the heart of these plans is a robust and detailed Operational Response Review.

Through this process, we have assessed our community risks, using a range of sophisticated analytical tools to identify where incidents such as fires or flooding might happen, when they might occur and how serious they could be.

This allows us to target our resources, including firefighters and fire engines, most effectively, bringing about a better balance of prevention, protection and response.

**Prevention** – This is about reducing the risk to our communities through education and engagement, the delivery of Home Safety Visits and through directing our resources to those identified at highest risk.

**Protection** – This is about reducing the risk to our communities by ensuring that premises covered under fire safety legislation, mainly businesses, are operating safely and within the law.

**Response** – This is about responding to fires, road traffic collisions, rescues, flooding and other emergencies efficiently and effectively.



Fire Authority Chairman  
Cllr Roy Galley



Chief Fire Officer  
Dawn Whittaker

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We have set out several proposals that will change the way in which we keep our communities in East Sussex and the City of Brighton and Hove safe. The proposals are centred on public and firefighter safety and look at delivering our service in a more flexible and efficient way.

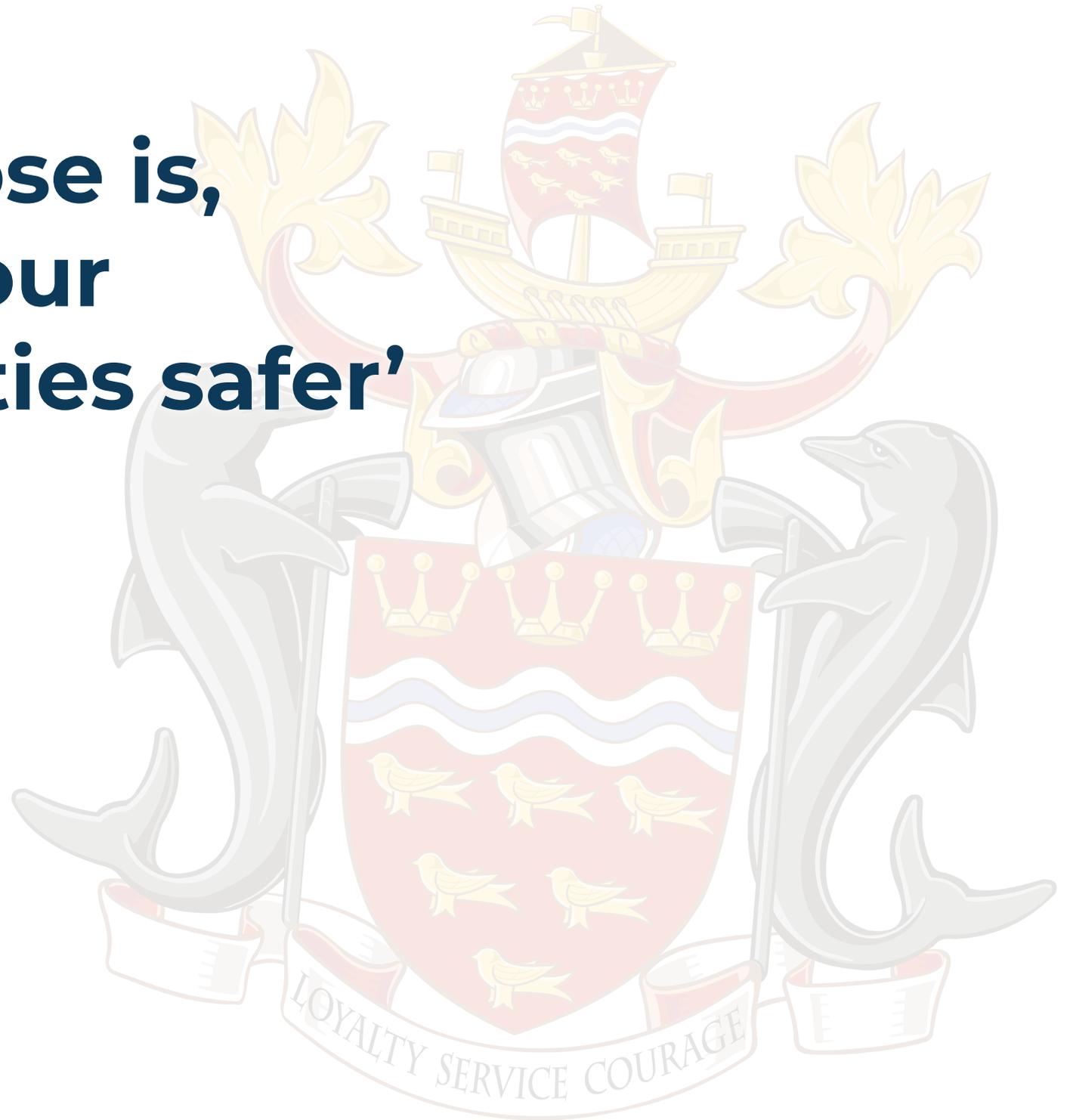
To ensure our 2020-25 plan is relevant in our ever-changing world, we have refined our strategic commitments. Our commitments are the promises we make to our communities.

We are keen to hear your views on the proposals and are also consulting with our staff and other stakeholders.

We believe our proposals provide the best options for our communities with the funding that is likely to be available to us in the future.

We welcome your comments and questions and hope you will take part in our consultation.

**Our purpose is,  
'to make our  
communities safer'**



# OUR COMMITMENTS

## Deliver high performing services

We will use our resources to achieve the best level of safety for people and businesses, by:

- Responding quickly to emergencies
- Ensuring plans and resources are in place to provide a flexible, efficient and resilient response to emergency incidents
- Using intelligence and data to match resources to risk and demand.

## Engage with our communities

We will use our trusted reputation to deliver educational initiatives and campaigns, ensuring:

- We collaborate with partners to promote home and fire safety, business safety, road safety, water safety, and health and wellbeing initiatives linked to core functions
- More people and businesses will be better prepared in an emergency situation.

## Have a safe and valued workforce

We will ensure our people are safe and are provided with the right equipment, training and skills:

- Our workforce will be competent and able to deliver our purpose and commitments
- Our culture embraces change, reflects our values, promotes leadership and is inclusive.

## Make effective use of our resources

We will become a more efficient service by:

- Ensuring all our resources are managed effectively and focused on delivering our purpose and commitments
- Improving our productivity
- Seeking new sources of income and funding.

# OUR VALUES

We are **PROUD**  
of the service  
we provide

**Proud**

**Accountable**

We are **ACCOUNTABLE**  
for our actions

We show **INTEGRITY** in  
our work

**Integrity**

**Respect**

We **RESPECT**  
our colleagues  
and members  
of the  
community

# How we plan

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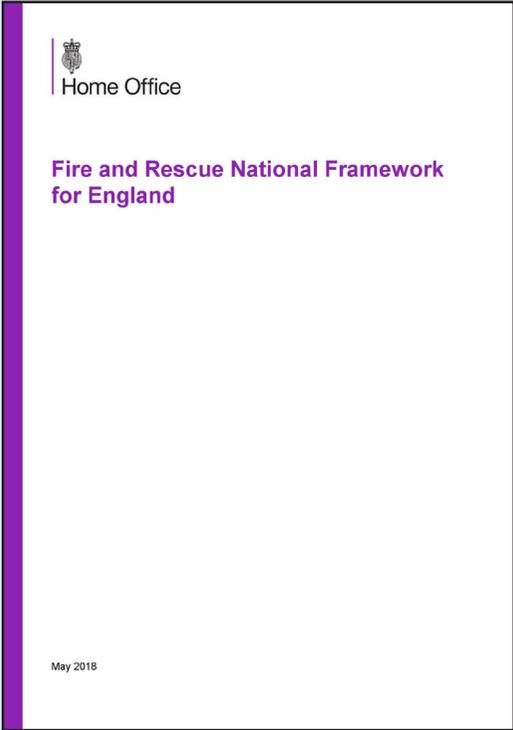
Integrated risk management planning is about improving public safety, reducing the number of incidents and saving lives.

## National Framework

The Fire and Rescue National Framework requires that we produce a plan which considers all the fire and rescue related risks that could affect communities. In doing this, we strive to make sure East Sussex and the City of Brighton and Hove are safer places for people to live, work and visit.

You can read the Framework here:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england)



## What do we mean by risk?

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Risk is the assessment of the likelihood of an event occurring coupled with the potential severity if that event occurs. The impact of incidents is often wider than just those directly involved. For example, a fire in a business will have a knock-on effect to staff, customers, suppliers and the wider community.

We want to reduce the risk, the likelihood and the consequence, for all those who may be affected by an incident.

We have developed a methodology that considers a wide range of data to inform our risk analysis. Further information can be found on Page 9 of the Operational Response Review (ORR) mentioned below.

We bring together data and intelligence to look for patterns and trends. We also use our professional judgement and experience of the Service, of partners and Government, alongside both national and local risk registers.

Our Annual Strategic Assessment of Risk in 2019/20 became the foundation for an Operational Response Review (ORR) and the production of Risk Profiles for each of our fire station areas. It is the analysis within these documents which provide the evidence base upon which we have built our proposals for delivery across prevention, protection and response. We have summarised some of the information in this plan.

The individual Station Risk Profiles form part of this Integrated Risk Management Plan.

They are published at [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture)

You can read more detail at  
[www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture)

## Our risks – past, present and future

One of the most important things this plan must do is to set out how we intend to reduce or mitigate the risks to our local communities and contribute to national, cross-border, and multi-agency incidents.

If a risk is identified, it doesn't mean it will definitely happen. Identifying emerging issues and changing risks helps highlight any actions we need to take.

The breadth and depth of risks which we have considered are fully detailed in the Annual Strategic Assessment of Risk and the ORR documents.

Figure 1 illustrates the types of risk we assess.



Figure 1

# Building a picture of the types of risk

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Our Operational Response Review, Annual Strategic Assessment of Risk and Station Profiles take risks into account to help us plan our prevention, protection and response activities.

The preservation of life is always the highest priority.

We are able to deal with the incidents that occur regularly with efficiency and effectiveness. We also prepare, by planning and exercising, for those incidents that do not occur regularly but that may have a significant impact when they do.

It is important to remember that no single piece of risk data is looked at in isolation. In order to build a comprehensive risk profile, we aggregate and overlay risk information from a variety of sources and this layered approach creates a rich picture of understanding risk. Our process is fully explained in the ORR Risk Assessment methodology document. We have given the following as examples to illustrate how these different sources of information help us build a picture of risk.

Page 200

## Residential

We look at population and household demographics as well as projections for the future.

In order for us to identify a risk for a certain household, we look at a number of factors and use a number of tools to assist us.

Mosaic is a data source which segments the population into “lifestyles” using information collated from a number of government and commercial sources.

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Combining Mosaic with data about fires in homes and dwellings means we can identify:

- which types of people have had fires and what types of fires they have
- which types are more or less likely to have a fire in the home
- where these people live
- what sort of property they live in and whether they own or rent
- how we can communicate fire safety messages to them effectively.

Significantly, the Mosaic lifestyle group 'J – Rental Hubs' accounts for approximately 22% of all dwelling fires – 1 in 5 dwelling fires. These household types are predominantly located along the coastal conurbations, particularly within the City of Brighton and Hove.

We have developed a scoring mechanism for each Mosaic lifestyle type in order to create an 'initial fire risk rating' for each household across the service area.

Across our area, 18% of households are designated as very high risk, with a further 22% high risk households. Around 17% of households are low or very low. Naturally, these proportions change on a station-by-station basis, with some station areas having no very high-risk households, while other areas have almost 30%.

More detail about Mosaic can be found on Page 31 of the ORR.

We also use the Fire Service Emergency Cover Toolkit (FSEC) to assess the risk of death from house fires in each area, based on the socio-demographic profile of the population, historic incidents and our response times to these areas.

Page 66 of the ORR provides further detail. Of note around 3% of output areas have been designated as an above average or well above average risk compared with the national average, the majority of these being within our attendance standards boundaries, i.e. those areas we can reach within ten and fifteen minutes depending on the location of the incident. Knowing this helps deliver our equality and inclusion commitment.

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## Commercial

In a similar way, we look at a number of factors and use a number of tools to assist us in identifying our community risks relating to commercial activity.

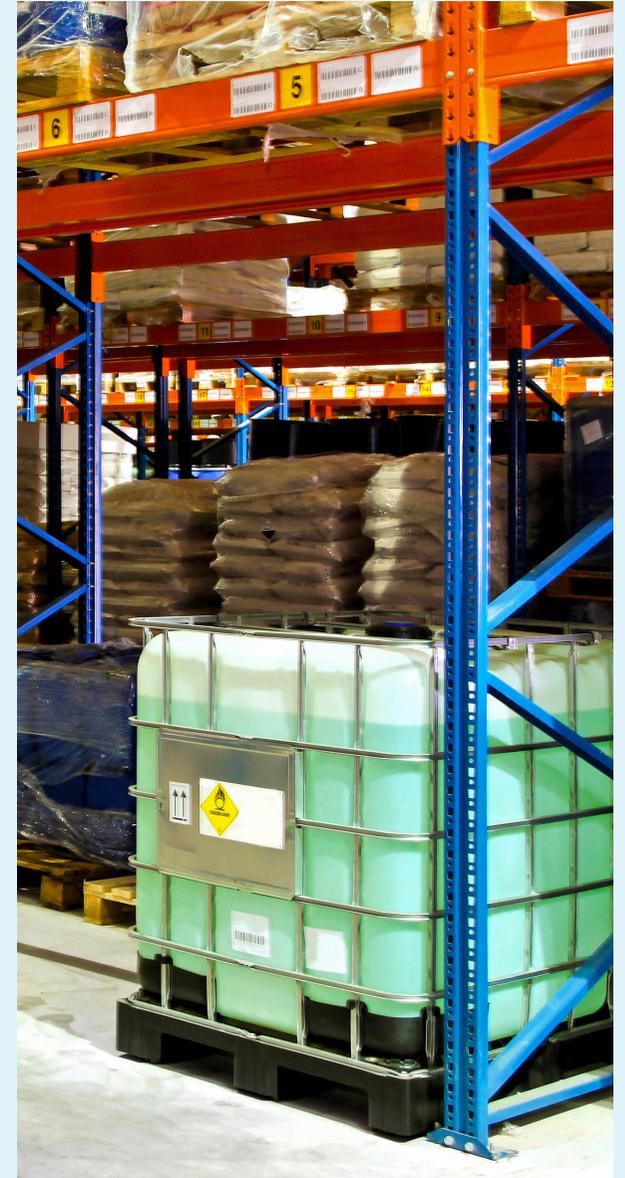
Commercial risks can relate to hospitals, care homes, hotels and houses of multiple occupancy as well as licensed premises, shops and offices.

More information can be found from Page 82 of the ORR.

For any specific high risk premises, we hold Site Specific Risk Information which provides firefighters with information which can be used when they are called to an emergency.

Page 202  
Certain industrial activities involving dangerous substances have the potential to cause serious injuries to people, or far reaching damage to the environment. While these are not frequent, the impact is serious. For example, in March 2009 a large solvent tank collapsed at a site in Rye, causing hazardous materials to leak.

COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations 2015) applies mainly to the chemical industry but also to some storage activities, explosives and nuclear sites, and other industries where threshold quantities of dangerous substances identified in the regulations are kept or used. East Sussex County Council has plans which we assist in reviewing and then testing.



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## Road Risk

We only attend around 25% of all road traffic collisions on the roads in our area and they tend to be the more serious ones where we need to perform a rescue, make the scene safe or make the vehicle safe.

We have analysed all the incidents we have attended alongside data from partners including the Safer Sussex Road Partnership – specifically collisions resulting in injuries. Page 87 of the ORR refers to the analysis carried out to assess our road risk. For example, it shows that road risk is particularly high in Wealden, where 38% of the fatalities in our Service area occur.

The quality of road infrastructure can affect our attendance times and we have taken this into account in the ORR.

## Water Risk

We have historically had high accidental drowning figures. Prevention work over the last three years has contributed to significant reductions in fatalities from accidents. In the period of 2015-2018, there have been an average of 12 water related deaths which were not attributed to suspected, probable or confirmed suicide.

We have a 55 mile coastline which is very popular with tourists and locals. We have considered all inherent risk from our wide variety of water sources including beaches, ports, harbours and marinas, alongside rivers, reservoirs and marshes.

Page 92 of the ORR has further detail.

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## Environment

We need to consider the impact of storms, gales, low temperatures, heavy snow, heatwaves and drought.

Sea levels and temperatures are predicted to increase and extreme weather events are predicted to become more severe and frequent.

The risk of inland and coastal flooding are all linked to excess rainfall, high tides and high-water tables.

2018 was the hottest ever summer for England. Prolonged hot weather has the potential to increase the risk of wild fires occurring. Summer 2018 saw a record-breaking number of wildfires in the UK, such as those experienced in Ashdown Forest. These incidents demand significant resources from fire and rescue services.

Page 99 of the ORR onwards details some of the impacts from the environment.

## Over border risks

In addition to all the risks within our area, there are also risks that sit just outside in neighbouring counties, for example, Gatwick and Shoreham airports in West Sussex and a nuclear power station in Kent. Individual station profiles provide more detail on these when there is a shared boundary with a neighbouring Fire and Rescue Service.



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## National Risk

The Government monitors the most significant emergencies that the UK could face over the next five years through its National Security Risk Assessment. The National Risk Register (NRR) is the public version of this assessment. It provides advice on how people, businesses and the emergency services can better prepare for civil emergencies.

## Community Risk Register

The Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF) produces a Community Risk Register (CRR). This provides information on the most significant emergencies that could happen in Sussex, together with an assessment of how likely they are to happen, and the impacts if they do.

Flooding and terrorism are two examples of national risks which come from the NRR to the Sussex Resilience Forum and on to our own assessments of risk and resulting operational plans: <https://www.sussex.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/sussex/about-us/sussex-resilience-forum/srf-community-information-on-risks-in-sussex.pdf>

# Our communities

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It is vital that we understand how our communities may change in the future so we can plan ahead. This includes demographics and the built environment now and in the future. The following is a snapshot of some of the factors and data we have considered, full details can be found in the ORR and Station Risk Profiles.

Understanding our communities helps deliver our equality and inclusion commitment.

## Population

### East Sussex

- The population of East Sussex is projected to increase by more than 55,000 to 607,000 between 2017 and 2032
- A quarter (26%) is aged 65 or over (fifth highest of all counties and Unitary Authorities in the country), compared to 18% in England and 19% regionally
- All elderly age groups are expected to increase in size with the number of very elderly people aged 85 and over expected to increase by 73%, from around 21,800 in 2017 to 37,800 in 2032
- The number of households is expected to increase by 14.4%.

### Brighton and Hove

- 288,155 people live in Brighton and Hove, making it the largest district with 34% of the service area's population
- Between 2017 and 2030 the population is projected to increase by 8.1%, more than the South East (7.3%) and England (6.6%)
- By 2030 the 'baby boomers' will be in their eighties contributing to an increase in the population of those aged 75 or older of 29%
- The total number of residents aged 90 or older is projected to be 2,800, an increase of 15%.



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## **Exeter Data**

Each year, the NHS supplies address records of GP-registered 65+ year olds to all Fire and Rescue Services in England and is often referred to as the 'Exeter Data'. This helps us to identify households that are at higher risk because the likelihood of being fatally injured in a house fire increases with age.

## **Diversity**

Brighton and Hove is by far the area's most ethnically diverse with 11% of the population belonging to an ethnic minority, i.e. not 'White British'. This is twice as diverse as any of the areas within East Sussex. There is more diversity in the urban areas (Hastings 6.2% and Eastbourne 5.9%) than the rural areas (Rother 2.9% and Wealden 2.5%).

## **Mental Health**

The number of people living with mental health illness continues to increase within the UK. Poor mental health can be associated with poor physical health, high levels of smoking and obesity which can contribute to higher risk of having a fire.

## **Drug and Alcohol Abuse**

Those who live in homes where occupiers misuse drugs or alcohol are known to be at an increased risk from fire and domestic violence.

## **Bariatric or Plus Size Risk**

We have seen an increase in calls to assist people who are seriously overweight (known as bariatric or plus size) often in support of the ambulance service. This is likely to become a greater risk in future years.

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## Smoking

A third of fatal house fires in the UK are caused by cigarettes and e-cigarettes/vapes and have led to a number of electrical related fires where charging units have overheated. 18% of adults in Brighton and Hove are smokers together with 20% in East Sussex.

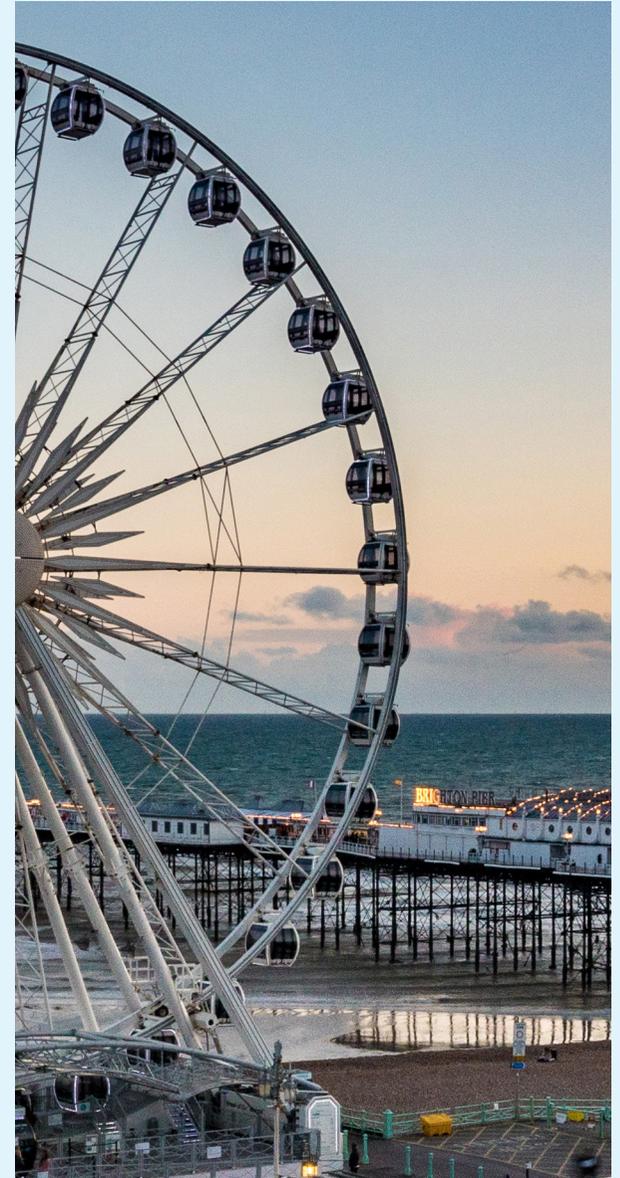
## Tourism

Each year, Brighton and Hove sees 11.45 million visits from tourists and East Sussex attracts 24 million visits. Visitors may not know the risk posed by the roads or by water and may not be told evacuation procedures when staying overnight in unfamiliar properties.

The rise in home owners renting out their properties for holiday lets is a significant emerging issue. These properties pose a potential fire risk, as they are not regulated in the same way as other traditional holiday accommodation and aren't subject to the same legislation.

## Dwellings

Brighton and Hove has one of the largest private rented sectors in the country with two in seven of the city's households now renting privately. However, high rental costs, poorer than average housing quality and pockets of overcrowding (the highest outside London) result in additional housing challenges. There are also high levels of rental households in Hastings with 43% renting, of which 13% rent from 'other social landlords' which is the highest in the county.



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## Residential Developments

Details of residential development sites have been considered through our analysis, as well as the number of households that are to be constructed on a given site. These are illustrated in the individual Station Risk Profiles, along with a description as to whether they are inside or outside of attendance standards. The total long-term proposed additional growth works out to a total growth of 2,729 additional dwellings per year. All of the currently proposed residential development sites sit within our attendance standards.

We have used our 'Housing Development Risk Assessment Toolkit' (HDRAT) to predict the increase in risk as a result of future housing and population growth and to assess whether we need to change how our resources are deployed in the future. The planned growth in the largest development areas are deemed to be well-below average dwelling fire risk.

## Homelessness and rough sleeping

We remain alert to the issue of homelessness and rough sleeping, and the risks faced by those who are affected. Shelter's 2019 "This is England" report highlights that Brighton and Hove has the highest estimated number of homeless people in the south east. [https://england.shelter.org.uk/professional\\_resources/policy\\_and\\_research/policy\\_library/policy\\_library\\_folder/this\\_is\\_england\\_a\\_picture\\_of\\_homelessness\\_in\\_2019](https://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_and_research/policy_library/policy_library_folder/this_is_england_a_picture_of_homelessness_in_2019)

The Government's 2018 Rough Sleeping rate figures show that Hastings in particular has a high rate (11.2 per 10,000 households) followed by Brighton and Hove (5 per 10,000 households).

# Management of risk – prevention, protection and response

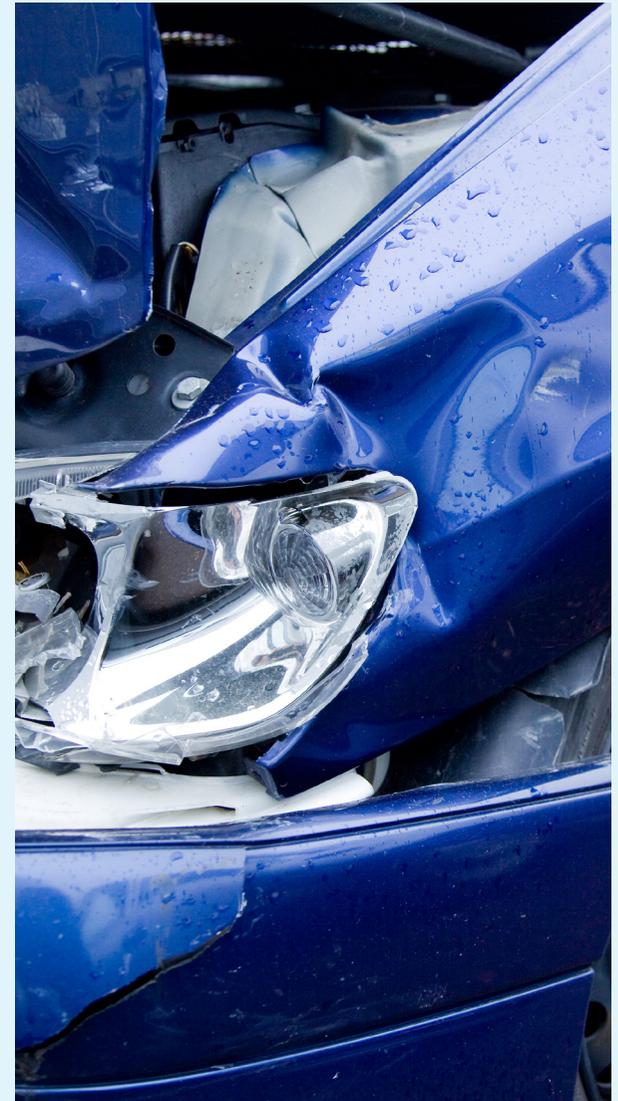
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Our assessment of all foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks across our area allows us to plan how to reduce or mitigate these risks, respond to emergencies and deliver our prevention and protection activities in the most efficient and effective way. This means we can make sure we have the right people and resources in the right places at the right time to protect our communities, our buildings, our people and the environment.

Experience tells us that incidents such as house fires and road traffic collisions are more likely to occur than more significant major incidents such as train crashes or large industrial chemical releases; although the latter may have a more significant impact on the community, they are much less likely.

The Operational Response Review, Strategic Annual Assessment of Risk and Station Profiles are used as the evidence base to establish how we best manage risks through prevention, protection and response at every level.

This plan sets out the key areas of focus across prevention, protection and response.



# Prevention

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An important part of our job as a fire and rescue service is to prevent incidents before they happen. We know that responding to emergencies is vital but we would much rather help prevent fires and other emergencies from happening in the first place.

To this end, we carry out a number of activities and provide a number of services all aimed at making our communities safer. Whether it is educating children on the dangers of fire or raising awareness of road safety, we know that what we do can have a significant impact on reducing risk and saving lives.

## Targeting risk

We have already set out how we identify those most at risk using, for example, national Exeter data alongside Mosaic information. This data has contributed to our ORR.

This allows us not only to identify who would benefit from a home safety visit because of their lifestyle but to identify those who may live outside our attendance standards and who therefore should be prioritised.

We apply a risk rating to our communities and our high-risk client category has expanded due to our collaborative approach with partners who refer complex clients from a wider number of organisations. For example, we act on data from GPs, direct referrals from the public and the social care sector along with other sources of information.

In line with the National Fire Chiefs Council, we recognise that individuals may have varying and increasing fire and safety risks based upon numerous and changing elements which can be categorised under personal, home and behaviour factors.

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We have one of the highest percentages of over 85's nationally. As a result of our ORR, we will be better able to target this group through intelligence and fire risk awareness training to partners which will have a positive impact on making our communities safer.

By targeting in this manner, we make our risk assessment person specific. This helps the Service deliver our equality and inclusion commitment.

## Local initiatives

The evidence from the Strategic Annual Assessment of Risk, supported by the ORR and Station Profiles, inform the full range of activities we deliver including home safety and safe and well checks, youth engagement programmes, arson reduction and road and water safety initiatives.

Activities are developed at station level via our partnership work and engagement with public, private and voluntary sector organisations. Station Profiles are used by local teams to decide which initiatives to carry out, using a risk-based weighting as a guide to determine allocation of resource.

Where Community Risk is high or our response time is slower, we are more proactive in our community safety. This approach is set out in more detail within our Safer Communities Strategy.

<https://esfrs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s800/Safer%20Communities%20Strategy%202018-2021.pdf>



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The following are examples of some of our initiatives:

### **Home Fire Safety**

Our Accidental Dwelling Fire Group was established to ensure that we brought together key members of staff across the Service to improve home fire safety. In the light of the ORR, it has reviewed and confirmed its objectives for campaigns to help reduce the number of incidents.

### **Road Safety – Wealden**

The Annual Strategic Assessment of Risk identified road risk as a high priority in Wealden. We work with partners to target this through public engagement and campaigns.

### **Drowning prevention – Brighton**

The Station risk profile for Brighton reveals that drinking and drowning is a real problem.

We ran a campaign to raise awareness about the dangers. This was supported by a large number of local business/night time economy, Universities, Sussex Police, Brighton and Hove City Council, Pride, Royal Life Saving Society and Brighton Beach Patrol.

Brighton Beach Patrol stopped 535 intoxicated people from entering the water and a further 188 people were encouraged to leave the water.

# Operational Response Review outcomes

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The ORR process has allowed us to validate the data and evidence, our prioritisation and approach and our resource allocation is already underway, laid out within the Community Safety Strategy and associated plans.

For example, the evidence in the ORR has been the foundation of a revised definition of vulnerability.

Vulnerability in this context refers specifically to those most likely to be killed or injured if a fire occurs and those most at risk of having a fire. It is fully acknowledged that very often the characteristics, circumstances or social factors that lead to an individual being more at risk than others are interrelated, which places a wider role on public services as a collective. To tackle and address the source issues around vulnerability the Service will be engaging and supporting partners in other areas of prevention such as public health and community support activities.

The evidence in the ORR shows that the highest density of high-risk homes and businesses are along the coast. The proposals to continue to invest in Eastbourne, Hastings and Brighton help provide us with the resources we need to carry out Home Safety Visits and business safety checks now and in the future.

The ORR has also identified homes and properties outside our response time targets and we will carry out a programme of Home Safety Visits and safety campaigns in these areas, targeting those at highest risk.

The evidence in the ORR has also provided us with key information about other risks such as road safety and water risks and during the next five years, we will work to ensure all community risks are better targeted and more effective through a process of continuous improvement.



Page 215



# Prevention - Our main areas of work for the next five years are.....

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We know the importance of prevention and recognise we have further work to do to develop our targeting and evaluation to be more effective. Based on the outcome of our data analysis from the ORR and Station Risk Profiles, we will:

## 1) Refine how we allocate our resources to prevention activity

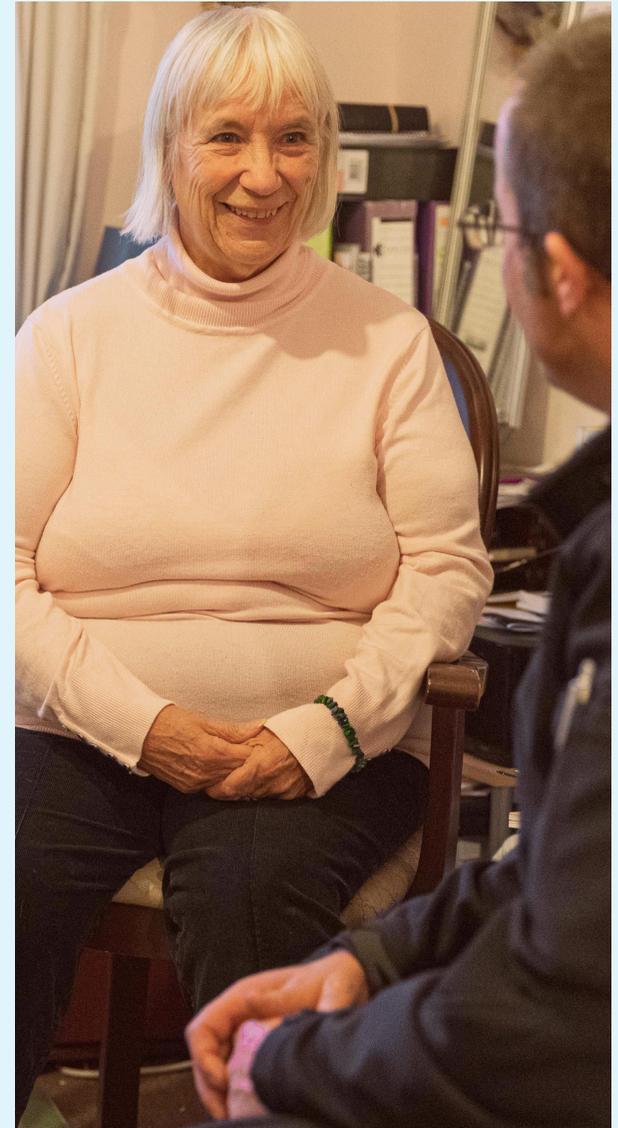
Our review of the station-based capacity and capability will identify the level of resource and specialist prevention skills the Service requires. Assessing the level of high-risk individuals and premises within our communities on an annual basis, we will be able to further refine the best level of resources.

A resourcing calculator will be developed to support this enhanced risk-based approach to delivering key activities such as Home Safety Visits. In this way, we seek to further reduce fire, road and water risk in our communities and provide community reassurance.

## 2) Improve our targeting

The evidence in the Annual Strategic Assessment of Risk and ORR will help us better target Home Safety Visits. These will be prioritised using the following criteria:

- Post fire incidents and community reassurance following an event
- Public concern and local intelligence through public and partner relationships/networks
- Vulnerability criteria (person centred approach in collaboration with partners and use of our own community profiling tool)
- Households outside the Service attendance standards.



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In the future, this will also include new community profiling information, which has been highlighted in the ORR. It will also allow us to better target emerging risks and trends. For example, we have identified that we have a high percentage of young children with Special Educational Needs and home education. We are planning to be involved in a project looking at how autism impacts on childhood accidents.

**3) We will look at different ways to secure a sustainable Prevention function**

We will explore alternative funding models, social enterprises and partnership arrangements. Our aim is to ensure a sustainable and effectively resourced Prevention function that is able to respond to changing community risk in keeping with the agreed partnership strategic principle of 'every contact counts'.

**4) We will develop a new quality framework**

We will undertake meaningful evaluation of our prevention work, including our Home Safety Visits, to ensure value for money and impact.

**5) Meaningful evaluation that unlocks opportunity for further development**

We will enhance our existing evaluation techniques, with support from partners and by considering techniques being advanced inside and outside the sector, to secure continual improvement and an enhanced impact on risk.

All these actions reflect our commitment to equality and inclusion.

# Protection

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Protection focuses on working with businesses and other non-domestic premises so they comply with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005. Through delivering advice and support for fire safety standards in these premises and taking regulatory action when needed, we support our Prevention and Response arrangements.

We use intelligence and data to form a risk profile of premises within our area. Our inspection programme and business engagement activities are planned around those premises that are at most risk of having a fire and where a fire is likely to create a risk to life.

We use the National Fire Chief Council's inspection programme to identify higher risk business premises to prioritise audits. We also carry out inspections after fires and where we receive fire safety concerns/complaints or sound intelligence from our partners.

We use live data and therefore all premises risk ratings are continually updated. This allows us to be agile and makes sure we target the highest risk premises.

Premises considered to be lower risk will be audited primarily in response to complaints, following fire incidents, information from our operational crews and safe and well advisors or sound intelligence from our partners. These are carried out to confirm the responsible persons are meeting their legal requirements.

Our operational crews support our specialist Business Safety team and undertake operational business safety visits. These target premises looking at local risks and types of premises e.g. shops or takeaways. They deliver added value through increased firefighter knowledge of the built environment and enhanced firefighter safety during incidents.

We delivered a 100% increase in the number of audits in 2019/20 compared to two years ago.

## Business engagement and Primary Authority Scheme

In order to support our protection approach, we deliver business fire safety training free of charge to the local business community and, in addition, have successfully introduced our Primary Authority scheme. This has proved popular with organisations including the Eastbourne Hospitality Association and Veolia signing up for partnerships.

You can read more about this scheme on our website:

[www.esfrs.org/business-safety/primary-authority-scheme/](http://www.esfrs.org/business-safety/primary-authority-scheme/)



# Protection - Our main areas of work for the next five years are.....

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Based on the ORR, Station Risk Profiles and new information we receive, we will:

## **1) Enhance our risk-based Inspection programme**

We will critically evaluate the risk weighting of the different property types, reflecting evolving national standards, securing additional data sets and learning from incidents. This will help us allocate the right level of resource to risk based inspections and business safety engagement.

## **2) Respond to the learnings from incidents of significance including the Grenfell public inquiry**

We are committed to taking on board national and local findings to ensure improvements can be made and risks further reduced.

The public inquiry into the fire at Grenfell Tower chaired by Sir Martin Moore-Bick listed a number of issues that continue to be investigated. The inquiry has identified steps which need to be taken to improve fire safety. This includes the response of fire and rescue services to major disasters, such as fires in high-rise residential buildings. As a result, a number of actions and improvements have been set out in a dedicated plan that is overseen by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer and the Fire Authority.

Phase Two of the inquiry is now underway and our local plan will be reviewed and updated to capture any further actions that will need to be undertaken.

## **3) Develop a new framework to check businesses receive the best service**

We will enhance our Business Safety audit assurance frameworks to ensure the public receives the very best service we are able to offer, helping reduce risk.

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#### **4) Refining how we allocate our resources to protection activity**

Our review of the station-based capacity and capability will identify the level of resource and specialist protection skills the Service requires. The resourcing calculator will also be used within Protection to support this enhanced risk-based approach to delivering key activities.

#### **5) Improve our targeting**

Business Safety inspections will be prioritised using the criteria below:

- Review the risk-based inspection programme toolkit with the evolving national standard
- Complaints and local intelligence through public and partner relationships/networks
- Businesses outside the Service attendance standards
- Post Fire Inspections and community reassurance following an event.

Through the use of this criteria and the annual assessment of risk we will seek to ultimately deliver the optimum amount of activity to address public and firefighter safety using our available resources.

#### **6) Improve our evaluation**

We will enhance our existing evaluation techniques, with support from partners and considering techniques being advanced inside and outside the sector. This will help secure continual improvement and an enhanced impact on risk.

# Response

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We provide an emergency response to save lives, protect property and also to prevent or mitigate harm to the environment.

We have 24 fire stations, covering the risk of the local area and providing resilience across the County and City.

The stations are staffed in three main ways:

- Wholetime shift: these are crewed 24 hours a day, 365 days per year by full-time firefighters
- Day-crewed (DC): operational firefighters are on the fire station during the daytime only. For our Service, this is typically between 08:30 and 18:30. Outside of these times, firefighters are still available to attend incidents through responding to an alerter
- On-call (OC) operational firefighters respond to an alerter when an emergency call is received and they are contracted to provide a certain amount of availability per week and must live or work within five minutes of the fire station.

Our control centre is based in Haywards Heath, with plans to move to a shared control centre with Surrey and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services in 2021. The control centre team has a number of duties including answering 999 calls, sending engines to incidents and moving fire engines to provide cover at strategically important locations.

## Our attendance standards

Our attendance standards are measured from when a call is received to the first fire engine arriving at the incident:

- an 'on-station' response should be within 10 minutes 70% of the time
- an 'on-call' response should be within 15 minutes 70% of the time



# Planning for a Safer Future – our proposals

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Our Operational Response Review (ORR) is the most significant piece of operational risk analysis work we have undertaken in recent years. It has built on the work carried out in our Annual Strategic Assessment of Risk.

Using multiple data sets and information, we identified the many and varied risks across our service area - past, present and future.

This has been fundamental to creating this plan and understanding how best to use our resources in terms of firefighters, fire engines and equipment to provide the most effective response to emergencies. It has allowed us to look at where we can realign our resources to deliver improvements to prevention, protection and response.

The following sections explain the proposals that have come from the ORR. These proposals mean we will have a more balanced approach and ensure we are able to do more to prevent incidents from occurring in the first place.

Aimed at enhancing our Service, they will be delivered over a five-year programme to get the right resources in the right place at the right time based on risk and evidence.

## Key outcomes

- We want to maintain 24 fire stations
- We want to improve our risk cover and resilience by resourcing, as far as practicable, 24/7 availability of some fire engines that have historically had limited availability
- We will balance our resources across the Service to reinvest in more:
  - ✓ prevention work (e.g. home safety)
  - ✓ protection work (e.g. business safety)
  - ✓ training (e.g. firefighter safety)

- 
- We want to have the right specialist engines and equipment so we are ready to respond to all types of incidents
  - We want to introduce a second fire engine into Hastings Bohemia Road to improve our risk cover and make residents even safer
  - We want to introduce another dedicated fire engine into Eastbourne and swap the existing aerial rescue vehicle for a dedicated aerial ladder platform

In order to make these improvements, we need to make some changes to the way we run our fire and rescue service, re-allocating our resources more effectively against the risk profile and response standards.

### **Key areas of proposed change**

There are seven key areas of proposed change which are being put before the Fire Authority:

- 1. Operational Resilience Plan (ORP)**
- 2. Changes to day-crewed duty stations**
- 3. Removal of second fire engines at day-crewed and on-call stations and reclassification of three “maxi-cab” stations**
- 4. Changes to the resources in Hastings**
- 5. Special vehicles – including aerials (high-reach vehicles)**
- 6. Review of previous IRMP proposals**
- 7. Changes to full-time staff duty systems.**

We will explain what each of these mean in the following sections

# Proposal 1 - Operational Resilience Plan

We plan to enhance our operational resilience by increasing our core number of fire engines available at the start of the day to 18. Our current approach, arranged between the Services Crewing Policy and Core Stations Policy, plans to provide 15 fire engines before demand. We want to improve this.

Based on the evidence in the ORR, our new Operational Resilience Plan (ORP) will plan for:

**18 immediate-response fire engines** - Our data proves that these have the biggest impact when looking at community risk, population and density index, overall activity, critical incidents etc.

**A further six fire engines for resilience purposes** - These provide added resilience. They are not as busy and they do not cover such high-risk areas, however, they are still required to be available. They will respond to incidents as per our current arrangements with the added expectation that we will be allowed a longer amount of time to respond if needed. This would give the Service a greater opportunity to draw in additional crew members to crew engines, as well as allowing greater flexibility for on-call staff.

## Benefits to the community

The operational resilience plan improves our risk profile in the following ways:

- 99% of high-risk dwellings are covered - improved from the current 93%
- 93% of all incidents are within our attendance standards - improved from the current 81%
- 92% of all households are covered - improved from the current 80%
- 92% of our population is covered - improved from the current 75%
- 92% of our over 80s population are covered - improved from the current 75%.

# Supporting changes

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In order to support the delivery of these new arrangements, we are proposing a number of new approaches.

## **Proposal 1a – We are proposing to enhance flexibility of our workforce availability through the introduction of a flexible crewing pool.**

We will introduce a new “flexible crewing pool” made up of firefighters who will be posted to group 1, 2 or 3 stations as necessary to cover for staff absences due to sickness, training or other matters affecting availability.

This concept is widely used across other UK Fire Services.

## **Proposal 1b – We are proposing to introduce new contractual arrangements for our on-call firefighters in order to enhance their availability**

Our on-call firefighters are currently paid a small retaining fee but the majority of their pay comes from attending emergency calls. There has been a significant reduction in the volume of calls they are asked to attend so on-call firefighters are asked to provide cover for long periods of time but with a much-reduced financial reward for doing so.

Despite efforts to recruit and retain staff, this has led to problems finding enough on-call staff to keep fire engines available to respond.

We will therefore look to introduce:

- new contracts where required which are aligned to periods where cover is needed to maintain fire engine availability
- a phased implementation of on-call “combined payment contracts” at group 1 and 2 stations.

## Proposal 2 – Changes to day crewed duty stations

**We are proposing to change staff contracts at our current Day-Crewed fire stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield.**

On these stations, firefighters work a combination of “positive” and “standby” hours over a 24-hour period. Positive hours are worked on the fire station and standby hours are worked on-call from a location within a five minute ‘turn in’ time of the station (in the same way our on-call firefighters do).

Day-crewing duty systems are traditionally used by fire and rescue services where risk levels are lower e.g. less urban. Two workgroups or “watches” of six staff cover an average of 42 daytime hours per week and remain on-call during evening periods helping to guarantee fire engine availability.

We propose to introduce a ‘Day Only’ crewing model, maintaining a 24/7 response from these stations through a different crewing pattern. In this arrangement, full time firefighters would be on-station during the daytime Monday to Friday, with on-call firefighters providing cover in the evening and at weekends. The differences between the existing system and day-only is that day-only does not require the fulltime staff to provide additional on-call cover during the evening and weekends. This cover is provided by existing and newly recruited on-call staff (see Proposal 1).

The evidence in our ORR demonstrates that this is an effective way to provide emergency cover on these stations based on community risk. The community would still have a 24/7 response from these stations but it would mean we may take slightly longer to attend during the daytime at the weekend in these station areas. However, our analysis shows this represents a very small number of incidents and that this proposal will therefore have a negligible impact on:

- community risk
- attendance standards
- incident demand



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A number of our day-crewed stations have a very low level of activity when compared nationally with other fire and rescue services stations covering similar sized population areas. Looking more locally, some of our current day-crewed stations have less demand than some of our “On-Call” stations, demonstrating that resources could be used more effectively. Two alternative options to resource this duty system have been identified.

### **Option 2A**

This option involves one team of six staff guaranteeing the immediate availability of the fire engine Monday to Friday, with each individual firefighter on the station working five days per week.

This option results in a net reduction of 33 posts providing the opportunity to reinvest highly trained and skilled staff into the service-wide flexible crewing pool (see Proposal 1), training, prevention and protection teams (subject to being able to meet future financial challenges).

### **Option 2B**

This option involves one team of seven staff, guaranteeing the immediate availability of the fire engine for 10.5 hours every weekday on a self-rostering shift pattern. This means that the staff have the flexibility to agree their workdays a minimum of six weeks in advance to guarantee the fire engine is available.

This alternative option would mean that staff on these stations would work four longer days (4 X 10.5 hours days rather 5 x 8.5 days under option A) and the proposed station establishment would need to increase by one on each station (from six to seven) to ensure that all five days of the week would be covered.

The impact of this option would reduce the overall number of staff posts released from 33 to 27. The Fire Authority will need to consider whether such a change would still allow the Service the flexibility to reinvest into the flexible crewing pool prevention, protection and / or to take sufficient savings should the need arise.

## Proposal 3 - We are proposing to change the number of fire stations that have two fire engines based on them

This proposal will move our resources to where they are most needed.

Every one of our 24 stations has at least one fire engine and nine have second fire engines. A further three stations have a hybrid system where a “maxi-cab” fire engine is provided; this has a larger cab to carry more firefighters and is currently considered a two-fire engine station.

We have reviewed the usage and availability of these fire engines against the risk profile and concluded that the second fire engines at day-crewed and on-call stations are under-utilised. We also want to reclassify our “maxi-cab” stations as single fire engine stations.

This affects: **Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield; along with the three “maxi-cab” stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst.**

### Benefits to the community

The public would still have a 24/7 response from these stations but it would mean that, if a second fire engine was required at an incident, it would come from a different fire station. However, this is often what happens already, particularly during the daytime when low on-call firefighter availability means that these fire engines are only available between 10-50% of the time.

The Operational Response Review data suggests the risk impact from these changes is low.

We have analysed historical data including demand, levels of activity, on-call availability and what each incident was and what we did there. 74% of all calls in these fire station areas are dealt with by one fire engine. The following chart shows the average number and type of incidents attended by the second engines in 2017/18. This includes calls into other fire station areas which can be as high as 50% of their total calls.



This proposal will therefore ensure a more efficient use of our resources and will also lessen the demand on our future capital programme, reducing the need to take loans in the future.

There are also considerable Service-wide benefits, across areas such as recruitment and training, by lowering the staffing requirements at these stations to a level that can be maintained efficiently and that is sustainable.

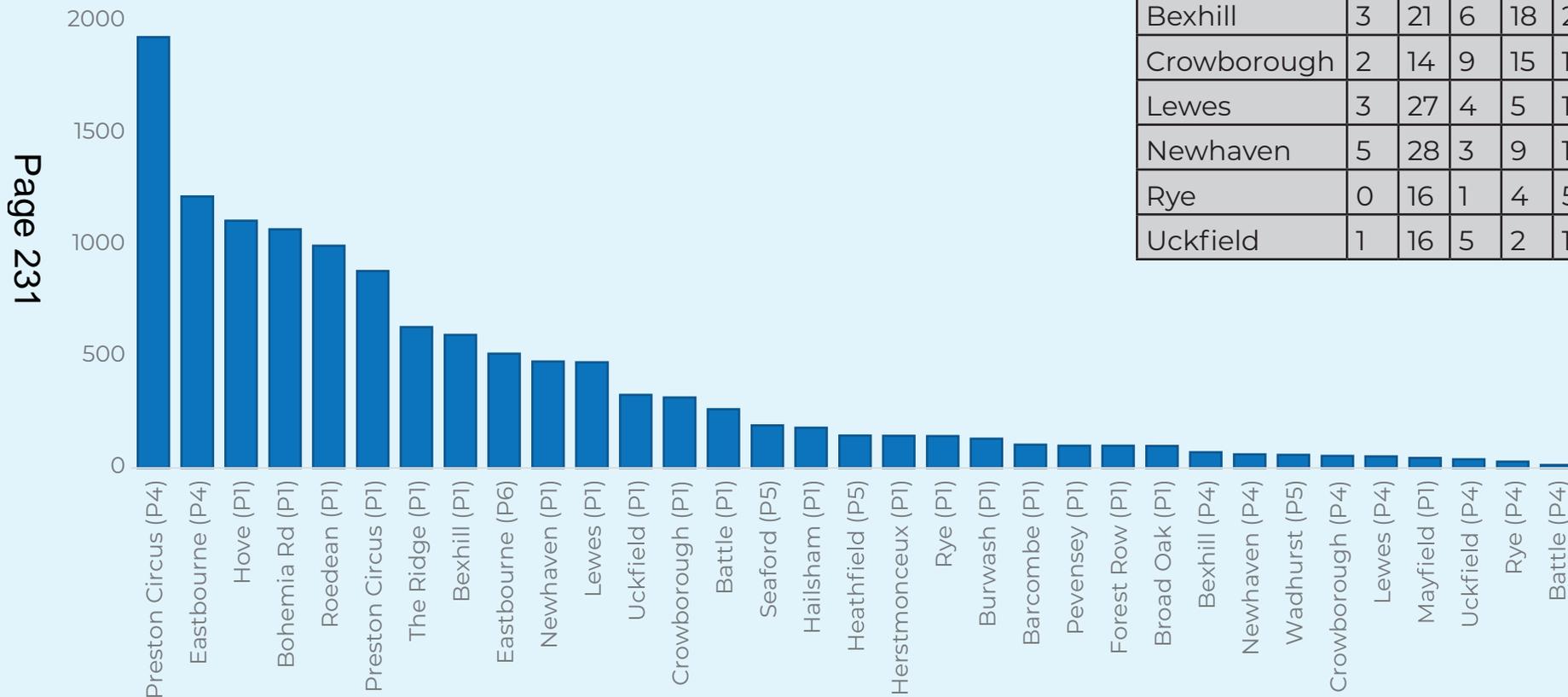


Figure 2

2nd fire engine location	Fire		Special Service		False Alarm	Other	Total
	Critical	Non-critical	Critical	Non-critical			
Battle	0	9	1	1	2	0	13
Bexhill	3	21	6	18	22	0	70
Crowborough	2	14	9	15	11	3	54
Lewes	3	27	4	5	12	0	51
Newhaven	5	28	3	9	16	0	61
Rye	0	16	1	4	5	2	28
Uckfield	1	16	5	2	15	0	39

## Proposal 4 - We are proposing to change the way we crew stations in Hastings and introduce an additional fire engine

Both Bohemia Road and The Ridge Community Fire Stations currently each have one fire engine on an immediate 24-hour response.

Based on the ORR risk information we have analysed, we want to:

- Introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge in Hastings, which would maintain a 24/7 response through a different crewing arrangement
- Introduce a second (additional) fire engine at Bohemia Road which will also provide an immediate 24/7 response
- Change the crewing of the “aerial ladder platform” (high-reach vehicle) at Bohemia Road to a shared crewing model.

### Benefits to the community

The ORR and Station Profiles identified that Bohemia Road has a significantly higher risk profile than The Ridge and we need to realign our resources accordingly.

Bohemia Road responds to some of our most deprived areas and our analysis shows there is a strong correlation with deprivation and the number of fires that occur.

For example, Bohemia Road station area ranks second across our area for the highest number of critical incidents and has had the most life-risk fire incidents over the last nine years, surpassing Preston Circus in Brighton.

By introducing a second fire engine (crewed by 24-hour wholetime firefighters) at Bohemia Road, we are improving the risk cover for both Hastings station grounds and building more resilience in Hastings. It will also improve firefighter safety.



Currently, The Ridge fire engine attends more incidents in Bohemia Road than it does on its own ground (Figure 3)

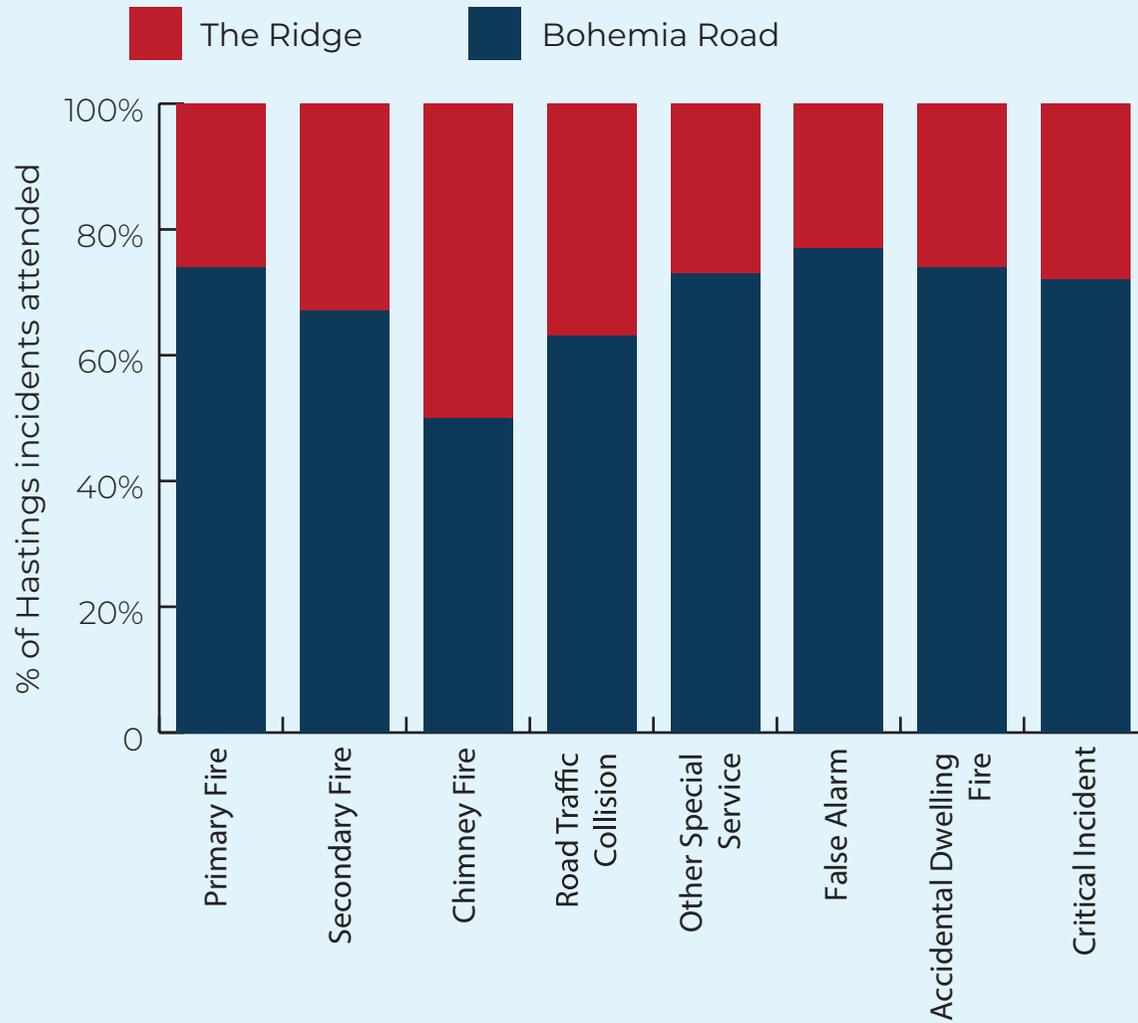


Figure 3

	Bohemia Rd	The Ridge	All Hastings
Primary Fire	129	46	175
Secondary Fire	89	45	133
Chimney Fire	7	7	14
Road Traffic Collision	33	20	53
Other Special Service	234	85	319
False Alarm	482	146	627
Accidental Dwelling Fire	65	23	88
Critical Incident	46	18	65
<b>All Incidents</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>1321</b>

# Proposal 5 – We want to make changes to how we provide and crew specialist vehicles including aerial appliances

## Aerials

An Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) differs from a conventional fire engine and is designed for operations where working from height is advantageous or a necessity. They typically reach up to 32 metres in height (9-10 storeys) and are able to supply water or foam jets as well as a stable rescue platform.

We propose to keep three aerial appliances; Brighton, Eastbourne and Hastings to ensure response is matched to risk, considering the different local risk profiles in the ORR.

We do however propose to change how these are crewed:

- ✓ The City of Brighton and Hove will have a dedicated crew
- ✓ Hastings will have a shared crewing model
- ✓ Eastbourne will have a shared crewing model.

## Benefit to the community

The ORR reviewed the use of these vehicles, how many we need and where they should be stationed, all based upon the analysis of risk.

We used incident information from the past, the present and what we could reasonably anticipate for the future using local planning information and knowledge of the current built environment.

Although located at particular fire stations, these vehicles provide a county-wide resource i.e. they can be expected to be called anywhere in the County or City.



## Specialist capabilities

We currently have a range of different vehicles, equipment and capability and we will look to continually review our options available to us so that we can tailor our approach to best suit each emergency. Specifically, there is further work being carried out in relation to our technical rescue capability. We will use our risk profile within this five-year period to identify the most appropriate equipment and vehicle(s) we need to address the risk.

Page 235



Figure 4

<b>Battle</b>	Rapid Response Vehicle
<b>Bexhill</b>	Incident Command Unit Rope Rescue Unit
<b>Bohemia Road Hastings</b>	Aerial Ladder Platform
<b>Crowborough</b>	Sprinter 4x4 Animal Rescue Unit
<b>Eastbourne</b>	Aerial Ladder Platform Mass Decontamination Unit
<b>Heathfield</b>	Sprinter 4x4
<b>Lewes</b>	Technical Rescue Unit Rapid Response Vehicle
<b>Newhaven</b>	Incident Command Unit Operational Support Unit
<b>Preston Circus</b>	Aerial Ladder Platform
<b>Seaford</b>	High Volume Pump Sprinter 4x4
<b>The Ridge Hastings</b>	Sprinter 4x4
<b>Uckfield</b>	GP Truck Water Bowser

## Proposal 6 - Previous IRMP Decisions

Our previous Integrated Risk Management Plans committed us to a number of proposals and programmes of work. Most have been completed however, there are some which were “on hold” until we completed the ORR.

### Smaller fire engines

A previous plan suggested that a smaller type of fire engine could be provided to Preston Circus and The Ridge fire stations. Our ORR evidence now shows that we do not need to progress with this proposal.

We checked this against nine years worth of incident data and found no evidence that we were unable to access any premises, address or location with the standard sized fire engine, particularly around the Hastings Old Town area. This included our largest vehicles, the Aerial Ladder Platforms. Notably, we had an average attendance time in the Hastings Old Town area of 7.01 minutes (the average across the County and City was 8.12 minutes).

As a further consideration, we have found that having fire engines of differing size will affect the quantity and type of equipment we currently carry. Our new Operational Resilience Plan relies on the availability of a consistently-sized fleet of 18 fire engines.

The ORR outcomes and the Service wide changes now proposed mean that the Service will also not be progressing with the previously recommended introduction of a three tier (small, medium and large) approach to fire engines.



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## **Demand Management**

We are aiming to manage demand for our services in three operational areas to reduce the number of unnecessary mobilisations which impact on our other work, businesses and commerce.

These changes will release capacity into prevention, protection and training.

### **Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)**

We average around 9,200 operational responses to incidents each year. Automatic Fire Alarm systems account for 34% of all these calls. 96% of the calls initially categorised as AFAs turn out to be false alarms – these are often described as “unwanted fire signals”.

We are proposing that the Service no longer automatically attend calls to fire alarms operating in low risk commercial premises.

We are also considering whether, at some point in the future, we should charge a fee for attending unwanted fire signals in some premises types in some circumstances. This would be subject to a separate public consultation in due course.

### **Lift releases**

We are regularly called to release people from lifts that have malfunctioned.

We want to engage and communicate with building owners to ensure that they are improving maintenance of their lifts and have in place other arrangements for release.

We will consider a delay in responding to some incidents where people are not vulnerable or in distress to give the building owners time to resolve the issue themselves.

We are also considering whether, at some point in the future, we should charge a fee for attending such calls. This would bring us in line with a

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significant number of other fire and rescue services. This would be subject to further public consultation.

We will continue to attend calls to release members of the public from lifts when appropriate and necessary.

### **Trapped birds**

We already work alongside animal charities to reduce the number of calls we receive about birds trapped in netting.

However, we continue to attend a small number. These calls tie-up our resources for a period of time and restrict our ability to attend incidents involving risk to human lives. It is often necessary to use aerial ladder platforms and other specialist equipment, making this service disproportionately expensive. Therefore, we are proposing that we should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting in the future.

## Proposal 7 – We are proposing to make changes to the duty system that is operated at our six fire stations that are crewed 24/7 on the traditional 4 watch system

This proposal is about the contractual arrangements of the firefighters who work on our six wholetime fire stations at Bohemia Road Hastings, Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus, Roedean and The Ridge Hastings; and the resulting and crewing arrangements.

The current duty system requires a firefighter to work two day shifts followed by two night shifts, then with four days off duty. Although it has stood the test of time, there are now alternatives which present the opportunity to improve how we deliver our services in a far more efficient manner without detriment to the speed or weight of our response.

With the exception of The Ridge (which we propose will become a day crewed station- see Proposal 4), we have identified two options for change. One option (option A) would impact on the remaining five wholetime stations; the second option (option B) would only impact on the three stations in the City. The Service recognises that this proposal is a significant change for our staff so we are keen to work with them and their representative bodies to discuss options in more detail.

### Option 7A

Option A would be to implement a “Flexible Rostering Duty System” at five wholetime fire stations. In this arrangement, one team of firefighters plan an average of 11 to 12 shifts per month split between day and night shifts, a minimum of six weeks in advance, to ensure the fire engines at that Station are always available.

The alternative Flexible Rostering Duty System will:

- improve the release of firefighters for training without affecting fire engine availability
- reduce overtime and staff employed on fixed-term contracts



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- enable the firefighters to have more flexibility in which shifts they work each month
  - introduce a more family-friendly work pattern

This option (if agreed) would result in a net release of five posts; which could then be used to support enhancement in prevention, protection, training, resourcing of the flexible crewing pool or, subject to future financial modelling, taken as savings.

### **Option 7B**

Option B would be to implement a “group crewing” system at Preston Circus, Hove and Roedean. This system enables the Service to provide the same level of response with fewer posts. The term “group crewing” indicates that resources are reduced in one station and enhanced in another, in order to allow the group of stations to operate on a self-sufficient basis for managing cover.

In this option, crews working on the current four watches continue to use the existing shift pattern (two days shifts, followed by two night shifts, followed by four days off) with an average of 16 shifts per month. Depending on sickness or other absence levels, one station supports the others in the “group”.

This option (if agreed) would only apply to the three City stations and would result in a net release of four posts; which could then be used to support enhancement in prevention, protection, training, resourcing of the crewing pool or, subject to future financial modelling, taken as savings.

Both options outlined above allow the Service to maintain our 24/7 immediate response and attendance standards from Bohemia Road Hastings, Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus and Roedean. In addition, both options will release a number of posts which we can reinvest into other vital areas of service delivery such as prevention and protection work as well as into the training department without adversely affecting the service to our communities.

# Our people

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Our staff are our most important assets.

We have a wide range of professionals working in the Service, not just our firefighters but technical specialists, qualified inspectors, community safety practitioners, control room operators, analysts, IT experts, health and safety and HR advisers, communication specialists, accountants and more.

The ORR presents us with an opportunity to reshape the way we deliver services to best meet the risks in the community, as a number of our proposals mean changes to crewing and duty systems and result in different or further training needs.

## Leadership and behaviours

We have considered the findings of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and reviewed our internal HR complaints and cases and have concluded that there is a need to have a clearer focus on behaviours internally to ensure our staff treat each other and others in a way that you would expect to see in any professional workplace.

Critical to this is a need for us to make sure our standards, policies and training support are fit for purpose to support that change. With that in mind, we are launching a Leadership and Behavioural Framework based on the National Fire Chiefs Council's national guidance. This sets out what is expected of staff and we will give our staff the resources, skills and knowledge to enable them to meet these expectations through training, engagement and one-to-one support.

This fits into our wider People and Organisational Development (POD) Strategy which can be found at: <https://esfrs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s806/People%20and%20Organisational%20Development%20Strategy%202017%20-%202022.pdf>

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## **Workforce planning**

We are anticipating a significant number of operational staff to retire due to changes in pension regulations and due to the fact that the operational workforce average age is 46.

This inevitably puts pressure on recruitment and training as we bring in the next generation of firefighters and upskill our current workforce to take on more senior roles.

Our interim Strategic Workforce Plan will take us through the immediate challenges we face but will need to be reviewed in order to take into account the impact of any of the agreed changes from this IRMP.

This will set out our future requirements in terms of numbers, roles and skills and will focus on identifying and nurturing talent.

We are also developing directorate, station and departmental workforce plans (for identification of required workforce specialist skills to meet community and therefore Service need) and departmental / directorate role profiles and competencies. This will strengthen our approach to workforce planning.

## **Diversity within our workforce**

We want our workforce to be more reflective of society at all levels in the organisation. Having a range of perspectives, cultures and experiences brings a greater understanding to our organisation, which contributes to decision making. We know our workforce does not reflect the communities that we serve in terms of diversity and gender.

We will take positive action to help encourage recruitment from under-represented groups. We want to create an inclusive, welcoming environment for our employees, the communities we serve and our partners as we understand these are mutually beneficial relationships.

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Our recruitment campaigns will continue to seek to increase diversity within the Service, however, this is only part of the picture. We must understand the needs of all our workforce and take appropriate action. For example, we know that we have a higher percentage of the workforce who have dyslexia or similar conditions, as compared to the average population. We have therefore put in place enhanced support and systems to address this.

Our Inclusion and Diversity Strategy gives more detail on this work. <https://esfrs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s803/Inclusion%20Equality%20Diversity%20Strategy%202017%20-%202021.pdf>

### **Developing a multi-skilled, safe and valued workforce**

The ORR has highlighted where new skills and new contracts are likely to be needed and our training plan will reflect these requirements. We will ensure our staff have the technical and personal skills required to undertake their role.

We put health and wellbeing at the centre of everything we do. As part of our Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2023 we provide a number of ways in which our people can access further support should they need it.

<https://esfrs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s805/Health%20Safety%20and%20Wellbeing%20Strategy%202017%20-%202020.pdf>

Of note, our wellbeing team is shared with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, which brings increased learning and experience into both Services. Initiatives which are being rolled out include creating Mental Health Champions among our staff who are able to signpost colleagues who approach them for guidance, advice and support.

We also provide fast track counselling services that individuals can access through self-referral and we are in the process of adapting the 'Back-up Buddy' app which already provides mental health support to the Police.

# Safe Person Principles

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It is recognised in health and safety management that the workplace can be inherently dangerous. This is a reality for us as firefighters and officers sometimes have to work in very dangerous and dynamic operational environments. This can sometimes include exposure to dangerous and unpredictable situations when attempting to save life and mitigate other emergencies.

We adopt the 'safe person concept' to minimise the risk. As an organisation we have a number of organisational responsibilities including:

- recruiting suitable candidates and training them appropriately and maintaining their competence
- ensuring that detailed guidance is available on how to establish a safer system of work for operational incidents
- ensuring that suitable equipment is available to them including fire appliances and that the necessary personal protective equipment is provided
- providing welfare arrangements for rest recovery and replacement of personnel during operational incidents
- learning from post event debriefs in order to do things differently next time to enable safe systems of work.

The safe person principles detail the organisational responsibilities together with those placed on individuals themselves.

Individuals should:

- work as effective members of a team within safe systems of work
- they should be competent and knowledgeable about hazard and risk
- they should have the personal skills and attributes necessary to remain safe, even in an environment where there may be limited controls over hazards and risks

# Finance and Support Services

## How our budget is spent

The budget for providing the fire and rescue services for East Sussex and the City of Brighton and Hove in 2020/21 is £39.7m.

Over £30.1m, or 76%, of our income is spent employing the people who provide our fire and rescue services to the public. £10.1m, or 25% is spent on supplies and services which includes equipment, protective clothing, training equipment, consumables and ICT licence costs, etc.

We plan to invest £24m over the next five years in our fire stations, training centre and our fire engines and other vehicles. We will also be investing £5m on a new mobilising service with our partners Surrey and West Sussex Fire Services.

The 2020/21 Annual Council Tax charge for an average (Band D) house is £95.53 (this equates to 26p a day). This provides £27.9m of income to the Fire Authority – 70% of our total income.

Other income comes from Business Rates (£8.6m or 22%) and core government grant (£3.2m or 8%). As part of its budget management, the Authority produces a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covering a five-year period. The MTFP is updated annually to reflect emerging local, regional and national issues and makes informed assumptions about issues such as future pay, inflation, government funding and Council Tax levels and future risks. The MTFP forms the basis for setting the annual budget for the Service.

## What we spend:

	2019/ 2020 £m	2020/ 2021 £m	%
Employees	30.1	30.1	76%
Running Expenses	10.0	10.1	25%
Capital Financing	0.9	0.8	2%
Gross Service Expenditure	41.0	41.0	103%
Income and Specific Grants	-3.7	-2.4	-6%
Net Contribution to Reserves	1.7	1.1	3%
Net Budget Requirement	39.0	39.7	100%

## How we are funded:

	2019/ 2020 £m	2020/ 2021 £m	%
Government Grants	0.0	3.2	8%
Business rates	11.6	8.6	22%
Council tax	27.4	27.9	70%
Total Funding	39.0	39.7	100%

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## Our finances in the future

There is significant uncertainty about our funding beyond 2020/21. The Government is planning to review how much it spends on public services, how much of this goes to the Fire Service, how this is divided between each Fire Authority and how much of this funding comes from business rates. This makes it difficult to make firm plans for the future. In our MTFP, we have modelled a range of scenarios and these suggest that we may need to make new savings of between £0.7m and £3.6m by 2024/25.

We will be identifying opportunities for new savings through our Efficiency Strategy. This will focus on a range of areas including:

- improving the way we procure goods and services
- using investment in our IT and estate to reduce our running costs
- reviewing all our support services
- working in collaboration with other emergency services and public sector bodies where that can make our services more effective and efficient
- looking for new sources of funding, including different ways of delivering services, for example through a charity.

As part of its inspection in 2019, HMICFRS judged that our approach to providing services efficiently was good.

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## The financial impact of our IRMP proposals

We have assessed the financial impact of our IRMP proposals and taken together they could release savings of between £1.0m and £1.6m by 2024/25 (the end of our current MTFP) and between £1.7m and £2.4m by 2028/29 (when we think all of the proposals could be implemented). There would also be a reduction in the overall cost of investment in our Capital Programme of £0.6m over the next five years. Depending on the level of funding that the Government decides the Service should have in the future, the Fire Authority may need to use all or part of these savings to balance its budget. Any savings from the IRMP that are not needed to balance the budget could be used to invest in our services or to reduce future increases in the level of Council Tax.

## Capital Assets

Page 247

### Property

Our stations are ageing and maintenance costs will rise significantly if we do nothing. We will invest in our stations to make sure they offer fit for purpose facilities that are easily maintained. Our Design Guide and Estates Strategy sets out a blueprint of how we will achieve this. <https://esfrs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s801/Estates%20Strategy%202018-2025.pdf>

We will continue our commitment to working with other blue-light services to identify opportunities for co-location to improve efficiency of running costs. To help deliver this programme of work, we will pursue new, additional sources of income.

In the next five years, we intend to deliver major estates projects at Preston Circus and at Lewes.

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## **Fleet**

We have reviewed the type and number of operational vehicles we use as a result of the ORR and this will be reflected in more detail through a dedicated Fleet Strategy. This will help identify the most cost-effective way of supplying these vehicles and seek to collaborate on these resources where we can to minimise cost.

## **Information and Communications Technology (ICT)**

We will continue to invest in information and communication technology that will help improve efficiency, effectiveness and resilience.

Key projects which will be supported during the 2020-25 Planning for a Safer Future IRMP include the streamlining and digitising of key operational processes for Home Safety Visits, Business Safety Inspections and Site Specific Risk Information (through our Customer Relationship Management system), employee self-service and on-call pay (through FireWatch) and the move of our mobilising function to Surrey Fire and Rescue Service along with further investment in station end equipment, mobile data terminals and pagers and alerters.

We will also continue to improve our Information Security Management Systems to keep our data accurate and secure.

We are developing a new Strategy for 2020-25, which will build on our current approach.

<https://esfrs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s808/Information%20Technology%20IT%20Strategy%202017%20-%202022.pdf>





[www.esfrs.org/irmp](http://www.esfrs.org/irmp)

**EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY**

<b>Date</b>	23 April 2020
<b>Title of Report</b>	East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan – Consultation and Communication Plan
<b>By</b>	Mark O’Brien, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Liz Ridley, Assistant Director Planning & Improvement

<b>Background Papers</b>	Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19 - East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service <a href="https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/fire-and-rescue-services/east-sussex/">https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/fire-and-rescue-services/east-sussex/</a> COVID-19 and Consultation: Institute advice - Issue 4 <a href="https://www.consultationinstitute.org/covid-19/">https://www.consultationinstitute.org/covid-19/</a> Fire and Rescue National Framework for England <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5904/nationalframework.pdf">https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5904/nationalframework.pdf</a>
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<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix A - Equality Impact Assessment – Consultation and Communication Plan (attached)  Appendix B CONFIDENTIAL - Financial Breakdown
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**Implications**

<b>CORPORATE RISK</b>		<b>LEGAL</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b>		<b>POLICY</b>	
<b>FINANCIAL</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>POLITICAL</b>	
<b>HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</b>		<b>OTHER (please specify)</b>	
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>		<b>CORE BRIEF</b>	
<b>EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – Appendix A</b>			

<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	To present the communication and consultation plan for the forthcoming Integrated Risk Management Plan, that has been revised in light of guidance issued by the Consultation Institute in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, for approval by the Fire Authority.
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<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	The Service has a robust process for consultation and communication in relation to its Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) arrangements in order to provide stakeholders, the public and staff, clear and relevant information through all stages of the plans development. This process has been recognised as effective by Her Majesty’s
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Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services in its inspection report.

In light of the escalating COVID-19 situation, the original consultation and engagement plan to accompany the public consultation of the Service Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) has been revised, taking account of the latest guidance available. The Service has worked with its consultation provider and a number of alternative options to face to face communication have been considered in order to ensure we carry out an effective consultation process that does not necessitate face to face contact, or people leaving their homes.

The latest briefing note from the Consultation Institute contains guidance for local authorities and covers alternative dialogue methods and key issues to consider when assessing the risks to consultation plans. The guidance states that, *'consultations should continue as a general rule, however as these are extraordinary times, going ahead with a consultation may require major changes to existing plans'*.

The guidance continues that, postponement of consultation activities could be considered, but before postponing, consideration needs to be given to a number of areas. A gap analysis has been included so that the Fire Authority can see where the changes have been made against the guidance issued. As reported in the previous paper on the agenda, if the Authority were not to proceed to public consultation, this would result in a significant delay to the Service's ability to meet the potential financial challenges that lay ahead. There is significant uncertainty about our funding beyond 2020/21. The gap analysis has been provided in order to reassure the Fire Authority that the decision to proceed with the consultation is in accordance with the guidance issued and that the consultation and communication plan remains effective at this challenging time.

The major changes to the original plan include:

- A telephone survey to 600 residents that would normally prefer face to face communication.
- Replacing a 500 hard copy postal questionnaire with the telephone survey. In addition there will be a printable survey that can be returned hard copy or electronically with respondents being given the opportunity to phone their responses in, and counselled against returning them by post.
- Our provider will process responses online and via the telephone.
- Face to face focus groups have been replaced with online forums.

- A face to face stakeholder meeting had been replaced by an online forum.
- 10,000 post cards advertising the consultation and the plan will be targeted at those in our communities that typically struggle to use technology and whose internet usage is low. We will use communication channel preference information held within Mosaic Public Sector Segmentation data.

The need to revise the plan has resulted in a higher cost than previously anticipated. However, it is anticipated that we will yield a higher response rate from the methods we have chosen. The costs of the original consultation proposals were approximately £27,000. The addition of the telephone survey increases the costs to approximately £42,000. The Fire Authority has the option to include the 12 depth interviews with members of the public (to account for those who may not be able/wish to take part in the online focus groups). Which would bring the total to £45,000.

The Planning for a Safer Future IRMP and associated proposals will then be subject to an eight week public, stakeholder and staff consultation. The outcome of which will be brought back to the Fire Authority in September 2020 when Members will be asked to consider the results of the consultation exercise before agreeing the plan.

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**RECOMMENDATION**

The Fire Authority is recommended to:

- i. approve the changes to the consultation plan in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, presented as option B;
  - ii. approve the proposed 8 week consultation period;
  - iii. consider whether to include a further 12 optional in depth surveys presented as option C; and
  - iv. note that the additional cost will be funded from the corporate contingency.
-

# 1 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Government's Fire and Rescue National Framework for England states that each fire and rescue authority must produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The IRMP must identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect its community, including those of a cross-border, multi-authority and/or national nature. The Framework provides guidance on integrated risk management planning and that an IRMP should:

*'Reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies, and partners'*

1.4 The Service has a robust process for consultation and communication to provide stakeholders, the public and staff clear and relevant information through all stages of the plans development. This information is provided through a variety of channels, enabling service-users to understand how the Service matches resources to identified and changing risk. The Service has been recognised by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services as being strong in this area. The HMICFRS inspection report stated that, *'plans are informed by the views of a wide range of organisations and people. The service effectively consulted with members of the public while producing its last IRMP in 2017, gaining 588 formal responses to this consultation through roadshows and social media. The IRMP contained a commitment to engage with the public about response standards, which it did in 2018'*.

1.5 In light of the escalating COVID-19 situation, the UK Government has advised against all non-essential travel and contact for the foreseeable future. Moreover, the Market Research Society has recommended that face-to-face research is not undertaken at this time. Government guidance has also been sought together with legal advice and counsel from other Fire and Rescue Services who are also consulting on their integrated risk management proposals. The Service has worked with its consultation provider in order to revise the consultation and communication plan. A number of alternative options to face to face communication have been considered in order to ensure we can carry out effective consultation that does not necessitate face to face contact.

1.6 Over the last few weeks the Consultation Institute (tCI), a UK-based not-for-profit organisation that sets the standards for best practice in public engagement and consultation, has released a number of guidance notes for public services who are undertaking consultation activities. The guidance notes provide information on alternative solutions in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. A gap analysis has been included so that the Fire Authority can see where the changes have been made against the guidance issued. This is provided in order to reassure the Fire Authority that the consultation and communication plan remains effective at this challenging time.

1.7 This report sets out the Service's consultation and communication proposals which have now been revised in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic

## 2 **MAIN ISSUES**

### 2.1 **Consultation Institute Advice and ESFRS response**

2.1.1 The latest briefing note from the Consultation Institute contains guidance for local authorities and covers alternative dialogue methods and key issues to consider when assessing the risks to consultation plans. The guidance states that consultations ***should continue as a general rule***, however as these are extraordinary times, going ahead with a consultation may require major changes to existing plans. The guidance continues that, postponement of consultation activities could be considered but before postponing, consideration needs to be given to the following areas.

2.1.2 **If the issue is not remotely time-sensitive and there may be advantage in switching resources to other matters.**

2.2.1 The launch of the IRMP and its proposals is considered to be a time-sensitive issue. As presented in the previous paper, it remains the recommendation of officers that the Authority continue with the planned public and stakeholder consultation despite the challenges faced as a result of the coronavirus situation.

2.2.2 If the Authority were not to proceed to public consultation, this would result in a significant delay to the Service's ability to meet the potential financial challenges that lay ahead. There is significant uncertainty about our funding beyond 2020/21. A delay would mean that the Service could not move forward with the changes it needs to make to improve community safety. The proposals as outlined in the plan represent significant and important change to how the Authority delivers services to our communities and these changes are needed to ensure that we are able to deliver the most effective service, based on risk, and within our available resources, and to deliver significant improvements across our service area. The introduction of a second fire engine into Bohemia Road, together with the reallocation of resources into prevention and protection work will improve the safety of our communities. It also means the Service can plan over the medium term to address its financial environment. As the fire authority is aware, the Medium Term Finance Plan models a series of scenarios (Best, Mid and Worse case) which produce a range of potential savings from £0.7m to £3.6m by 2024/25. Therefore the launch and progression of the IRMP is considered time-sensitive in order to ensure we are able to meet the financial envelope we are operating in.

2.2.3 Members will be aware of the Authority's legal obligations in relation to IRMP. The Fire & Rescue Services Act gives legal standing to the Government's National Framework document which requires all FRAs to produce an IRMP. Our current IRMP covers the period 2017 to 2020; there is therefore a strong legal case to progress with consultation with a view to the Authority being able to approve a final IRMP in the Autumn of this year. This requirement has not changed despite the coronavirus outbreak. Therefore this supports the recommendation to proceed as the production of the plan is time sensitive.

**2.3. If key stakeholders would reasonably expect significant face-to-face dialogue and be reluctant or have difficulty in responding by alternative (e.g. online) methods.**

2.3.1 The Service's usual consultation and communication plans utilise several methods which include face to face meetings, public focus groups, and social media campaigns and drop in sessions. The Service has considered the issue of face to face communications and what would be a suitable alternative at this time.

2.3.2 The revised consultation and communication plan now includes a telephone survey which will be targeted at those communities who prefer the face to face method of communication. The advantage of a telephone survey is that it can give us wide geographic access to our communities. Figures show that 85% of households have a landline and 95% of households have mobile phones. This survey will be undertaken with 600 people. This method alone will gain a response rate equivalent to previous consultations and is targeted at representative groups within our communities.

2.3.3 Participants are recruited in advance (methods of doing so differ according to the audience) and are asked to nominate a preferred date and time for an interview. A researcher then undertakes the discussion using a semi-structured topic guide that covers all the key topics, while allowing the interviewee a degree of freedom in their responses. Toward the end of the interview, respondents are given an email address in case they wish to send further information or comments using that route, or to answer any questions they did not wish to discuss over the telephone.

2.3.4 Six public focus groups were originally planned to allow for face to face communication and an in-depth discussions on the plans contained within the IRMP. These will continue but will now be held electronically. The focus groups will include 8 participants taking part in a text chat-based discussion via an online platform. They are arranged for a specific time and last around 1.5 hours. The participants are recruited in advance to match agreed criteria to ensure representative groups are included, and then sent invitations via email. They join the online focus group via their computer, smartphone or tablet at the designated time (without any costs to them, aside from any charges associated with data usage). A facilitator then runs through the discussion using a text chat facility whereby participants respond simultaneously to each question posed (their comments appear on-screen chronologically) and the moderator is able to follow-up on particular comments in the same way as they would at a face-to-face session.

2.3.5 Key advantages of these focus groups are:

- Participants can interact and “bounce” ideas and views off each other
- Enables a good geographic spread of participants
- Accessible to all of those with a telephone
- Can allow for explanations of background issues if stimulus material is provided
- Participants can take part at no cost to them

## **2.4 If key stakeholders fall into high-risk categories and would struggle to access alternative methods.**

2.4.1 We have adapted the consultation plan to allow for people to respond to the survey by telephone as well as online. We will be sending out 10,000 targeted postcards with a phone number that people can ring in and provide their answers over the phone. The ability to phone responses back in is an additional change to what the Service normally provides. Normal communication channels will support this together with our media advertising. The analysts in the Planning and Intelligence team have a data base that profiles our community through preferred communication methods and channels. They are able to provide addresses by Mosaic Group profiles which provides information on at the channel preference of each group and we can target those in our communities who are adverse to digital communication as follows:

- Group F – adverse to digital and text, prefer post
- Group I – adverse to email and digital, much prefer post
- Group N – adverse to email and digital, prefer post / face to face
- Group O – adverse to digital, prefer post

This will allow us to highlight the consultation opportunities and provide them with the alternative options which include taking part by ringing in and leaving an answerphone message to arrange for a copy of the questionnaire to be emailed to them but the opportunity to post is there if needed. They can then ring the consultation provider who will take their answers over the telephone.

## **2.5 If alternative methods would struggle to reach seldom heard groups**

2.5.1 We believe that the changes we are making will increase the reach to seldom heard groups. We will target groups utilising the Mosaic data base to ensure that we are reaching those groups, along with our existing data base that holds 500+ organisations. Those organisations will be targeted and asked to raise awareness of the consultation with their clients and staff offering them the range of opportunities to respond, i.e. on line or by telephone. They will also be given the opportunity to take part in a webinar. This was originally planned as a face to face focus group but the opportunity under the current circumstances now allows us to consult differently.

2.5.6 The webinar will be conducted for stakeholders online in real-time at a predetermined time and date. There will be a presentation of the issues under consideration (with the ability to share slides), followed by a question and answer session. Those who have signed-up to take part can also be asked to submit questions in advance so answers can be prepared. The key advantages to this is that it provides an opportunity for many participants to take part easily and at no cost to them and allows for the explanation of complex issues. The Service's consultation provider suggests that up to 100 stakeholders could take part.

2.5.7 Key advantages of the webinar are as follows:

- Opportunity for many participants to take part easily and at no cost to them
- Offer participant anonymity
- Particularly good for specialist, targeted audiences
- Allow for the explanation of complex issues
- Content can be made available on demand for those unable to attend

**2.6 If you face shortages of staff and resources such as would affect your ability to conduct a consultation to appropriate legal and other standards.**

2.6.1 The staff supporting the preparations for the IRMP launch and consultation and communication plan are mainly professional services support staff. Operational staff involved in the COVID-19 response are not affected by the change in direction. Service staff, group managers and station managers were previously identified as delivery agents in the original communication plan ensuring their local partnerships and communities were briefed and aware of the proposals. This can still take place over online methods and electronic methods, pointing respondents to the online survey, telephone survey and the stakeholder webinars that will be taking place.

2.7 The Consultation Institute guidance states that public meetings and large scale events should be not be undertaken. It recognises that *'consultation traditionally makes use of many types of collective gatherings ranging from small-scale focus groups, committees, public meetings, forums, exhibitions, drop-in centres, citizens' juries or even citizens' assemblies. Their value in bringing people together to learn, share and deliberate is immense and cannot fully be replicated in other ways. However, all are inappropriate under current circumstances, and none should be undertaken.'*

2.8 The original consultation and communication plan contained a number of 'drop in' sessions across the area in Battle, Hastings, Eastbourne, Lewes, Newhaven, Brighton and Uckfield. The aim of the sessions were to publicise the plan and its proposals and encourage participation in consultation. They were going to be supported by staff where the public could talk about the proposals. We believe that that alternative proposal to conduct a telephone survey, targeted at our communities who are not online, is a suitable alternative solution to glean those views. A hard copy survey was handed out at these events. The Fire Authority are reminded that paper survey responses to our questionnaires are low and in recent year we have seen an increase in online responses.

The telephone survey will guarantee at least 600 responses. Previous consultation exercises have provided response rates as follows in their totality from online and hardcopy questionnaires:

- 675 from the review of our attendance standards
- 588 from the consultation on 2017/20 IRMP
- 655 from Changing the Service Shaping our Future
- 504 from the Hastings Review
- 347 from the rural review.

2.9 The guidance continues that *'It is not enough just to substitute a more traditional consultation with an online survey.* Again the Service has responded to this statement by employing additional techniques to the original plan and included the telephone survey. The media will be utilised to ensure that our communities can access the information in the format appropriate to them. We will ensure copies of the plan are printed off and sent to the people who request one. We have also ensured the public can ring in to respond to the questionnaire by telephone. A robust internal resource plan will need to be implemented to ensure we can meet higher than expected demand for copies and telephone responses.

- 2.10 The guidance continues that organisations should ‘Go Digital’ and explore ‘*new facilities which their engagement/consultation systems can offer and which can, to an extent, bridge the gap caused by removing public events from your project plan. Use online forums, ideation tools, storytelling, text/video Q & A chats and publish your consultation papers imaginatively using multiple media such as podcasts, webinars, live-streaming and enhanced visual presentations such as infographics. Focus particularly on better presented documents that are easily accessible and downloadable.*’
- 2.11 The consultation and communication plan always allowed for the use of this technology. The website will be a powerful tool for communication and will include the link to the online survey. It will also host a range of publicity materials such as posters, leaflets and links to Fire Authority papers, etc. There will be a social media campaign using Facebook and Twitter and Facebook advertising to target members of the public who do not already follow our work. To support this the website will hold a series of short videos which will guide members of the public through the proposed 7 decisions held within the IRMP. The videos will be short (under 2 mins) with graphics and explanations as to why we are proposing to change.
- 2.12 The guidance continues that we must accommodate those who cannot respond using online technology. It states; ‘*You must not abandon those who are either reluctant or unable to participate electronically. There are alternatives. Telephone hotlines or similar services in particular, might prove useful in enabling you to gather consultation responses.*’ Our telephone survey will deliver this, along with the ability for our communities to telephone in their responses.

### **3 Pre engagement**

3.1 In order to ensure the IRMP reflected effective consultation throughout its development a programme of pre-consultation and engagement activities have been held over the past 12 months in order to help shape the strategic direction of the IRMP and the proposals outlined within the draft IRMP 2020/2025.

#### **3.2 Staff and Union engagement**

3.2.1 Staff and representative body engagement has taken place and has contributed to shaping the proposals. Very early engagement was undertaken starting in October 2017 and was tied in with the HIMCFRS inspection communication plan. Every watch in the Service was visited. The main report and station profiles and the areas of investigation were shared with staff on a dedicated web page throughout the review and the opportunity for staff to feed back with questions and ideas was promoted. Station visits have been completed, focus groups were established and the proposals shared with staff and unions before being submitted to the Fire Authority as its next Integrated Risk Management Plan.

#### **3.3 Pre engagement with the public**

- 3.3.1 In order to carry out pre engagement on the integrated risk management plan a survey was available on the Service’s web site and advertised through social media. There were 100 respondents and the headline results are as follows:
- 80 % of respondents agreed that we should align our resources to the areas of highest risk

- 72% agreed we should invest more in more prevention schemes and campaigns such as our schools programmes, Safety in Action and Safe Drive Stay Alive
- 86% agreed we should invest more in improving business fire safety of buildings through, for example, inspections and advice for building owners
- 76% answered yes when asked if they thought the cost for a Band D property is £1.84 a week or £95.53 to pay for the fire and rescue service provided good value for money.

#### **4 REVISED CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY DUE TO COVID 19**

4.1 The consultation period for the IRMP is set at eight weeks, commencing on Friday 24 April 2020 and closing on Friday 19 June 2020. The results of the consultation will be reported to the Fire Authority meeting on 3 September 2020.

Government Advice published in 2018 states:

- Consultations should be clear and concise
- Consultations should have a purpose
- Consultations should be informative
- Consultations are only part of a process of engagement
- Consultations should last for a proportionate amount of time
- Consultations should be targeted
- Consultations should take account of the groups being consulted
- Consultations should be agreed before publication
- Consultation should facilitate scrutiny
- Government responses to consultations should be published in a timely fashion
- Consultation exercises should not generally be launched during local or national election periods.

It is important to note that this guidance does not have legal force and is subject to statutory and other legal requirements.

4.2 With specific reference to the length of the consultation, it advises:

*'Judge the length of the consultation on the basis of legal advice and taking into account the nature and impact of the proposal. Consulting for too long will unnecessarily delay policy development. Consulting too quickly will not give enough time for consideration and will reduce the quality of responses.'*

The Service had planned a combination of early engagement and consultation methods. This delivers a range of opportunities to provide information to all audiences, using multiple channels and various communication styles, allowing stakeholders sufficient time to provide a considered response within an eight-week consultation period. This will also allow the Fire Authority to consider the results of the consultation at its meeting in September. This timeline allows for the plan to be aligned with the budget proposals and included in the Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan.

4.3 East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service has been running consultations for Integrated Risk Management Plans and Service Reviews for many years and has found the following trends in responses to be typical:

- Interested parties respond very quickly, sometimes using more than one method of communication
- Any media coverage is usually immediate and will raise the public's interest very quickly after information is released
- People who attend the focus groups, forums and staff meetings tend to respond straight afterwards once information has been received and discussed
- Once initial meetings and communications have been sent, reminders do elicit further interest but at a very much lower level than the first responses
- During the last 2 or 3 weeks of the consultation period there is very little interest and requests for information have usually died down completely
- Regardless of the timescale there will always be people who respond after the deadline resulting in their responses being too late to be included in the resulting report. This, however, is usually very low i.e. the Hastings Review received 3 responses after the consultation had closed

4.4 It is felt that our proposed combination of revised consultation methods, the telephone survey in particular will increase response levels and by utilising various communication styles, will allow stakeholders sufficient time to provide a considered response within an 8 week consultation period.

### 4.3 **Consultation methods**

4.3.1 The original consultation plan included face to face publicity and engagement events to reach the public. Additionally, the original plan highlighted a number of key influencers such as MPs and Chief Executives who we planned to brief face to face.

4.3.2 The consultation plan has been reviewed and guidance has been sought from the Service's consultation providers who have worked with us to develop the new plan. Also specific guidance has been sought from the Consultation Institute regarding postal surveys. Bearing in mind government guidance about people staying at home, we have ruled out a postal survey and put in place a telephone survey where people phone in. There is still an option for our communities to return a postal survey to us if they wish, but we will not be encouraging this. All the information will be available on the Service's website from Friday 24 April 2020 and staff, stakeholders and the public will all be informed of its location and the opportunities to respond and comment on the IRMP as soon as possible after that date.

4.3.3 The table below shows the original consultation plan with the revised plan so the Fire Authority can see at a glance where the major changes are occurring.

4.3.4 The major changes are:

- Replacing a 500 hard copy postal questionnaire with the telephone survey. In addition there will be a printable survey that can be returned hard copy or electronically with respondents being given the opportunity to phone their responses in, and counselled against returning them by post.
- Our provider will process responses online and via the telephone.

- A telephone survey to 600 residents that would normally prefer face to face communication.
- The face to face focus groups have been replaced with online forums
- The face to face stakeholder meeting had been replaced by an online forum
- 10,000 post cards advertising the survey will be targeted at those that typically struggle to use technology and whose internet usage is low.

4.4.4 There is a further option that the Fire Authority may wish to consider if it believes the above measures need to be supplemented. There is an option to include 12 in-depth interviews with members of the public (to account for those who may not be able/wish to take part in the on line forums). Video-based depth interviews are one-to-one discussions between a researcher and participant. They typically last from between 30 and 60 minutes, though they can be shorter or longer depending on the topic under discussion. Participants are recruited in advance (methods of doing so differ according to the audience) and are asked to nominate preferred a date and time for an interview. A researcher then undertakes the discussion using a semi-structured topic guide that covers all key topics, while allowing the interviewee a degree of freedom in their responses. This is presented as option C and will increase the cost of the consultation plan.

<b>Original consultation plan A</b>	<b>Revised consultation plan B</b>	<b>Revised consultation plan C</b>
Online questionnaire hosted by ORS (printed versions available on request).	As A	As A
Printable survey option to print 500, 800 or 1,000.	Changed to a PDF version of the questionnaire that can be sent out and emailed back, or communities can phone the consultation provider to respond. Postage return will not be encouraged.	As B
Staff presentations conducted face to face.	Staff presentations conducted on line via webinars and webex.	As B
A stakeholder forum conducted face to face.	A stakeholder webinar on line up to 100 participants.	As B
Six public focus groups conducted by consultation provider face to face.	Six public focus groups conducted by consultation provider on line.	As B
Six "drop in" events in where the public will be able to complete the survey with support from staff.	Telephone survey will now be undertaken to gain the views of 600 residents.  A post card mail out of 10,000 linking to our website and our phone line to request an	In addition to option B there is an opportunity to include 12 in depth interviews with members of the public (to account for those who may not be able/wish to take part

	electronic to be emailed or paper copy to be posted.  Opportunity to phone in to leave their response.	in the online focus groups). This is an option for the Fire Authority to consider.
Local meetings involving senior officers and community groups.	Email communications via stakeholder data base and local contacts on stations, offer of phone call briefings.	As B
Member involvement. We will provide leaflets and info packs to Members for use in surgeries and meetings and any interactions as appropriate.	These will now be electronic member packs for dissemination on line, via email etc.	As B

#### 4.4 **Communication plan**

4.4.1 A co-ordinated communications campaign will support the consultation process and promote participation in the consultation.

4.4.2 There are a number of key objectives:

- To publicise the plan and its proposals
- To encourage participation in consultation
- To conduct a series of senior officer led engagements
- To set out next steps
- To help the public understand that we are facing new challenges

We will carefully monitor the number of responses and adjust our strategy accordingly.

4.4.3 The Service will make information readily available in a range of formats. As previously indicated by the Fire Authority, there is a preference for free or low-cost options which have a proven record of success.

4.4.4 The Service will therefore use digital channels, however it is important to note that internet usage drops from age 55 upwards according to Ofcom. This means the Service needs to support our digital communication with other forms of communication such as local media which broadly speaking will reach those not online. We will use stakeholder groups such as specialist charities to seek the views of those groups deemed to be harder to reach through the stakeholder data base and our usual methods.

#### **Localised content**

The Service will provide information which is tailored to local areas so the public can better understand the proposals and the rationale behind them.

The Service should anticipate that there will be some areas which will request a greater level of engagement.

## **Digital Communication**

The website has a dedicated page [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture) which will be updated once the consultation is open with information about how people can take part including a link to the online survey. It will also host a range of publicity materials such as posters, leaflets and links to Fire Authority papers, etc.

A social media campaign will be launched using Facebook and Twitter. The Service will use Facebook advertising to target members of the public in key areas. Any questions will be answered promptly with people signposted to further information.

## **Media engagement**

The media remains an important route to reaching a wide range of audience groups. The local media will be given with briefings, press releases and offered interviews with senior officers.

It is anticipated that there will be a higher demand for ongoing media responses and interviews during the consultation period and spokespeople will need to be available to respond to these as well as help launch the consultation.

There will be media monitoring in place to help assess common themes of concern or interest and these will be used to shape communications as the consultation progresses.

## **Stakeholder engagement**

The Service holds a consultation database with over 500 contacts. This has been reviewed in recent weeks and additional contacts added. We will directly email a number of key stakeholders including, but not limited to, Councils including Parish Councils, charities and support groups and partners.

We will support on line engagement by Fire Authority Members and ESFRS staff by producing relevant material.

We would normally utilise libraries but will not be doing so during COVID-19.

- 4.4.5 The full communication plan has been developed and has been approved by SLT, the ORR review team will action the plan.

## **5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Best Value Duty applies to how 'authorities should work with voluntary and community groups and small businesses when facing difficult funding decisions. It states that authorities are to 'consider overall value, including economic, environmental and social value, when reviewing service provision'. To reach this balance, prior to choosing how to achieve the Best Value Duty, authorities remain 'under a Duty to Consult representatives of a wide range of local persons.

5.2 The Government's Fire and Rescue National Framework for England states that each fire and rescue authority must produce an IRMP. The IRMP must identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect its community, including those of a cross-border, multi-authority and/or national nature. The National Framework provides clear guidance that an IRMP must reflect effective consultation with the community, workforce, representative bodies and partner organisations.

## 6 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The following table shows the costs associated with previous public consultation exercises. It also includes the costs of the original consultation proposals approximately £27,000. Option B with the inclusion of a telephone survey increases the costs to approximately £42,000. The Fire Authority has the option to include the 12 depth interviews with members of the public (to account for those who may not be able/wish to take part in the online focus groups). Which would bring the total to £45,000.

6.2 The Fire Authority is asked to note that the costs presented below have the potential to increase depending on the numbers of surveys received and processed. The consultation provider provides quotes based on an estimated number of returns, if the response to the consultation is high, the costs will increase. Also the provider is able to offer a translation service based on request which would be an additional cost and unknown. These costs are not factored in to the table.

6.3 A budget of £30,000 for IRMP consultation was provided in 2019/20 and remains unspent. Subject to the final outturn position it is expected that this amount can be carried forward into 2020/21. Any costs above this will need to be funded from the 2020/21 corporate contingency. The additional costs resulting from the impact of Covid 19 will be declared in the monthly monitoring return through NFCC and Home Office but it is felt unlikely that, in this case, this will result in additional Government funding.

<b>Consultation</b>	<b>Cost* £'000</b>	<b>Response rate</b>
Attendance standards	22	675
Consultation on 2017/20 IRMP	10	588
Changing the Service Shaping our Future	22	655
Hastings Review	19	504
Rural Review	30	347
Planning for a Safer Future		
Option A – original plan	27	**
Option B – with telephone survey	42	
Option C – with telephone survey and 12 additional interviews.	45	
*includes in house costs for the mail outs and social media advertising costs		
**costs could increase depending on the number of returns processed.		

## **7 EQUALITY AND DIVERISTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Service has a Communication and Consultation Strategy that has an accompanying Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). The EIA has been considered as we have revised the consultation and communication strategy for this integrated risk management plan. There are no material changes from before. We have also undertaken a specific EIA on the proposals within this document which is attached as Appendix A. This has been reviewed by the Services Equality and Diversity Officer.



**CONFIDENTIAL WHEN COMPLETE**

*Forms will be independently processed by  
Opinion Research Services (ORS)*

## East Sussex Fire Authority

### Planning for a Safer Future Consultation

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) is required to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) to describe how it will keep its residents, and those who work or travel through its area, safe over the coming years. The Plan describes the main risks to East Sussex and Brighton & Hove's communities and how ESFRS is proposing to use its resources efficiently to reduce those risks.

The East Sussex Fire Authority (ESFA) is undertaking this consultation to gather the views of local residents and other stakeholders of ESFRS' proposals for the next five years. To find out more before answering the questions, **please read the accompanying consultation document**, which is available at <https://www.esfrs.org/safer-future>

ESFA has appointed Opinion Research Services (ORS), as an independent social research company, to manage the consultation and questionnaire responses, and it will faithfully report the outcomes. The views of individual members of the public will be anonymous; but where feedback is from a representative of an organisation or someone acting in their official capacity, it may be attributed. All completed questionnaires should be returned by **19<sup>th</sup> June 2020**.

**This questionnaire is also available online** at [www.opinionresearch.co.uk/ESFRS](http://www.opinionresearch.co.uk/ESFRS)

All questions are optional, and all information you provide will be processed by ORS in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR. **Any personal information will be kept for no more than 12 months after any decisions have been finalised.** For further information, please see ORS' privacy notice at [www.ors.org.uk/privacy](http://www.ors.org.uk/privacy) and ESFRS' privacy notice at <https://www.esfrs.org/about-us/privacy-notice/>

If you have any queries regarding the questionnaire, you can contact ORS by telephone on 0800 3247005, and ESFRS on 0303 999 1000 and by email at [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org)

## The Operational Response Review (ORR)

*The following six key proposals\* have emerged from ESFRS' Operational Response Review (ORR), which is the most significant piece of risk analysis work the Service has undertaken in recent years. The Review has enabled ESFRS to identify the risks across its service area, and to develop proposals that target its resources to manage these risks.*

*The Service believes these proposals will ensure it can target its resources, including firefighters and fire engines, most effectively - bringing about a better balance of prevention, protection and response.*

*\*Please note that proposal 5 does not appear in the questionnaire as it relates to internal operational matters and therefore there are no resulting questions. However, information on this proposal can be found on pages **50-51** of the consultation document.*

# Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan

Please read pages [40-41](#) of the consultation document to find out more before answering this question

ESFRS plans to improve its operational resilience by increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of each day from **15** to **18**.

The Service will plan for:

- **18 immediate response fire engines** - these have the biggest impact when looking at community risk, population and density, overall activity, response to critical incidents etc.
- **A further 6 fire engines for added resilience** - these will also respond to incidents, but will be allowed a longer amount of time to respond if needed. This will enable the Service to draw in additional firefighters (including on-call firefighters) to crew fire engines when required.

The data shows that this change would result in improvements to the number of people, households and incidents reached within ESFRS' attendance standards.

In order to support and assist the delivery of these new arrangements, ESFRS is proposing two new approaches:

1. A **'flexible crewing pool'**, made up of firefighters who will be posted to stations as needed to cover for staff absences, which will be resourced by further changes we are proposing to make; notably through the new duty system proposals (see proposals 2 and 7). This concept is widely used across the UK Fire and Rescue Service.
2. New salaried contracts for **on-call firefighters** to improve their availability. On-call firefighters are currently paid a small retaining fee, but most of their pay comes from attending calls. These have reduced significantly in number, which has led to problems finding enough on-call staff to keep fire engines available to respond. The new contracts would offer a guaranteed monthly salary.

**1. To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?**

PLEASE TICK ✓ **ONE BOX ONLY**

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Proposal 2: Changes to Day-crewed Duty Stations

Please read pages [42-44](#) of the consultation document to find out more before answering these questions

ESFRS currently has six “day-crewed” fire stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield. On these stations, firefighters work a combination of “positive” and “standby” hours over a 24-hour period. Positive hours are worked on the fire station and standby hours are worked on-call from a location within five minutes of the station.

ESFRS proposes to introduce “**day-only**” **crewing** at these stations, whereby full-time firefighters would be on-station during the daytime Monday to Friday, with on-call firefighters providing cover during the evening and at weekends. The key difference between the existing system and the day-only system is that the latter does not require full-time staff to provide extra on-call cover during the evening and weekends. This cover is provided by existing and new on-call staff.

Two alternative options to resource this duty system have been identified:

**Option A** - one team of 6 staff guaranteeing the immediate availability of the fire engine for 8.5 hours of every weekday, with each firefighter working 5 days per week. This option results in a net reduction of 33 posts, providing the opportunity to reinvest staff into the “flexible crewing pool” (see Proposal 1), training and prevention and protection teams.

**Option B** - one team of 7 staff guaranteeing the immediate availability of the fire engine for 10.5 hours of every weekday, with each firefighter working 4 days per week. This option results in a net reduction of 27 posts, providing the opportunity (albeit reduced) to reinvest staff into the “flexible crewing pool” (see Proposal 1), training and prevention and protection teams.

**2a. Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from ‘day-crewed’ to ‘day-only’ at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a ‘flexible crewing pool’ and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?** PLEASE TICK ✓ **ONE BOX ONLY**

<b>Strongly agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Don't know</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
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**2b. Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing system from ‘day-crewed’ to ‘day-only’ at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, if the crewing change is agreed by ESFRS, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?**

PLEASE TICK ✓ **ONE BOX ONLY**

<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p>(6 staff – 8.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 33 posts)</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p>(7 staff – 10.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 27 posts)</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Don't know</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/>
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# Proposal 3: Changing the Number of Fire Stations with Two Fire Engines

Please read pages [46-47](#) of the consultation document to find out more before answering these questions

Nine of ESFRS' 24 fire stations have two fire engines, and a further three (in Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst) have a "maxi-cab" fire engine that have a larger cab size. The latter are also considered to be 2-fire engine stations.

Data shows that the second fire engines at day-crewed and on-call stations are not warranted: three-quarters of all calls in these fire station areas are dealt with by one fire engine.

ESFRS thus proposes to:

1. Remove the second fire engines from the following stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield. On-call staff would be used to crew the remaining fire engines in the evenings, overnight and at weekends.
2. Re-classify the three "maxi-cab" stations (Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst) as single fire engine stations.

The public would still have a 24/7 response from these stations but if a second fire engine were required at an incident, it would come from a different fire station. However, this often happens already, particularly during the daytime when low on-call availability means these fire engines are only available between 10-50% of the time.

## 3a. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?

PLEASE TICK ✓ **ONE** BOX ONLY

<b>Strongly agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Don't know</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
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## 3b. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three "maxi-cab" stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst, as single fire engine stations?

PLEASE TICK ✓ **ONE** BOX ONLY

<b>Strongly agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Don't know</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
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# Proposal 4: Crewing and Fire Engine Changes at Hastings

Please read pages [48-49](#) of the consultation document to find out more before answering this question

Currently, both of Hastings' fire stations (Bohemia Road and The Ridge) have one immediate response fire engine, which is available 24-hours a day.

However, data shows that Bohemia Road has a significantly higher risk profile than The Ridge. For example, the Bohemia Road station has the second highest number of critical incidents across the ESFRS area, and has had the most life-risk fire incidents over the last 9 years. Moreover, The Ridge fire engine attends more incidents in Bohemia Road than it does in its own area.

In light of this, the proposal aims to improve fire cover across both station areas and build more resilience in Hastings by:

1. Introducing a day-crewed system at The Ridge, whereby a fire engine would be immediately available during the day, and on-call during the evening and overnight.
2. Introducing a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road.

## 4. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?

PLEASE TICK ✓ **ONE** BOX ONLY

<b>Strongly agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Don't know</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
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PLEASE CONTINUE THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE →

# Proposal 6: Demand Management

Please read [52-54](#) of the consultation document to find out more before answering these questions

ESFRS is aiming to manage demand for its services in three areas to reduce the impact on its other work. These proposed changes will release capacity into prevention, protection and training.

## Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)

ESFRS attends, on average, 9,200 incidents each year. Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) account for 34% of all these calls – and 96% of the calls initially categorised as AFAs turn out to be false alarms.

ESFRS proposes to **no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises.**

**5a. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises?** PLEASE TICK ✓ **ONE BOX ONLY**

<b>Strongly agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Don't know</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
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## Lift releases

ESFRS is regularly called to release people from lifts that have malfunctioned. The Service wants to engage with building owners to ensure they are improving lift maintenance and have other arrangements in place to release people. It may also consider a delay in responding to some incidents where people are not vulnerable/in distress to give building owners time to resolve the issue.

**5b. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance?** PLEASE TICK ✓ **ONE BOX ONLY**

<b>Strongly agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Don't know</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
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## Trapped birds

ESFRS works alongside animal charities to reduce the number of calls it gets about birds trapped in netting, though it still attends a small number of calls. These calls tie-up resources and restrict ESFRS' ability to attend incidents involving risk to human life, and it is often necessary to use specialist equipment, making this service disproportionately expensive. Therefore, the Service is proposing that it should **no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting.**

**5c. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?** PLEASE TICK ✓ **ONE BOX ONLY**

<b>Strongly agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Don't know</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
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# Proposal 7: Changes to 4-Watch Duty System

Please read pages [55-57](#) of the consultation document to find out more before answering these questions

This proposal is about changing the way ESFRS' stations at **Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)** provide a 24/7 on-station response, through contractual and crewing arrangements of the firefighters who work at these stations.

The current full-time duty system requires a firefighter to work 2 day shifts, followed by 2 night shifts, followed by 4 days off. Although it has been in place for many years, there are now alternatives for delivering services in a more efficient way, without detriment to response levels.

Two options for change have been identified.

## **Option A: a "Flexible Rostering Duty System" at all 5 fire stations**

One team of firefighters plan their shifts between them a minimum of 6 weeks in advance, to ensure the fire engine(s) at their stations are always available. This system would:

- Improve the release of firefighters for training without affecting fire engine availability
- Reduce overtime and staff employed on fixed-term contracts
- Give the firefighters more flexibility and introduce a more family-friendly work pattern
- Result in a net reduction of 5 posts, which could be used for prevention, protection, training or resourcing the flexible crewing pool.

## **Option B: a "Group Crewing Duty System" at Preston Circus, Hove and Roedean (the 3 City stations)**

"Group crewing" means that resources are used flexibly within a "group" of stations. Crews would continue to use the existing shift pattern (2 day shifts, 2 night shifts, 4 days off) – and depending on sickness or other absence levels, one or more stations would support the others in the "group".

This option would result in a net reduction of 4 posts, which could be used for prevention, protection, training, resourcing the flexible crewing pool or taken as savings.

**Both options allow the Service to maintain its 24/7 immediate response and attendance standards.**

## **6a. Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)?**

PLEASE TICK ✓ **ONE** BOX ONLY

<b>Strongly agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Don't know</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
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## **6b. Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements at the 5 ESFRS fire stations listed above, if the crewing arrangements are changed, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?**

PLEASE TICK ✓ **ONE** BOX ONLY

<b>Option A</b> "Flexible Rostering Duty System" at all 5 fire stations <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Option B</b> "Group Crewing Duty System" at Preston Circus, Hove and Roedean only (the 3 City stations) <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Don't know</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
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# Building and Home Inspections

Please read page [32](#) of the consultation document to find out more before answering this question

One of the key areas of focus for ESFRS is to ensure buildings are safe and that fires are prevented. By reviewing its response models ESFRS will release resources to do more of this prevention and protection work, and to have capacity for more inspections and visits.

## 7. To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?

PLEASE TICK ✓ **ONE** BOX ONLY

<b>Strongly agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Don't know</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
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# ESFRS' Finances in the Future

Please read pages [62-63](#) of the consultation document to find out more before answering these questions

The average household in East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove currently pays £95.53 per year for their fire service — that is just £1.84 per week for a Band D property.

ESFRS' revenue budget for 2020/21 is £39.7m and is funded from a government grant (8%), business rates (22%) and council tax (70%). Over 75% of our spending is on employees, and the vast majority of this is on our firefighters.

Due to significant uncertainty about ESFRS' funding beyond 2020/21 (due to the Government planning to review how much it spends on public services) ESFRS have modelled a range of scenarios. These scenarios suggest that we may need to make new savings of between £0.7m and £3.5m by 2024/25 (in addition to savings of £9.8m made since 2010/11 and already planned for the period to 2024/25), in order to balance our budget.

ESFRS will also make further savings through its **Efficiency Strategy**, which will focus on a range of areas including:

- Improving the way ESFRS procures goods and services
- Using investment in IT and estate to reduce running costs.
- Reviewing all ESFRS' support services.
- Working in collaboration with other emergency services and public sector bodies where that can make its services more effective and efficient.
- Looking for new sources of funding, including different ways of delivering services, for example through a charity.

However, since 2010/11, ESFRS has also become much more dependent on the income it receives from council tax, and we have increased the amount we charge households by just under the maximum amount allowed by Government in each of the last four years (between 1.94% – 2.94%).

Considering the uncertainty about funding beyond 2020/2021, ESFRS has identified two possible options to increase its funding through council tax:

**Option A: a small increase in council tax of up to a 3% (depending on what the Government allows) for 2021/22),** which would mean that the amount the average householder pays would increase by up to £2.87 per year or just under 6 pence per week for a band D property. The Authority would still have to make savings, but this would help ESFRS to protect and improve the service it provides.

**Option B: a larger increase in council tax (more than a 3% increase) for 2021/22,** whereby each 1% increase would mean that the amount the average household pays would rise by 96 pence per year (or under 2 pence per week) for a band D property. This would help the Authority to reduce the amount of savings it needs to make and continue to invest in making communities safer.

**8a. Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?** PLEASE TICK ✓ **ONE BOX ONLY**

<b>Yes</b> → Please go to <b>8b</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> → Please go to <b>9a</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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**8b. If you would be willing to pay more council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22), what level of increase would you accept?** PLEASE TICK ✓ **ONE BOX ONLY**

<b>Option A</b> Up to a 3% increase depending on what the Government allows <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Option B</b> More than a 3% increase <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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**9a. To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?** PLEASE TICK ✓ **ONE BOX ONLY**

<b>Strongly agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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9b. In what ways do you think that ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future?

PLEASE WRITE THE BOX BELOW

## ESFRS' Purpose and Commitments

Please read page 9 of the consultation document to find out more before answering this question

ESFRS has a strong purpose and clear commitments to help make East Sussex safer by:

- **Delivering high performing services** by using its resources to achieve the best level of safety for people and business.
- **Engaging with its communities** by using its trusted reputation to deliver educational initiatives and campaigns.
- **Having a safe and valued workforce** by ensuring the people of East Sussex are safe and are provided with the right equipment, training and skills.
- **Making effective use of its resources** by ensuring all its resources are managed effectively, improving its productivity and seeking new sources of income and funding.

10. To what extent do you agree/disagree that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate?

PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

<b>Strongly agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to agree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tend to disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly disagree</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Don't know</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
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# Hearing About the Consultation

## 11. How did you hear about this consultation?

PLEASE TICK ✓ ALL BOXES THAT APPLY

Leaflet from ESFRS	<input type="checkbox"/>		Email	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letter from ESFRS	<input type="checkbox"/>		Social media	<input type="checkbox"/>
Questionnaire from ESFRS	<input type="checkbox"/>		Papers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information from a local Councillor	<input type="checkbox"/>		ESFRS Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
ESFRS website	<input type="checkbox"/>		Other - Please specify below	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text"/>	

## Further Comments

12. If you have any further comments you would like to make about any of the proposals in the consultation, please write below.

*As public bodies, ESFRS have a duty to take into account the impact of their decisions on human rights, under the Human Rights Act 1998, and also on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation).*

**13. Are there any positive or negative impacts from ESFRS that you believe should be taken into account?**

**If so, are you able to provide any supporting evidence and suggest any ways to reduce or remove any potential negative impact and increase any positive impact?**

**PLEASE ANSWER IN THE BOX BELOW AND CONTINUE ON A SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY**

# INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

If you are responding *on behalf of* an ORGANISATION:

**Which organisation do you represent?**

*Please give ESFRS the name of the organisation and any specific group or department.*

*Please also tell ESFRS who the organisation represents, what area the organisation covers and how you gathered the views of members.*

PLEASE ANSWER IN THE BOX BELOW AND CONTINUE ON A SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

If you are providing your own PERSONAL RESPONSE, please answer the questions below:

*ESFRS have a duty to promote equality and want to make sure all parts of the community are included in this consultation, but these questions are optional. All consultation responses will be taken fully into account when making decisions, regardless of whether you provide your details.*

**What is your full postcode?**

*This will help ESFRS understand views in different areas*

<input type="text"/>						
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PLEASE TICK ✓ ONLY ONE BOX FOR EACH QUESTION

**What was your age on your last birthday?**

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 25          | <input type="checkbox"/> 55 to 64   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 to 34          | <input type="checkbox"/> 65 to 74   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35 to 44          | <input type="checkbox"/> 75 to 84   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 45 to 54          | <input type="checkbox"/> 85 or over |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |                                     |

**What is your ethnic group?**

- White British
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
- Asian or Asian British
- Black, African, Caribbean or Black British
- Any other ethnic group
- Prefer not to say

**What is your gender?**

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Transgender
- Prefer not to say

**Do you work for East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Other

**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME**

Please return the questionnaire by June 19<sup>th</sup> 2020 to:  
Opinion Research Services · FREEPOST SS1018 · PO Box 530 · Swansea · SA1 1ZL

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## CONSULTATION DATA BASE

Organisation	Category
The Being Heard In Government Group (BHIG Group)	
Sompriiti	Advocacy and Representation
Sussex Interpreting Services (SIS)	Advocacy and Representation
Sussex Interpreting Services (SIS) Drop-In Centre	Advocacy and Representation
Age Concern Heathfield & District	Age
Dementia Support East Sussex	Age
Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)	Airport
RSPCA	Animal
Hastings Borough Council	Borough/District Council
Rother District Council	Borough/District Council
Sussex Association of Local Councils	Borough/District Council
Eastbourne Borough Council	Borough/District Council
Eastbourne Borough Council	Borough/District Council
Hastings Borough Council	Borough/District Council
Wealden District Council	Borough/District Council
Hastings Borough Council	Borough/District Council
Active Rother	Borough/District Council
Brighton & Hove City Council	Borough/District Council
Wealden District Council	Borough/District Council
Lewes District Council	Borough/District Council
Trifast Plc	Business
Volvo Eastbourne	Business
The Carers Centre	Carers
Achieve together	Carers
Brighton & Hove Chamber of Commerce	Chamber of Commerce
Uckfield Chamber of Commerce	Chamber of Commerce
Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Tourism	Chamber of Commerce
Battle & District Chamber of Commerce	Chamber of Commerce
Lewes Chamber of Commerce	Chamber of Commerce
Newhaven Chamber of Commerce	Chamber of Commerce
Peacehaven & District Chamber of Commerce	Chamber of Commerce
Rye & District Chamber of Commerce	Chamber of Commerce
Sussex Chamber of Commerce	Chamber of Commerce
Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce	Chamber of Commerce
Eastbourne Chamber of Commerce	Chamber of Commerce
Heathfield Chamber of Commerce	Chamber of Commerce
Hastings Coastguard (HMCG)	Coastguard
HM Coastguard	Coastguard
HM Coastguard Operations	Coastguard
Chailey Lunch Club	Community
Aspirations	Community
Battle Parkinson's Café	Community
Rotary Club of Battle	Community
3VA	Community
Allsorts Youth Project	Community
Brighton & Hove Speak Out	Community

Organisation	Category
Hanover Community Association	Community
The Trust for Developing Communities	Community
Brighton & Hove Community Works	Community
The Heathfield Partnership Trust Limited	Community
Brighton Greeks	Community
Kings Church	Community
Sussex Ouse Restoration Trust	Community
Bexhill Islamic Association	Community
Hastings Sierra Leone Friendship Link	Community
Polegate Community Association	Community
St James' Trust, Seaford	Community
Sussex Community Development Association Ltd	Community
Battle Area Community Transport	Community
Battle Community Singers	Community
Bexhill Caring Community	Community
Brighton & Hove Chinese Society	Community
East Sussex Federation of the WI	Community
Hastings & Rother Voluntary Association for the Blind	Community
Hastings Chinese Association	Community
Hastings Voluntary Action	Community
Sussex Indian Punjabi Society	Community
Uckfield Volunteer Centre	Community
Community Base	Community
RSPB South East Division	Conservation
Conservators of Ashdown Forest	Conservation
Maresfield Conservation Group	Conservation
South Downs National Park Authority	Conservation
Forestry Commission	Conservation
Forestry Commission	Conservation
Brighton & Hove City Council	Councillors, senior officers
East Sussex County Council	Councillors, senior officers
East Sussex County Council	County Council
East Sussex Record Office	County Council
Al-Medinah Mosque	E & D
All Saints Church	E & D
Bexhill Christian Spiritualist Church	E & D
Black and Minority Ethnic Community Partnership (BMECP)	E & D
Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University	E & D
Brighton & Hove Hebrew Congregation	E & D
Brighton Islamic Mission	E & D
Brighton Women's Centre	E & D
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	E & D
Clued up Info - Crowborough	E & D
Crawley Ethnic Minority Partnership CEMP	E & D
East Sussex County Council	E & D
Find it Out Centre	E & D

Organisation	Category
First Church of Christ Scientist, Brighton & Hove	E & D
Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha	E & D
Hastings & District Jewish Society	E & D
Hastings & Rother Rainbow Alliance	E & D
Sensory Impairment Service, E.Sussex Social Services	E & D
Sussex Nigerian Society	E & D
The Swaminarayan Hindu Mission	E & D
Bodhisattva KMC	E & D
Brighton & Hove Hindu Women's Group/Gujarati Cultural Society	E & D
Brighton Mosque and Muslim Community Centre	E & D
The Clare Project	E & D
B&H Muslim Women's Group (BHMW)	E & D
East Sussex Youth Cabinet	E & D
Age UK Brighton Hove and Portslade	E & D
Age UK East Sussex	E & D
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Uk	E & D
Eastbourne Seniors Forum	E & D
Friends, Families and Travellers	E & D
Maitreya Kadampa Buddhist Centre	E & D
Shree Swaminarayan Temple	E & D
Sussex Deaf Association	E & D
Sussex Jewish Representative Council	E & D
Sussex Oakleaf	E & D
The Disabilities Trust	E & D
Wealden Senior Citizens' Partnership	E & D
Bodhi Garden Dharma Centre	E & D
Brighton & Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group	E & D
Brighton & Hove Jewish Centre	E & D
Brighton & Hove Reform Synagogue	E & D
Crawley Bangladeshi Welfare Association	E & D
East Sussex Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People	E & D
Eastbourne Buddhist Group	E & D
Rigpa South Downs (Tibetan Buddhist Centre)	E & D
Shahjalal Masjid (Bangladeshi Muslim Cultural Centre)	E & D
Lewes District Seniors' Forum	E & D
Meridian Mature Citizens Forum	E & D
Oasis Project	E & D
Polish Community Centre	E & D
Possability People (Formerly East Sussex Disability Association and The FED)	E & D
Rother Seniors Forum	E & D
Seaford Seniors' Forum	E & D
Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre	E & D
Hastings Older People's Ethnic Group (HOPE G)	E & D
Hove Hebrew Congregation	E & D

Organisation	Category
International Centre for Krishna Consciousness	E & D
Polish Association Hastings	E & D
Voices in Exile	E & D
Hastings & St Leonards Seniors' Forum	E & D
Churches Together for Eastbourne	E & D
East Sussex Hearing Resource Centre	E & D
Eastbourne District Chinese Association	E & D
Eastbourne Liberal Jewish Congregation (ELJC)	E & D
Eastbourne Talking Newspaper Association (ETNA)	E & D
Possability People	E & D
Sensory Services Team	E & D
Brighton & Hove City Council	E & D
7th Day Adventist Church	E & D
B&H Hebrew Congregation	E & D
Brahma Kumaris The Lighthouse Retreat Centre	E & D
Brighton & Hove Hindu Women's Group	E & D
Brighton & Hove Spiritualist Church	E & D
Eastbourne Hebrew Congregation	E & D
Gujarati Cultural Society	E & D
Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses	E & D
Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses	E & D
Newhaven Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses	E & D
The Westgate Chapel	E & D
Bad Nerves, Mental Health	E&D
Hastings Kurdish Welfare Association	E&D
St Vincent De Paul Society	E&D
The Links Project	E&D
Vandu Language Services	E&D
Sussex Travellers & Gypsies (STAG)	E&D
Bexhill College	Education
The Friends Centre	Education
C360	Education
Plumpton College	Education
University of Brighton	Education
East Sussex College	Education
East Sussex College	Education
Environment Agency	Environment
Environment Agency	Environment
Environment Agency	Environment
Rother Environmental Group	Environment
Friends Meeting House	Faith
Churches Together in Sussex	Faith
Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is of Brighton and Hove	Faith
Brighton and Hove Progressive Synagogue	Faith
Brighton Buddhist Centre	Faith
Church of Scientology	Faith
First Church of Christ Scientist	Faith

Organisation	Category
Hastings Mosque	Faith
Kent Fire and Rescue Service	Faith
Shree Digamber Jain Association	Faith
The Pagan Federation	Faith
West Sussex Humanists	Faith
Avon Fire & Rescue Service Police & Fire	Fire & Rescue
Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Cleveland Fire Brigade	Fire & Rescue
Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service (Penrith)	Fire & Rescue
Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Essex County Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Fire Service College	Fire & Rescue
Fire Service College	Fire & Rescue
Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Guernsey Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue	Fire & Rescue
Humberside Fire and Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Isle of Man Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Isles of Scilly Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Kent Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
London Fire Brigade	Fire & Rescue
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Mid & West Wales Fire and Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
North Wales Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue

Organisation	Category
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
South Wales Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
States of Jersey Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Suffolk Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Surrey Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
West Midlands Fire Service	Fire & Rescue
West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service	Fire & Rescue
Fire and Rescue Services Association	FRSA
National Association of Local Councils (NALC)	Gov & Local Authority
Blind Veterans UK	Health
Seeing Ear	Health
East Sussex Healthcare Trust	Health
Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust	Health
Equinox Brighton	Health
Pavilions Adult LGBT Drug and Alcohol Service	Health
South East Coast Ambulance Service	Health
St Thomas Fund	Health
Sussex Cocaine Anonymous	Health
Active in Recovery	Health
BHT Addiction Services Detox Support	Health
Brighton Housing Trust	Health
Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	Health
Alzheimer's Society Brighton & Hove	Health
Dementia Action Alliance	Health
Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust	Health
Brighton Oasis Project	Health
East Sussex Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT)	Health
East Sussex drug and alcohol recovery service (STAR) - Eastbourne & Hastings	Health
East Sussex Families & Carers Team	Health
East Sussex Recovery Alliance	Health
East Sussex Under 19's Substance Misuse Team	Health
Kenward Trust	Health
KEYS Community Detox	Health
Newhaven Rehab Centre	Health
Oasis Women's Recovery Service	Health
Recovery Project	Health
Reformed East Sussex Services CIC	Health
ru-ok? Young People's Substance Misuse Service	Health

Organisation	Category
Therapy Service for Children and Young People Oasis Project, Hastings	Health
English Heritage	Heritage
High Sheriff of East Sussex	High Sheriff
Optivo	Housing
Tenants of the Lewes District	Housing
Southern Housing Group	Housing
Mears Home Improvement Ltd	Housing
Orbit South Housing Association	Housing
Southdown Housing Association	Housing
Arts Council, England Brighton Office	Leisure
Historic England - London Head Office	Leisure
Tourism South East	Leisure
Freedom Leisure	Leisure
Battle Library	Library
Brighton's Central Library	Library
Coldean Library	Library
Crowborough Library	Library
Eastbourne Central Library	Library
Forest Row Library	Library
Hailsham Library	Library
Hangleton Library	Library
Hastings Library	Library
Heathfield Library	Library
Hollington Library	Library
Hove Central Library	Library
Langney Library	Library
Lewes Library	Library
Mile Oak Library	Library
Moulsecoomb Library	Library
Newhaven Library	Library
Patcham Library	Library
Peacehaven Library	Library
Pevensey Bay Library	Library
Portslade Library	Library
Ringmer Library	Library
Saltdean Library	Library
Westdene Library	Library
Whitehawk Community Hub and Library	Library
Woodingdean Library	Library
Bexhill Library	Library
Hampden Park Library	Library
Rottingdean Library	Library
Rye Library	Library
Seaford Library	Library
Uckfield Library	Library

Organisation	Category
Wadhurst Library	Library
The Lieutenancy Office	Lord Lieutenant
More Radio Head Office	Media
Seahaven FM	Media
Uckfield FM	Media
Kent Online	Media
Heart	Media
Eastbourne Herald	Media
BBC South East Today	Media
BBC Sussex Radio	Media
John Connor Press Associates	Media
Fire Times - Modern Media Communications Ltd	Media
Hastings Observer	Media
The Argus	Media
Bexhill and Battle Constituency	MP
Brighton Kemp Town Constituency	MP
Brighton Pavilion Constituency	MP
Eastbourne Constituency	MP
Hastings and Rye Constituency	MP
Hove Constituency	MP
Lewes Constituency	MP
Newhaven Constituency	MP
Wealden Constituency	MP
NFCC	NFCC
East Sussex Youth Offending Team (YOT)	Offenders & Probation
Alfriston Parish Council	Parish Council
Berwick Parish Council	Parish Council
Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council	Parish Council
Laughton Parish Council	Parish Council
Ringmer Parish Council	Parish Council
Rye Parish Council	Parish Council
Salehurst and Robertsbridge Parish Council	Parish Council
Sedlescombe Parish Council	Parish Council
Streat Parish Meeting	Parish Council
Ticehurst Parish Council	Parish Council
Wadhurst Parish Council	Parish Council
Wartling Parish Council	Parish Council
Westfield Parish Council	Parish Council
Willingdon & Jevington Parish Council	Parish Council
Ewhurst Parish Council	Parish Council
Guestling Parish Council	Parish Council
Hartfield Parish Council	Parish Council
Icklesham Parish Council	Parish Council
Iden Parish Council	Parish Council
Isfield Parish Council	Parish Council
Kingston Parish Council	Parish Council
Mountfield Parish Council	Parish Council

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Category</b>
Newick Parish Council	Parish Council
Pevensey Parish Council	Parish Council
Playden Parish Council	Parish Council
Rotherfield Parish Council	Parish Council
Rye Foreign Parish Council	Parish Council
Pett Parish Council	Parish Council
Piddinghoe Parish Council	Parish Council
Rodmell Parish Council	Parish Council
Udimore Parish Council	Parish Council
Warbleton Parish Council	Parish Council
Alciston Parish Council	Parish Council
Chailey Parish Council	Parish Council
East Guldeford Parish Meeting	Parish Council
Fairlight Parish Council	Parish Council
Firle Parish Council	Parish Council
Fletching Parish Council	Parish Council
Forest Row Parish Council	Parish Council
Hamsey Parish Council	Parish Council
Hellingly Parish Council	Parish Council
Herstmonceux Parish Council	Parish Council
Hooe Parish Council	Parish Council
Hurst Green Parish Council	Parish Council
Little Horsted Parish Meeting	Parish Council
Long Man Parish Council	Parish Council
Mayfield & Five Ashes Parish Council	Parish Council
Ninfield Parish Council	Parish Council
Peasmarsh Parish Council	Parish Council
Westmeston Parish Council	Parish Council
Crowhurst Parish Council	Parish Council
Westham Parish Council	Parish Council
Arlington Parish Council	Parish Council
Ashburnham and Penhurst Parish Council	Parish Council
Barcombe Parish Council	Parish Council
Brightling Parish Council	Parish Council
Burwash Parish Council	Parish Council
Catsfield Parish Council	Parish Council
Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council	Parish Council
Chiddingly Parish Council	Parish Council
Cuckmere Valley Parish Council	Parish Council
Dallington Parish Council	Parish Council
Danehill Parish Council	Parish Council
Ditchling Parish Council	Parish Council
East Chiltington Parish Council	Parish Council
East Dean and Friston Parish Council	Parish Council
East Hoathly with Halland Parish Council	Parish Council
Falmer Parish Council	Parish Council
Framfield Parish Council	Parish Council

Organisation	Category
Hadlow Down Parish Council	Parish Council
Iford Parish meeting	Parish Council
Northiam Parish Council	Parish Council
South Heighton Parish Council	Parish Council
Whatlington Parish Council	Parish Council
Buxted Parish Council	Parish Council
Etchingham Parish Council	Parish Council
Frant Parish Council	Parish Council
Horam Parish Council	Parish Council
Maresfield Parish Council	Parish Council
Plumpton Parish Council	Parish Council
Withyham Parish Council	Parish Council
Wivelsfield Parish Council	Parish Council
Beckley Parish Council	Parish Council
Bodiam Parish Council	Parish Council
Camber Parish Council	Parish Council
East Sussex Strategic Partnership	Partnership
Eastbourne Homes Ltd	Partnership
Kent Surrey and Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company	Partnership
LSP Co-ordinator	Partnership
St. John Ambulance	Partnership
Wealden Strategic Partnership	Partnership
South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Trust	Partnership
National Association of Retired Firefighters	Partnership
British Red Cross, Kent & Sussex	Partnership
CareLink Plus, Brighton and Hove City Council	Partnership
Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex	Partnership
Care for the Carers	Partnership
Brighton & Hove Clinical Commissioning Group	Partnership
Rother District Local Strategic Partnership	Partnership
Sussex Housing & Care	Partnership
Sussex Police	Police
Sussex Police	Police
Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner	Police
Country Land & Business Association	Rural
Countryside Alliance	Rural
CPRE Sussex Countryside Trust	Rural
Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group South East	Rural
High Weald AONB Unit	Rural
National Farmers Union South East Region	Rural
National Trust	Rural
Action in Rural Sussex	Rural
Natural England	Rural
Southdowns National Park Authority	Rural
South East Coast Ambulance Service	SECAmb
South East Water	Services

Organisation	Category
Park Holidays Uk Ltd	Top Employer
T E Connectivity	Top Employer
Centre Management Office	Top Employer
Coral Brighton & Hove Greyhound Stadium	Top Employer
Domestic & General	Top Employer
Equity	Top Employer
Friday Ad Ltd	Top Employer
Gardners Books Limited	Top Employer
General Dynamics United Kingdom Limited	Top Employer
Hotchkiss Ltd	Top Employer
Jones Bootmaker	Top Employer
Priory Meadow Shopping Centre	Top Employer
Royal Mail Brighton Delivery Office	Top Employer
Tesco	Top Employer
The Civil Service Motoring Association Ltd.	Top Employer
Waitrose	Top Employer
Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd.	Top Employer
Brighton Pier	Top Employer
Bupa International	Top Employer
Capital (Hair & Beauty) Ltd.	Top Employer
American Express Services Europe Ltd.	Top Employer
Asda Brighton Hollingbury Superstore	Top Employer
Hastings Direct	Top Employer
The Brighton Dome	Top Employer
Kimberly-Clark European Services Ltd.	Top Employer
Mott Macdonald	Top Employer
Freedom Leisure	Top Employer
Rydon Group Ltd	Top Employer
American Express Services Europe Ltd.	Top Employer
Brighton & Sussex Medical School	Top Employer
C Brewer & Sons Ltd	Top employer
EDF Energy (South East) Ltd	Top Employer
Elite Hotels	Top Employer
Hilton Brighton Metropole Hotel	Top Employer
Legal & General Investment Management Ltd.	Top Employer
Marks & Spencer Plc	Top Employer
Saga Insurance	Top Employer
Sainsburys	Top Employer
Southern Water Services Ltd	Top Employer
Battle Town Council	Town Council
Crowborough Town Council	Town Council
Hailsham Town Council	Town Council
Lewes Town Council	Town Council
Newhaven Town Council	Town Council
Seaford Town Council	Town Council
Telscombe Town Council	Town Council
Uckfield Town Council	Town Council

Organisation	Category
Polegate Town Council	Town Council
Rye Town Council	Town Council
Eastbourne and District Enterprise Agency (EDEAL)	Trade & Professional Association
Eastbourne Hospitality Association	Trade & Professional Association
Hastings & St Leonards Tourism Association	Trade & Professional Association
North Laine Traders Association	Trade & Professional Association
The Fire Protection Association	Trade & Professional Association
The Rye & District Hotels and Caterers Association	Trade & Professional Association
Brighton & Hove Hotels Association (BHHA)	Trade & Professional Association
Fire Leaders Association (FLA)	Trade & Professional Association
Sea Fire 2000	Trade & Professional Association
Let's do Business	Trade & Professional Association
East Sussex Federation of Small Business	Trade & Professional Association
Brighton & Hove Business Forum Ltd	Trade & Professional Association
Brighton & Hove Hotels Association (BHHA)	Trade & Professional Association
Highways England	Transport
RDH Coaches	Transport
Brighton & Hove Bus & Coach Co. Ltd.	Transport
The Automobile Association	Transport
Campaign for Better Transport - East Sussex	Transport
RAC Motoring Services	Transport
Newhaven Port & Properties LTd	Transport
Govia Thameslink Railway	Transport
Brighton&Hove Food Partnership	Voluntary/Charity
Eastbourne Network	Voluntary/Charity
Eastbourne Access Group	Voluntary/Charity
Eastbourne Blind Society	Voluntary/Charity
Rother Voluntary Action	Voluntary/Charity
Rother Voluntary Action (Rye Office)	Voluntary/Charity
Pastoral Action in Residential Care Homes for the Elderly (PARCHE)	Volunteering and Work Experience

**East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS) must, by law, produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) to outline...**

- How it will keep residents, and those that work or travel through its area, safe over the next 5 years
- The main risks to East Sussex and Brighton & Hove's communities
- Proposals to use its resources efficiently to reduce those risks

**East Sussex Fire Authority (ESFA) undertaking this consultation to gather views on ESFRS' proposals**

**Following proposals have emerged from ESFRS' Operational Response Review (ORR)**

**Most significant piece of risk analysis work undertaken in recent years...**

**Enabled the Service to...**

- Identify risks across its service area
- Develop set of proposals that target resources to manage these risks
- Balance prevention (e.g. home safety) protection (e.g. business safety) and response



# Current shift patterns

## Some key information...

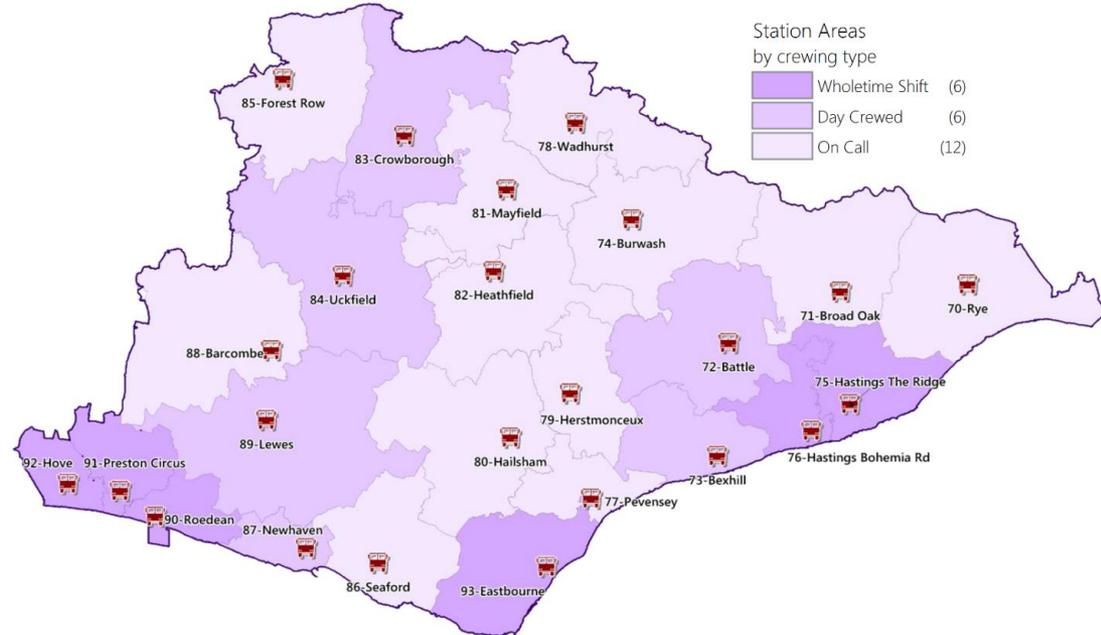
–24 fire stations,  
currently staffed in 3  
main ways:

- ‘Wholetime shift’: crewed 24/7,  
365 days per year by full-time  
firefighters

Page 295

‘Day-crewed’: firefighters are on-  
station during the daytime only  
(typically between 08:30 and  
18:30). Outside these times,  
firefighters attend incidents by  
responding to an alerter

- ‘On-call’: firefighters must live or work within 5 minutes of the fire station and are contracted to provide a certain amount of availability per week. They respond to an alerter when an emergency call is received



*Questions for clarification?*

*ESFRS plans to increase the number of core fire engines available at the start of the day from 15 to 18*

## Current



**15 x core fire engines available at start of day**

## Planned



**18 x core fire engines available at start of day**

+ a further 6 fire engines for resilience

- Not as busy/don't cover such high-risk areas
- Will respond to incidents (to support high demand and at longer incidents), but allowed longer to do so if needed → more flexibility for on-call staff



*ESFRS plans to increase the number of immediate response fire engines available at the start of the day from 15 to 18*

## Benefits to the community if ORP successfully implemented...



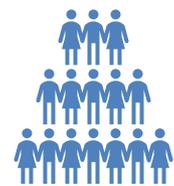
Page 297



99% of high-risk dwellings covered (up from 93%)

93% of all incidents within attendance standards (up from 81%)

\*Attendance standards are the time between when a call is received to the first fire engine arriving at the incident: an 'on-station' response should be within 10 minutes 70% of the time; an 'on-call' response should be within 15 minutes 70% of the time



92% of all households covered (up from 80%)

92% of population + 92% of over 80s population covered (both up from 75%)



## 2 new approaches to support this...

### *'Flexible crewing pool' to improve workforce flexibility/availability*

- Firefighters posted to stations as necessary to cover for absences due to sickness, training etc.
- Widely used across other UK FRSs

### *New contracts for on-call firefighters to enhance their availability*

- On-call firefighters are currently paid a small retaining fee...
- ...but the majority of their pay comes from attending emergency calls
- Number of calls is much reduced → firefighters provide cover for long periods of time but with less financial reward
- Has led to problems finding and retaining enough on-call staff to keep fire engines available to respond
- New contracts would guarantee monthly income and ensure cover is given when needed to keep fire engines available

# Proposal 2: Changes to Day-Crewed Stations



*ESFRS is proposing to change to 'day-only' crewing at its current 'day-crewed' fire stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield*

### Day-crewing (24/7)

- Used where risk levels are lower
- Some day-crewed stations have a relatively low level of activity (can be quieter than some on-call stations)



“Positive” hours worked on-station (daytime)  
“Standby” hours worked on-call from a location within 5 minutes from the station (evening + overnight)  
Same firefighters work positive and standby hours

### Day-only (24/7)

- Difference = full-time staff do not provide evening, overnight + weekend on-call cover...
- ...provided by existing + newly recruited on-call staff



Full-time firefighters on-station Monday-Friday daytime



Different sets of on-call firefighters provide evening/overnight/weekend cover

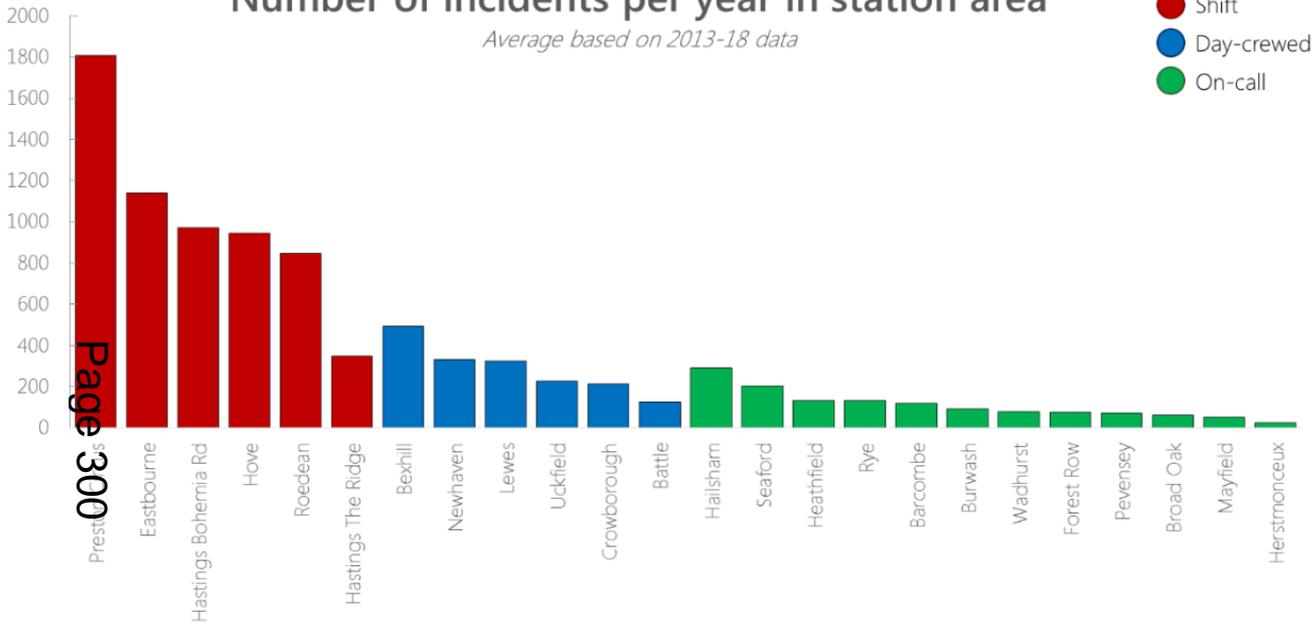
*The change results in a reduction of between 27 and 33 posts, to be reinvested into the “flexible crewing pool” training and prevention and protection teams*

# Proposal 2: Changes to Day-Crewed Stations



Number of incidents per year in station area

Average based on 2013-18 data



Some day-crewed stations → less demand than some “on call” stations

Incidents in Hailsham similar to Newhaven + Lewes (+ The Ridge)

Incidents in Seaford similar to Uckfield and Crowborough

More incidents in 4 busiest on-call areas than in Battle

Appliance	Daytime weekend mobilisations per year	
	All Incident Types	Critical Incident
Battle P1 (9-4 only)	32	4
Bexhill P1	84	7
Crowborough P1	47	4
Lewes P1	58	9
Newhaven P1	61	6
Uckfield P1	54	6

Average no. of incidents per year that would potentially receive a longer response time

Very few critical incidents (e.g. dwelling fire, RTC)

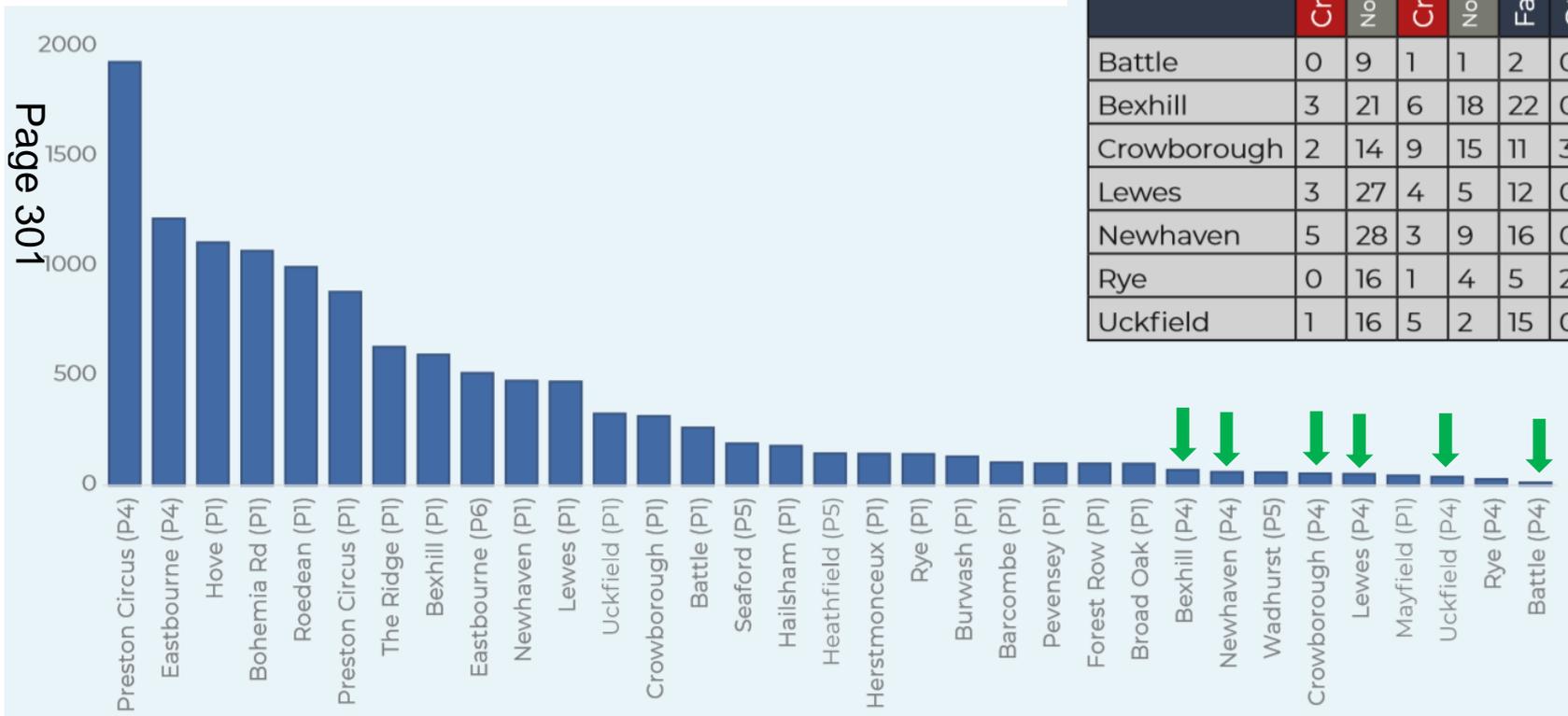
Data → change has very low impact on fatality rates, demand and performance



# Proposal 3: Changes to 2-engine Fire Stations

ESFRS proposes to remove the 2<sup>nd</sup> fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations

Review found they are under-utilised → 74% of calls in these areas are dealt with by one fire engine  
 Still a 24/7 response, but if a 2nd fire engine required it would come from a different fire station



2nd fire engine location	Fire		Special Service		False Alarm	Other	Total
	Critical	Non-critical	Critical	Non-critical			
Battle	0	9	1	1	2	0	13
Bexhill	3	21	6	18	22	0	70
Crowborough	2	14	9	15	11	3	54
Lewes	3	27	4	5	12	0	51
Newhaven	5	28	3	9	16	0	61
Rye	0	16	1	4	5	2	28
Uckfield	1	16	5	2	15	0	39

Average number/type of incidents attended in 2017/18

Includes calls into other fire station areas, which can be as high as 50% of total calls

# Proposal 4: Crewing + Fire Engine Changes at Hastings



*ESFRS is proposing to change the way it crews stations in Hastings and introduce an additional fire engine*

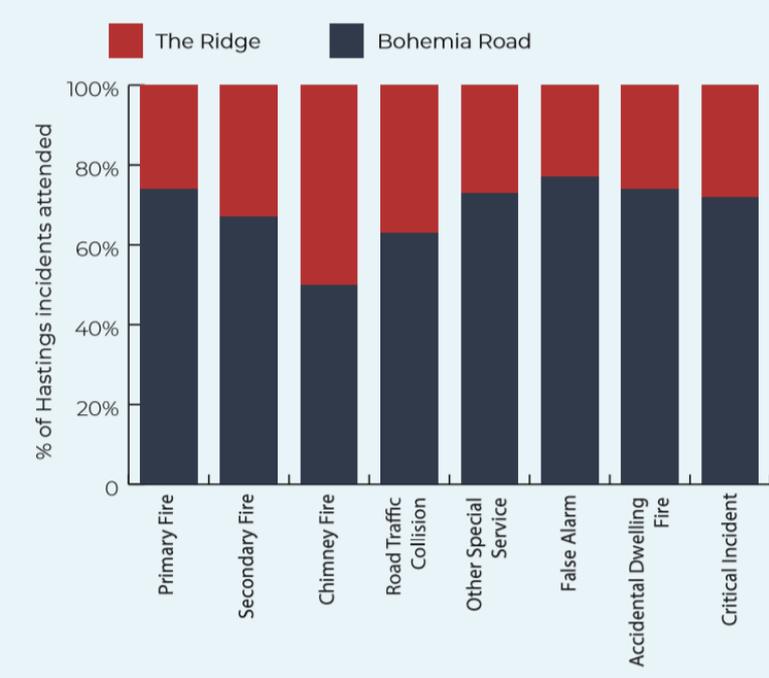
**Bohemia Road + The Ridge Fire Stations have one 24/7 immediate response fire engine each**

**Data shows that...**

**Bohemia Road → far higher risk profile than The Ridge**

**E.g. Bohemia Road area is 2<sup>nd</sup> across ESFRS for critical incidents + 1<sup>st</sup> for life-risk fire incidents**

**The Ridge fire engine attends more incidents in Bohemia Road than on its own ground**  
**Incident numbers at The Ridge are similar to typical day-crewed areas**



	Bohemia Rd	The Ridge	All Hastings
Primary Fire	129	46	175
Secondary Fire	89	45	133
Chimney Fire	7	7	14
Road Traffic Collision	33	20	53
Other Special Service	234	85	319
False Alarm	482	146	627
Accidental Dwelling Fire	65	23	88
Critical Incident	46	18	65
<b>All Incidents</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>1321</b>

**74% of all incidents in Hastings are in Bohemia Road station area**



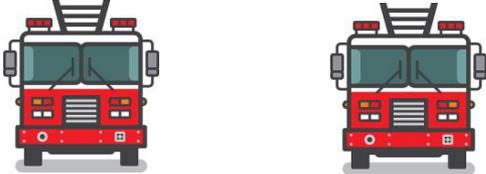
*ESFRS is proposing to change the way it crews stations in Hastings and introduce an additional fire engine*

## ESFRS wants to introduce...

- A day-crewed system at The Ridge
- A second (additional) 24/7 immediate response fire engine at Bohemia Road

Page 303

**Current**



**1 x 24/7 immediate response fire engine at each station**

**Proposed**



**2 x 24/7 immediate response fire engines at Bohemia Road**

**1 x 'day-crewed' fire engine at The Ridge**

## ESFRS feels this will...

- Improve risk/fire cover for both Hastings station grounds
- Build more resilience in Hastings
- Improve firefighter safety

*ESFRS is aiming to manage demand for its services in 3 low-risk areas to reduce the impact on its other work*

## Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)

- Account for 34% of ESFRS' c.9,200 annual incident responses (c.3,130)
- 96% turn out to be false alarms – and of those that are fires, very few require 'firefighter action' as fires are already out when crews arrive
- Significant drain on resources
- Proposal → no longer automatically attend AFAs in low-risk commercial premises

Page 304

## Lift Releases

- Proposal → delay responding to lift releases, if the people are not vulnerable or in distress
- Give building owners – who are responsible for broken lifts – time to resolve issues

## Birds trapped in netting

- ESFRS works alongside animal charities to reduce this type of call
- Still attends some → tie up resources/often need expensive specialist equipment
- Proposal → no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting

***These changes will release capacity into prevention, protection and training***

# Proposal 7: Changes to 4-watch duty system



*ESFRS proposes to make changes to the duty system at its 24/7 fire stations that are crewed on the traditional 4-watch system*

**Current ‘wholetime shift’ duty system → 2 days, 2 nights, 4 days off**

- Worked at Bohemia Road + The Ridge (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, and Preston Circus + Roedean (Brighton)

**ESFRS → more efficient alternatives available that do not affect 24/7 immediate response or attendance standards e.g.**

- ‘Flexible Rostering Duty System’
  - A team of firefighters plan their shifts between them in advance, to ensure their fire engines are always available
- ‘Group Crewing Duty System’
  - Resources used flexibly between a “group” of stations – one or more stations supports the others in the “group” to cover sickness, holiday and other absence

***Both examples would release a small number of posts for prevention, protection, training, flexible crewing pool***

**One of ESFRS' key areas of focus is to ensure fires are prevented and buildings are safe (prevention + protection)**

**By reviewing its response models ESFRS will release resources to...**

- Do more prevention + protection work
- Have capacity for more building inspections/visits to offer advice and ensure compliance with legislation

Page 306



***How do you feel about ESFRS' proposed shift of resources toward more prevention and protection work?***

***Main advantages?***

***Any disadvantages/ concerns?***

## ESFRS' budget for 2020/21 = £39.7m

- Over 75% of spending is on employees (vast majority on firefighters)

## Uncertainty about funding beyond 2020/21

- Modelling → need for new savings of between £0.7m and £3.5m by 2024/25 to balance budget (has to be done by law)

## Since 2010/11, ESFRS is much more dependent on council tax income → 70% of its income

- Average (Band D) household pays £95.53 a year for ESFRS - £1.84 a week

## Considering the funding uncertainties, ESFRS has identified 2 options to increase funding through council tax in 2021/22

- Option A
  - Small increase of up to 3%
  - Avg. increase of up to £2.87 per year - just under 6p a week
- Option B
  - More than 3% increase
  - Each 1% increase → avg. rise of 96p per year (under 2p a week)



*Would you be willing to pay more for ESFRS next year?*

*If so, what level of increase?*



***Thank you for your time***

**[www.opinionresearch.co.uk/ESFRS](http://www.opinionresearch.co.uk/ESFRS)**

**[consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org)**

**<https://www.esfrs.org/safer-future/>**

# Pre-consultation responses



Dear Councillor,

Thank you for your time in reading this and with the current situation I will keep this extremely brief:

1. Please considered carefully and in detail all the changes proposed in the IRMP. There are significant consequences to the Service and impacts upon the employees.
2. I do not believe that full due consideration can be given to these proposals and certainly no valid public consultation during the current national emergency.
3. I urge you to read the materials made available to you by all those invested in the process and consider postponing any attempt at a robust Public Consultation at this time.

Please do not hesitate to contact myself or the FBU my representative body should you require anything further.

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Firstly I'd like to thank you for taking the time to read this e-mail and hope you are safe and well in these uncertain times.

I am aware that you will be part of a Fire authority meeting tomorrow and wanted to touch base with you before then.

I'm concerned that many of the proposals put forward to you by ESFRS are to the detriment of the service and put members of the public at risk.

You would, I'm sure, had lots of massaged statistics paraded in front of you proving the points that they want to prove, which looks good on paper that is formulated by civilians and bean counters in ivory towers. But that is not the real world.

Less fire engines, less firefighters and reducing station status can only mean one thing, a worsening service putting lives at risk.

They will tell you it's not about money, but anyone of any intelligence will know it is.

The finer details of the proposals will be fought over by rep bodies and firefighters who's lives will be turned upside down with less money and worsening conditions.

But, what I am asking is for the Fire authority is to use common sense and suspend the IRMP until this pandemic is over.

It is not possible to hold a public consultation whilst people are worrying if their loved ones are going to live or die.

You can not get a true feeling from the public when they have bigger problems.

I am disgusted that I even need to lobby this point, and shame on ESFRS for not taking it upon themselves to suspend the process whilst the country is in crisis.

Once again money comes before lives.

Attached<sup>12</sup> is some factual information formulated by fire service staff (operational not civilian) that actually work on the front line, please take the time to read and digest.

I hope this helps you in formulating your decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> ESFRS Draft IRMP 2020-2025 – FBU Briefing Paper

<sup>2</sup> FBU 2019 Demand Management Review Birds Lifts AFA's Response

Dear Councillors,

I am writing to you as you are about to be asked to agree to commencing public consultation in relation to ESFRS draft IRMP proposals.

Attached<sup>34</sup> is a briefing paper produced for members of the Fire Authority by the Fire Brigades Union, so that members may understand and be sighted on the FBU's position in relation to the proposals set out in the IRMP.

Please take the time to read the attached document. Also attached is our previously submitted response to the Demand Management Review proposals.

I would also wish to add, that myself, the FBU and other members do not believe that now is the correct time to be consulting on any IRMP let alone one that sets out such drastic changes to how services are delivered. We are in the midst of the Covid pandemic. Now is not the time to be changing the Service. I also feel that the changes proposed are overly excessive and damaging to the staff within the service and the community that we serve.

I'm concerned that many of the proposals put forward to you by ESFRS are to the detriment of the service and put members of the public at risk. I'm sure, had lots of statistics presented to you proving the points that they want to prove, which looks good on paper that is formulated by civilians who have never worked for ESFRS or an emergency service. We have to remember that is the real world, less fire engines, less firefighters and reducing station status can have a massive impact to all communities within East Sussex, and a worsening service putting lives at risk.

They will tell you it's not about saving money or cost cutting, but anyone of any intelligence and who can read between the lines will know it is.

The finer details of the proposals will be fought over by rep bodies and firefighters who's lives will be turned upside down with less money and worsening conditions. But, what I am asking is for the Fire authority is to use common sense and suspend the IRMP until this pandemic is over.

I am disappointed that I even need to lobby this point, and shame on ESFRS for not taking it upon themselves to suspend the process whilst the country is in crisis.

The FBU are of the opinion that the IRMP must be delayed and reviewed post Covid pandemic. Should the Fire Authority go ahead with public consultation there may well be legal challenges to the legitimacy of the consultation under the IRMP framework document. Plans will also most likely have to be reviewed and changed, due to changes in the roles of firefighters in society.

Please support our view and postpone the IRMP consultation until the full affects of the pandemic are known.

Kind regards,



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<sup>3</sup> ESFRS Draft IRMP 2020-2025 – FBU Briefing Paper

<sup>4</sup> FBU 2019 Demand Management Review Birds Lifts And Response

Dear CFA Members

I'm a long serving employee of East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, with twenty plus years as an operational Fireman.

I'm aware that tomorrow, you will be undertaking a Fire Authority meeting (hopefully remotely). During this meeting, I know that the agenda will include discussions and voting upon the upcoming Fire Service I.R.M.P.

My concerns initially are that, the Service is currently stretched during the Covid-19 Pandemic, with requests being made on operational staff to help other public services and the pressure being put on staffing levels due to isolation. I feel the situation should force you to suspend/postpone the implementation of the I.R.M.P and any discussions about it, until this Pandemic is over.

I feel the service, Nationally and Locally will emerge from this pandemic looking quite different from how it currently stands. Any premature implementations of "efficiency cuts" may be detrimental to the public and Public Service employees you currently represent. I'm aware that any changes to the Fire Service and how it looks, now and in the future, should be open to public consultation. The public should have the opportunity to scrutinise your decisions in an open forum, not just remotely or via a hastily constructed questionnaire. For these reasons, please consider your vote tomorrow.

Your decisions effect all of our futures.

Yours

With Regards  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Councillor Roy Galley

I am writing to you with my concerns about the management team within ESFRS still going forward with the IRMP. I have served within esfrs for over 25years working as the Watch Commander of the on call staff on a day crewed station as well as working as the Watch Commander on a shift station in the city. I believe that working within roles across different work groups I have a good understanding of the concerns of my work colleagues. Due to the fact of covid 19 and the changes it has within our communities, the risks have changed since the IRMP was completed now people are staying home the possibility of more mental health issues more unemployment people in poverty and lots of other unknown consequences to all of our lives.

Surely it would be wise to wait until this pandemic is over and review our IRMP to get a better picture of what resources are needed and how best to serve our community.

Please reflect on this tomorrow when you have your meeting.

Kind Regards  
[REDACTED]

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I am writing with regard to the above and the proposed changes set out in this review that are set to be discussed at the Fire Authority Meeting tomorrow.

I understand it is your aim to request tomorrow that the Fire Authority agree that these proposals are submitted for public consultation.

I am well aware these proposals were in the making before the outbreak of Covid-19, but in my opinion to continue with the public consultation whilst in the midst of a global pandemic is appalling.

No one knows how long or how far reaching this pandemic will be and what the impact on every aspect of society will be in the short medium or long term.

Right now, the general public need reassurances that all their emergency and public services are fully available, accessible and reliable during this time and in the future.

In case you are not aware, my husband is a Firefighter on [REDACTED]. After passing his 16 week recruits course he was posted to [REDACTED] Fire Station and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED], he has worked [REDACTED] for his entire service to date [REDACTED] years.

To you, my husband may just be a number on your payroll, but he is and always has been fully committed to his role within ESFRS [REDACTED]. It is my understanding from his colleagues that he is an experienced, fully competent, reliable, solid Firefighter, and is extremely proud to be.

The proposals put forward in this review I find personally insulting and are totally disregarding not only my husbands personal commitment to the service, but to all Day Crewed Wholetime Firefighters, Crew Managers and Watch Managers.

It makes no sense to me to disregard the extensive experience, skills set, specialist qualifications, topography and knowledge of the much wider station ground, that your Wholetime personnel have as a collective - not to mention the relationships that have been built within the community - to essentially have your most experienced front line personnel working office hours Monday to Friday 09:00 - 17:00.

Moving onto the RDS element of the review and your proposal to have RDS cover evenings and nights from 17:00 to 09:00, and weekends from 17:00 on a Friday to 09:00 on a Monday. I am very interested in how you see this working, when, without the Wholetime personnel, there are gaps across the service for availability during these times, as well as a lack of qualified and competent Firefighters, JO's and drivers. You already have all this availability, qualifications and commitment from your Day Crewed Wholetime personnel.

Myself and our children have lived alongside the current working pattern for [REDACTED] years and essentially live with the alerter too. This is no easy way of life and requires us all to be on board and committed to the requirements of my husbands career. Something we want to do, are committed to doing and are extremely proud to do.

Referencing back to the current global situation we all find ourselves in, to have the additional worry, stress and anxiety of these proposals and their financial impact, is crippling and having a serious effect of our well being. We as a family lived through the stress and anxiety of the Rural Review in 2010/2011 and that was a very difficult time.

In conclusion, I am strongly asking you to reconsider putting these proposals out for public consultation.

Yours sincerely  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Councillors,

I am writing to you as you are about to be asked to agree to commencing public consultation in relation to ESFRS draft IRMP proposals.

Attached<sup>56</sup> is a briefing paper produced for members of the Fire Authority by the Fire Brigades Union, so that members may understand and be sighted on the FBU's position in relation to the proposals set out in the IRMP.

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<sup>5</sup> ESFRS Draft IRMP 2020-2025 – FBU Briefing Paper

<sup>6</sup> FBU 2019 Demand Management Review Birds Lifts And Response

Please take the time to read the attached document. Also attached is our previously submitted response to the Demand Management Review proposals.

I would also wish to add, that the FBU and our membership do not believe that now is the correct time to be consulting on any IRMP let alone one that sets out such drastic changes to how services are delivered. We are in the midst of the Covid pandemic. Now is not the time to be changing the Service. Post pandemic, the Fire Service nationally may change, we are already seeing firefighters take on additional roles including driving ambulances, transporting deceased, testing of sick, and the distribution of PPE.

The FBU are of the opinion that the IRMP must be delayed and reviewed post Covid pandemic. Should the Fire Authority go ahead with public consultation there may well be legal challenges to the legitimacy of the consultation under the IRMP framework document. Plans will also most likely have to be reviewed and changed, due to changes in the roles of firefighters in society.

Please support our view and postpone the IRMP consultation until the full affects of the pandemic are known.

If you have any questions then please ask.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

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Dear Cllr Dowling,

Firstly many apologies for leaving this until the last minute but ESFRS have not made it very easy to obtain relevant information.

My name is [REDACTED] and am an Uckfield resident who served with ESFRS [REDACTED] before retiring [REDACTED]. I was fully involved in the working groups to deliver the crewing models for ESFRS during the previous two Operational Response Reviews and feel that I am suitably qualified to raise serious concerns regarding the proposals for service delivery in the current IRMP. My main focus during these processes was to ensure that a guaranteed and effective emergency response to rural communities was maintained.

If not to late, I would be grateful if you could review the attached<sup>7</sup> document prior to tomorrows 'virtual' meeting and consider my concerns.

I will partake in the formal consultation process once launched.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]



## **ESFRS Draft IRMP 2020-2025 - FBU Briefing Paper**

First and foremost, the FBU are of the opinion that the IRMP must be suspended until the immediate threat and potential impacts on the Service from the Covid-19 pandemic have passed.

Nationally and locally the Service may look quite different when we emerge from the pandemic. Currently we are seeing firefighters carry out new and varied roles including the driving of ambulances, delivering of PPE, transportation of deceased to mortuaries

This is not the time to be looking to make cuts or savings to the Service.

Response to proposals

### **Proposal 2 - Day Crewed to Day only**

- This is not supported by our members. It will produce over reliance on the retained system. Historically at many RDS stations it has proved very difficult to recruit and retain RDS staff.
- No immediate response cover at weekends. No guaranteed on-call/RDS cover.
- Reliance on surrounding shift stations for cover.
- Service have actively depleted RDS numbers by filling wholetime posts with RDS rather than externally publicly recruiting.
- The Service shall be hoping that the current day crewed (who shall lose their day crewed allowances) shall take up secondary contracts as retained firefighters. This is not possible without a collective agreement with the FBU. The agreement would need to reduce rest periods under the working time directive. We do not support reducing down rest periods, as the rest periods ensure staff are fit for work.
- Negative impact on work life balance of those working day only, even more impacted if staff take on secondary contracts.

- Should day only personnel not be willing or able, due to the lack of a collective agreement, to take up secondary contracts as RDS staff then the Service shall not be able to implement their plan effectively.
- Day crewed changing to day only will impact both pay and pensions negatively of our members.
- Bexhill is the busiest daycrewed station in our family group of similar Services.

### **Proposal 7 - Changes to Wholetime Shift Stations**

- A change to flexible rostering is not supported by our members. Our members do not wish to change their shift pattern. Many have spouses who work around the fixed shift pattern of 2 days followed by 2 nights, and childcare is often planned around the shift pattern.
- The change will negatively impact work life balance. It will negatively impact families of firefighters and in particular female firefighters due to impacts on childcare having to be booked in fixed places and days.
- This system has failed in many authorities around the country.
- Flexible rostering removes the team aspect of emergency work. All reports into emergency and military cite team cohesion as vital for safe working. Flexible rostering removes this team aspect as firefighters will work with differing people each shift. Strengths and weaknesses of individuals will be unknown until they manifest themselves at an emergency.
- Flexible rostering crewing negatively impacts training, competency and training does not take place as a team but as individuals. It is extremely hard for organisations to monitor and ensure competency when delivered individually instead of as a team.
- Flexible rostering does not remove the need for overtime or fixed term contracts, in fact nationally when flexible rostering has been introduced there has been an increase in overtime bills and fixed term contracts. This has been evidenced in our own region in the South.
- Proposal goes against current work that is ongoing between FBU and Service regarding training and competency delivery and recording.

### **Proposal 4 & 5 - Changes to Crewing in Hastings Area - Specialist Appliances (Aerials)**

- This is a reduction in cover, being badged up as an improvement.
- Aerial cover will not be guaranteed.
- Services data does not support reduction in any cover in Hastings area as a whole.
- Aerial cover appliances will not be permanently crewed, but will be shared crewed with a fire appliance at Hastings.

- Post Grenfell moving to shared crewing of Aerials is poor decision making in the opinion of the FBU. Fire Services that have shared crewing of aerials are reviewing their decisions post grenfell. ESFRS are putting the public at greater risk with this proposal.
- Reduction in cover in the Ridge area as proposed downgrading to daycrewed from wholetime shift. Impacts included reduced cover at night, increased attendance times in Ridge and surrounding rural areas.

### **Proposal 3 - Changing the number of stations that have 2 Appliances**

- This proposal cuts second appliances at Stations where the second appliance is dependent on RDS firefighters.
- Historically, ESFRS have failed to recruit, failed to retain, and moved RDS into wholetime positions instead of running wholetime recruitment. The FBU have repeatedly stated this is shortsighted. What the FBU predicted has now happened. These appliances are often not available due to the above failings to be able to crew them. Had suitable recruitment and retention taken place, they would have been available more often and utilised more often for operational response.
- This is a direct cut to resources and will negatively impact firefighter and public safety.

### **Proposal 6 - Previous IRMP decisions**

- The FBU supports the proposal not to pursue changes to fire appliance size, for smaller appliances. The pressures on space due to work around contamination and environmental changes mean that more space on appliance is needed, not less.

### **Lift Releases and Trapped Birds**

- FBU have previously submitted a formal response to these proposals. See separate letter titled ' FBU 2019 Demand Management Review dated 15/08/2019.

### **Reduction to Personnel Across the IRMP Proposals**

- Reduction of 6 wholetime posts per day crewed station - 36 total posts.
- Reduction of RDS across service due to removal of secondary appliances.
- Reduction of 4 - 5 posts due to shift change to wholetime shift stations.



# Fire Brigades Union

## *South Eastern Region*

**Brigade Secretary: Mark Brown    Brigade Chair: Simon Herbert**

Richard Fowler  
East Sussex Fire Service Headquarters  
Malling House  
Church Lane  
Lewes  
BN7 2DZ

15/08/19

### **RE: Demand Management Review, Lifts, Birds, AFA's**

The Fire Brigades Union have reviewed the documentation provided by the Service regarding the Demand Management Review. The scope of this review appears cover operational response to incidents involving birds, lifts and those generated by Automatic Fire Alarms.

With regards to the recommendations in the briefing paper regarding incidents involving birds it is the opinion of the FBU that the current policy should continue.

With regards to the recommendations in the briefing paper relating to incidents involving lifts then the FBU are of the opinion that the current policy of responding to lift incidents should continue. The current task analysis also appears suitable as there are currently no technological solutions that would allow numbers to be reduced. However, we do acknowledge that work can be done to potentially reduce the numbers of these incident types. That work could include working with premises that have a high number of incidents relating to their lift equipment.

The FBU do not support the current weight of attendance to Automatic Fire Alarm activations, when the policy was originally brought in by ESFRS the FBU challenged the decision and we continue to not support the decision. For clarity, the FBU are of the opinion that the full PDA (predetermined attendance) should be sent to alarm activations for the potential incident type ie fire.

The FBU obviously support work that seeks to work with premises to reduce false alarms, however when an emergency response is mobilised then it should be the full incident PDA.



Finally, the Service appear to ignore the fact that at every attendance, irrespective of incident type or whether it is a false alarm, there is an opportunity for the Service to interact with the community they serve and should be making every contact with the public count. Every time an appliance is mobilised it has the potential to also deliver a fire safety message, to review an SSRI for the premises or carry out other fire safety work.

Therefore, we do not view these incident types as a burden on resources but rather as opportunities to carry out engagement work, use equipment in an operational environment, enhance knowledge of the built environment and improve both firefighter and public safety.

Kind regards,

Simon Herbert

East Sussex FBU Chair

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020

Dear Sir,

Re: East Sussex Fire & Rescue IRMP proposals

Proposals 2 and 3, if implemented, raise serious concerns to me about the ability of the service to deliver an effective and appropriate emergency operational response to rural communities and I offer the following observations for your consideration.

### **Proposal 2 – Changes to day crewed duty stations**

*We are proposing to change staff contracts at our current Day-Crewed fire stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield.*

*On these stations, firefighters work a combination of “positive” and “standby” hours over a 24-hour period. Positive hours are worked on the fire station and standby hours are worked on-call from a location within a five minute ‘turn in’ time of the station (in the same way our on-call firefighters do). Day-crewing duty systems are traditionally used by fire and rescue services where risk levels are lower e.g. less urban. Two workgroups or “watches” of six staff cover an average of 42 daytime hours per week and remain on-call during evening periods helping to **guarantee** fire engine availability.*

*We propose to introduce a ‘Day Only’ crewing model, maintaining a 24/7 response from these stations through a different crewing pattern. In this arrangement, full time firefighters would be on-station during the daytime Monday to Friday, with on-call firefighters providing cover in the evening and at weekends. The differences between the existing system and day-only is that day-only does not require the fulltime staff to provide additional on-call cover during the evening and weekends. This cover is provided by existing and newly recruited on-call staff (see Proposal 1). The evidence in our ORR demonstrates that this is an effective way to provide emergency cover on these stations based on community risk.*

*The community would still have a 24/7 response from these stations **but it would mean we may take slightly longer to attend during the daytime at the weekend** in these station areas. However, our analysis shows this represents a very small number of incidents and that this proposal **will therefore have a negligible impact on: - community risk - attendance standards - incident demand***

### **Concerns**

The current Day Crewed duty system was designed to **guarantee** the availability of at least one fire appliance from each of the six stations 24/7 by the fulltime firefighters being available on call at night. ESFRS state that they will invest in on call firefighter recruitment. However, the recruitment and retention of on call personnel has been an issue that fire services nationwide have been struggling with for many years and is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon.

Therefore, as their own on call appliance availability statistics demonstrate, ESFRS will be **unable to guarantee** a fire appliance from any of the current day crewed stations during evenings and weekends.

### **Evidence from neighbouring FRS**

West Sussex FRS changed their crewing arrangement to that now being proposed for Day Crewed stations in East Sussex. A freedom of information request provides the evidence below that the system is totally flawed.

Note; Given that WSFRS have recently over to a new data system, we have not yet carried out any in depth analysis on data collected from December 2019 using this system. As such, the data we have provided covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2018 to the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

#### **1. How many FRS incidents in West Sussex have been attended by East Sussex fire appliances in the past 12 months?**

In the period from 01/12/2018 to 30/11/2019 appliances from East Sussex attended 146 incidents. In the four stations you specifically mentioned the following numbers of attendances were made:

<b>Station</b>	<b>Number of Attendances</b>
Haywards Heath	6
Burgess Hill	13
Shoreham	88
East Grinstead	19
Other WSFRS Stations	20

#### **2. What is the average availability of appliances during on call periods (evenings & weekends) at; Haywards Heath, East Grinstead, Burgess Hill and Shoreham fire stations.**

For the period between 01/12/2018 to 30/11/2019 the average availability of each station is as follows:

<b>Station</b>	<b>% Availability</b>
Haywards Heath	59.13%
Burgess Hill	58.42%
Shoreham	28.06%
East Grinstead	39.04%

There is a glaring lack of evidence to show that East Sussex can ensure sufficient on-call personnel to provide appliance availability for evenings and weekend considering that West Sussex have been consistently failing.

**The current proposal 2 fails to guarantee the availability of any fire appliance during evenings and weekends outside of Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings whereas West Sussex FRS do at least maintain some 24/7 cover in the North of the county at Crawley and Horsham.**

### **Proposal 3 - We are proposing to change the number of fire stations that have two fire engines based on them**

*This proposal will move our resources to where they are most needed. Every one of our 24 stations has at least one fire engine and nine have second fire engines. A further three stations have a hybrid system where a “maxi-cab” fire engine is provided; this has a larger cab to carry more firefighters and is currently considered a two-fire engine station.*

*We have reviewed the usage and availability of these fire engines against the risk profile and concluded that the second fire engines at day-crewed and on-call stations are under-utilised. We also want to reclassify our “maxi-cab” stations as single fire engine stations. This affects: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield; along with the three “maxi-cab” stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst.*

*Benefits to the community. The public would still have a 24/7 response from these stations but it would mean that, if a second fire engine was required at an incident, it would come from a different fire station. However, this is often what happens already, particularly during the daytime when low on-call firefighter availability means that these fire engines are only available between 10-50% of the time.*

*The Operational Response Review data suggests **the risk impact from these changes is low**. We have analysed historical data including demand, levels of activity, on-call availability and what each incident was and what we did there. 74% of all calls in these fire station areas are dealt with by one fire engine. The following chart shows the average number and type of incidents attended by the second engines in 2017/18. **This includes calls into other fire station areas which can be as high as 50% of their total calls.***

#### **Concerns**

Removing the very fire appliances that, if crewed, ensure the resilience of the service, will at times result in the resources of East Sussex undoubtedly being stretched beyond breaking point whatever the statistics say. *Resilience: the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness*

The service is using the ‘statistical’ reason of ‘under-use’ of these fire appliances to scrap them without fully explaining all of the reasons for their lack of operational use to the public. The main reason being the fact that they are simply not available due to the lack of available ‘on-call’ firefighters. ESFRS management has itself been major contributor to this issue over recent years by utilising its on call firefighters to fulfil full time roles on temporary contracts to plug gaps in full time crewing thus rendering them unavailable for their on-call role. Gaps created by the services’ own policies and its failure to adequately identify future staffing requirements and not recruit full time firefighters for nine years as they slashed posts during the austerity measures.

The statistics show a three-fold increase in standby moves across the service over the past ten years. These are where fire appliances are moved to provide emergency cover in other areas due to incidents elsewhere and sometimes require additional moves behind each appliance. In theory the reduced number of emergency calls across the county should bring about a reduction of required cover moves. However, reasons for the increase include; non availability of on call fire appliances and more fire appliances required to deal with incidents due to the reduced crewing levels on each appliance following the last round of cuts!

## **Residential Developments**

*Details of residential development sites have been considered through our analysis, as well as the number of households that are to be constructed on a given site. These are illustrated in the individual Station Risk Profiles, along with a description as to whether they are inside or outside of attendance standards. The total long-term proposed additional growth works out to a total growth of 2,729 additional dwellings per year. All of the currently proposed residential development sites sit within our attendance standards. We have used our 'Housing Development Risk Assessment Toolkit' (HDRAT) to predict the increase in risk as a result of future housing and population growth and to assess whether we need to change how our resources are deployed in the future. The planned growth in the largest development areas are deemed to be well-below average dwelling fire risk.*

## **Concerns**

The Risk Profile for Uckfield claims that there are 'no residential allocations'! The authors of the report have conveniently chosen to ignore the 1,000 dwelling estate currently being built at Ridgewood Farm "which is not included as this is a former allocation as part of the old Wealden Core Strategy (February 2013)". Add to this the potential for a further 1,500 dwellings following the rejection of the Wealden local plan, Uckfield, along with other Wealden towns could see a huge increase in properties and residents. See Uckfield News story [Uckfield Fears New Big Housing Estate Plans](#)

Information regarding the household demographic is based upon the census of 2011!!

## **Summary**

If approved, these proposals will pare emergency response and resilience to the bone and can only have a detrimental impact on rural communities across the County despite the IRMP claiming to 'Prepare For A Safer Future'.

Irrespective of the statistics, it is physically impossible maintain the same level of response and resilience to when removing so many fire appliances and crews from the system and extending attendance times.

Given the current state of the country (and the world) and its total lack of preparedness, I would suggest that it is time to stop relying on statistics alone to manage our public services and to start basing decisions on the real world needs and expectations of the tax paying public.

We have emergency services 'in case' we need them and while prevention and protection measures can help reduce the risks, we pay for and expect an effective emergency response in our moment of need. Hiding behind manipulated statistics to further reduce resources and emergency cover across the County make this IRMP the most dangerous document that ESFRS has ever produced.

I believe the old term is 'there are lies, damned lies and statistics'!

Yours faithfully



# Public Consultation responses



Could you just confirm how you are consulting with residents who don't have access to the internet? I know there are options on line, but for those that can't get online in the first place, how are you contacting them?

Thanks  
[REDACTED]

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Hi,

It is extremely disappointing to find that after ten years of cuts and in the middle of a global pandemic you are going along with this process. Having strong public services is saving lives right now. If they are weaker then more people die. People who are doing important jobs outside of their role while other people quarantine safely are being told they will lose their jobs if this goes through.

The survey is also done poorly in a leading and biased manner. A transparent attempt to get positive answers to ambiguous questions. This is presumably my tax paying for someone to produce this? What a disgrace.

Proposal 1 question implies we are getting more fire engines overall when they are actually reducing. All you are doing is setting a new lower limit for a very specific time of day. This is disingenuous and leading.

Proposal 2 question is worded to imply that if you disagree with introducing flexible crewing you also disagree with investing in training and prevention and protection teams. You cannot link these two items in one questions. I could go on but feel it would be a waste of my time as like most consultations of these type they have been carried out with the goal of pushing an agenda.

How about you guys fight back with the government. Openly discuss the funding cuts from central government with the public. Ask them to back you against the government cuts.

This capitulation is obscene and galling to see you waste tax payers money on a deeply flawed survey and consultation.

Please protect our fire service and employees and the public as you are charged with doing.

Thanks  
[REDACTED]

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Hello,

I am emailing after learning of Safer Future ESFRS proposals which would essentially cut resources and staffing for our fire service.

I have friends within the fire service who have explained that the proposed increase in fire appliances actually amounts to a reduction of available appliances as many of these would be shared across services.

A proposed shift to 'day-crews' amounts to a loss of hours, earnings, and operational staffing of fire crews.

At this time of uncertainty, it is imperative that our fire service is better funded and increased, not reduced. I would happily pay more tax to be able to provide the fire service with the support they need to continue the excellent work they do across the board.

Kind regards  
[REDACTED]

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Firstly thank you for having saved our home in 2017.

I called 999 at 16:00 and by 16:10 the fire was under control, we would have lost the house had it not been for the amazing work of the local professionals to whom we are grateful.

The cost still came in at £1.6m.

Recently the Fire at the George Hotel demonstrated the need for local appliances, without rapid response we could have lost large parts of the Citadel.

Whatever happens please retain the highly skilled resources at the same or higher level in Rye.

Kind Regards  
[REDACTED]

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I note that you are considering revising all fire services in East Sussex.

Why not take the French approach and combine Fire and ambulance services. The Pompier System in France works very well. Why duplicate premises; vehicles and sometimes personal. I know that unions might be opposed to this sensible system. Why not try it on a trial basis in some places. Uckfield would be ideal to amalgamate Fire; Ambulance and Police including para medics on one site!  
[REDACTED]

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To all decision makers,

I oppose the plans to reduce the fire service coverage for Hastings.

I disapprove most strongly that this is being carried out in what appears to be a covert manner.

Hastings is a growing town with the erection of many more homes and the conversion of bigger houses into flats. as a result we need more emergency service cover not less.

Please do not make this cuts.

Yours sincerely,  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Sirs,

I grew up in Peacehaven from 1972 – 1991 and my parents still live in the house that I grew up in. In more recent years I have lived in Newhaven for a few years and more recently moved to Seaford.

Even though Seaford has it's own Fire station, Peacehaven does not and relies upon the Fire station in Newhaven and a fire engine sent from Roedean fire station.

Well, being someone that works in Hove and until recently has travelled both to and from work by either bus or car I can safely say that especially during rush hour periods between 4pm – 6pm, the traffic especially through Rottingdean is quite constant. Even with using the bus lane, I doubt that a fire engine would be able to get to where my parents live in the eastern end of Peacehaven before the house is burnt down and their lives are lost that has come from the fire station at Roedean.

Now, if there is more than one fire that the fire station at Newhaven is called out to go too, then quite naturally it would go to one that is within Newhaven as it is closer than say to the other call which maybe a property in Peacehaven. This point concerns me, as my parents are in their mid-70's with difficulty with walking and your actions by reducing the fire service capability will almost certainly in the situation that I have described have placed my parents at best in danger and worse they would have died due to the lack of time it had taken a fire engine to get to the property.

If you are going to reduce the number of fire engines at Newhaven, can I suggest that a Fire station is setup in it's place within Peacehaven that can then cope with the requirements of the people living in Rottingdean, Saltdean, Telscombe Cliffs and Peacehaven. Otherwise, I can see many people such as myself in future wanting to claim back the money being paid as part of the council tax back as the fire service would not be doing the role that it was setup to do, which is save lives.

I must confess I am not a conservative supporter and never will be as in the past when they have made cuts such as these, it has cost people's life's when more money should have been put into the Fire, Police and Health services. Why do you think that Colonel Tom Moore felt that he needed to be raising what was originally £1000 and has turned out to be over £29 Million!

Please think about the cost to people's lives, before you make a decision on cutting the fire engines at Newhaven Fire station.

Yours faithfully,

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Reading the proposals of cuts to East Sussex Fire & Rescue service are appalling, how can cutting 10 fire fighting appliances be safe when in East Sussex there countless building of dwellings going on thus increasing the amount of residents & therefore putting more lives at risk ... making these cuts will cost lives

These cut should & must not happen

Yours sincerely

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This is the first time I have contacted councillors with regard to decisions to be made. I feel so strongly against the proposed cuts to a public service we all rely on. To even consider cuts to emergency services at this time of global crisis is obscene. Does this mean that as a councillor you consider money is more important than peoples lives? The public have put their hands in their pockets to give more money to emergency services with charitable contributions. This shows the high regard that they are held in. What planet are councillors on to even consider these proposals. You are so out of touch with your constituents that the chances of your re-election is extremely remote. I also noticed that there is no mention of any cuts to the corporate empire of so called "support staff". Ask the public if they would rather have a Best Value Officer or a firefighter I know the answer. We are all watching you with interest to ensure you do the right thing. Thank you for you time.

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

- it seems obvious to me that rather than reduce or try to close this fire station, it not only needs to stay but be enlarged, simply due to the very large increase in new houses and therefore the population increase and business developments in the immediate area.

The service therefore needs to be improved, especially with the additional homes and circumstances and to certainly not be reduced which can only result in the obvious loss of both service, property and most probably lives.

I do wonder who has made this decision and whether it has already been fully approved? If so I believe this is a very short- sighted decision, and can only, in the end, put lives at risk.

Please do let me know about the " who and why" this is being considered?  
Thank you.

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Dear Carolyn

I am rather disappointed by the proposal that will mean ESFRS no longer attend when asked by the various wildlife rescue services to help release birds which are trapped in netting.

The implication seems to be that this kind of call-out could result in resources being unavailable to deal with human crises (how often has this actually happened - do we know?). I realise that there are many people who

have an irrational hatred of pigeons and gulls and won't give a jot, but there are many of us who will be as distressed as the trapped birds if they are left to die.

More importantly, I suspect this will result in an increase in injuries to people who are desperate to save these creatures but who lack the proper equipment to do so.

Frankly, this looks like totally unnecessary penny-pinching, and is a potential PR disaster.

Incidentally, call-outs might be reduced if people could be dissuaded from putting up netting in the first place, especially if they are not going to maintain it properly.

Hope you are keeping well,

kind regards

[REDACTED]

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Dear Carolyn,

Rumour and I hope it is only a rumour has it Easy Sussex County Council is proposing to cut all fire services in Newhaven and Seaford.

There is still a lot of industry in Newhaven should a fire break out needing all hands on deck and then a house fire occur in Seaford what happens?

Common sense tells you you cannot leave Seaford, Alfriston, Denton, Newhaven with on protection. What is the point of building a first class new fire station in Newhaven only to waste all that money. (Warwick House a prime example of money wasted!). Let's not make another mistake.

I hope you and every councillor for this area will defeat any motion to cut the fire service any further.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Dear Councillor

I am writing to you as a local resident and business person.

Recently, I've learnt that East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service are proposing some very worrying cuts to the amount of fire cover they currently provide.

As a resident of Newhaven and someone who runs a small dance school in Peacehaven, I have never needed the Fire Service in a professional capacity, but like most council taxpayers, I know it is there should that need arise. Exactly like an insurance policy.

Apparently, as a member of the Fire Authority, you will be asked to vote on taking away one of the fire engines at Newhaven Fire Station. Not only that, but reducing cover at weekends. I think this means there will be no full-time firemen on duty for the whole weekend and we will be waiting longer for a fire engine to arrive?

I was directed to and have read some of the literature from the Fire and Rescue Service, which is stating that this is somehow more efficient and making me safer?

Personally, I fail to see how getting rid of a fire engine, (And Newhaven's is one of 10 fire engines that they wish to get rid of!), makes me, or the people of Newhaven, or East Sussex at large, any safer at all!

The school I run is in a village hall and is for young children between the ages of 3 and 18. It is open every Saturday morning and afternoon. I think I can expect a fire engine to arrive there, perhaps 10 minutes later than it otherwise would have if you vote these changes through? That could mean the difference between life or death to anyone trapped by a fire!

It would be nice to receive a detailed explanation, from you, as to why you think these cuts are justified and to why you think I will be safer?

If it is to save money, which I suspect is the real case, will I be receiving a rebate on my council tax for the reduced service?

I have signed a local petition which has nearly reached 10,000 signatures and I note there are hundreds of comments from local residents, all of whom appear very angry about this.

Finally, I would urge you to think very carefully before you agree to these needless cuts and perhaps see if there is another way to deliver the service without such a severe reduction in cover.

Yours faithfully

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I am contacting you as a very concerned resident of East Sussex living in Seaford, regarding the proposed cuts to the Fire and Rescue services in the eastern part of the County. As members of the Fire Authority, I ask that you seriously reconsider these proposals to reduce the effectiveness of the front line service. These cuts will seriously adversely affect the response times of the service and will certainly put local residents lives at risk.

I have contacted my MP with my concerns and she has answered saying, "the government has not asked for this reduction, and the funding is adequate. I am not sure why these proposals are on the table and have asked for an explanation from the Authority"

The fact that this is being done during the Covid-19 crisis, when the public can only have a limited input into theses proposals is a disgrace. Should these cuts take place, I can only say that I hope you never need the services of our highly respected Firefighters on the ground.

Regards

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Dear Councillor,

I write to you regarding the wide ranging proposed changes to East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.

I recognise the need for any organisation to periodically review, reassess and re-evaluate it's role and objectives and of course to work within budget constraints and save money.

I do not accept the need to continue with a public consultation while the country suffers the most serious threat in our lifetime. To carry on with this consultation at this time is beyond comprehension and totally unacceptable.

I urge you to reconsider the timing of this consultation at what can only be described as a global crisis. Clearly no-one knows what the future holds now. The only thing you can now do to retain the credibility of East Sussex Fire Authority is to withdraw the consultation immediately.

Thank you,

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Good Evening Fire Authority Members,

I would like to raise my concerns at the way East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service appear to manage public monies, I have outlined several areas which i would be grateful if you could look into and challenge, especially with the newly advertised integrated risk plan which has been proposed.

1, /The public were informed back in 2016 that the Newhaven Fire Station was to be sold in order to build a combined Fire & Police Station in Newhaven ( Saxon House ). Since the new station has been operational the old station in Fort Road has been used for storage and vehicle park for all and sundry why has the building been left for all this time before being offered for sale. The station valued (estimate) at£0.515in 2018/19 yet in 2020 is being

offered at the same value. Not sure if you are aware but since the new station has been operational the crews are not able to do water drills in the yard due to complaints from neighbouring properties also concerns were raised because of water damage to the historic walls. The old station had many years of life left, adequate parking ,good access and plenty of space to carry out training unlike the new station with very limited facilities.

2, East Sussex originally had there own control centre yet we the public was informed that the way forward was for East and West Sussex to combine the Operational control centres and that it would save money West Sussex County Council were not happy with the service being provided by East Sussex Fire & Rescue service they withdrew there co operation One of the reasons given by WSXCC was the equipment used by ESXFRs was not up to the standard expected. Now I see that ESXFRS has entered into another agreement with Surrey Fire & Rescue Service to provide the same service for the brigade. The amount of money being wasted by ESXF&RS on this communication system should be fully investigated . Over the last few years many thousands of pounds have been spent on this system.

3, Revenue budget programme monitoring 2019/20 , I am concerned that Marlie Farm incident in 2006 is being used as an excuse for the lose off appliance and equipment which surely insurance covered the loses in 2006/7 why some 14 years later are we using this as an excuse.

4, Fuel tank replacement £400,000 surely in this day and age like the other emergency services such as Police and Ambulance service fuel could purchased by fuel card from service stations thus giving the service this savings.

5 Combined Aerial Rescue Pump i note in the same revenue report that £25,000 for improvements to this vehicle yet in the proposed integrated risk management plan this vehicle is proposed to be replaced this in its self i question as the vehicle is only 6 to 7 years old yet special appliances generally have 15 year life span this vehicle replaced an aerial which we was told was the way forward and would save money for the public purse yet we are now looking at spending in excess off £700,000 to replace the CARP with a vehicle we originally had, I take it this vehicle not fit for purpose as i also note it is not included in the appliances allocated to Eastbourne Fire Station.

6, Compressed foam (CAFS) i note that the cost of foam has increased and when used effectively is good fire fighting media, however i must question the amount of fires in East Sussex that appear to be total burn outs is this value for money if the end result is the same.

7,I note that once again all cuts proposed appear to be at the operational front line yet once again as per the last integrated risk plan NO senior officer or Principal officer reduction, surely with such a small fire and rescue service is this required bearing in mind that this level of management has been in place since the 1970's when East Sussex Fire Brigade joined with Brighton Fire Brigade along Hastings Fire Brigade and the reduction of appliances and equipment and Firefighters.

I look forward to your reply and comments.

Regards



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Good morning,

I have read, with some dismay, that you all voted to approve the public consultation on cuts to the provision of fire cover in East Sussex. I have to say that, in my opinion, the timing of this consultation is beyond shameful - did you all think that you could just slip it under the radar while the entire population of the UK is in the grip of the Covid pandemic?

Furthermore, I believe the proposals are fundamentally flawed in that they are based on what, at best, is lies, damned lies and statistics and, at worst on data that I would suggest is misleading. In short, a classic case of smoke and mirrors.

The proposals may be dressed up as a 'plan to transform the Service' but they are cuts to the Service. As a former employee of ESFRS I could explain, in great detail, why these cuts present a very real danger to the community of East Sussex, but I do not intend to do that now. If any of you are interested to hear those reasons, you are very welcome to contact me.

I realise that in politics you are required, on occasion, to follow the party line - this is not one of those occasions. This time, there is an expectation on the part of every single person who voted for you, that you will do the right thing and vote against the proposals put forward by the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Senior Leadership Team.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

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To whom it hopefully concerns,

I am writing to you as a Wholetime Firefighter of over 22 years service for East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS), [REDACTED]. I am also the Fire Brigade's Union (FBU) Representative for my station.

My intention is to write this in 'layman's terms', as I wish to emphasise the gravity of ESFRS plans and do not want to lose you in terminology etc.

You may or may not be aware that ESFRS have (on 23/04/20) had their plans for the next few years 'okayed' by the Fire Authority to go out to public consultation. Myself and my fellow firefighters working for ESFRS vehemently oppose these proposed changes and are further saddened by the way ESFRS are attempting to push them through in the current climate of COVID 19 and 'social distancing'. In 'normal times' some public meetings would at least be held to present their plans. However, in the current climate, 'public consultation' will be confined to members of the public sourcing the information on the internet. The way this generally works is that if no-one questions/challenges the plans (or are potentially unaware of them in the first place) then they are deemed acceptable and implemented.

The FBU have already voiced their concerns, both regarding the plans and the timing of this process, but calls (and proposals by 4 members of the Fire Authority) to postpone until we are out of this pandemic have been ignored (outvoted).

ESFRS management are telling YOU (the public) that the service provided will be more efficient and that you will see little or no change. THAT IS NOT TRUE.

ESFRS plans include:

1) The downgrading of The Ridge Fire Station from 24/7 response to Day Crewed.

This will mean: Slower response times during evenings, night time and early mornings to residents local to The Ridge and the outlying villages. These are exactly the times (from my experience) when fire deaths are more likely to occur.

2) The removal of the 2nd Fire Engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield (so only 1 Fire Engine left at each of these stations).

ESFRS is a relatively small brigade and thus have always been heavily reliant on Retained (Part-Time) firefighters. Due to Government led cuts over recent years, resulting in the depletion of Wholetime firefighters in East Sussex, this service have been plugging the gaps on Wholetime stations (no wholetime recruitment took place for 8 years) by offering Retained firefighters short-term contracts and, in many cases, wholetime contracts. This is 'robbing

Peter to pay Paul' and has unsurprisingly led to Retained fire stations not having enough staff to crew their fire engines on countless occasions, as their workforce have already been poached to fill spaces on Wholetime stations.

ESFRS management are telling you that such proposed changes reflect their analysis of risk within the county. The real reason they wish to remove the 2nd appliances from these stations is that they can rarely crew them (for the above reason). What is really required are MORE RECRUITMENT OF RETAINED FIREFIGHTERS but this is too difficult. It is not that ESFRS is adapting it's cover to fit the risk..... more a case of changing it to fit it's own shortcomings.

This plan would also mean that when fire engines are sent to stand by at busier stations (eg. in Brighton, Eastbourne or Hastings), when the crews from the busier stations are delayed for some time dealing with an incident, the crews that are standing by are more likely to be leaving their towns without fire cover, as even if there are enough personnel available..... they do not have another fire engine to use.

3) Day Crewed Stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven and Uckfield would change from being crewed 7 days a week (08.30-18.30) to being crewed Monday-Friday, with Retained firefighters covering all evenings and weekends.

ESFRS admits this will slow the response to incidents over weekends.

This is also most likely to be unworkable. Plans to enhance the pay of Retained firefighters (at these stations only) will surely not convince them to sign up to working virtually all their weekends and evenings throughout the year, to the detriment of their families. As mentioned before, there are limited numbers of Retained firefighters already.

4) Changing the shift patterns of Wholetime firefighters on 24/7 shift stations from current 2 days then 2 nights shift pattern to 'self-rostering'.

This is another means to cut firefighter jobs and would leave 24/7 shift stations even more dangerously low on personnel than they are currently. ESFRS says this would be more 'family friendly', but firefighters at these stations have always been fully satisfied with their current shift pattern.

In total, the plans of ESFRS, including those mentioned above, could mean a loss of more than 60 Wholetime firefighters and 10 Fire appliances, as well as the loss of some specialist capabilities.

With the planned reduction in fire appliances, I believe it is important that you are aware of the following: Due to cuts over recent years, the likelihood now is that the majority of fire engines will arrive at an incident with the bare minimum crew of 4 (would more than likely have been 5 or even 6 in years gone by). When turning up to a house fire it is generally deemed unsafe to enter the house to extinguish the fire and potentially rescue people inside without a certain number of firefighters, and this number is usually not reached until the 2nd fire engine arrives. Obviously, moral and social pressure and the desire to carry out our job means that we will make every effort to deal with the job at hand, but quite clearly the fewer firefighters and fire engines available, and the further they have to travel puts both US AND YOU in greater danger!

Lastly, with all these cuts planned for your fire service..... nobody knows how much ESFRS need to save!

If you wish to have your say regarding what your local firefighters see as reckless, irresponsible and dangerous cuts, please contact

your local Fire Authority Members, MP, Councillors

Also visit: 'Save East Sussex Fire Service - Stop The Cuts' on Facebook

You can also email concerns to: [Consult@esfrs.org](mailto:Consult@esfrs.org)

Please feel free to come and speak to firefighters at your local Fire Station (maintaining 2 meters safe distancing of course).

Kind Regards and Stay Safe

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Sirs

We experienced a horrendous barn fire on our family farm at 4am this morning. It involved our quad bike and our late fathers beloved tractor which unfortunately are no longer. It is not clear on the cause but it is being noted as suspicious. Our barn roof has also had extensive damage. The barn adjoining this stabled my little girls treasured ponies who are loved beyond measure and our farm dogs. Two fire engines attended from Crowborough within minutes and had the fire under control. We cannot praise or thank them enough for saving our barns, our animals and our belongings. Their professionalism shone through. If they'd been 5 minutes later it would have been a different story altogether.

I understand you've all voted to approve the public consultation of cuts to the fire service. If these cuts had already taken place then this morning we would have been lucky to have 1 fire engine attend, we also wouldn't have had the junior officers who attended today as they're both wholetime. This would have meant a whole different story for us as a family. It is likely we would have lost both of our barns, our animals, our belongings. We would have been comforting our little girls falling asleep crying tonight that they'd lost their ponies.

This is an unnecessary cut. The service right now is outstanding, a service to be proud of. Trained heroes saving lives and livelihoods. If these cuts happen how will 1 fire engine and retained firefighters respond to all the emergencies with the expertise we were lucky to receive today? I cannot imagine calling the fire service and being told there isn't a fire engine free to come to us or it's going to be 20 minutes to get to us. You cannot allow people to stand and watch fires burn their buildings and homes down. Please reconsider these proposals. I would be prepared to pay more council tax if these cuts are about finance and I'm sure many would agree with me.

If however you're still of the opinion these cuts are required I would be grateful if you could give me a minute of your time to reply and explain to me in order that I may have the opportunity to understand your personal view on the situation and how a potentially slower, less experienced, 1 fire engine crew (if any) this morning would have benefited us more than the amazing service we received.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Councillor Lambert

Can I start by saying that I am very disappointed to hear you have decided to proceed with the consultation process at this time. I do agree that there should be a process to consult with the public of East Sussex over such dramatic reductions in fire appliances across the county. However the timing shows a lack of understanding of what the public of East Sussex are going through at this time, thousands facing financial difficulties, job security, redundancy, social anxieties, illness and loss of loved ones during this time, limited numbers being able to attend funerals the list is endless.

Firefighters are being asked to carry out extra duties putting themselves at risk and their families, this will add more stress to them having to think about new working patterns/hours and losing valuable resources.

[REDACTED] East Sussex resident/ Council tax payer

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Dear Sir/Madam

Every Thursday we clap the NHS and all our vital key services and workers for all their hard work.

It has come to my attention that a major cut is proposed to one of our main and crucial services, The East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, Link [fbu.org.uk](http://fbu.org.uk) April 27.

These proposals will be met with anger by the public, as they rely on this service on a daily basis for incidents big and small.

Fire Fighters are out on the front line helping in this crisis and are still responding to fires and other emergencies as well.

These proposals are dangerous under normal circumstances , but to put such a proposal forward amidst the Covid pandemic is completely shameful.

The cuts will have a detrimental effect on the fire fighters and their ability to rescue and help members of the public and must be stopped.

I also understand that the government has not asked for this reduction and funding is in fact adequate.

I will therefore send a copy of this e-mail to the government

Thank you

A very concerned member of the public

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Dear Cllr Galley

Firstly, I would like to thank you for taking the time to read this as I know you are terribly busy.

I am writing to you today to express my deep concerns over the proposals East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) have put out in their IRMP. As a tax paying resident of East Sussex, I am very worried to see a proposal to remove seven fire engines and have three fire stations reduced to one fire engine status resulting in an overall loss of 10. The proposals to not have a permanent crew for height vehicles is badly thought out, especially after the terrible fire at Grenfell Tower. I am worried to see firefighter numbers reduced during an international pandemic when they are helping the ambulance service. Recently East Sussex has had several big fires, most noticeably the Claremont hotel in Eastbourne. I have read the data provided by ESFRS and noticed there is no data on the fire engine call outs from 2018/19 and 2019/20. I understand that a lot of work has clearly gone into this IRMP but a lot of statistic that are being used online and in social media cherry pick one year and do not use the most up to date information. The fire service and indeed the world is in a vastly different place now compared to how it was in 2009 when the data provided starts. I have read that nationally fires and calls to the fire service are going up and wonder what the data would look like if the latest information had been included?

I would also like to draw your attention to the removal of a 4x4 vehicle from Wadhurst fire station. I cannot understand why ESFRS or the fire authority would want to remove a resource that is used for off road firefighting or any situation a 4x4 is needed. Ashdown forest has large fires nearly every year and it is worrying to see that risk being ignored. I have also seen online that 2019 the UK recorded the highest ever amount of wildland fires in history. This really does not seem like the time to get rid of a vehicle like this when it is internationally recognised that climate change is going to be such a big factor in our futures. Please can I ask for reassurances that this particular point will be challenged and that you will indeed be recommending that this vehicle is not removed from service at Wadhurst fire station.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this.

Kind Regards,



Dear Councillors

It has come to light that it appears you have been misled with massaged statistics presented to you regarding the proposals for fire service cuts.

What has been presented to you are statistics running up to 2018 this is misleading.

To give an example from January 2019 to January 2020 at Newhaven Fire Station there has been an increase in actual calls (recorded in the station call log) of 12.5%.

Now this is every time the station is called upon. Incidents on our station ground are up 6%.

This increase in calls is due to factors brought in by ESFRS recently for example the introduction of 4i technology, assisting SECAMB and the loss of an engine at Hove. This will not change, if anything increase in the future and who knows what duties will fall upon ESFRS due to Covid19.

This is just one example how we feel you have been misled and we would invite you as fire authority members to challenge the statistic that you have been fed and seek up to date actual facts.

As far as Newhaven Fire station is concerned the station ground we cover in the process of re-generation, 1000's of new homes are being built or in the planning stage. Millions have been spent on infrastructure (new road bridge under construction) to increase commercial viability with new businesses moving in to new industrial estates every day and the massive re-generation of the port.

Logic would tell you this is not the time to down grade the fire station, take away a fire engine and cut full time post by 50%.

As a station we would welcome engagement with the fire authority so you have a well rounded view of how the fire service actually works whilst we are in this period of consultation.

We look forward to your response.

  
Dear Carolyn

I am writing to you both as one of your Seaford South constituents and as a serving wholetime ESFRS firefighter.

I understand from colleagues that you may have voted recently to approve the baffling decision by the service management to push ahead with public consultation on an unprecedented and unnecessary series of cuts to local fire cover, despite the ongoing pandemic. Given the woefully low levels of public engagement with such consultations in the past, I am concerned that current events will push this review ever further to the periphery, meaning it receives even less scrutiny than it might otherwise have had. It is also impossible at this stage to predict what impact the pandemic might have on future funding arrangements and budgets, so the current proposals may be hopelessly out of date by the time the consultation is complete.

The loss of ten fire appliances from a service that has been praised recently by HM Fire Inspectorate for the efficiency of its resource allocation has already precipitated a major public backlash, as evidenced in the local press and on social media. This response is, I feel, entirely justified and is only likely to ramp up as the service continues to seek to implement the cuts. In view of this, I would respectfully ask you to reconsider your support for the decision to go ahead with the consultation and to back any future calls to halt the process.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,  


Hi,

I am writing to you not just as a concerned resident of East Sussex but also as one of the county's firefighters. What is being proposed is endangering the lives of everybody. I have personally attended two house fires in the last 3 weeks which, had it not been for our second fire engine at Newhaven, would have resulted in disastrous consequences. It was due to the fact that we had our second fire engine that the incidents did not escalate. The numbers being shown are not true, also. It states on the website that Newhaven's main appliance was mobilised 423 times, in fact it was mobilised to 720 calls. We have our log book as proof of this. The numbers are being skewed to paint a different picture to you! Please find out the facts!

What is being proposed is just not going to work. I am an on call firefighter and with the new model, it is highly likely that myself and many others will have to resign. The hours will not work for those of us who are firefighters working around our regular jobs. It takes years to train firefighters to full competency and this loss of personnel risks many of the fire engines not being able to be fully crewed. We already give so much of our time to the fire service and this proposal could mean that we are working through the night and at weekends, whilst also having our regular jobs to do. I'm sure you can understand this is just not feasible.

You have a chief fire officer who has never been a firefighter. I urge you to please consult with us, the firefighters, who are working on the frontline and understand the catastrophic impact this could have to our communities. Find out the facts before you make your decision. Cuts cost lives.

Warm regards,

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Dear Sir,

It has come to my attention that there are plans by East Sussex County Council to downgrade the Ridge Fire Station from a 24/7 to a 'day crewed' response facility.

As a local resident I wish to object strongly to this proposal to reduce the crew by 50% during the evening, overnight and early morning...the most common times for emergency call out.

Conquest Hospital is less than a mile away and should a major incident occur there it is negligent to wait for 'on call' staff to arrive..from a much larger radius than in the past. There are also 2 large secondary schools and a primary school in the immediate vicinity that could also be at high risk in the morning or overnight.

It could be disastrous to cut these vital local services...as the present national disaster highlights. We have to be prepared for emergencies not scramble around after the event.

I would be interested to hear your views on this issue of our local security.

Yours faithfully

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Dear Councillor

I hope you are keeping safe and well.

I am writing to you as a member of the fire service. I have served from the age of 21 some 19 years ago, working [REDACTED], all in operational front line roles and all 19 years have been served in Hastings.

I understand that you are considering the IRMP recommendations which have gone to consultation. I fully appreciate the difficult position you and the management team are in, having to balance the efficiency savings, financial savings alongside the impact on individuals in the community.

The purpose of my letter is to explain the impact on a significant portion of the population in our area which I believe has not yet been expressed to you in the proposals you have been presented with. Please bear in mind I am talking with first hand front line experience.

Within Hastings we have 2 station, Bohemia Road and The Ridge. The IRMP suggests that downgrading the ridge to be a daytime only appliance would assist in increasing the response to the majority of vulnerable areas.

The ridge station has been located to ensure that the residents of the outlying areas such as Fairlight, Guestling and the areas between Rye and Hastings have a quick response when needed. Downgrading the ridge will result in these areas having a 5-10 min delay in response. You will likely have been told that a retained / day crew (who the proposal suggests will respond in an evening) will take a max of 5min to get to the station, get dressed and crew the appliance. Having been in charge of a retained crew in [REDACTED] for [REDACTED] years (in addition to my roles in Hastings) I can categorically tell you that this timescale is not accurate in reality, as the majority of calls I attended were nearer the 10min mark before a fire engine even left the station.

In my experience this additional 5-10min could be the difference between life and death in the areas I described above. The headline statistics which are spoken about show where fire deaths occur and not where there would have been a fire death had we delayed our attendance by 5-10min.

I recall a number of incidents where an increased attendance time would more than likely have resulted in a fatality. [REDACTED]

Leaving a fire for a further 5-10 minutes we know from experience and research has a devastating effect on the chances of survival and also increases the risk to our front line crews. If you are being told that there is a low risk in these geographical areas, then I would suggest the person telling you this speaks to [REDACTED], you can make statistics show anything, however speaking to those who know first hand and have seen the benefits of what we have now I hope will give a more realistic view.

I have a number of examples of such incidents which I would be happy to share with you if you wished to come on station and meet myself and our crew for a cup of tea one day, or indeed a zoom call.

I hope you do not mind me emailing you direct, however I believe that the decisions you are making will have an immediate effect on lives, and you deserve to know all the facts in order to make a balanced and considered decision.

Kind Regards.

[REDACTED]

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Thank you for the letter that arrived today. Please carry on doing what you do at the moment if it ain't broke don't fix it!

I would just like to make the point on Non emergency calls . In my mind they are important weather it is a trapped animal, seagull, Dog or cow they are all sentient beings and feel pain and distress. It could also be a natural disaster . So please please do not drop this important part of your service . On a lighter note from a public relations point of view rescuing a distressed animal will always earn you Brownie points from the public!

Best wishes for your service you will always get my vote,,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear Sir/Madam,

I received today a general circular from you. I believe the timing of sending this letter, during a pandemic is a poor decision. Many people are trying to avoid the handling of post for obvious reasons. I don't think I need to elaborate any further.

We are very grateful for you being there,  
We fully trust how you run our Fire Brigade, and wouldn't attempt to try to give advice on any changes.  
thank you for your amazing Bravery!!

[REDACTED]

Dear Councillor Galley,

I am writing because I have recently become aware of the proposed cuts to the East Sussex fire service. As a resident of Crowborough I am very concerned about the fire services ability to function effectively and keep the public safe if we have a reduced number of fire crew and appliances in East Sussex.

Do you support these changes? The implications of which will mean that fire cover is reduced and resilience lost. I am concerned that reductions of the sort proposed would mean that it would not be possible to cover all households in the county and that it would become a post code lottery as to whether a fire crew could attend an incident. I do not want the lives of my family and friends put at risk in this way and as a servant of the public neither should you.

I am sure that the proposed cuts are just a cost cutting exercise and have not been proposed with the livelihoods of our firefighters or public safety in mind.

I am further shocked by the back door method in which these changes are being proposed at a time when we are in lockdown and there can be no public meetings or discussion on the subject. Shame on those who have chosen this time, a time when we have never needed our front line workers more to try and implement such drastic cuts with blatant disregard for public safety.

I sincerely hope you will see it as your public duty not to support these cuts.

Cuts cost lives!

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

The Ridge fire station.

As a local resident on the outskirts of Fairlight village, I am most concerned about the proposed downgrade of the Ridge fire station. This is our nearest fire station and downgrading it will place our lives at risk.

I urge that this proposal is abandoned and that the current cover, 24/7 is maintained.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]

Hi

I shall have to remember that in future if a fire should occur I will advise "it" to happen during the day ,not sure whether the "fire" will take any notice of me & wait for a more suitable time ! I do wonder sometimes.....

Hi everyone,

I hope you are well. Firstly, thank you for taking the time to read this. I am writing to you to ask a small favour. If you do not already know, there are plans for a major cut back to East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND HELP STOP THIS HAPPENING.

Planned cuts include:

- o Remove 10 fire engines from towns and villages across the county. Affected stations are Bexhill, Battle, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye, Uckfield, Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst.
- o Cut dedicated crews for aerial appliances in Hastings.
- o Cut wholetime jobs at Lewes, Newhaven, Uckfield, Crowborough, Battle and Bexhill.
- o Downgrade The Ridge fire station from 24hr immediate response to only daytime immediate response.
- o Cut staffing levels of wholetime firefighters at all shift stations across the county.

These proposals are extremely dangerous! They will impact heavily on a critical lifesaving service. They will negatively impact public safety as well as firefighter safety and will also impede firefighter's ability to rescue and assist members of the public.

**Further reply:**

Thank you for replying to my email but this is not what the frontline firefighters have been told!

Where have you obtained your information because mine have come directly from our East Sussex Brigade. The appliances you are mentioning, which are replacing the ones already in place, are inadequate for the emergencies they are talking about, so will actually increase response times.

Your facts and figures quoted are only up to 2018 and calls have actually increased by 12% since the stats were calculated.

Can I suggest that maybe you get your facts correct before sending such a rude email and consult with the frontline firefighters rather than senior officers who have never even worked on the ground.

---

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are writing to protest the dreadful possibility that The Ridge Fire Station may be downgraded to part time from 24/7. As we live in one of the villages that rely on their service it feels as though lives in the villages are less important than those in the towns. Please DO NOT put residents at risk by making changes to the working hours and conditions of these vital firefighters - we need them.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,

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To whom it may concern

This is a resource that is essential anyone who is unable to get out of their house quickly in the event of a fire. Having had a bedroom gutted in a previous fire when the fire tender got to me in 4 minutes and I had already emptied two fire extinguishers on it I will probably not get out in time at night .

I'm a high level paraplegic and not getting any younger

We have already decimated the the does the government not think that enough.

Thank you

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Hi.

As you will know East Sussex fire and rescue service are making some 'changes/cuts' to their service. Now as a resident of the town of Rye I'm deeply deeply concerned with the fact that ESFRS are moving/cutting (whatever

way you want to dress this situation up!). As a member of the fire authority I've got a few questions that I would like to ask that ain't in the Information with the proposals and can't seem to find it anywhere.

1. Can you tell me the response time for a second fire appliance to a house fire in camber (if broad oak isn't available - as as a tier 3 station would be up to a 30 minute response time). And not one from Kent (after all we all pay our East Sussex Council tax).
2. Can you tell me what the recruitment level has been at Rye for the last 5 years?
3. Can you tell me how many times that the second appliance has been used last year?
4. In the proposal the words 'slightly longer' are used....How long is slightly longer?

I hope you can give me the true answers please.  
I look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks

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I wish to register my concern that The Rldge Fire Station is not downgraded from 24/7 to Day-Crewed as I understand it being considered. I consider such a reduced in service is a dangerous attempt at economy and oppose it strongly.

Yours, [redacted] Fairlight resident.

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I am MOST concerned to read that there are plans to make The Ridge fire station a 'day-only' category. I live in Fairlight and had reason to call the fire service many years ago [redacted]

If I lived any further out in more rural parts of the catchment area, I dread to think what could have happened.

This is an absolute nonsense. It was a nonsense when it was first tested and discussed,, and is still the same. How can reducing the service make anyone feel safer?

I will fight this and join any campaign that fights it. We pay our taxes, we have a right to feel safe in our homes. The local service does that by being on 24/7 preparedness.

[redacted], Fairlight resident.

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To chief Fire Officer of the ESRSA, Chair of ESFRS, Councillors and Wealden Member of Parliament

We write as a residents of Crowborough We would like to make the following observations and comments as to how it relates to Crowborough.

We have not completed the questionnaire as We don't believe the questions asked reflects the situation as seen by the public generally.

In the case of of Crowborough and probably other towns on the list -

Firstly- safeguarding the Ashdown Forest (with one fire engine!!) - even in the document outlining the proposed changes there is an admission that "incidents demand significant resources for the FRS". How can this be with one fire engine and Crowborough being "out on a limb" to rely on swift help from other fire stations at times. Likewise with road traffic accidents - Crowborough is on the busy, but narrow, A26 which unfortunately has a high incident rate of road traffic accidents, often with deer involvement. The report states it may take a little longer for another appliance to arrive but even five minutes delay could be devastating both to lives, property or land. Again in the report there is mention of an increase in East Sussex of 14.4% in the number of households, population increase of 11.0% and house development increase by nearly 3,000 (certainly a lot in Crowborough!) and yet the fire

service will be expected to manage these increases by a decrease in staff and vehicles! I also note that the control centre is going to be yet again further centralised in 2021 covering an even larger area. This in turn could impact response times with less knowledge of the area locally.

Proposed cover of 55 hours a week out of 168 (so approx a third) to be manned by fully trained full time firefighters. So for 113 hours we will be reliant on what I understand will be mainly, if not wholly, retained firefighters who by their nature lack the years of full time experience and the on going daily/weekly training they undertake whilst on shift for their four day/night shifts.

There will always be unfortunately the occasional "big "incident (Ringmer Fireworks/Shoreham/ Eastbourne locally and Grenfell )after which there is often an expensive inquiry which invariably finds fault with the fire service in the "blame game" society in which we live. If you are going to reduce the level of response, personnel, equipment this is not likely to improve.

Again in the report on Workplace planning it states "expecting staff to retire, putting pressure on recruitment". So "releasing" firefighters does not seem a good idea if the force may be short in the future.

At this point we would like to say it to so wrong to start this consultation period during this unprecedented time in the country's history! The whole thing is going to go under the radar when everyone is focused on the pandemic. A lot of the general public will not have even heard about it. We would have thought by law there ought to be a Public Meeting as at other times? (Obviously not possible in these times) Stress and worry for our men and women in the Fire service and their families. Just at a time when they are on the front line, as ever, of this crisis. No one knows how life is going to be after all this. It will be different that's for sure. It is not the time, if at all, to be considering such drastic changes.

These are not the first cuts to the fire service we have experienced in recent years. Time after time there has been paring back of service. There must be a time when there can be no more.

Remember it's not that long since there were cuts to the Police Service and we know how badly that worked out, forcing a u turn both locally and nationally. Don't let this happen to the fire service. Remember the word SERVICE. That is what it is and we deserve to keep it.

We hope our views will be considered in the light of these proposed cuts

Regards

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We are completely opposed to the downgrading of The Ridge, Fire Station. All the villages to the east of Hastings, i.e. Fairlight, Pett, Icklesham, Westfield, Sedlescombe, Brede, to name just some of them also Rye itself would suffer in response time when dealing with emergencies that require the fire service. Its a matter of life and death when consideration is being given to these ill thought out plans.

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Good afternoon

In response to your posting earlier today, it is comforting to know that we have a fully manned Fire station in Uckfield should the 'dreaded' ever happen.

However, I wonder if I may take this opportunity to mention something that always worries us in Maresfield Park because it is a well known nightmare for delivery people to find addresses which in some cases are nonexistent.

I believe there are about one hundred properties in the Park and there is a map of all of them which you may already have in your possession for the crews bearing in mind that the Archway blocks the main entrance to large vehicles.

This is just an observation from a resident who has a copy of the latest house plan.

Thank you for being there if we need you.

With best wishes

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Dear sir/madam,

I read with concern your plans to withdraw the incredible fire Land Rover from Wadhurst.

I want to air strong opposition to this. Savings are hard to defend when it comes to emergency services, especially in an area of woodland and isolated properties, where a fast, all round vehicle can help save lives quickly.

Please re-consider. I will raise this in wider circles.

Kind regards,

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Hello Matt

I will make sure this is passed onto the crews from Wadhurst who attended last night.

I have recently emailed Richard Fowler about the importance of keeping the Landrover at Wadhurst and how disappointing it is to see that it has been already been removed from the list of specials and county map which the public view on the consultation currently taking place. Richard has assured me that no firm decision has been made yet regarding the removal of the Landrover from Wadhurst.

This weekend has highlighted again the importance of maintaining 5 4x4 in the county more importantly the one at Wadhurst, it has attended 2 separate off road fires in Hastings and Ashdown Forest this weekend.

I also want to make yourself and Richard aware of the forward thinking decision made by the JO,s at Wadhurst last night, they were alerted to attend Crowborough as standby, the crew contacted ESFC to confirm that they had enough personnel to crew both 78P5 & 78M1 and suggested that they took both to Crowborough for the standby considering the type and size of incident. This proved to be a great decision as both were sent on to the incident.

Hopefully this information can be carried forward to the future Ops meeting when considering the Landrover removal.

Kind regards

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Dear Councillors

Having read fully the IRMP documents and having understood the content, it seems to me that you are having your intelligence insulted.

The main issue is that the statistics being used to form your decisions are massively out of date. The work done to provide the detail in the IRMP proposals uses figures running up to 2018. This is not a true reflection of how the fire service works today.

We have 2 fire engines at Newhaven 87P1 and 87P4, we also have a special appliance 87S2 a foam tender. We cover Newhaven, Peacehaven, Telscombe Cliffs, Seaford and surrounding villages including the port.

We also spend an amount of time covering incidents in Brighton and Hove, Eastbourne and Lewes. This mainly be due to the fact currently we have 2 fire engines at Newhaven

The total amount of times Newhaven fire station was called upon to provide a service was 740 times in year 2019. This was an actual increase in total calls of 12.5% on the previous year and shows a trend.

With the increase in house building, the increased commercial development and the massive investment in the port, we think this proposed cutting of services from by ESFRS could not have come at a worse time.

The Proposals for Newhaven are;

- Cut one fire engine from the station
- Downgrade fire station from Day-crewed to Day-staffing
- Cut 50% of the full time firefighting staff
- Cut Foam Tender from the station
- Introduce a Command Unit and an Operational support unit (OSU)

The public consultation IRMP document is very misleading and full of loaded questions based on out of date data and unfortunately the Fire Authority has been briefed on this out of date data for many months now and it is hard for them to listen to up to date facts but there are some key issues pertaining to Newhaven fire station I would like to point out, but we are not alone in these cuts proposals this is county wide.

The key issues are;

1. Cut a fire engine (87P4) - This engine was used 51 times in 2019, but what is not brought to the attention of the Fire authority is that every time our first fire engine goes out (87P1) the second engine remains on station giving cover to the community when the first (87P1) is busy. No break in cover, safer community.

Also when attending a fire 87P1 will turn up with a crew of 4, made up of an officer in charge (OIC), driver/pump operator/breathing apparatus board controller and 1 Breathing apparatus (BA) team (2 x firefighters). Before the OIC can commit a BA into a burning building, to conform to Health and safety and fire service national risk assessments the OIC must wait for another BA team to be available before committing the first. This is a national H & S standard and can only be breached in the most extreme circumstances.

For Newhaven the second BA team is on the second engine (87P4) the engine they want to cut.

So 87P1 will have to wait for an engine from either Roedean or Seaford that's an extra 10/15 minutes, that's the difference between life and death, or losing your property or business.

2. Down Grading of Newhaven Fire Station - This would reduce the communities fire cover greatly. The proposal states it wants full time firefighters to man the station possibly 9 til 5 and no weekend cover. Times outside these hours would be covered by on-call firefighters responding from their homes. As it stands at the moment the full time firefighters are split into 2 watches of 6, doing a four days on, four days off rota system, covering a total of 96 hours per watch, being bolstered by on-call firefighters.

The trouble with relying on the on-call firefighters is there is not enough of them to cover all the hours required. There is a tradition of on-call not turning into station for a call for up to 10 minutes, then getting ready to go out, that 12/15 minutes from time of call. There is problem getting on-call firefighters to be available at crucial times of the day ie. 6am to 9am and 5pm to 7pm because they have their primary employment and have to get to and from work. Also most on-call firefighters are full time firefighters from shift stations and so are hampered by the working time directive.

3. Introduction of command unit and OSU - This on the surface is not a bad thing if the station is not downgraded, but if it is and you have a call for one of these vehicle outside of 9 to 5 it causes a problem. Out of office hours they will only have 4/5 on-call firefighters on duty, if they get a call for one of the new vehicles that

would mean the main fire engine 87P1 would no longer have a full crew so would not be available, so no fire cover for the community.

4. 50% full time firefighter posts lost - Loss of skills and experience.

Above is a quick precis of how the fire station works and what the cut proposals would mean to the community.

Unfortunately the statistics used to make up the IRMP and are fed to the Fire Authority Councillors are out of date, running up to 2018. Things have changed since then, the introduction of the 4i mobilisation system, loss of an engine from Hove and the close working with SECAMB has increased our calls hugely and will only get greater.

I hope this gives food for thought and would welcome any Councillors to the station now that lock down has been relaxed to have the situation explained fully.

If you would like any more information please do not hesitate to contact me, as there is a mountain of information not suitable for this e-mail

Regards

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I am concerned at the proposed cuts to the fire service, particularly at a time when it has become more clear than ever how important the emergency services are. I hope you will look again at the plans.

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I have read the proposals and it is pretty clear that the net result will be a worse service. What we need is a better service not a worse service. If a better service will cost more then personally I would be happy to pay more. I know other people who would do the same. I have lived in Switzerland and their fire service is far superior because people are willing to pay for it. These proposals must be rejected.

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Hi all, I hope I find you all well in these difficult times.

I just wanted to share with you my views and concerns on the removal of 78M1, as proposed in the IRMP.

It feels like this vehicle may have been lost amongst the many other vehicles that rightly need review, and that a decision has been made for it to be removed based solely on the amount of times it has gone out in the past, rather than on the predictions of the future of our climate, and the actual amount of hours use the vehicle has had. It may have only gone out in an operational capacity a few times in recent months which makes it look like an underused resource, but as an example during the recent forest fire the crew were out for approximately 8 hours in one go in, which in reality is the same amount of use another vehicle would have if it went to 8 one hour incidents in the same timeframe.

I would also like to note that we are terribly reliant on the 4x4 capacity of our neighbouring services when we have forest fires. Other than for re inspections, I don't think I have ever been to a fire in Ashdown forest where there has not been a WSFRS 4x4 attendance. Certainly last year when we had 2 simultaneous forest fires, we would have been in a desperate situation without the 4x4's we had and the help of our neighbours.

Finally, If the cost of the new style sprinters is the issue, then there is nothing wrong with our current vehicle and I am confident I speak for the whole station when I say if a sprinter isn't an option we would happily keep it. It seems absurd that a vehicle like 78m1 should be classed as having the same working life as the rest of the fleet. After a conversation with a mechanic recently he confirmed that it costs almost nothing to service and run, and

that out of all the operational vehicles we have the parts are the most ready available when repairs are needed. Although it doesn't have all the latest safety features, it is still legal, and driven by trained response drivers.

To summarise, the IRMP/ORR is described as being about putting our resources where we most need them. In my opinion, 78M1 is needed more at Wadhurst fire station, serving the local communities, than it is at an auction house.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

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"I object to the proposed cutbacks and am in agreement with the FBU's defence".

[REDACTED], Piddinghoe resident

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Dear Sir,

I have trawled through the mounds of documentation for the Consultation on the future. I must say it is too cumbersome and lacks effective clarity over much of what is being considered.

My main concern relates to any reduction in "resource" where man-power of equipment as a time of increasing risk across many areas. Risks are increasing now and will do across a number of areas. We should be investing more in staffing and equipment. Note that for any capital expenditure the costs will be low as interest rates are at rock bottom. We should be spending now for the future.

To reduce at this time shows very poor Management and judgement. We MUST NOT do this.

I guess you are unlikely to pass this direct to the Decision Makers, but rest assured I will be raising my concerns at the highest level both in Sussex and at National Level.

Regards

[REDACTED]

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Dear Sir/madam

Please see Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council consultation response below:

The Council is concerned that the gradual removal of posts, and the cutting of second engines at our nearest stations, Lewes and Uckfield is a risk to fire protection across our Parish.

Whilst acknowledging the extensive work that has been done on risk analysis, growing extremes of weather lead to a clear potential of larger and more severe fires in the countryside during extended periods of high temperature.

The Council would like the Service to re-consider the cut of second engines at Lewes and Uckfield.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]

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Clerk to Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council

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Cllr Lambert,

I write as a very concerned, and somewhat bewildered, resident of East Sussex.

I have just read the article in today's Sussex Express where you claim that 'There are positive proposals in fire plan'.

Can you enlighten me as to what these are please?

I fail to see what is positive about removing 10 appliances, delaying response times, cutting firefighter jobs across at least 6 fire stations and asking the residents of Eastbourne & Hastings to choose whether they have 2 fully crewed appliances or take 1 and the Ariel Ladder Platform (ALP)?

Whilst you state that the service's government grant has been cut over the last decade you fail to mention the increase in council tax which 'to be invested in protecting the public'!! How can this be investing in the protecting the public when the service wishes to cut its frontline response so drastically?

Following the recent HMICFRS report for ESFRS it states in its overall summary that they are good at responding to fires and other emergencies and to national risks.

It also states that they are good at using their resources efficiently and have a realistic and robust financial plans in place. And the service is good at making its services affordable now and in the future.

These were the only areas in which they performed good, requiring improvement everywhere else.

With this in mind how on earth can they justify cutting where they are good???

Referring to the 'positive proposals', you say that the Fire Authority believe the plan will offer benefits to the staff of ESFRS, and to the public to help keep everyone safe.

HOW??

Having read the proposals thoroughly, ESFRS will have to cut posts, remove fire appliances and change firefighters lives to achieve public safety, is this correct?

All this whilst Firefighters, along with others, assist the government in the middle of a global pandemic!!!

I appreciate your time in this important matter and await your response,

Yours,

[REDACTED]

#### **Further reply:**

Thank you for your response.

I do however have some further queries from your replies.

Firstly I disagree that there are positive benefits to those impacted by a change of crewing system. You say it will provide staff with more control over when they work but the system requires them to 'book' their hours upto 6 weeks in advance. How can this give them more control if they don't know when they will be working in 6 months time? The current system allows them, and their partners, to plan when they are working for the rest of their career, not just 6 weeks!! It may well have been welcomed by some in other services but they have then had to cope with pumps going off the run and an increase in the use of overtime to cover crewing shortages. Not the best use of their resources I guess!

Add the pay cut and the complete change in work pattern to Day Crewed staff and the impact on their families lives, along with increased stress and anxiety, then this clearly is not a positive move.

The 'pool' of firefighters, resilience pool, will be formed by utilising firefighters released from their wholetime positions in the service. It will not be populated by those 'On Call' firefighters who have seen the second appliance removed from their station. They will simply have to sign an unknown quantified contract or lose their position on that station. That will be their only choice. This proposal, that apparently shows clear evidence about where the resources should be, ranges from data covering 9 months to 9 years, dependant on how you want it look. Not clear evidence in my eyes!!

Your views around council tax and future funding I do tend to agree and know doubt we will see further cuts from Government over the coming months and years in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The basis of the IRMP is to ensure that the right resources are in the right place at the right time. There is little, if at all, mention of the financial savings that can be achieved through the implementation of the cuts, so therefore should not be led in any way by money. The fact that this proposal refers to reinvesting then it shouldn't be about savings!

The balancing of risk and resources, which ESFRS appeared to have got wrong previously, is surely not justified by removing the resource, which in turn increases the risks?

Remove a life buoy away from beside a water course and the risk of serious injury or death will increase.

Remove a fire appliance away from towns and the the risk of increased fire damage, serious injury of loss of life will increase.

It states in the proposed IRMP that changes will have a very low impact on dwelling fire rates. Low impact is still an impact that surely you would not want any member of the public experiencing, or any member of your family? The 'sound evidence' within the IRMP proposal is figured to fit exactly how the service wants the public to see. It does not give a balanced review into how ESFRS has allowed itself to get to where it now!

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Dear Sir,

[REDACTED] I am writing to you about the upcoming changes included in the initial consultation document. As you are aware, although with very little detail, the service is looking to firstly put the community we serve, here in Uckfield and it's surrounding area's at risk by removing our second appliance and changing our working pattern, potentially removing our availability at weekends.

If the service were to instigate these changes, there potentially will not be a Fire appliance available from Friday evening through to Monday here in Uckfield as at present, potentially the whole time crews will not be able to nor want to work at the weekend, if we are working all week. The statistics on availability over the weekend period for the RDS over the last 18 months are quite shocking and as you are aware, the issues surrounding recruitment and retention of our RDS colleagues isn't and hasn't been for some years now, sustainable.

Although there are no real figures and lot's to read between the lines in the consultation document, I firmly believe that offering a salary to an individual to become an On-Call Firefighter may sound like the golden answer but things are very different to when the RDS was developed and society, peoples working patterns and employers 'goodwill' have vastly evolved.

As much as I do understand change, efficiency and financial restraints, for me professionally and the person I am, I am greatly concerned about the future.

Personally, I have valid reasons why I cannot give cover at weekends but my crew also have their own, very relevant reasons. If an individual is working Monday to Friday and giving cover during the weekday evenings then, as I hope you can appreciate, why and how can they also be on call all weekend and I worry for them, their wellbeing, family life and the whole idea of work/ life as opposed to a balanced life/ work as we should all be living.

I feel that the service is adamant that the two watches will cover the weekend to bolster the availability alongside our RDS colleagues

but sadly this is far from the truth and this is not just the case in Uckfield. Again I raise the point, why would anyone wish to work all week then not be able to free themselves from here if they so wish to at the weekend.

This process will transform my crew's financial situation and ultimately their pensions but without doubt, first and foremost, we all genuinely care about our community we serve and we have grave concerns, that we won't be able to serve them, in the manner to which they deserve.

I am not the most eloquent nor is this a angry rant (not my style) and I hope you read this as it is meant.

I appreciate your time and wish you a good weekend

Regards  
[REDACTED]

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you in response to the disturbing news that East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Senior Management are looking to cut our incredibly important Fire Service vehicles and personnel for the sake of 'saving' money where as these imposed cuts are actually going to prevent 'saving lives'.

By trying to enforce this idea it will put incredible pressure on the already limited resources that East Sussex Fire and Rescue already have to work with. It will put mental and physical strain on our Firefighters on the front line, increase the time taken to get to fire and rescue calls resulting in a higher risk percentage - i.e. risk to LIFE

East Sussex has been exposed to huge residential development in recent years and we need to match this population increase by expanding the Fire Service in those areas but definitely not cutting them and their resources? The spectrum of work which the Fire Service covers no other service can provide, it is a service which is the difference between life and death.

Rural areas such as Wadhurst need there 4x4 vehicle as the surrounding terrain, roads and rescue calls they get require a nimble, sturdy smaller vehicle that can handle these emergency's and work a long side the fire engines. To take this resource away would be making many geographic areas of East Sussex unreachable for any fire and rescue calls. Please refer to the recent forest fire at Ashdown Forest on 17th May 2020 - Warhurst's 4x4 vehicle was invaluable and vital for containing.

It is our prerogative to maintain and support our one of our most valued emergency services especially in the current climate where they are front line, working with other services and yet are having the rug pulled under their feet by those in positions who are trying to play God for power but actually destroying the service.

THESE CUTS ARE NOT SAFE

The people responsible for pushing these cuts are jeopardising the safety of civilians and those working at East Sussex Fire and Rescue and that is criminal. That is unacceptable.

This country is in crisis and they are silently trying to take 10 fire engines 100 firefighters out of action and downgrade stations, it is immoral - the fire service educates and is a necessity not something that can be played with and undervalued.

Minutes mean a life saved, a building saved, a business saved - increase the response time, lack of fire fighting power then they are solely to blame for the consequences. We can never allow this to happen. Heads should be hanging in shame; this county and our country needs these resources and our full support behind them.

This covid-19 smoke screen will not hide the failure to the East Sussex Fire and Rescue imposed by those pushing for these cuts - there is no justification for it will simply cost lives.

I vote to save our incredibly important Fire Service and not diminish and destroy it.

Please do not allow this to happen, please fight for our Firefighters who go above and beyond every time they put on their uniform - confident they can successfully and safely do their job with the essential equipment and resources required.

I am a mother with two young children and it honestly scares me that the Fire Service is being undercut and that this idea is even being considered.

Yours faithfully,

A very concerned member of the public

Today (23 March ) West Sussex Fire Brigade rescued a swift trapped in the eaves of a house at Climping, W. Sussex. They are happy to rescue birds, and surprised that East Sussex Fire and Rescue are consulting as to whether or not to rescue birds! Shame on you.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
West Sussex Wildlife Protection

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How do you hold a public consultation with no public meetings?

What you and the fire authority are doing is not acceptable, I find it all so disgusting.

You speak of respect, democratic processes and freedom of speech. Absolute rubbish, you all show little respect for public opinion, no respect for your employees opinions, and no regard or respect for public safety. This IRMP has nothing to do with safety, your only interests are saving money, end of.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Dear Mr Galley.

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First and foremost I hope this email finds you and you family fit and well.

I write to you today Regarding the above proposals and the affect that these WILL have on not only myself, wife and children but yourself and family and the whole of the East Sussex community that you serve and that they pay for.

I have read the IRMP and I truly urge to not let these drastic measures come to fruition. I understand that some change is probably needed in the service but not at this dangerous level.

And not at the cost of so many full-time highly experienced frontline fire-fighters who live in the towns that they serve

I personally am one of these fire-fighters [REDACTED] posted to Crowborough. [REDACTED] becoming an ESFRS Fire-fighter was a great honour and to be posted in the town were I live was a level of responsibility I have taken very seriously.

I have made my life in this town and being one of its fire-fighters is something that's more than a job. Upon my employment I was told that I would be full-time at Crowborough. Being a Day Crewed fire station I would need to live in a house within a certain distance of the fire station because part of the role is being on-call with an alerter to be able to GUARANTEE a fire appliance 24/7/365 days of the year for the town because of its geographical location and population that we cover. And because of this I would receive a Day Crewed allowance of which my mortgage would be based on. So this is what I have done and built my life and family around this. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

But it is now being suggested that this way of working at Crowborough fire station is no longer a relevant working practice. I am devastated at these proposals and the complete lack and disregard for the feelings and impact that this could and will have of the full-time fire-fighters and their families at Crowborough .Not only financially but mentally and emotionally.

As it stands with these proposals I really do not feel respected or valued by the senior management that have come up with IRMP which is I might add not completely telling the whole correct story,from what I can deuce as well is that the facts and figures have been manipulated some what.

Simply put under these proposal's, you will not be able to guarantee the paying public a fire appliance with a fully qualified and experienced Team within the period's [REDACTED] that are in the IRMP .How can you when the

part time workers have full time commitment's/jobs elsewhere and some also already have full time jobs within ESFRS and Full time jobs within other fire services.

This already puts these part time employee's out of the time frame on a regular period because of the shifts they work in their primary employment.

Please consider the IRMP very seriously as you are the ones undersigning it and making an absolutely huge difference to a lot of other peoples livelihoods, family and personal situations some of which may never recover from both mentally and financially.

**Addition sent to certain FA Members:** *I know that you yourself did not want to go ahead with this during this highly difficult/stressful and unpredictable time and I urge you to make the other Members understand the gravity of this IRMP. You the Fire Authority need to talk to the frontline if you want to make a real difference.*

Yours Sincerely

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Dear Councillor Lambert,

First of all, I hope that you are well and have the support you might need in this challenging time.

I write to express my concern at the proposed cuts to both Newhaven and Seaford Fire Stations. I understand that Newhaven will lose one of its two fire engines and Seaford will also be affected by the proposed cuts. I note that the document produced by the Fire Service is titled "Planning for a safer future". There seems to be a contradiction between title and proposals.

Seaford is part of a large rural district with a high population of people over 65. Seaford itself is densely populated and following the neighbourhood plan will eventually become more so. In addition, it hosts in normal years people on camp and caravan sites where there is inevitably a fire risk, heightened by the rising temperatures associated with climate change. There have already been cuts to the local fire service during the years of austerity. I know you will be aware of all this and hope that as a result, I can count on you to oppose these plans when they come up for approval at East Sussex County Council.

Finally, please do all you can to ensure that when schools begin taking in pupils again, they are able to do so with all possible precautions taken and that no school will be forced to open if its staff and or the parents feel that it is not safe to do so.

Yours sincerely,

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Good Morning,

I understand that it is being proposed that the ALP in the City of Brighton and Hove will be primary crewed, but the aerial appliances in Hastings and Eastbourne will be dual crewed.

Can I ask what happens if the City appliance goes off the run through damage servicing or defect, will we still get a primary crewed aerial to cover the risk in the City from Hastings or Eastbourne like we do now.

Also if you do send the Aerial over from the dual crewed stations won't that take an appliance off the run at Hastings or Eastbourne which reduces fire cover in these areas, which increases the risk??

Kind Regards

Dear All,

I would like to express my gravest concerns over the proposed cuts to the Emergency Fire and Rescue Services in East Sussex.

The Areas covered by the Stations affected in these proposed cuts are really rather unique. There is a lot of rural, coastal, high rise and agricultural property in these areas and the beautiful Ashdown Forest. The incidents that occur here are wide ranging and varied. The area includes Towns which are designated for countless new housing developments, bringing more residents and more cars to the area.

Numerous incidents in recent months have required many of these stations to work together and cover each other, supported by Retained Crews. How will this be possible on the same levels in future, with less Crew, Appliances and Specialist Vehicles/Equipment?

I have deep concerns over the desire to rely more heavily on Retained Crews. The time taken to get them to the training level of a Full Time Firefighter, is much longer and let us not forget, they are all doing this alongside a "day job". I have an acquaintance who is Retained Crew, and their employer is not particularly supportive of their second role for the Fire Service. They have to take unpaid leave to do any training (Fire Service payment for this is not equal to lost earnings) and can only be on call in their own time.

A few weeks ago, they were on a shout all night, at an incident that required several of the East Sussex Stations to attend together, with specialist vehicles that are proposed for cuts. Had that been a week night, that retained crew member would have worked all day, been up all night and then had to go back to their day job on 2 hours sleep. If we rely on that sort of cover as permanent crewing options, it is only a matter of time before someone endangers themselves or a colleague on a shout or in their day job. Worse still, makes a mistake (human error/lack of judgement happens to us all, especially when tired) which costs untold damage to life or property of the public.

I am very concerned about how some figures and information in the documents seem misleading and vague. I am very aware that nationally incidents are down, but in East Sussex this is not the case. 8,812 incidents in 2015, 9,385 incidents in 2018 and 10,007 in 2019, that is an increase of 7% from 2019 and 12% from 2015. It is ludicrous that a reduction in service would be suggested, given this and the increase in housing in the area, previously mentioned. The removal of an Aerial Platform in a Seaside Town with countless High-Rise properties is beyond comprehension.

I have been very vocal on Social Media regarding these cuts and will continue to be so. I have been very concerned at the way in which some of the points raised by people about the consultation documents, have been answered (or not) by the East Sussex CFO.

As the FBU point out, Fires, RTCs and other urgent incidents do not discriminate. They happen to anyone at any time. You are playing with people's lives by proposing to reduce cover at night.

In short, the crews, appliances, expertise, and specialist knowledge/equipment, that are proposed for streamlining (i.e. cuts) in the documents, are nothing short of reckless. The public do not feel confident of the service they can expect with less Crew, less Appliances and less Specialist Equipment.

Yours

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Good luck in your fight against these iniquitous cuts.

My family and I have emailed all the relevant authorities in your support.

United we stand ,divided we fall.

Kind regards

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Dear Sir

I am extremely concerned about the proposed cuts to Crowborough Fire Station. As the biggest inland town in east Sussex, Crowborough cannot afford to lose the level of service as proposed. Crowborough is a growing town and will need more services, not less. We have already lost our ambulance station as well as a diminished police presence; please maintain the fire service we need and deserve.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED] (Crowborough resident)

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Dear Sirs,

I was very concerned to see that the fire station in Crowborough is being severely depleted not just with a massive 50% loss of firefighters but also a loss of an engine.

This is happening in spite of the huge increases in council tax over the last few years.

I really want to express my concern about this matter as surely the safety of the residents is of paramount importance. Can you please explain to me how this is being justified?

I am in strong opposition to this happening.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]  
Team,

Thankyou for keeping me up to date on threats to the Crowborough Fire Service by a flyer through the door this evening.

I have signed the petition, emailed Roy Galley and emailed Crowborough Town Council with my displeasure at such a stupid suggestion.

Crowborough has seen the population double in just twenty years with presumably twice the revenue, yet there are suggestions of cutting the service in half.

I would like to meet the idiot who is proposing such action and see the risk assessment which covers such stupid thoughts.

The practical teaching in schools and Universities is now virtually none existant leading to a lack of understanding about health and safety in the home.

Most electrical appliances have an incorrect fuse ( fact ) which can lead to electrical fires, maintenance on gas equipment is rare to save money so we need essential support when emergencies occur.

[REDACTED]  
Our fire service is essential and making any cuts would be plain stupidity with such a continuing increase in housing.

Please let me know if I can assist in your fight to maintain common sense.

[REDACTED]  
We have just received advice that the local fire station may be closing. I am writing on behalf of my husband as he is registered blind to raise concern as one of many residents at this news. This service is much valued by this community and it would appear we cannot sign the petition objecting to the station's closure as this would appear unavailable online. Having lived here for over 30years it has been a comfort to us to know this service is accessible and also the knowledge that the police station should be moving back to the centre of the town. With the Ashdown Forest on our doorstep and proposals for additional housing it seems short sighted to go ahead with this. At a conservative estimate we are at least 20 minutes distance from Uckfield Fire Station and similarly Tunbridge Wells as you must be fully aware. Surely having the additional appliance available in an emergency to respond quickly before matters get out of hand is not a price too high to pay, In addition we cannot afford to lose

these highly trained firefighters and subsequently have to train more; a false economy I think you will agree. Please make sure this communication reaches the ears of the right people and not just confined to the waste bin. Thankyou.

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My wife and I want to add our extreme concern about the proposed cuts to the Fire Service in Crowborough. This town is growing very rapidly with proposed planned new estates and the more recent dense newly built homes, the infills and not to mention the frequency of fires on the nearby Ashdown Forest. We believe you are proposing to reduce our highly skilled Fire fighters by 50% and cut One Fire Engine. We are alarmed that you consider these cuts to be safe. We live in a densely packed part of town in the vicinity of three schools [redacted] off Crowborough Hill and want to make our feelings very clear that we are strongly against these cuts.

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I strongly object to the proposed cuts at Crowborough Fire Station. Many new houses are being built in the area, and fires on the Ashdown Forest continue to be a serious problem. Regards

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As a local Crowborough resident I am very unhappy to be told there might be cuts to our local fire service - cuts which seem wrong and misguided when one takes into account all the new buildings going up in our town, and thus an increase in population. The last thing needed is a cut in services at this time. Please have a really deep delve into this problem and banish the thoughts of Fire service cuts. Safety must come first!!

Sincerely [redacted]

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Gentlemen,

Yet again I hear noises that the County Council wish to propose further cuts to our fire brigade. Surely in recent times with all the under cover cuts with the NHS is this not a lesson to be learnt when our country was not ready to tackle one of the biggest events in recent times both of staff and equipment. We have to admit that the Government has worked hard to correct their previous mistakes but this has all taken time, we were not standing at the gate ready to fire with all barrels to protect the population if further cuts to Fire and Rescue takes place.

I believe our station in Crowborough has only two engines based here along with two auxiliary vehicles to protect our expanding town along with the Ashdown Forest and other support. Just two weeks ago there was a devastating fire on the Forest at Ghyls Gap which was possibly started by someone having a bar-by-queue. This must have been devastating as I have been witness to a fire there some years ago, it is unbelievable how fast fire travels in conditions like we are experiencing at the moment. Then there are accidents in places like Beacon Road which has been subject to various cuts by the council with other services, I remember some years back on the other side of town when a young mother was trapped in a burning car and she could not get out, somehow her baby was saved, I think she died.

The town is expanding in numbers authorised by the councils, just look at the building down near Morrisons now, how many more people will this bring to live here, then on Crowborough Hill, then over by the council estate and the wishes of the council wanting to build even more, is it by the Sports Centre? Then there are isolated spots going on all around and of course extra traffic trying to go even faster.

I have been out on Beacon Road helping when an accident has occurred and I have seen all services doing their utmost to get here, only having one engine and less staff would the town be in position to aid any unfortunate individuals that may want Fire and Rescue to assist? Seeing someone in a car which appears as though it is about to burst into flames is not good, after a crash at Church Road or a young lad who has been propelled into a tree from his motor bike or that dreadful one where a lad was forced under a Ford Fiesta. One can go on!

Due to the increase in population and traffic should you not be considering to get a third engine based here and full time cover at the station for our town for 24/7/365?

Our boys and girls are at the sharp end here and they need your support and allow them to give a high standard of protection for us all. We hope to never to have to call them, but my goodness when you do need them it is like a life time waiting for help and then you hear the sirens and they are risking their lives to get to us and help and do their best.

They need your support to protect a very valuable service that they provide for us. Do not start getting your axe out again here!

Regards

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We are writing to express concerns about proposed changes in the current IRMP Consultation 2020-2025 on behalf of the members of the Women's Section and LGBT+ Section of the FBU in East Sussex.

The IRMP Consultation document opens with a statement regarding the service's equality and inclusion commitment. We are told that ESFRS "strives to achieve equality of access, equality of impact and equality of outcome for the services we provide" and that this is achieved by staff carrying out 'people impact assessments.' We are very concerned that the IRMP people impact assessment (still referred to as an equality impact assessment on the service website) identifies a potential negative impact of the proposals under disability and gender. We request that you ask the service to take steps to address these negative impacts. At the very least, we would expect the impact to be neutral, and our overwhelming preference would be for the proposals to have a positive impact on those with protected characteristics.

We are disappointed that reference to improving diversity within the workforce is relegated to the final pages of the document and that there appears to be no new thought on how to address these issues, despite the IRMP Consultation stating that "we actively support equality and inclusion". The paragraph is brief and refers the reader to the ESFRS Diversity Strategy 2017-2021 (the plan does not take us through to 2025). When this strategy was produced we expressed our concerns that it did not contain enough substance and would be unlikely to effect meaningful change. We were promised that a suite of enabling policies would be introduced to facilitate implementation. These enabling documents have not materialised and we believe, based on the lack of evidentiary change, that this strategy has been a failure. This assertion is supported by the findings of the HMICFRS Inspection Report published in December 2019 which found that "East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement in promoting the right values and culture"; that "the service requires improvement in ensuring fairness and promoting diversity"; and that "the service needs to ensure activities aimed at diversifying the workforce are effective." We strongly urge you to reject proposals that your own impact assessment has found will have a negative bearing on disabled persons (staff and community), carers of disabled persons, those with neuro-diverse conditions, and female primary carers. We ask that you request any proposals for change are assessed as having a positive impact on our communities and staff.

The HMICFRS Report also found that "the extent to which the service looks after its people requires improvement." Given that the people / equality impact assessment has identified that these IRMP proposals will negatively impact disabled persons, carers of disabled persons and female primary carers, we strongly urge you to consider applying the 'family test' to any proposed changes. On 18 August 2014, then Prime Minister David Cameron announced the introduction of a 'family test' which should be applied when formulating public policy. The objective of the test is to introduce a family perspective to the policy making process. The test ensures that policy makers recognise and make explicit the potential impacts on family relationships in the process of developing and agreeing new policy. The government states that policy makers should think about family impacts in a similar way to how they consider impacts on equality as required by the Public Sector Equality Duty, considering impacts at each stage of the process.

There are 5 Family Test Questions;

1. What kinds of impact might the policy have on family formation?

2. What kind of impact will the policy have on families going through key transitions such as becoming parents, getting married, fostering or adopting, bereavement, redundancy, new caring responsibilities or the onset of a long-term health condition?
3. What impacts will the policy have on all family members' ability to play a full role in family life, including with respect to parenting and other caring responsibilities?
4. How does the policy impact families before, during and after couple separation?
5. How does the policy impact those families most at risk of deterioration of relationship quality and breakdown?

On behalf of our members, we are requesting that prior to approving any changes in shift or duty pattern, the Fire Authority applies the 'family test' to the proposals. We draw your attention to the following observations; ESFRS have stated that changing the crewing model to a self-rostering shift system would benefit staff as it would enable firefighters to have more flexibility in which shifts they work each month and would introduce a more family-friendly work pattern.

Having consulted with our membership, the Women's Section and LGBT+ Section dispute this assertion. Our members believe that having a regular shift pattern, where leave days change week by week in a regular progressive manner is more family-friendly than a work pattern where shifts are organised six weeks in advance. Government advises that policy makers should think carefully about how any policy under consideration might add to the pressures families might face. Policy makers should consider the nature and scale of the potential impact, and whether any negative impacts can be mitigated in any way. A self-rostering system would introduce uncertainty for firefighters around work patterns and work commitments. It can already be challenging for operational staff to make child care arrangements due to working both day and night shifts. The same applies to carers. If firefighters are only able to plan with certainty six weeks ahead these challenges would certainly increase. Many providers are already unable to offer placements or care due to our shift pattern. A higher proportion of women than men have child care and caring responsibilities. LGBT+ carers can in particular find it difficult to organise culturally appropriate respite care. Self-rostering would potentially compound these issues further.

All family members have a role to play in family life, whether that is the role fathers play in raising children, that grandparents play in supporting parents, including lone parents, or that adults play in caring for elderly relatives or disabled family members. The government reminds us that while most people would recognise these aspects of family life, policy makers can sometimes fail to take a whole family perspective into account when thinking about the design and delivery of public services, sometimes underplaying or discounting the contribution of particular members, or failing to see the opportunities to support and enhance how families support each other. Factors for consideration include how policy impacts family members' ability to balance work and family life, the time families can spend together, and the competing demands of caring for elderly family members and children. ESFRS have acknowledged that the proposed changes to the Day Crewed shift system will rely on whole-time firefighters taking on additional contracts to provide cover at evenings and weekends. Firefighters are very committed to serving the communities where they live and work. Our members currently working on Day Crewed stations believe that this sense of moral obligation combined with new financial pressures when current allowances are no longer payable, will lead firefighters to agree to contracts that will have a negative impact on their ability to balance work and family life. This may disproportionately affect women and LGBT+ firefighters who often have to accommodate the dual pressures of parental and caring responsibilities.

Couples do separate, and that can be necessary for individuals and their children. Nonetheless, separation can have a significant impact on the wellbeing of all those involved. The Service has a role to play in supporting families going through difficulties, helping them navigate separation in a way that mitigates the impact on children in particular. We are concerned the impact proposals would have on any member in the unfortunate position of having to seek assistance through the courts to make access arrangements to children. If parents are unable to commit to any planned access arrangements beyond a six week window this could cause undue stress and harm to the individuals concerned. Policy makers should consider how new policy might impact families at particular stages, and look beyond intact families or households when thinking about impacts.

The HMICFRS inspectors observed that “the service has a workforce planning group, but no workforce plan. It needs to develop one so that it is clear about its long-term workforce needs.” Under the Fire & Rescue National Framework for England it is clear that a priority for fire and rescue authorities is to develop and maintain a workforce that is diverse. A fire service should “continuously improve the diversity of the workforce to ensure it represents the community it serves.” The requirement to diversify the workforce should form part of the workforce plan when it is developed.

This IRMP consultation declares that ESFRS has reviewed diversity within our workforce and that we want our workforce to be more reflective of society at all levels in the organisation. The Service acknowledges that having a range of perspectives, cultures and experiences brings a greater understanding to our organisation, which contributes to decision making. ESFRS accepts that we know our workforce does not reflect the communities that we serve in terms of diversity and gender.

These facts were drawn into sharp relief in the HMICFRS report published in December 2019 which highlighted that whilst 50.9% of the population in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove are female, only 6.5% of ESFRS firefighters are women; and whilst 6.4% of the county’s population (11% in Brighton & Hove) identifies as black, Asian and minority ethnic, only 3.3% of ESFRS firefighters identify as BAME. It was disappointing that the HMICFRS did not examine the numbers of firefighters identifying as LGBT+ (a point that has been raised with the Inspectorate). What we do know is that Brighton & Hove has the largest proportion of LGBT+ residents in the UK with around 10% of the population identifying as LGBT+. Yet despite this sizeable population, we know from our service network that less than 1% of ESFRS firefighters identify as LGBT+. As an organisation we are also behind the national average in two of these measures – in England statics for 2019 evidence that fire services employ on average 6.4% female firefighters, 4.3% BAME firefighters and 3.2% LGB firefighters.

As representatives of female and LGBT+ firefighters, we ask Fire Authority members not to introduce duty patterns that will be less attractive to already under-represented groups.

We would welcome your thoughts on these matters which are of concern to our members. If you would like to discuss the content of this letter further, we would be more than happy to make a telephone appointment given the current limitations on meeting face-to-face.

Yours Sincerely,  
Jake Kaye –East Sussex FBU LGBT+ Rep  
Jane Thompson – East Sussex FBU Women’s Rep

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Sirs,  
I have just read with surprise that you are planning to cut the fire service provision in Crowborough. I regard this as the most stupid decision anyone in a responsible position like your own could make. At a time when local authorities are proactively creating more housing and expanding the population of the area, a decision like this flies against all common sense.

What is the rationale?

I can only conclude that you are counting on the death toll following the pandemic actually reducing the size of the population so that we do not need the Fire Service.

Stupid !!!!

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We are writing to protest strongly against the proposed cuts to the fire service at both Crowborough and Uckfield.

These cuts would leave us totally vulnerable in the event of a fire and put many lives at risk. Even more so should there be a fire in Ashdown Forest.

The loss of these fire stations would also impinge on the help they provide when there is a road traffic accident when their assistance is greatly needed. Lives could be lost due to the length of time taken for a fire service to arrive from another area.

Please advise what plans you do have in place to cover these emergencies. Have you taken into account the fact that services from outside the county may not be in a position to assist when needed.

Will the result of these cuts reduce the amount we pay in community charges and does this mean we are paying for a substandard service??

We await your reply with interest.

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Dear Councillor Galley,

I wish to record my severe objections to the proposals. I find it astonishing that such a plan is even getting serious consideration.

1. Crowborough is the largest inland town in East Sussex.
2. There is a significant increase in new houses and flats being built, as well as conversions of commercial property to high density residential accommodation.
3. The FRS regularity support accidents which you will know for instance on the A26 are regular and often very serious.
4. The Ashdown Forest remains a significant fire risk, after years of poor husbandry, and to make this point 2 weeks ago three appliances were in attendance at the weekend. I have on more than one occasion this year seen the aftermath of open air BBQs.

I am not one who regularly gets involved in campaigns but this one is very serious to the welfare of the community and the fabric of our lives here.

Yours sincerely

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We would like to express our support for the Crowborough Fire Station and do not wish to see any cuts from this very valuable service. They do an amazing job and are greatly valued by all Crowborough residents. We hope you will re-consider the proposed cuts.

Many thanks

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Dear Sirs:

I was made aware of a proposal being considered to reduce the services at Crowborough Fire Station. As a long-time Crowborough resident I would urge you to reconsider these measures, the community relies on the services of the Fire Brigade.

Any loss of fire cover will be felt throughout our town and surrounding areas.

Sincerely,

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to register my strong objection to the planned cuts at Crowborough Fire Station as this will leave our town and surrounding area extremely vulnerable, by increasing risks to lives and to the vital amenity of the Ashdown Forest.

Best regards

[REDACTED]

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The proposal to cut the fire service in Crowborough is absolutely ridiculous and very very dangerous, this is an essential service, which the community relies on the loss of a fire engine and reduction of weekend and evening fire cover could be the difference between life and death for families and indeed everyone exposed to a fire situation.

Yes cuts have to be made this is understandable but to this service!!

Fire fighters losing their jobs! It's awful that this is being proposed.

We the public are paying for this service and it is my understanding that we will be paying the same with a reduced and lower protection level!

This really is unacceptable and I hope this doesn't happen.

Regards

[REDACTED]

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Dear Councillors

My name is [REDACTED]. I was a firefighter with ESFRS [REDACTED]. I left to pursue a career in another industry.

On 22nd August 2015, I was one of the first in attendance at the Shoreham air crash. After dealing with the initial carnage, I put on my breathing apparatus set and helped put the plane out, standing in a lake of fuel and roasting in my fire kit.

On 3rd December 2006, I was in attendance, again with my colleagues from Blue Watch, at the Marlie Farm incident.

In early 2016, just after 1 appliance had been 'cut' from Hove Fire Station, we were called to a shed on fire. [REDACTED] Confident in being able deal with what we might be about to face as best we could, I was nonetheless faced with dealing with it with only 1 fire appliance, with only a crew of 4, and with back-up from Preston Circus at least a few minutes behind us. A lack of life saving resources, not because of another incident taking them, but because East Sussex Fire Authority voted to take them away from us.

We were told by East Sussex Fire Authority, as we are now, that losing a fire engine would 'make the community safer due to education'. [REDACTED]

Shoreham Fire Station was downgraded under the same pretext you are giving now. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It haunts me to this day. It reminds me

of the government response, or lack of it, after Grenfell - The complete lack of ability to effectively cope with the fallout from a major incident.

During a previous round of 'cuts', all justified under the false spin of 'making the community safer', former Fire Authority Chair, Ted Kemble, actually admitted to us that he did what ever the Chief Fire Officer (Des Pritchard at the time) told him to do, "Because he's my mate (sic)".

I urge you to look at all the facts being presented, and not take on blind faith from ESFRS that these cuts will have little negative impact on peoples' safety. They will.

I am a businessman and I know about budgeting and tough decisions. But if I was dealing with peoples' lives, I would always put that first.

Fire education does work, but remember there are still people who bulk buy toilet rolls and strip supermarket shelves when instinct takes over from common sense or education.

I am currently retraining to drive ambulances during the Covid crisis, despite the potential increased risk to myself and my family. I am proud to be able to do something that will help others. I urge you to make yourselves proud and not vote for these cuts. They will cost lives.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

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I am alarmed at the cuts proposed to Crowborough fire station. How many people have to be without the help they need in a crisis? It is especially appalling in the times we are already facing with the Corona virus.

Your sincerely,

[REDACTED]

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Hello

I want to register my strong opposition to the "proposed" cuts to the above.

It seems the more we pay locally the less we get. perhaps a layer of management should be removed and the money used to keep the front line active.

For a sprawling town of over 20000 people to cut this vital service is madness.

Just think, it might be you or your children that needs them after the cuts.

Oops! Too late ! Cuts cost lives.

[REDACTED]

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I was contacted recently by phone and asked to take part in the consultation about the changes to ESCC Fire Service. I had no prior knowledge of the proposals, or of the response from the Fire Service Union, but I have subsequently looked into this.

I want to make a complaint about this method of testing support for the proposals. I think that the telephone survey is a very unfair way of conducting this consultation. The questions are very complex and I was pressured to form an opinion on the spot.

I can see that you have provided plenty of explanatory materials on your website to support the online survey, but I wasn't directed to this by the person asking the questions on the phone, nor would I have time to read and absorb them before answering. I think you are likely to get results from your telephone survey that are not a true reflection of the opinions people might have if they had the full information in front of them, and I urge you to disregard them.

For example - a question like the one below contains so much detailed information, and so many points at which you might need clarification and you only have a minute or so to take this in and arrive at an opinion about it.

Yours,  
[REDACTED]

*ESFRS currently has six "day-crewed" fire stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield. On these stations, firefighters work a combination of "positive" and "standby" hours over a 24-hour period. Positive hours are worked on the fire station and standby hours are worked on-call from a location within five minutes of the station.*

*ESFRS proposes to introduce "day-only" crewing at these stations, whereby full-time firefighters would be on-station during the daytime Monday to Friday, with on-call firefighters providing cover during the evening and at weekends. The key difference between the existing system and the day-only system is that the latter does not require full-time staff to provide extra on-call cover during the evening and weekends. This cover is provided by existing and new on-call staff.*

*Two alternative options to resource this duty system have been identified:*

***Option A** - one team of 6 staff guaranteeing the immediate availability of the fire engine for 8.5 hours of every weekday, with each firefighter working 5 days per week. This option results in a net reduction of 33 posts, providing the opportunity to reinvest staff into the "flexible crewing pool" (see Proposal 1), training and prevention and protection teams.*

***Option B** - one team of 7 staff guaranteeing the immediate availability of the fire engine for 10.5 hours of every weekday, with each firefighter working 4 days per week. This option results in a net reduction of 27 posts, providing the opportunity (albeit reduced) to reinvest staff into the "flexible crewing pool" (see Proposal 1), training and prevention and protection teams.*

*Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?*

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Dear Ms Hart and Ms Lambert

I am emailing you to oppose the cuts for Rye Fire Station. I am very concerned that in the event of a major fire or indeed fires occurring in two separate areas there would not be enough cover with only one pump available causing delays with possible loss of life. Back in 2015 / beginning of 2016 The Camber Newsletter that is distributed to Camber residents suggested that lifeguards were not needed on the beach at Camber. Then sadly seven deaths occurred in one summer of 2016, proving how much lifeguards were needed. Don't let this be a repeat of a disaster because of a budget that I am sure could be workable.

Best wishes  
[REDACTED]

Resident of Playden.

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Dear Sir / Madam,

We are writing to express our concern about the proposed cuts to East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service – in particular Crowborough, where we live. With a population in excess of 20,000, that is set to increase as the number of new houses being built continues to rise, a reduction in fire and rescue cover is nonsensical. In addition, the proximity of the very busy A26 trunk road to both Uckfield and Crowborough with its potential for road traffic accidents and the Ashdown Forest with its potential for forest fires (which, with predictions about climate change, are likely to rise in frequency in the coming years), means that the availability of a full time and fully manned and equipped fire and rescue service is imperative.

Whilst we fully appreciate that in the current financially constrained climate, authorities are obliged to review and provide evidence of improving fiscal efficiency across their many and varied services, surely public safety should be a top priority and immune from all but the very minimum of cuts?

Please reconsider very carefully the impact and potential future consequences of these proposals.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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Living where we do on the edge of East Sussex, almost surrounded by forestry and open spaces, all of which are places frequented by people who are not only local but visit from miles around, Crowborough is liable to many accidents.

RTA's caused by people who underestimate the driving conditions of our twisty lanes and fires caused by the thoughtless behaviour of these visitors. Unless you have seen it for yourself no one can appreciate the ferocity of a fire on the Ashdown Forest. The speed these fires spread and the damage they cause.

Reduce the number of appliances and firefighters and the dangers caused by these incidents will escalate. To lose our current level of protection by the proposed cuts is frightening to say the least.

The fire service in Crowborough is part of community life and they are a welcome sight at many minor incidents as well as those reported in the press. I can remember being stuck in a lift at a local supermarket. My relief was great when the local firefighters appeared on the scene and slowly did all that was needed to release me. Would my rescue have been so speedy if the fire service had been reduced. I could have been stranded in there for much longer while help was obtained from elsewhere.

Another great service our local team undertake is educational visits to the local schools. These are so important, but with the proposed reduction I guess these would be axed.

Please reconsider your actions when threatening to reduce the fire cover at Crowborough.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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My husband [REDACTED] and I wish to make a formal challenge to the loss of firefighters and one fire engine at Crowborough. Currently Crowborough is undergoing a rapid period of development with more housing estates being built. Surely when a town is growing you don't reduce a vital service. I cannot understand how, at a time when there are more homes being built/proposed to be built, that you consider there to be less risk of fire/ a need for a vital service. Please reconsider your plans. I assume it is a purely financial decision. I assume that the increase in council tax the new housing occupancy in Crowborough produces would be sufficient for our fire service to continue with full staff and equipment.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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The council must be gaining an increase in council tax as the new homes are occupied - I personally don't like the building in areas of outstanding natural beauty but I expect some recompense in perhaps the town as a whole benefiting in terms of services - not having them reduced.

Please take note of our objection to what seems on every level a dangerous policy.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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To whom it may concern ...

Please can you do all you can to maintain our Fire and Rescue services in Crowborough.

I should like to protest at the proposed cuts that are being proposed across East Sussex to the Fire and Rescue service. I only feel I can comment on the cuts affecting Crowborough and Uckfield in particular, as this seems ridiculous to me. We have the Ashdown Forest on our doorstep and it was only last year when we realised, more than ever, just how dangerous fires can be - if you remember we had several very serious fires which damaged the Forest, and which would have caused even more damage had local fire crews not been available.

Crowborough is, I understand still one the largest inland towns in East Sussex and we deserve an adequate level of Fire and Rescue service to be available. We also pay for this service and therefore expect it to be made available.

As we come out of the Covid Crisis - please don't give us another one to deal with.

Yours sincerely

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Dear Sirs, we are very concerned to read of the proposed changes by the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service to the stations at Crowborough and Uckfield.

With more large building developments currently being constructed in Crowborough and Uckfield with further major housing plans under consideration by Wealden District Council, the last thing we should be doing is reducing the capability of our local stations.

Crowborough as you are aware, is the largest inland Town in East Sussex, and the rate payers contribute significantly to the Local, District and County budget for these services.

We, on behalf of the residents of Crowborough and Uckfield, strongly object to these proposals by the ESFRS and ask that they be removed.

Kind Regards

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Dear Counsellor Rose

I understand the fire station in Crowborough has been under review. Please fight hard to keep it as:

- Inevitably response time will increase if the station is not maintained.
- More housing is going up in the area which increases the density of population in Crowborough.
- Adequate infrastructure as regards services must be maintained.
- Advice to the elderly re fire prevention might decrease.

There may well be further reason but these come to mind first. Thank you for your hard work on residents behalf.

Yours sincerely

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I am writing to strongly object to the threat to Crowborough Fire Station. We cannot have the reduction in the services that you propose this would leave the area extremely vulnerable. Please reconsider!

Regards,

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Sir/Madam

I wish to raise my deep concerns regarding the proposed cuts in appliances and personnel in Crowborough. I am at a complete loss to understand the rationale of cutting services to the largest inland town in East Sussex particularly in view of its close proximity to Ashdown Forest, which has several large fires annually. As Uckfield, our closest neighbour, is also facing cuts in services the response time is obviously going to be much slower which will endanger the residents, fauna and flora in this area.

If these proposals do go ahead then I assume there will also be a proportionate cut in the tax we pay for the service.

Regards

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We are extremely worried about the proposed cuts to the Fire Service in Crowborough. Bearing in mind the increase in building houses and flats in the town and the proximity to Ashdown forest, we regard the cuts as being foolhardy. There will undoubtedly be more residential properties built in Crowborough in the future, the town is growing and a full working fire service is necessary.

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Crowborough residents.

To Senior Management team

There are many new houses under construction in Crowborough. In many there is a lot of structural wood and there will be more fires. It's a simple equation

More houses = more fires

We need the fire station in Crowborough

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Dear Sir

I was absolutely horrified to learn that East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service are proposing cuts to both Crowborough and Uckfield fire stations and teams. We live in an ever expanding town and area, and need more provisions in place not less. Making these proposed cuts will lead to a loss of property and potentially lives too. I would therefore ask you to strongly object to these cuts and to fight to not only keep the service we currently have, but to increase the level of cover.

We are currently living in a very strange period of our lives, and will all have to make sacrifices and cuts no doubt. However, it should never be at the expense of a potential life should it?

Regards

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I am writing to say how dismayed I was to receive your leaflet regarding the cuts to the excellent fire service in Crowborough.

It appears pointless to cut the services when there is development going on everywhere and with several hundred people about to move to Crowborough the chances of fires and rescues needing attending to are more of a risk than ever.

Please could you put my name on your petition.

Thank You

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To Roy Gallery, Greg Rose and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.

I have lived in Crowborough for 35 years. I am extremely lucky that so far I haven't needed our fire service.

God forbid I need it in the future and my emergency happens in the evening or over a weekend as there will be no one there to help me!!!!

These cuts are a disaster for Crowborough and should be stopped immediately. I assume you all live in the area so I hope you don't need these services once they are cut!!!

PS. I want to send this letter to Roy Gallery and Greg Rose but the email addresses I've been given on a leaflet are incorrect. Please could you forward this letter onto them.

Thankyou.

**Further reply:**

Hi Chris.

Good job I'm retired and had time to read! I didn't read the whole consultation but focused on those parts affecting Crowborough.

Having read it, I can see that the leaflet does not tell the whole story. By saying about a loss of a fire engine it implies there won't be one available but obviously there will. Yes, there will be a loss of full time firefighters but it

seems jobs will be redistributed to make more efficient use of manpower. I believe Crowborough will have enough cover in evenings and weekends. Interesting that most call outs are for road accidents. The A26 from Uckfield is lethal and drivers ignore speed limits all the time not realising there are blind bends!

Anyway. Thankyou for giving me the information and I hope by filling in the questionnaire I've helped.

Just wandering how the rest of Crowborough residents can give their views. I wouldn't have known about the Questionnaire if I hadn't emailed you.

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Good afternoon

I've just had a leaflet put through my door about the proposed cuts. I'm absolutely appalled to hear this is being even considered.

Being near to Ashdown forest our fire service is often called upon during the summer months to put fires out. I'm further shocked that its being considered when the local council seem hell bent upon agreeing to numerous new developments which will put further demand on the fire service.

The enquiries to the new development behind Sainsbury have been few and far between, the one next to the community centre isn't even half built, Nightingales isn't finished either, then there's the new houses near Well House vets that seem to be on the market for ages, the new houses off Montargis backing into Tollwood lane (Coppice end?) another development on the cards off Palesgate lane and yet another 250 houses are waiting approval near Nightingales? We still don't know the impact Covid 19 is going to have on the economy, these houses could lie empty for years.

The volume of houses being planned for our town require improvements to our infrastructure; traffic congestion in Western road needs addressing, another school and doctors surgery will be needed to accommodate the additional residents, parking restrictions around the station need putting in place before x amount of new Crowbough residents decide they don't want to walk to the station in the morning and don't want to pay to park either.... but no you're considering reducing our fire service!!

I honestly feel that the Council has lost its focus. Looking forward to the next local elections already.

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Fire Service in Crowborough / Consultation Document

My wife [REDACTED] and I feel compelled to write to you expressing our concern, and total opposition to the proposals referred to in the Consultative Document relating to fire cover at Crowborough Fire Station.

Being fearful that the proposed cuts will be implemented, as senior citizens we have recently have a few sleepless nights worrying about the dreadful consequences, and the fearful possibilities that could occur in the event of a fire in our home.

We just cannot understand the rationale behind such proposals, particularly having regard to the increase in residential house building in Crowborough; one would think that there would be an increase in fire cover, not decrease!

In addition to the above surely cognizance should be had of the special services provided by these worthy Firefighters, both in attendance of road traffic accidents, which appear to be on the increase in, and around Crowborough; and just recently the awful forest fires in the Ashdown Forest.

Finally, Crowborough has historically sought to encourage new businesses into the Town, fearful of following many others, by becoming a ghost town. What message therefore do these proposals if implemented send to potential takers?

Please I implore you to reject these ill thought-out proposals, and allow us to sleep peacefully.

Yours Sincerely

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Dear Mark O'Brien, chief fire officer

I am responding to your invitation to submit responses to your consultation about the future of the fire service in East Sussex.

I live in Prince Charles Rd, Lewes, very near your headquarters.

I am copying in this response to the two members of parliament recorded in the Sussex Express, as being opposed to the plans. This is significant because it is a cross party response. As Maria says, there is no urgency to push this forward at such a critical time when there is so much before all of us, and the fire fighters have been taking on extra duties in the light of the response to Covid 19.

My experience has been that the Fire Service acts with care in our area. And we should keep the Rescue element in the work, the sea and coast and downs nearby. The fire engines are vital to respond to the needs in a wide area, and I do not think our workers are sitting around wasting their time waiting for emergencies that rarely come.

It is vital we stay secure as we come out of the emergency and in the next couple of years it will be with us. Also, we are so blessed with nature and birds, and the rare occasions when birds need rescued should not be put aside, unless human life is at risk and where the priority has always to be.

I look forward to receiving reports on where this goes,

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Hi

I tried to get the online petition but could not get response to the <http://chnq.it/mnL5MvQM> as per the flyer for Crowborough.

I feel strongly it is ridiculous to make cuts to our fire service, we have already seen Police /Ambulance services cut, we have incredible expense of new houses going up to 600 if the three new applications go thru!!(of course they will with Wealdens Planning committee!) No one wants to listen to the need for infrastructure.

Lives will be put at risk, what do we pay our Community Rates for!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

So we support you in the fight to maintain not reduce a vital service.

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Dear Councillor Galley,

Please accept this email as an indication of my strong opposition to the proposed changes at Crowborough Fire Station.

This is the largest inland town in the County and as such it needs total Fire Service protection and does not need the loss of one engine and 50% of its full-time firefighters. It is also the closest station to the Ashdown Forest and there are often forest fires there which require a heavy commitment of both equipment and personnel.

It seems that the District and County Councils seem determined to do whatever is necessary to spoil this town and its environment. There is never any thought given to the population and the main thrust appears to be how can we preserve villages and smaller towns by ruining Crowborough! Recent examples would be the housing development on the junction of Mill Lane and the A26 which involved chopping down many trees,(the "lungs" of the town by a busy A road) removing part of Bluebell Wood for car parking spaces and giving planning permission all around the town for far too many houses.

So build up the town past the point where its facilities can cope, remove pollution fighting trees and then take away Fire Service cover. Great plan!


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Dear Sir,

I was sorry to hear that you are proposing to cut the facilities at our local fire station.

I am particularly worried at the longer response times as certain individuals in our area deem it acceptable to have bonfires on warm summer days not only necessitating windows to be shut when we are fighting a respiratory virus but also with the bone dry conditions posing a threat to neighbouring properties and gardens.

I therefore think that if the fire fighters cannot reach us especially in evenings or weekends then there is an increased risk to life and property.

Also, as the local demographic tends to be more elderly and consequently not as mobile and there are a number of flats and apartments with more being built, often for older members of society, so a rescue service is vital. The loss of firefighters would also mean that property safety checks, which at the moment I believe are readily available for the disabled and elderly would also be curtailed.

Therefore I should like you consider whether the same level of protection can be maintained where lives are at stake.

Kind regards


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Dear Sirs

I understand that you intend cutting back on equipment and staff at both Crowborough and Uckfield fire stations. I feel this is extremely foolhardy seeing that both stations are on the outskirts of a tinder box in the shape of Ashdown Forest, which can keep them extremely busy as recently May. How long will it take for a reduced number of crews to get to the residents of both towns and any road accidents that may occur in the area, particularly when attending a fire on Ashdown Forest? Crowborough is the largest inland town in East Sussex and has several large housing developments, only increasing the number of households and vehicles. Many of the local roads are already congested and this will only get worse as the population increases.

I am appalled at the thought that you could even think of reducing the size and efficiency of the Fire & Rescue service, particularly when the Local Authorities are being instructed to increase the quantity of residential properties. We have already lost the police and ambulance stations and the Council Tax bills are supposed to contribute towards these services. What are we paying for?

I sincerely hope that you will reconsider cutting the local services.

Yours faithfully

  
 (Crowborough Resident for 54years)

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Dear Clerk to Parish Council

I am deeply disturbed to see that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Authority are planning huge cuts to the fire service in East Sussex.

They plan to;

1. Remove ten fire appliances which will result in the of sixty retained firefighters.
2. Twenty four of these firefighters will be lost from fire stations with two fire appliances. These stations are Netherfield, Rye, Seaford and Wadhurst.
3. Thirty six further firefighters will be lost from day crew stations. These stations are Bexhill, Battle, Lewes, Uckfield, Crowborough and Newhaven.

This monstrous indifference towards our fire service will mean;

1. The whole of East Sussex will be ten fire appliances down from where we are now.
2. The capacity for aerial rescue will be severely diminished.
3. The Ridge Community Fire Station, 50 The Ridge, Hastings, will have night time fire cover cut.
4. Bexhill, Battle, Lewes, Uckfield, Crowborough and Newhaven will all suffer from an increase in response times to incidents.

We simply can't allow this attack on the fire service, our key workers, to go unchecked and unchallenged.

East Sussex has a variety of challenges which you will be acutely aware of. Vast areas of the area is rural which will hamper the response of the fire service in attending incidents that are in these out of town areas with their narrow, bendy roads, many of the towns within the county are seaside and holiday destinations which brings increased risk with water dangers which can be exacerbated by people not familiar with the area, accommodation risks such as fire in these establishments alongside environmental, terrorist or other incidents which the fire service is often called upon to deal with.

Would it be possible for you to take urgent action to;

1. Lobby all members of the Fire & Rescue Authority to drop these proposals and work positively with the Fire Brigades Union to devise new plans to safeguard the community.
2. Lobby all MP's in East Sussex for them to work in conjunction with the Fire Brigades Union and the Fire & Rescue Authority to devise new plans to safeguard the community.
3. Speak with Cllrs in your political group to stress how important it is they also take action to support action against the cuts.
4. Allow the Fire Brigades Union to attend the meeting where the decision will be made so a front line perspective can be heard by all who attend.

The Fire & Rescue Authority also plan to introduce less family friendly working patterns which will impede firefighters ability and their morale to do the job they love;

1. **Preserving life**
2. **Defending property**
3. **Supporting the community.**

I look forward to your support in defence of our community.

Please sign the petition;

[https://www.change.org/p/east-sussex-fire-authority-support-your-firefighters-reject-the-proposals-save-lives-2?recruiter=137903920&recruited\\_by\\_id=3f1f61b0-6fc1-11e4-833e-7736be7179ed&utm\\_source=share\\_petition&utm\\_medium=copylink&utm\\_campaign=petition\\_dashboard](https://www.change.org/p/east-sussex-fire-authority-support-your-firefighters-reject-the-proposals-save-lives-2?recruiter=137903920&recruited_by_id=3f1f61b0-6fc1-11e4-833e-7736be7179ed&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink&utm_campaign=petition_dashboard)

Go raibh maith agat, do chara,

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Dear Consultation

I had the following questions passed to me via Phil Scott which relate to Rye. Please could I ask you to take a look at them and provide what answers you can.

1. Can you tell me the response time for a second fire appliance to a house fire in camber (if broad oak isn't available - as as a tier 3 station would be up to a 30 minute response time). And not one from Kent (after all we all pay our East Sussex Council tax).
2. Can you tell me how many times that the second appliance has been used last year?
3. In the proposal the words 'slightly longer' are used....How long is slightly longer?

If you need any further clarification please let me know. Could you let me know if this would be a direct response to me or whether these would form part of the FAQ's in case I need to direct the individual to them. Many thanks in advance

Kind regards

Questions from [REDACTED]

**Further reply:**

Hi.

Thanks for passing me to the consult people. Much appreciated. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I did also ask the question of the recruitment at Rye fire station - how many firefighters have left to the number that the service has recruited over the last 5 years.

Many thanks

**Further reply:**

Thanks for your emails. Sorry it's only now that I've just got back to you. Been talking this over with my local firefighters.

Now it seems that you haven't been telling the whole truth regarding the question about the second fire engine into camber. You know that if Rye was to travel with 4 firefighters and needed to go in to a fire with BA and they didn't meet the rapid development criteria that Kent fire and rescue couldn't not control the entry control board (correct me if I'm wrong).

The question regarding 'How many times did the second fire engine at Rye get used' you came back with 14? Are you absolutely sure that's the right figure? Again I've been told otherwise.

The third question about how long is slightly longer....you generally don't know do you? I've seen all over social media that the Chief fire officer had been asked this question and has failed to answer the question.

How on gods earth can you ask the public to take a survey on cuts to the service that a simple question like that can't be answered. Shocking really.

So all I ask is that you answer the question with just simple answers.

Many thanks

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I wish to register my objection to the proposals to reduce the efficacy of the Crowborough Fire Station both in terms of equipment and personnel. The population of Crowborough continues to grow relentlessly with the obvious effect of requiring more protection - not less.

Our friends in the local Police tell us that a fire crew is more often than not the first responder to a local road traffic accident and therefore able to give vital first aid to the injured much earlier that would otherwise be the case.

We grow tired of this specious nonsense that by reducing or removing our local services we will get a better service. We have already lost our ambulances and now the nearest Stroke Unit is a further 30 miles distant than before. Crowborough is the largest inland town in East Sussex and our local Fire Service should be enhanced, not diminished. It looks as if the proposals are to maintain the animal rescue unit but to reduce the capability to fight fires in the area. What good is that to a local resident whose home is being consumed by flames, or whose husband is trapped in a wrecked car on the A26?

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Good morning to you.

I would like to express my concerns over the proposed reduction in the current level of emergency cover available to the Crowborough community.

I appreciate the need to balance between costs and demand but given the need for cover in the area increasing considerably ; with the Walshes Road housing developments on going and the project next to the Council offices nearing completion; and most certainly future housing expansion in our area, any reduction may have a serious effect on lives.

I would ask you to reconsider the decision.

Thank you.

Regards.

---

Dear Sirs

I am extremely concerned about the proposed cuts to Crowborough fire station

I believe they will lead to a reduction in the level of service currently provided and will lead to greater risks for the local community especially elderly people.

I would ask you to oppose the plans and to note my objections please

Regards

---

To the Senior Management Team.

Dear Sirs

I wish to register my dismay at your proposed cuts to the above Fire Station .

Apart from the attendance at road and other incidents. The Fire Team do a sterling job attending fire incidents on Ashdown Forest.

There is no way that fires can be dealt with swiftly if you carry out these cuts.

Yours Faithfully

---

Dear Mr Galley and the Senior Management Team of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

Our family is very concerned about the proposed cuts to the Fire Station in Crowborough and also further afield in the East Sussex area.

With ever increasing building developments taking place, then surely as the population grows so should the essential services! Lives will be put at risk if a full service is not available locally and it is also not good enough to lose firefighters who rely on the employment. That is also lost skills.

Please, please reconsider these proposed drastic cuts and do everything possible to retain at least our current level of service, although you still need to consider the rising local population so do not stretch the service too thinly!

Your sincerely

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Hi Senior management

I understand you want to make alarming cuts to the fire service in the area.

Is this due to cut backs , austerity?

My Councilor here in Crowborough says you think modern houses are now not liable to fire any longer.

That's interesting, is this based on science ?

What are your response times to fires and motor vehicle accidents?

Being a rural area with large tracks of heath land.

I personally think it's a short sighted money only thing.

I'm sure if I were a sacked fireman I'd be pretty upset.

Regards

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Good Afternoon

We have just received the flyer informing us of the cuts to East Sussex fire and Rescue and cant understand the reasoning behind this as there are more and more houses being built in Crowborough and we cannot see 50% of firefighters losing there jobs and a reduction of evening and weekend cover as this is when they are most needed ! This will cost lives its madness so please reconsider this proposal

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Dear Sir / Madam,

As you are aware East Sussex Fire and Rescue have put their Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) out for consultation to the public.

As a member of public living in Peacehaven, and an experienced operational firefighter working at Preston Circus Fire Station in Brighton, I would like to highlight the impact of the proposals of the IRMP.

A layperson reading the IRMP would think that the presentation is impressive, that the proposals appear effective and that they greatly benefit the public. The key messages promoted by the IRMP are:

- No reduction of fire stations.
- Extra fire appliances to be put at Eastbourne and Hastings.
- A flexible rostering duty system allowing a more family friendly work pattern.

It all sounds too good to be true!

And it is: The IRMP fails to use the latest available data information and the data used is highly selective and does not support the proposals. It also results in a number of very serious cuts.

- Removal of 10 appliances
- Longer response times
- Only 1 primary crewed ALP in East Sussex
- Detrimental impact on Fire Fighters and their family lives
- Even the government hasn't asked for 'cost-savings'!

### Removal of 10 Appliances

Firstly, the IRMP will cut the second appliance on every day crewed station citing that (statistically) they are not used enough (Page 45): this represents a loss of 10 appliances from the service as a result of cutting the second appliance from day crewed and on-call stations, such as Rye, Wadhurst, Seaford and Heathfield. The second appliances at these stations are not idle – they are moved to provide vital stand-by cover when primary pumps are at larger jobs, such as the recent fire at Ashdown Forest over the weekend 16th May, and on Sunday 17th May when all the pumps from Brighton and the surrounding area attended a basement fire:

[REDACTED]

Additionally, the Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) based at Preston Circus, Brighton was required. This is one of only 3 High-Rise capable appliances left in East Sussex following previous IRMP cuts (the others being in Hastings and Eastbourne).

In such circumstances in the future, if the Day-Crewed stations had no second appliance this would mean no fire appliance cover for a population of more than 300,000 people across an area of more than 200 square miles: Between Barcombe in the north, Uckfield in the north-east, Seaford in the east, and Shoreham (a Day-Crewed West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service station) in the west. This would be negligent.

### **Longer response times**

Page 42 states that Day-Crewed stations will change to a 9-5 Monday to Friday for day-crew firefighters; after 5pm Monday – Friday and weekends will be covered by ‘on-call’ firefighters. As someone who lives in a community served by a Day-Crewed Station (Newhaven) what concerns me most is the expressed impact and accepted risks of this proposal (Page 42, Paragraph 4): “The community would still have a 24/7 response from these stations but it would mean we may take slightly longer to attend during the hours after 5pm during the week and at the weekend “.

As a resident living in this area with the reduction of the second appliance there is one key detail lacking: HOW LONG IS SLIGHTLY LONGER? Will it be just one room destroyed by the fire or your whole house? We are not told, as they are not releasing the modelling for turnout of first and second appliances. In cases where a second appliance is required, such as a persons reported (therefore a risk to life) this could literally be the difference between life and death. It goes without saying that there is a higher risk to life at night: sleeping people take longer to respond and are often disorientated, while drivers can be less alert and will have less visibility to react to risks, especially on unlit country roads in areas around the affected stations. Suffice to say that if a member of your family crashes their car on a country road in the middle of the night it will be a fire fighter cutting them out to save their life, so you probably want them there sooner rather than taking ‘slightly longer’.

### **Only 1 Fully Crewed ALP in East Sussex**

The ESFRS proposals to ‘dual-crew’ the appliance and the ALPs at both Eastbourne and Hastings would make Brighton the only primary crewed ALP in the whole of East Sussex. Brighton has numerous high-rise buildings, and a great deal more are found throughout the county.

Dual-crewing means that if an appliance is out at a job, then the ALP will not be crewed. In the event that the ALP is also required the appliance will have to return to the station, pick up the ALP and then drive to the job, leaving insufficient crew for the other appliance. This both reduces overall effective cover and increases response times and endangers the public, putting lives at risk. We are all mindful of the tragic loss of life at Grenfell Tower, a high-rise building in the capital. Our ALP cover is already insufficient (with no ALP appliances stationed to cover the centre of the county), but by downgrading the Ridge Station and dual crewing the ALP in Hastings this reduces coverage even further.

### **Detrimental impact on Fire Fighters and their family lives**

My next area for concern is with the proposed change in the shift station duty system.

The rota system currently follows a rolling 2 days 2 nights 4 off pattern and ‘it has stood the test of time’ (page 53, paragraph 2). Annual leave is planned locally well in advance to ensure adequate planned staffing cover and ensure service continuity. I have worked in the service under this system for [REDACTED] years without issue. As a mother, my husband [REDACTED] and I are able to plan our child-care arrangements with minimal stress or

difficulties well in advance. This system works brilliantly: As a family unit we know exactly what we are working every week, every month, every year due to the continuity.

Can you imagine the insecurity of only knowing your work schedule 6 weeks in advance? How can you coordinate your changing shift patterns to ensure child care? How is this proposal less stressful?

My husband [REDACTED] was involved in [REDACTED] using flexible rostering systems. He witnessed this approach and the difficulties it brings, such as reliance on expensive bank and agency staffing. Roster managers were left pulling their hair out trying to cover shifts without overloading [REDACTED]. It increased work-place tensions as some staff try to cherry-pick the best shifts and leave the unsociable shifts to the newer or disorganised [REDACTED]. It was entirely reliant on senior [REDACTED] staff spending a great deal of their valuable time on administration, rather than what they are trained to do – care for people.

The reality of any flexible rostering approach is that for someone to get their personal preferences others will have to sacrifice their own to cover them. And a senior firefighter will be at the centre of it trying to keep everyone happy, or failing to keep anyone happy. In such a tightly knit team such as that of a Watch this can have serious repercussions, especially when you can end up relying on each other for your lives in your line of work. This is before you consider the harmful impact on the mental health and well-being of fire fighters. The fixed-shift system which we operate in at this moment is fair to all and ensures adequate planned staffing to provide service continuity – flexible rostering is an unnecessary and unwelcome proposal.

The IRMP states that it tries to encourage a 'workforce better reflecting the communities in which we serve' However in Brighton and Hove 50.9% of the population is female, only 6.5% of ESFRS firefighters are women. Our Equality Impact Assessment Document states that those worst affected by the proposed shift changes will be primary care givers: 70% of primary care givers are female, so how can the proposed shift change benefit carers? In a service actively trying to encourage minority groups how will they retain those they have when these changes will make balancing childcare, work and family life too difficult?

And finally:

#### **Even the government hasn't asked for 'cost-savings'!**

In an email response to an enquiry from a firefighter, Maria Caulfield, MP (Conservative) for Lewes, stated that cost savings were unnecessary as the Fire Authority has recently received c£750k additional funding required for service provision. She said that Central government has not asked for further savings and in her opinion that the proposals will not provide savings anyway.

The IRMP proposals are reckless, dangerous and irresponsible. I am concerned as a member of the public because they put me, my family, my friends and my neighbours at greater risk. I am concerned as a firefighter because they are detrimental for firefighters and their families and damage the service that I continue to be proud to be part of after [REDACTED] years of service. I think the data shows that we need to improve fire cover in the county, so we do need a set of proposals to achieve this. What the data does not support is prioritising fire cover on certain days at particular times at the expense of cover overall.

I look forward to hearing your views on this matter.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

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Dear Member

I am truly dismayed at the cuts that have been proposed to cut fire stations, fire engines and firefighters.

We are in the middle of a pandemic where we are clapping for these key workers every week.

It seems obscene and a sign of monotonous difference to clap whilst also writing the redundancy notices for buildings, vehicles and staff that support our vulnerable communities.

There is no person in the area who can say they have not or will not need the assistance of the fire service.

I accept cuts have to be made at the direction of HM Government but this isn't the place to be looking for those savings. I recommend a wholesale lobbying of HM Government by Ch Fire Officers and Fire Authority Chairs along with their Members to redirect the need for cuts.

We have seen too much of needless cutting of late, people need to be safe in their communities; so they can raise their families, work and develop their talents, worship and see friends, and mercifully, have the protection of the fire and rescue service.

Its time we railed against HM Government on this issue and left our communities alone.

I hope I have your support on this important matter.

Go raibh maith agat, do chara,

[REDACTED]

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Dear Member

Just a few short weeks ago I rang your e-mail wanting help and I am thankful for those that answered.

I wasn't aware until today that the person who will implicate the cuts has never been an operational firefighter and nor has anyone on the Fire Authority.

I tried to speak with Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive Whittaker and it wasn't possible. There is every chance this wasn't possible cause the large job title she holds may mean she gets lost in the corridors of power.

I engaged with the Fire Authority just a few short weeks ago and received fairly predictable responses.

There are ten fire engines going to disappear, overnight, across the area. This is a disaster, what on earth are you people talking about? Its almost as if the East Sussex area should have no provision at all.

Crews for aerial rescue capability will be cut and the pumps responding will be cut.

I'm not sure how this will go down with the PCS as we need fire cover for our hotel.

If businesses feel threatened I am sure graffiti and pot holes etc may well come second.

East Sussex does NOT want a reduction in wholetime firefighters - we need to be alive to terrorism. It tells a story that unarmed civilians as firefighters, TfL and Transport Police are sent in first and suffer the worst injury.

The Ridge Fire Station and Hastings Fire Station are vital community stations. Can anyone on the fire authority explain why they were on the list?

Cllr Galley has e-mailed me and told me his private thoughts.

I imagine I'll come back to this.

Thanks for your time.

"In the words of 'Bella Ciao' we send a heartfelt message of solidarity to firefighters and workers in Italy - and across the world."

Go raibh maith agat, do chara,  
[REDACTED]

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To Senior Management Team East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

We would like to register our objections to the possible cuts to services at Crowborough Fire Station. We believe we need to have full time services at Crowborough as we are in an area of the Ashdown Forest which has regular fires in dry periods. We are also on the A26 which has regular accidents where the Fire Brigade become involved. Crowborough is forever expanding with constant new developments and a cut in services will puts the lives of people living here at more risk.

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Further to our letter of objection dated 14th May - regretfully on the evening of Saturday 16th May there was a significant fire on the Ashdown Forest. We understand that overall 6 fire appliances attended together with 4 four wheel drive land rovers. In the brave new world that is envisaged by the Powers that be at the Fire Authority the response We fear the outcome would have been very different. As far as response from Crowborough-it was a weekend so there would be no full time firefighters, only retained would be on duty. Only one fire engine and NO FOUR WHEEL DRIVE VEHICLE (as this will no longer be at Crowborough. Apparently there would be back up four wheel drive vehicles from Hastings and Seaford. Hardly a swift response from that distance. 10 acres burned that weekend but it would have been worse. This was the second fire that week and We expect there will be several more this summer. There is an "EXTREME" fire warning in place at the moment. On this alone you must reconsider these cuts. It is just too dangerous to work on such a depleted service.

Since writing last month We understand that neither the Ashdown Forest Rangers or Crowborough Town Council were contacted prior to the Consultation process being released. The very area that our Fire station covers. This is really quite unbelievable. We don't know if Wealden District Council we're consulted beforehand. Probably not. It is also unbelievable and very unsatisfactory that there will be no public meetings. Bearing in mind that due to "Lockdown and the sequelae " the inquest for the Shoreham Air crash from 2015 has been delayed until 2021 and yet you plan to go ahead with this "public consultation " which it isn't! We really wonder if it is legal? The petition against these proposals has now reached nearly 20,000. Now Crowborough households have now received leaflets through the door this will surely rise. So many people did not even know about these proposals.

You must reconsider these proposed changes. Feelings are running high in Crowborough and elsewhere.

Brighton MP brought the matter up at PMQ time this week.

Regards  
[REDACTED]

**Further reply:**

Dear Dawn Whittaker,

Thank you for your prompt reply to our email yesterday.

Our fears are founded on fact because we have bothered to talk to our local firefighters about the proposals.

I would just like to point out that I did not mean "only retained firefighters" in a derogatory way. I was just stating that the weekend under the proposed changes shift would ONLY be retained firefighters as opposed to full time firefighters along with retained. (For a large incident such as a forest fire).

Also pleased to hear that new 4x4 vehicles are being introduced. Let us hope that the Crowborough Fire Station get one due to their close proximity to the Forest.

I stand by the views expressed in my earlier email of the 14th May as far as RTAs on the A26 and increases in housing, population together with the Ashdown Forest.

I would conclude by saying we are paying members of the public that ESFRS serve through our taxes and on that fact you need to listen to us. Possibly the public should be given the option of perhaps paying a little bit more through their taxes rather than just cutting the service to what we and the firefighters see as dangerous and unsuitable levels.

Again, thank you for taking the time to reply.

Regards  
[REDACTED]

**Further reply:**

Dear Dawn Whittaker

Thank you once again for your prompt reply. It is not our intention to keep writing back and forth but we would just say that we HAVE read fully the proposals (some 64 pages?) outlined and we referred and quoted from this report in our first email of the 14th May. We would not have considered writing without gathering as much information as possible.

Interesting about the capping of any increase in funding.

Finally, we would take issue that it is a full and open consultation on the proposals. This cannot be without public meetings which cannot be held at this time. Hence it is NOT the time for cuts to be considered.

Thank you for forwarding our letters to the dedicated consultation so that they can be recorded.

We await the outcome!

Regards  
[REDACTED]

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Please drop these proposals. It is putting lives and property at risk, with longer response times. Delay could cost lives  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am appalled that ESFR rethinking of closing Crowborough fire station. We have an ever expanding population, by the time the latest housing is finished there will be over 28,000 people to protect in Crowborough alone.

Our taxes were used to modernise this fire station not so long ago, it is in an ideal location for Crowborough and to attend out of town emergencies.

If this station is shut how are we to get a fire service when the weather is bad? The A26 is impassable several times a year in icy or snowy weather. Traffic is unable to get up the hill in any direction to Crowborough, often due to accidents.

The increased traffic on the roads in the south east with the ever increasing housing leads to slower response times, particularly if the fire response vehicle has to come from afar, it will inevitably be too late for anyone caught in a fire. Presumably that is the price worth paying if we live in the Wealden area?

The people of this area pay their taxes just as much as anyone else in the rest of the country, why are we singled out to take the brunt of the costs. For instance Hunstanton in Norfolk have a population of 5,000, they have their own fire station and one in the neighbouring town of Kings Lynn.

If you are worried about money try altering the bureaucratic system from the top down, simplify the rules and regulations and retire those who are no longer productive.

Kind Regards

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I wish to add my voice to those of so many others living in and around Crowborough regarding the threat of reducing the capacity - both in terms of personnel and equipment - at Crowborough Fire Station.

I fully understand that savings have to be made in these times of economic stringency but it is an act of sheer folly to reduce the capability of the Crowborough Fire Station. The population of Crowborough increases relentlessly as will the need for local support and protection. Our friends in the Police tell us that the Fire crews are almost invariably the first responders to local road traffic accidents and therefore giving first aid to the injured faster than would otherwise be the case. It would seem that Crowborough will be left with the animal rescue service and not much else. This is completely unacceptable and I would urge you and your colleagues to see the sheer folly in even thinking about reducing this vital service.

**Further reply:**

Dear Mr Galley,

Thank you for your speedy response to my email and I am grateful that you took the trouble to leave double spaces between each line of your reply as there appears to be a great deal to be gleaned from "reading between the lines". I infer from your reply that your mind is already made up.

It would be interesting to know how many of the "number of changes" recommended by senior Fire Officers are based purely on the "evidence collected" of their shrinking budget rather than on the safety and well being of the people of Crowborough. It is difficult to comment on the effect of changes to shift patterns and their assumed benefits without having the full details for consideration. I would be concerned about the threat of removal of the second fire appliance from Crowborough on the grounds that it is not used frequently. At the Crowborough Rugby Club we installed a defibrillator several months ago and, to the best of my knowledge, it has never been used in an emergency but nobody in their right mind would suggest removing it for lack of frequent use.

Will there be a public meeting before those in authority sweep aside all the residents' objections and pass the proposals?

Regards,

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Dear Councillor Galley

We have been informed that there is a serious intention to reduce the resources of Crowborough Fire Station along with other Brigades namely Uckfield.

We are sure that such a plan would be a serious reduction to the safety of the people of Crowborough as well as the surrounding area and amenities such as the Ashdown Forest. The population of Crowborough as with other towns and villages has grown and will continue to grow as will the intended shopping and work facilities that support the people of Crowborough.

Indeed it would not be unfair to state that the North sector of the county either through the Wealden connection or the County Council has left the region in a far worse position that during the time when there was more local government interest and work in place.

To further reduce the safety function that has been provided by the local brigade over the years - I am 70 and have lived in Crowborough all my life and my wife has live here for 45 years - would be a callous disregard for the expected standard of safety from a professional unit which has served the village and town throughout my life. Both manpower and machinery needs to be kept up to strength as there is a near continuous need for the brigade to be available be it for industrial, domestic or environmental reason plus when major incidents occur when it may well be called to other parts of East Sussex to protect people and property from damage.

Please ensure that the Crowborough and neighbouring Fire Brigades are protected from any reductions - unlike the police presence in Crowborough of which no further comment - and halt the downsizing of everything that matters to the voting public let alone those unlucky enough to require the services of their local Fire Brigade.

We hope that you will ensure that any proposed reductions are stopped in their tracks in this matter.

Stay Aware and Keep safe

Regards

[Redacted signature]

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Dear Councillor Roy

It has been brought to our notice that the East sussex Fire & Rescue Service are planning major cuts across the county and included within these plans are the following applied to the Crowborough Fire Station :

1. Loss of one fire engine
2. 50% of full time Firefighters
3. A reduction in evening and weekend fire cover plus longer response times.

These proposals we find incomprehensible as not only has this unit proved itself an invaluable service over the years in providing insurance for the saving of lives and property within this area, but furthermore by making such cuts would mean that the authorities in making them would be stating these fundamental rudiments to the protection of life and property no longer bear importance. Hence we wish to put forward our strongest objection.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

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Hello,

I have been made aware of the forthcoming proposed cuts at Crowborough fire station.

I wish to object and ask that these cuts do not happen.

A fully equipped and fully staffed fire station is an essential public service and there should be more investment into it not cut-backs.

Your life and your family lives might depend on this service one day - just as for the rest of us.

Please do not make any cut backs at all. Please increase the investment into the service for more crew, vehicles and facilities.

Regards,

[Redacted signature]

Dear Councillors,

Over the next couple of days i understand you will be having meetings regarding the ESFRS proposals and cuts to Newhaven Fire Station.

Unfortunately no frontline firefighters have been invited or included in these meetings so i am writing to you today with information you will need to make an informed appraisal of the potential decimation of fire cover for Newhaven and surrounding areas.

Attached is information and questions that are relevant to the issue at hand.

We would like you to raise the questions posed in the attachments as ESFRS have not been able to give us answers so maybe you will have more luck.

As front line Firefighters we see day to day how the fire service needs to be resourced, and it is surely only logical that if you take Fire engines and firefighters out of the resource pool it can only mean more risk to the community.

Couple that with the down-grading of the station which means reducing fire cover and the increased time it would take us to respond to critical incidents, the future safety of the residents of Newhaven, Peacehaven, Seaford and surrounding areas is in dire straights.

These cuts will cost lives !

ESFRS's proposals are based on outdated statistics running up to 2018, Newhaven Fire Stations mobilisations have increased by 12.5% alone, and what for the future, what about Covid 19. There is no future proofing of the fire service only reacting to outdated statistics from the past.

By its own admission ESFRS tell us it will take `slightly longer` to respond to calls. Slightly longer means a worsening service. This is not a positive step but a backward one.

Surely there is not a town council in the country that would want their communities put a greater risk for any reason.

I speak for all firefighters, we live and work in the community and we only want to help and protect, but we need the tools to achieve this.

Please read and digest the attachments and beware of spin.

Thank you



I wish to object strongly to the proposed cuts to the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service and in particular my local station, Crowborough

The proposed cuts would be extremely dangerous if carried out! They will decimate a critical, much needed lifesaving service that has suffered budget constraints in previous years. They will negatively affect public safety as well as firefighter safety and will also impede firefighter's ability to rescue and assist members of the public.

New housing and population in Crowborough and the surrounding area that this station supports has grown dramatically in recent years and current and planned housing developments will put a strain on all emergency services primarily Fire & Rescue which with any more cuts would be reduced to another ineffective reactive force such as the Police which has been cut back to a near non-existent emergency service, virtually unheard of in local villages with a response time that would have previously been unthinkable and unacceptable.

The overlap assistance from and to other surrounding stations would become impossible so even if firefighters from Crowborough or another station are attending a very serious incident, if the cuts take place, backup if urgently required will not be coming very quickly and lives could be lost.

Our contribution through rates and other taxes has increased every year so why should we accept our essential services being cut.

Please stop these proposals before any lives are lost.

Hon Treasurer & Secretary  
Hartfield & Colemans Hatch Branch

Sir

Having just read the proposals for the future of fire services in East Sussex and Crowborough in particular, I wish to advise you my wife and I are vehemently opposed to the reduction of the number of fire appliances and fire fighters at the local station. In the unfortunate event of a house fire the attendance of the engine and fire

fighters, by definition, needs to be both fast and efficient. Given the proximity of Ashdown Forest and the size of our town, it is imperative we retain the current complement of services and equipment in Crowborough.

Regards

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Dear Councillor

I write to you as a retired Fire Officer [REDACTED] and former Officer in Charge of Crowborough Fire Station. At times throughout my career I have worked in most departments and crewing systems. I also served as a Crowborough Town Councillor for 13 years.

The questions in the review will lead to the result being misleading and interpreted to give the Authority reason to implement the moves and also to being accused of passing this through under cover of the overriding Covid-19 pandemic crisis.

The proposals must not be implemented as the changes/reductions will not achieve better levels of attendance as my following comments will make plain.

1. Reduction of appliances will only lead to reduced appliances attending incidents. This is already a problem where the county cannot cover two concurrent major incidents, [REDACTED]. This endangers life to all.....firefighters and the public, with unavoidable and unnecessary loss of property both homes and businesses.
2. The change to Day Crewed stations to a level of 6-7 personnel Monday to Friday does not leave flexibility to enable leave, sickness or training to be adequately covered thereby reducing appliance crewing and availability.
3. The Fire & Rescue Service has for many years not held proper Wholetime Recruit Courses. Instead it has relied on placing Retained personnel on wholetime contracts (many of a zero hours basis) . This has led to reductions of crews at retained stations resulting in these stations becoming unavailable.
4. Retained recruitment is difficult, there is no longer a large local pool of workers as firms, due to the ongoing commercial climate, are mainly unwilling to release staff. This has, with 3 above, led to the current retained personnel covering, if ,possible, more hours which leads to increased stress and family problems whilst reducing crewing flexibility and appliance availability. This enforces the need to maintain the current Wholetime shift and Day Crewed Levels as you cannot and will not guarantee to cover from 18.00hrs. Friday to 09.00hrs. Monday by Retained personnel at Day Crewed and Retained Stations.
5. Increased turnout times. In the years of my service on Day Crewed Stations swift turnout during on call periods was normal – at Crowborough an appliance would leave the station in 4 minutes - now it will take over 9 minutes on average. This is due to the loss of Brigade housing, longer travel time for those responding and the requirements of crews to be fully rigged before the appliance leaves the station whereas we would rig on the way as a matter of course to save lives, time being of the essence.
6. Reduction at Wholetime Shift stations would likewise endanger the lives of both service and civilian personnel. The increase in both urban and rural communities is not going to improve matters and coverage of sickness and leave will have appliances attending with minimum crews.

I would respectfully like to make you aware that today all this country has in way of Civil Defence is the Fire & Rescue Service. At present it is barely able to provide a level of service that was there prior to my retirement and

crewing levels are such that major incidents the like of the major flooding from north to south of the county could not have the attendance required of it. Government and ministers at all levels must be told by all Councillors from Parish to County Level - ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. The plate is virtually empty. Morale is at rock bottom. If it means more taxes so be it. BUT look in the mirror and ask how you will live with yourselves when further cuts lead to losing those you love?.

To those of you who have already rejected these proposals, thank you, I urge you to convince fellow Councillors, through meaningful discussion and debate to reject the Review Proposals for they will affect you all and your families, friends and those you represent.

Finally - If you wish to maintain a Fire & Rescue Service which is fit for purpose, Reject this Review and hold meaningful discussions with, and listen to, those who crew the appliances and crew the stations - Your Uniformed Firefighters, and act in a meaningful and responsible way.

Respectfully Yours, [REDACTED]

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Dear Sir/Madam,

As a Crowborough resident who lives not too far away from the Ashdown Forest, I feel that your proposal to reduce the number of fire station appliances at Crowborough does not seem all that logical. Bearing in mind the recent number and intensity of fires that have occurred on the Ashdown Forest in recent years, any reduction of the ability to quickly send appliances to the area before fires become out of control means that Crowborough needs to retain all of its appliances, and be able to respond quickly.

Your general proposals for reductions throughout the County for both appliances and retained crews, would also mean fewer appliances at nearby stations to assist, these could even be in use elsewhere and unavailable.

Global warming is undeniable, meaning that summer fires are likely to be more frequent and intense with more fire appliances being necessary to gain control, was this something taken into consideration when you carried out your risk assessment of future fire service needs for this part of the County?

Crowborough fire station is on the doorstep of the Ashdown Forest, and the most northerly fire station in the County. We want the whole County to be adequately served, not just the large coastal towns.

Yours  
[REDACTED]

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I strongly oppose the proposed cuts to the Service. Crowborough, like other other towns in East Sussex, is seeing a huge increase in population with new housing being built wherever developers think they can get away with it and with little interest from the local authority. The Service should be expanded rather than reduced.

[REDACTED]  
Hi Chris

Unfortunately an urgent meeting has been rescheduled into my diary for this afternoon and I cannot now make the consultation. I have been involved with Surrey Fire Services changes in how they deliver non-threat to life work and would like to establish a similar relationship with East Sussex Fire Service.

The primary cross over point seems to be call outs to incidents of trapped livestock. If this is an issue for your team then please could you put me in touch with the relevant personal involved in the consultation who may be able to meet outside of today's session to discuss.

Apologies again and many thanks for all your work and efforts.

Kind regards

Romy Jackson  
County Adviser  
Sussex and Surrey  
National Farmers Union

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To: The senior management team ESFRS

Please find attached our letter to Cllr Galley regarding the planned cuts you are proposing to take at our local fire & rescue service in Crowborough.

We strongly object to these proposals to an already basic service especially when compared to historic norms, if the police can get more funding so should you for this lifesaving service.

Councillor Mr Roy Galley, Head of Fire Authority  
Ref: Cuts to Fire Services in East Sussex

We are writing to you to express our concerns and objection to the proposed cut backs to our local fire station in Crowborough and to the East Sussex Fire Service in general.

Our perception of the existing staffing and fire vehicle levels at Crowborough are barely adequate now to serve our community as it is, and with the added responsibility of Ashdown Forest to protect with one appliance it is of grave concern that this will not enable adequate cover for other incidents that may occur with the added hazard to life of local residents .

Housing in Crowborough is increasing all the time, with even more large housing applications with the planning authorities at the present time, and this proposal to reduce fire cover flies in the face of common sense, with the added revenues to the community charge, this must surely be an additional financial consideration for the revenue for the future fire services in the area.

We find it appalling that as East Sussex residents we are expected to pay more each year to get a reduced service which will put our lives at additional risk from harm, this is not how we expect a responsible and caring Fire Service should be contemplating for our future planning.

Reductions in cover for other towns in the area exacerbate the problem as there will be a vast void when their services are called upon to assist, especially from Uckfield, we are at a minimum with cover now, do not reduce it further.

What message does this give to the careers of fire fighters with these continuing cuts to their professions?

We look to you to ensure that these proposals do not go ahead and safeguard our lives and the residents of East Sussex.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

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We strongly oppose any reduction to the Crowborough very busy important Fire Station A very busy station on the edge of the Ashdown Forest and the very busy A26 road

Yours

[Redacted Signature]

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I understand that there is a proposal to remove the 4 x 4 Land Rover and cut the number of Fire fighters from Wadhurst Fire station. As this is such a rural area it is vitally important that we are adequately covered by the Fire Service in the event of a serious fire. The thought of having to wait up to 30mins for an appliance to come from Crowborough or Tunbridge Wells when dealing with an emergency is inconceivable, and could well result in loss of life. Obviously, with all the additional building going on in the village there will, no doubt, be even more calls for the emergency services. Please, please do not allow these cuts to happen.

[Redacted Signature]

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For the attention of ESFRS:

Having read the proposed cuts to East Sussex Fire and Rescue Services, with particular reference to Crowborough and Uckfield, I would like to express my total opposition to these moves.

It is obvious to me that the basis for the proposals is financial rather than any actual concern for practical and thorough protection for residents, businesses, land and property in the area, let alone for our firefighters.

Fire service cuts in London have led to a much more stretched and thin service. We might be treated here as a rural area, but that does not diminish, merely vary, the risk. My concerns are summarised as follows:

- East Sussex's roads are dangerous: RTCs are frequent and often messy due to speeding. There is an overpopulation of deer, that often cause accidents requiring fire service attendance. Crowborough's elevated situation can cause it to be more prone to extreme winter weather that threatens road safety.
- Ashdown Forest, the huge expanse of ecologically valuable heathland and pockets of woodland, is constantly under threat from fire, which spreads rapidly due to the nature of its flora, made even drier by the increasingly hot and lengthy summers we are experiencing as global warming continues. There were recently two large fires on the Forest, requiring not only the usual cover from Crowborough and Uckfield, but appliances from stations much further afield. Cuts to staffing and machines would make this a more frequent occurrence, thus diminishing the cover in areas who've had to 'lend' their requirement to our area.
- The population of Uckfield is rising by over a thousand, and that of Crowborough by a couple of hundred, due to the huge expansion in house building in both towns, with more development being regularly applied for. Logic dictates that a higher population increases risk. More domestic fires and accidents, more vehicles on the road, more delivery vans.
- I understand that the construction of modern housing, whilst more efficient in sound and energy insulation, brings its own problems for firefighters. Fire and smoke alarms do not prevent fires, they merely alert us to the danger of them starting. My own heat alarm tends to go off when I use the grill, reminding me to open windows (we don't have a cooker hood while our kitchen is under renovation). Elderly couples like us, a growing phenomenon in Crowborough, pose a particular risk.
- Relying on more part-time staff brings problems. Full-time staff live closer to the station. Recruitment variabilities and logistics threaten regular attendance and optimum cover and lengthen turnout times.
- Fire prevention expansion is a laudable aim. But after ten years of government cuts and the emasculation of local government, it must not be improved at the expense of sharp end firefighting.

Finally, I have been watching the shrinking of local services over the years with dismay. The stress and frustration this brings to the people who have to work and make a living for themselves and their families under constant changes and worsening of their working terms and conditions is not conducive to efficient production. It frankly annoys me that those responsible for having to make financial savings bend over backwards to justify and rationalise their proposed changes (and your consultation includes shamefully loaded questions), rather than railing at central government that is the real culprit. I've seen it with the police service, only now, years later, restoring the damaging cuts made to local policing and returning desperately needed police presence to our streets, whilst pretending that this was the plan all along. I do not want the same thing to happen to OUR Fire Service, and strongly refute your proposals.

With regards



Crowborough

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Removing the 4x4 fire fighting Land Rover from Wadhurst Fire Station

I write to strongly oppose the removal of the above. This fire station covers all of this area we need as much fire prevention cover as possible and cannot see the reasoning of cutting any more. Some properties are down very narrow lanes, this land rover can get down there quicker than anything else.

We don't need any more cuts to the fire service in Wadhurst, they are there to save lives and protect us.

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Dear ESFRS,

We are writing to ESFRS management team to express our opposition to the proposed cuts to the Service.

We are extremely concerned to read about the planned proposals and note they include the downgrading of Crowborough and Uckfield fire stations. In the wider context, they involve the loss of fire engines and professional expertise across the county.

Both Crowborough and Uckfield fire stations serve large and growing communities on the edge of an extensive area of natural beauty, with considerable leisure activity during evenings and weekends. Crowborough Town Council, which opposes these proposals, has also outlined the Fire Services' important role in tackling car accidents, both on the busy A26 and on the network of rural routes.

We are concerned that longer response rates arising from this proposed reduced service, will lead to loss of life, greater property damage and potential environmental devastation. As temperatures rise, hotter summers make forest fires more, not less, likely.

In the current challenging climate, we also question the timing and motivation of these proposals by ESFRS. Skilled, emergency manpower are a particular asset during these times.

Ultimately, a service to which local people contribute to, needs to be fit for purpose.

We hope these proposals will be abandoned.

Yours sincerely

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Peacehaven Town Council's response to the ESFRS IRMP consultation is as follows:-

General:-

- A deadline for responses of the 19th June 2020 is not realistic. There cannot be a proper public consultation during the current COVID-19 restrictions; the consultation should be postponed as such urgency is not justified.
- The consultation documents are too complicated; a high-level summary document should be produced outlining the effects on crews and appliances.
- During the current COVID-19 restrictions is not a time to make cuts/changes, when ESFRS staff are currently more engaged with the public in various support tasks, in addition to their normal duties.

Specific:-

- A lot of the modelling data and statistics used in the consultation are out of date, e.g. population figures.
- Telscombe Cliffs is not included in the consultation.
- Natural/geographical restrictive features have not been properly considered, e.g. one road in and out of Peacehaven.
- Peacehaven is already a remote area which previous IRMP's have identified, but unfortunately nothing has been done in the new Plan to reduce these risks
- It is believed that Incidents of domestic and waste fires are increasing. ESFRS is asked to provide up-to-date data for this.
- The proposal to remove the second appliance from Newhaven and to cut staff at Rodean will put Peacehaven at increased risk as response times will increase.
- Where is the evidence that such drastic cuts in staff, appliances and response times are for financial reasons.
- It is unacceptable that whole time firefighters will no longer provide any cover at evening and weekends. This means the fire cover for the entire area during these periods will be solely dependent on the retained

firefighters being available to come in from home (and hopefully enough of them available to crew the appliance) assuming other crews are not out on a call.

Yours sincerely,

Peacehaven Town Council

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East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service is currently consulting about proposed cuts.

Since 2011, fire and rescue services across the UK have had 11,500 firefighters cut from their staff, and since 2013 have seen real terms spending on their service slashed by 38%.

The council believes that removal of a fire engine from Newhaven Fire Station (a 50% reduction) will significantly compromise overall cover for the town placing great reliance upon additional appliances successfully making the additional 12-15-minute journey from Roedean or Seaford.

Likewise, the 50% reduction in the number of full-time firefighters resulting in no weekend cover, and cover by part-time/on-call staff, creates the greater likelihood of delayed response times due to their primary employment and the distance they have to travel to the Fire Station. This is also a significant dilution of the pool of experience and skills available to the service.

Newhaven Town Council believes that the proposed cuts will place the town and its surrounding villages at an increased level of danger, and will therefore to the best of its endeavours seek to maintain the current high standards of coverage and first rate service that the people of Newhaven have come to expect.

Newhaven Town Council

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Dear all,

To say I am disgusted, disappointed and insulted by your suggestions of supporting the cuts to the fire services in Crowborough is understatement. The fire services have already had enough cuts. The town of Crowborough has at least 22 thousand population, not only do we have a major A road A26, we also have the Ashdown Forest, which appears to have fires approximately twice a year. We have one of the highest council tax bills in East Sussex and you must be receiving even more with all the new houses being built. If any child dies through lack of provision the people of Crowborough will hold you all responsible.

Regards,

The cutting of the service must not be allowed! Crowborough is expanding with all the extra housing estates which are being built. A massive number of new houses are being built in the area. Nightingales(Femor Road) which originally had planning permission for something like eighty houses is now having well over one hundred houses built.

ADJOINING Nightingales another much larger piece of ground is having an estate built, so will have even more than Nightingales, also across the road what was Jordons Nursery,(Luxford Lane) there is a larger acreage ready for building. Steel Cross is mentioned every little while, the ground required for building, and not forgetting the new estate adjoining the Community centre!!

It is stupid to think of cutting down for cost as it would coast more for people and vehicles from further away. Those who want to cut costs THINK AGAIN!!! Let common sense prevail!!!

Dear Sir/Madam

It is with extreme dismay that I read about the proposed cuts at Wadhurst Fire Station , that would negatively impact on local residents.

At a time when we are seeing secular rise in temperatures, delivering ever hotter springs and summers, the risk of wildfires is rising; as is that of normal fires.

I would like to request that you reconsider your decision. It would be useful to know whether you undertook consultation among local residents. I do not appear to have received any information on this major decision.

Warm regards

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Here we go again. Essential services cut to the bone. When will we ever learn?

The coronavirus pandemic has taught us quite a few things, but surely the most important thing it has taught us is that the basic, essential services are the most important things for people.

And your top priority is to ensure, that as representatives of the people, public servants and not masters, that the basic essentials ARE the priority.

Have we not learned that the denuding of the NHS, social services and the police force has contributed to the poor performance of the UK in this dreadful pandemic.

I can only assume that when we have the next fires on the Sussex Downs, as we inevitably will, or a major fire at a hospital, or care home or school, all of you will be rushing to help to make up for what will become another inadequate service, brought about by the usual lack of foresight and long term planning.

After all, isn't short term-ism, something that UK local and national politicians excel at?

Please learn from what the cutbacks to the NHS and social services have brought us to.

And, yes, the vast majority of the British public realise that these services have to be paid for, and if tax raises are necessary to provide these essential services, then so be it. But, any rise in taxes MUST be done in concert with a review in spending priorities, and if some non-essential services have to go then that may have to be part of the new reality.

I await your responses.

Regards,

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I am writing to say that I deplore the cuts proposed for the Fire Service. The Rye Fired Station is the nearest to me and it is a very busy station and covers a wide area. These cuts look as though they are accountancy driven and being pushed by the government which is still demanding budget reductions from local authorities.

The current Corvid 19 crisis has revealed that our Health Service is being run at about 98% capacity which has been the cause of panic at the lack of availability of staff and resources generally. Now, to try and run the Fire Service in such a way will mean people will die because there will not be enough capacity to deal with any crisis, such as two fires at the same time. Often engines are brought from other stations nearby, and from Kent for large fires. You have to have spare capacity to cope with these emergencies. There seems to be a complete lack of concern: it is only money that matters not potential loss of life.

As a Council Tax payer for many years I have seen this tax rise for fewer services as money is reduced from the central government. I am sure there have been exercises done to show what is available in a crisis, much as the project for pandemics. Are we going to repeat the failure that arose from that as regards Health services, now in the Fire service. To quote a phrase "lessons will not have been learnt" if this happens. Perhaps you need to actually consult your electorate as how they feel, and if the government still insist on cutting the County's budget, offer other cuts to your electorate and state why you are doing this. Have a transparent process.

This elector resents the hollowing out of our vital services to such an extent that they are no longer truly "fit for purpose".

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I am disturbed to hear about the proposed cuts to the local fire brigade in my larea, namely Rye. I must wholehearted request that you oppose these cuts.

I live in Lion Street in Rye, a very old and wooden part of this ancient town, just up the road from the George Hotel which as I am sure you are aware caught fire this time last year.

Had the wind been in a different direction, the centre of town would have gone up like tindersticks, very quickly. The consequences to not bear thinking about.

Given the logistical issues that arose from this incident with what is already a critically limited emergency service in proximity of an airport, 2 major holiday camps and a nuclear power station, I would like to know how you justify cutting such a vital emergency service?

Furthermore, I understand this is the 4th busiest on call fire station in East Sussex and a predominantly rural and remote area where incidents have risen over the past 3 years.

I implore you to oppose these cuts and look forward to hearing your thoughts on the matter.

Bests,

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Dear Sirs

It has come to the attention of Lamberhurst Parish Council that there is some concern regarding the future plans for Wadhurst Fire Station.

Even though it lies just over the county border Wadhurst is the closest station to the Lamberhurst community and is usually the first on the scene at incidents within its area.

Rather than trying to interpret rumour and supposition would it be possible for you to inform Lamberhurst Parish Council what is actually planned and the effect it may have on this parish.

Many thanks

Lamberhurst Parish Council

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To Whom it may concern,

Please accept this communication my response to the Services current consultation on "Safer Futures" my response is both as a service Watch Manager and member of the local community that will be adversely affected by the proposed changes in working practices and emergency response capability.

Firstly I would like to express my disappointment that the organisation has adopted an approach that appears to be deliberately misleading, contrary to the Fire Authorities own core values of integrity and accountability.

Information provided to the public indicates that an increased number of appliances would be available for "immediate response" despite significant reductions in personnel and equipment. Reduced over all call numbers are cited as grounds to make efficiency savings despite the Services own statistics presented in the ORR that indicate that Life threatening/Critical calls per head of population for each the geographical areas being fairly even across the county.

The proposal to increase resources in Hastings and Eastbourne areas is presented as a positive improvement but fails to recognise that these measures are in fact the partial restoration of resources removed from these areas around four years ago. In my opinion the need to restore resources so soon after reduction highlights the lack of realistic evaluation of risk and demand and I feel that a similar lack is informing the current county wide proposals. The data being used from the Operational Response Review is misleading as it is three years or more old, fails to take into account the increased number of multi-appliance incidents that have resulted from the reduction of appliance staffing levels (calls often demand a higher number of appliances due to the reduced number of crew) and fails to recognise the real challenges of On-Call recruitment/training and retention. I understand that a new On-Call system is being discussed but I am not confident that sufficient planning has been made nor do I believe that the financial cost and training burden is fully appreciated at this time.

During my 24 years of Service with ESFRS Operational posts have been reduced by nearly one hundred staff across the service (according to a freedom of information request posted on the Services website) Community and business safety work has been reduced for Station crews while non-operational staff have been employed to undertake these roles. Unfortunately reallocating funds and work in this way has had a negative impact on the availability of appropriate resources when Emergencies occur.

I do not object to change and I am aware that financial challenges face the Fire Service as a whole, I agree that prevention work is as essential as intervention capability. I firmly believe that cost effective improvements

can be made, however, I do not believe that the proposals offer a "Safer Future" or the efficiency savings without severely impacting on service and resilience.

I have genuine concerns for the impact on the safety of my community, friends and family, and take no comfort in knowing that Fire Stations will not close, after all a Fire Station is a building and plays no role in dealing with Fires, Rescues or RTC's.

Finally I have concerns for my future and that of my family due as the proposal impacts negatively on my income, future pension and work life balance.

I can only hope that the proposals are reviewed and a more realistic and viable approach is identified before negative changes are implemented.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]

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To stop proposed cuts to Wadhurst Fire Station

[REDACTED]

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Dear Sir or Madam,

Having studied some of the 1488 pages of information provided to the public, I would be grateful if you could answer the following questions regarding missing information.

1. Appliance availability.

Why is no statistical information provided regarding the current weekend availability of all 'on call' appliances? This is pivotal to the proposals and to emergency provision anywhere North of the coast!

2. Appliance availability.

Will your 'flexible crewing pool' be utilised to maintain on call appliance availability at night?

There is no evidence that guarantees evening and weekend availability or sufficient recruitment of on call personnel.

3. Appliance availability.

Why are reasons for appliance non availability not clearly specified?

eg; Reasons for insufficient on call firefighters.

4. Removal of 'under used' second appliances.

How many incidents would these appliances have attended, had they been available?

A clear explanation of why the second appliances are 'under used' is required.

5. Why is there no explanation for the trebling of standby cover moves?

These can only vastly increase still further under the proposals.

6. How can you claim to provide resilience when you're removing 6 appliances (9 crews inc maxicab) from the system but only providing resilience appliances 'as far as practicable'?

The appliances you propose to remove, if crewed properly, are the current resilience!

7. ALP crewing

How can you claim a 'benefit to the community' by 'dual crewing' which has the potential to take two more appliances out of the system or render high reach unavailable?

This crewing model can only mean that your claim is false.

There are many more questions raised by the documents but answers to these few would be appreciated for now.

Best regards

[REDACTED]

### Further reply:

Many thanks for getting back to me. Unfortunately you haven't answered any of my questions but simply referred me back to the information that raises them! It is this information, or the lack of clarity in it that I am questioning as explained in underlined bold below.

I note with interest that the ongoing question of 'how long is slightly longer' has finally received a four page answer which says that you don't know! The truth is that you don't know because, irrespective of the Resilience Proposal, ESFRS has no idea which appliances will be available at any one time and it would appear are scared to admit that from six day duty stations at weekends times would be at least 5 minutes longer, from The Ridge at night would be at least 5 minutes longer and second appliance time for ten stations would be at least 10 minutes longer being plenty of time for a room fire to spread into a fully developed dwelling fire. This now only seems to be a concern if you live in Brighton, Eastbourne or parts of Hastings!

Best regards

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### Letter to ESFA Members

Dear Councillor,

I write concerning the proposals contained in the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service IRMP and wish to express my deep concerns about the negative effect they will **DEFINITELY** have on public safety across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

I am a recently retired Watch Manager [REDACTED] for [REDACTED] ESFRS and worked with senior management on revised duty systems during the last two service reviews. I also spent two years revising operational procedures for ESFRS and the South East Region and believe that I am well qualified to comment on the current proposals. I have completed the online questionnaire but as the questions are so loaded in favour of the proposals without room to comment I offer my considered views on each individual proposal in the attached Appendix A together with additional supporting information regarding the potential resulting emergency cover should the proposals be implemented. (Appendix B)

Having listened to the Fire Authority meeting on 23rd April, Cllr Galleys' interview on Uckfield FM and studied the supporting information, I am seriously concerned that, once again, the Fire Authority members and the public are being seriously misled by ESFRS management.

A strong emphasis is being given to proposal 1 and the claim to be able to cover a higher percentage of properties by having more fire engines available. However, further information should be provided for the uninitiated to understand that this additional cover cannot be guaranteed, is based upon an attendance time of just one [recorded] fire engine which may be inadequate to intervene due to minimum crewing levels until the arrival of a second engine. The availability of additional fire engines for resilience appears to be promised but the detail states **as far as practicable!** Proposals 2 and 3, if implemented, raise serious concerns to me about the ability of the service to deliver an effective and appropriate emergency operational response to any rural communities and I offer the following observations for your consideration and make no apology for repeating some content in the appendices.

The current Day Crewed duty system was designed to **guarantee** the availability of at least one fire appliance from each of the six stations 24/7 by the fulltime firefighters being available on call at night. ESFRS state that they will invest in on call firefighter recruitment. However, the recruitment and retention of on call personnel has been an issue that fire services nationwide have been struggling with for many years and is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon.

Therefore, as their own on call appliance availability statistics demonstrate, (Appendix B) ESFRS will be **unable to guarantee** a fire appliance from any of the current day crewed stations during evenings and weekends despite claims regarding 'A Resilience Pool' and on-call recruitment.

The service has been repeatedly asked to clarify what 'slightly longer' means regarding attendance times if the changes to crewing systems occur and have failed to provide an answer.

The truth is that this is impossible to answer because ESFRS do not know which fire engines will be available at any one time during evenings and weekends. Following changes to reporting, ESFRS now only record the attendance time of the first arriving fire engine to incidents. However, no mention is made of the fact that this fire engine increasingly has a crew of just four firefighters which restricts their ability to intervene at certain incident

types until the arrival of a second fire engine. Scrapping the second engine at the six day crewed stations means that this second fire engine will now have to come from another **available** station for 100% of critical incidents, property fires and road traffic collisions and an attendance time for this engine is, again, impossible to predict. This fact can only endanger the safety of both the public and firefighters alike.

I have asked questions of ESFRS but have only been referred back to the information from which I raised the questions. I have made a formal complaint to ESFRS regarding inaccuracies in the consultation document but received a response which was seriously contradictory.

#### Evidence from neighbouring FRS

West Sussex FRS changed their crewing arrangement to that now being proposed for Day Crewed stations in East Sussex. A freedom of information request provides the evidence below that the system is totally flawed. What is the average availability of appliances during on call periods (evenings & weekends) at; Haywards Heath, East Grinstead, Burgess Hill and Shoreham fire stations. For the period between 01/12/2018 to 30/11/2019 the average availability of each station is as follows:

Station	% Availability
Haywards Heath	59.13%
Burgess Hill	58.42%
Shoreham	28.06%
East Grinstead	39.04%

There is a glaring lack of evidence to show that East Sussex can ensure sufficient on-call personnel to provide appliance availability for evenings and weekends considering that West Sussex have been consistently failing whilst using the same crewing model.

**The current Proposal 2 fails to guarantee the availability of any fire appliance during evenings and weekends outside of Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings whereas West Sussex FRS do at least maintain some 24/7 cover in the north of the county at Crawley and Horsham.**

#### Residential Developments

**Quote:** *'Details of residential development sites have been considered through our analysis, as well as the number of households that are to be constructed on a given site. These are illustrated in the individual Station Risk Profiles, along with a description as to whether they are inside or outside of attendance standards. The total long-term proposed additional growth works out to a total growth of 2,729 additional dwellings per year. All of the currently proposed residential development sites sit within our attendance standards. We have used our 'Housing Development Risk Assessment Toolkit' (HDRAT) to predict the increase in risk as a result of future housing and population growth and to assess whether we need to change how our resources are deployed in the future. The planned growth in the largest development areas are deemed to be well-below average dwelling fire risk.'*

#### Concerns

The Risk Profile for Uckfield claims that there are "no residential allocations"! The authors of the report have conveniently chosen to ignore the 1,000-dwelling estate currently being built at Ridgewood Farm "which is not included as this is a former allocation as part of the old Wealden Core Strategy (February 2013)". Add to this the potential for a further 1,500 dwellings following the rejection of the Wealden local plan, Uckfield, along with other Wealden towns could see a huge increase in properties and residents.

In reading the information provided regarding the household demographic, my understanding is that it is based upon the census of 2011 and 'estimates' are used to quote figures up to 2017.

#### Summary

If approved, these proposals will pare emergency response and resilience to the bone and can only have a detrimental impact on rural communities across the county despite the IRMP claiming to 'Prepare For A Safer Future'.

Irrespective of the statistics, it is physically impossible to improve or even maintain the same level of response and resilience when removing so many fire appliances and crews from the system and extending attendance times. Given the current state of the country (and the world) and its total lack of preparedness, I would suggest that it is time to stop relying on statistics alone to manage our public services and to start basing decisions on the real world needs and expectations of the tax paying public.

We have emergency services 'in case' we need them and while prevention and protection measures can help reduce the risks, we pay for and expect an effective emergency response in our moment of need. Hiding behind manipulated statistics to further reduce resources and emergency cover across the county make, in my considered and professional opinion, **this IRMP the most dangerous document that ESFRS has ever produced**. I believe the old term is 'there are lies, damned lies and statistics' and I for one am fed up with rural communities being treated as second class citizens by a service that clearly does not understand the impact of its own proposals.

I urge you to reject these proposals in the name of public and firefighter safety and demand that ESFRS review their plan so that it is based purely upon risk management instead of financial savings.

Yours sincerely

██████████

ESFRS Watch Manager (Retired)

#### **Letter to CFO:**

Dear Madam,

I write concerning the proposals contained in the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service IRMP and wish to express my deep concerns about the negative effect they **WILL DEFINITELY** have on public safety across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

I am a recently retired Watch Manager having served ██████████ in ESFRS and worked with senior management on revised duty systems during the last two service reviews. I also spent two years revising operational procedures for ESFRS and the South East Region and believe that I am suitably qualified to comment on the current proposals.

#### Consultation

I have completed the online questionnaire but as the questions are so loaded in favour of the proposals without room to comment I offer my considered views on each individual proposal in the attached Appendix A together with additional supporting information regarding the potential resulting emergency cover should the proposals be implemented. (Appendix B)

Having listened to the Fire Authority meeting on 23rd April, the Cllr Galley interview on local radio, studied the supporting information and followed the social media farce, I am seriously concerned that, once again, the Fire Authority members and the public are being misled by ESFRS management.

The whole consultation is descending into chaos with continual accusations by ESFRS and numerous parties of 'misinformation'. These accusations are checkable against the consultation documents and having a clear understanding of service procedures I am disappointed to conclude that it is ESFRS that is promoting misinformation or at best promoting selective information in order to 'sell' their proposals to the public. It is obvious to me that those commenting on behalf of the service are either unaware of the true impact of the proposals or are dangerously spinning the narrative and are unaware of operational procedures.

I have asked questions via the consultation process but have only been referred back to the information from which I raised the questions. I have made a formal complaint to ESFRS regarding inaccuracies in the consultation document but received a response which was seriously contradictory.

ESFRS have consistently deleted social media posts in an effort to maintain a one-sided view of proceedings.

Questions are not answered but discussed at length to avoid any concession and individual statistics are used in attempts to justify service wide issues.

May I suggest that manual note below is either respected or reviewed.

*ESFRS Manual Note*

*CPS06\_14\_V1 - Local Code of Corporate Governance*

*Openness is required so that people can have confidence in our staff and our decision-making and management processes. We need to be as open as possible about the decisions we make and the reasons we have made them. Consulting openly and providing access to full, accurate and clear information helps us stand up to public scrutiny.*

The strong emphasis being given to proposal 1 and the claim to be able to cover a higher percentage of properties by having more fire engines available and greater resilience is presented as a certainty. However, without the provision of further information for the public to understand that this additional cover cannot actually be guaranteed, is based upon an attendance time of just one [recorded] fire engine which may be inadequate to intervene due to regular minimum crewing levels until the arrival of a second engine, they cannot make an informed decision. Dependant on the nature of the incident and despite 'operational discretion', this can only seriously endanger the lives of the public and firefighters alike whilst presenting the incident commander an unfair dilemma.

It has become clear to me that Proposals 1, 2 & 3 have little to do with public and firefighter safety but have a lot to do with 1st pump attendance times against which your performance is measured and cost cutting. Having removed the 2nd pump attendance times during another contrived consultation in 2018 it no longer matters where that 2nd pump comes from or how long it takes to arrive giving you carte blanche to decimate the appliance fleet.

The availability of additional fire engines for resilience appears to be promised but the detail states **as far as practicable!** ESFRS state that they will form a resilience pool and invest in on call firefighter recruitment to fulfil proposal 1. However, the recruitment and retention of on call personnel has been an issue that fire services nationwide have been struggling with for many years and is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon.

Proposals 1, 2 and 3, if implemented, raise serious concerns to me about the ability of the service to deliver an effective and appropriate emergency operational response to any rural communities. As your own on call appliance availability statistics demonstrate, (Appendix B) ESFRS will be **unable to guarantee** a fire appliance from any of the current day crewed stations during evenings and weekends.

The service has been repeatedly asked to clarify what 'slightly longer' means regarding attendance times if the changes to crewing systems occur and have failed to provide an answer. The response in FAQ is a four page listing of the existing variables which fails to address the issue of 'extended attendance times' resulting from these proposals. Four pages to say 'we don't know'!

The truth is that this is impossible to answer because despite claims in the proposals ESFRS do not know which fire engines will be available at any one time on any given day. Scrapping the second engine at the six day crewed stations means that this second fire engine will now have to come from another **available** station for 100% of critical incidents, property fires and road traffic collisions and an attendance time for this engine is, again, impossible to predict. However, it is safe to say that at weekends the current day crewed stations will have **at least 5 minutes** added to the first pump attendance time and all 10 stations having their second pump removed will have **at least 10 minutes** added to their second pump attendance time, which is more than enough time for a dwelling fire to fully develop!

#### Residential Developments

**Quote:** *'Details of residential development sites have been considered through our analysis, as well as the number of households that are to be constructed on a given site. These are illustrated in the individual Station Risk Profiles, along with a description as to whether they are inside or outside of attendance standards.'*

#### Concerns

The Risk Profile for Uckfield claims that there are "no residential allocations"! The authors of the report have conveniently chosen to ignore the 1,000-dwelling estate currently being built at Ridgewood Farm "*which is not included as this is a former allocation as part of the old Wealden Core Strategy (February 2013)*". Add to this the potential for a further 1,500 dwellings following the rejection of the Wealden local plan, Uckfield, along with other Wealden towns could see a huge increase in properties and residents.

In reading the information provided regarding the household demographic, my understanding is that it is based upon the census of 2011 and estimates are used to quote figures up to 2017.

## Summary

If approved, these proposals will pare emergency response and resilience to the bone and can only have a detrimental impact on all, but particularly rural communities across the county despite the IRMP claiming to 'Prepare For A Safer Future'.

Irrespective of the statistics, it is physically impossible to improve or even maintain the same level of response and resilience when removing so many fire appliances and crews from the system and extending attendance times.

Given the current state of the country (and the world) and its total lack of preparedness, I would suggest that it is time to stop relying on statistics alone to manage our public services and to start basing decisions on the real world needs and expectations of the tax paying public.

We have emergency services 'in case' we need them and while prevention and protection measures can help reduce the risks, we pay for and expect an effective emergency response in our moment of need. Hiding behind manipulated statistics to further reduce resources and emergency cover across the county make, in my considered and professional opinion, **this IRMP the most dangerous document that ESFRS has ever produced.**

I believe the old term is 'there are lies, damned lies and statistics' and I for one am fed up with rural communities being treated as second class citizens by a service that clearly does not understand the impact of its own proposals.

I urge you to abandon these proposals in the name of public and firefighter safety and review your plan so that it is based purely upon risk management instead of meaningless reportable attendance times of one understaffed fire appliance and financial savings.

Yours sincerely

  
ESFRS Watch Manager (Retired)

## Appendix A:

### Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?*

#### Concerns:

##### **Insufficient evidence to assure viability of the plan.**

This is a leading question which, without the provision of a detailed explanation, can only lead to an affirmative answer from the uninitiated. However, the truth is that having just 15 fire engines available for 'immediate response' ie crewed by full-time staff on station has been and will continue to be the bare minimum provision from the current 36 fire engines (3 x maxicab counts as 6 engines) and the remaining 27 if the proposals are implemented. This was as a result of a management decision to remove several on-call stations from 'Key Station' status in the late 90s.

Additional fire engine availability has always been provided by 'on-call' fire stations and 2nd engines at Day Crewed stations to boost the base figure. However, that daytime availability of on-call staff has severely diminished over the past 10 years for a variety of reasons. This proposal offers no evidence that ESFRS will definitely be able to form or maintain a 'flexible crewing pool' OR to recruit and retain sufficient on-call firefighters to guarantee the availability of additional stations. These additional stations would NOT be available for immediate response as stated but would be delayed by 5 to 6 minutes as on-call staff respond to an alerter.

##### **Proposal 2 has the potential (in the extreme) to reduce the number of available fire engines to 9 during evenings and weekends unless the flexible pool and on-call recruitment is proven.**

The further 6 'resilience' fire engines will only be crewed 'as far as practicable' and the suggestion that they could be allowed up to half an hour to turn out is laughable. The removal of 7 rural fire engines (10 crews) will obviously mean that none of them can ever be available for emergency or resilience mobilisation and every station other than three shift stations will be dependent upon the support of the next nearest available station for critical incidents 100% of the time.

The statistics show a three-fold increase in standby moves across the service, ie; resilience, over the past ten years where fire appliances are moved to provide emergency cover in other areas due to incidents elsewhere and sometimes require additional moves behind each appliance. In theory the claimed reduced number of emergency calls across the county should bring about a reduction of required cover moves. However, reasons for the

increase include; non availability of on call fire appliances and more fire appliances required to deal with incidents due to the reduced crewing levels on each appliance following the last round of cuts!

This proposal combined with proposals 2 and 3 can only increase the need for additional standby moves and could in fact severely reduce the resilience of the service putting further reliance on the already overstretched resources of neighbouring services.

### Proposal 2: Changes to Day-crewed Duty Stations

*Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?*

Concerns:

**This IS a downgrade and will extend attendance times.**

The current 'Day Crewed' duty system is designed to **guarantee** the availability of at least one fire engine from the 6 stations 24/7 through full time crewing by day 7 days per week and the duty crew being on-call at night. The day only system would be totally reliant upon on-call firefighters being available to cover nights and entire weekends. The services own statistics show that on call availability cannot be guaranteed (Appendix B) and therefore the **statement that these fire stations will continue to provide a 24/7 service is unfounded**. This proposal has the **potential to result in NO fire appliances being available evenings and weekends outside of Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings due to the potential lack of on-call personnel**. This proposal **will extend attendance times from six fire stations by at least 5 minutes at weekends and fails to guarantee a fire engine overnight from all six stations!!** It should be noted that West Sussex FRS implemented the same duty system at their Day Crewed stations and continuously fail to guarantee fire appliance availability indicating that the system is totally flawed. Evidence confirming this is shown below in a response to a freedom of information request to West Sussex FRS.

**Q. What is the average availability of appliances during on call periods (evenings & weekends) at; Haywards Heath, East Grinstead, Burgess Hill and Shoreham fire stations.**

A. For the period between 01/12/2018 to 30/11/2019 the average availability of each station is as follows:

Station	% Availability
Haywards Heath	59.13%
Burgess Hill	58.42%
Shoreham	28.06%
East Grinstead	39.04%

There is a glaring lack of evidence to show that East Sussex can ensure sufficient on-call personnel to provide appliance availability for evenings and weekend considering that West Sussex have been consistently failing using the same crewing model.

The current proposals fail to guarantee the availability of any fire appliance during evenings and weekends outside of Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings.

**West Sussex FRS do at least maintain some guaranteed 24/7 cover in the North of the county at Crawley and Horsham.**

**Under the proposals East Sussex would have none!!!**

*Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, if the crewing change is agreed by ESFRS, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?*

I will not even dignify this question with a response as this refers solely to cost cutting and not risk management!

Proposal 3: Changing the Number of Fire Stations with Two Fire Engines

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?*

**Concerns:**

**This IS a downgrade and will extend attendance times.**

**100% reliance on support from other stations.**

The evidence offered in the supporting documentation is concentrated on the 'under use' of these second fire engines. Despite a fleeting reference to being unavailable due to there being no crew, nowhere does it evidence the reasons for their 'under use', the reasons for there being no available crew or their value to service resilience when available. The service is using the 'statistical' reason of 'under-use' of these fire appliances to scrap them without fully explaining any of the reasons for their lack of use to the public. **The main reason being the fact that they are simply not available due to the lack of available 'on call' firefighters.** ESFRS management itself has been major contributor to this issue over recent years through its own staffing policies and its failure to adequately identify future staffing requirements and not recruit full time firefighters for many years as they slashed posts under austerity measures. Instead, the service has utilised many of its on-call staff on temporary contracts to plug gaps in full time crewing across the County thus rendering those staff unavailable for their on-call role.

There is no evidence in the supporting documentation of how many calls these fire engines would have attended had they had an available crew or how many standby cover moves were required due to their unavailability. To keep quoting Battle's 2nd fire engine calls figure as justification on social media is totally misleading unless also presented with the availability graphs and supporting details. (Appendix B) These graphs highlight the fact that **NO** fire engine may be available at all under the proposals. The same applies to all seven stations.

The claim that these stations would still provide a 24/7 response is potentially untrue due to the proposed changes to the full-time duty system and the inability to guarantee an on-call crew.

When crewed properly, these seven fire engines are the services resilience and negate the need for a large number of standby moves.

**This proposal WILL extend attendance times of a critical second fire engine to these seven fire stations by at least 10 minutes.** Whether or not you record 2nd appliance times is irrelevant to the firefighters and public who are waiting for it to arrive!

**Crews at Lewes, Uckfield, Crowborough, Battle, Bexhill, Newhaven and Rye will now have to wait for a second crew to come from elsewhere for critical incidents, property fires and road accidents 100% of the time!!**

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three "maxi-cab" stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations?*

**Concerns:**

**This IS a downgrade.**

**100% reliance on support from other stations.**

Again, there is no detailed information on how the 'Maxicab' system was intended to work for the public to base their decision.

Maxicab stations are deemed to be two pump stations and if crewed according to the original policy provide two crews (6 - 8 personnel) in one fire engine backed up by additional personnel in a Land Rover. ie sufficient resources to deal with an incident that would attract a two pump attendance elsewhere. On social media ESFRS management have argued that these are one pump stations and therefore do not count as a fire engine cut. However, the IRMP consultation document is clear in identifying them as considered to be two pump stations confirming that the number of fire engines to be cut is **10!** (Nett 9)

**This proposal will extend attendance times of a critical second fire engine to these three fire stations by at least 10 minutes**

**Crews at Heathfield, Wadhurst and Seaford will also now have to wait for a second crew to come from elsewhere for critical incidents, property fires and road accidents 100% of the time!!**

**Proposal 4: Crewing and Fire Engine Changes at Hastings**

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?*

## Concerns:

### **This IS a downgrade.**

The introduction of a second fire engine at Bohemia Road fire station is the only positive in the proposals. However, this benefit is counteracted by the downgrading of the Ridge Fire station to 'a day crewed system' which will extend attendance times to East Hastings and communities to the East and North of the town compounding the removal of the on-call fire engine from The Ridge in 2015.

Shared crewing of this additional fire engine with the high reach vehicle combined with shared crewing of the Ridge's fire engine and 4x4 vehicle means that only three of the five Hastings appliances can ever be 'truly' available.

*Note: East Sussex FRS policy is that a fire engine is only deemed as available if it has a minimum crew of four personnel. Suggestions that a crew of 4 could be split (2 and 2) to crew both the pump AND the High Reach vehicle is totally misleading and deems the pump as NOT AVAILABLE. A task analysis process identifies the number of personnel required for any specific incident type and the resources required. A fire engine without a complete and competent crew is of no use at an incident and would necessitate the mobilisation of an additional appliance.*

## **Proposal 5: Special Appliances**

Whilst this proposal is not up for public consultation, its content raises several concerns regarding appliance availability, training and competencies.

1. Reduction of 4x4 capability
2. Special appliances at on- call stations risks losing fire engine availability.
3. Special appliances on day duty stations may have no available crew if removing 2nd pump and risk fire engine availability.
4. Additional and regular training for on-call personnel will be required for special appliances.
5. Special appliances at Eastbourne, The Ridge and Bohemia Road will lose fire engine availability. (see proposal 4)

## **Proposal 6: Demand Management**

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises?*

### Concerns:

#### **What or who defines 'low risk'?**

An automatic fire alarm is not a false alarm until it has been confirmed as such. Statistics aside, what right does ESFRS have to ignore fire alarms at the risk of a company losing its business? Bear in mind that irrespective of maintenance and practices, the vast majority of fire detection equipment in commercial buildings is located in positions as dictated by the Fire Service through historical planning applications and fire safety inspections. Government changes to the definition of 'fire' for recording purposes resulted in a drop of thousands of recorded incidents nationwide overnight which led to their 'justification' of the austerity cuts from 2010. Numerous fires are now recorded as 'false alarm good intent' to satisfy political will and this false recording continues to be used as a lever to further reduce emergency operational cover.

#### **Lift releases**

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance?* **Concerns:**

#### **This is a humanitarian service.**

Have you ever been trapped in a lift which has broken down? If you support this proposal then I assume not! Irrespective of maintenance, entrapment in a confined space can be a traumatic event for those concerned and as the fire service are in a position to relieve that trauma far more quickly than a lift company this service must be continued on humanitarian grounds. The Service can still engage with building owners to ensure they are improving lift maintenance to reduce incidents.

#### **Trapped birds**

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?*

### Concerns.

## Public outrage and endangering the lives of others.

Other organisations or individuals will continue to attempt the rescue of these birds as an act of humanitarian kindness. Without the appropriate equipment, these people will be putting themselves at risk of harm and may require rescue themselves, or worse. The IRMP quotes 'a small number of incidents' of this type. Small numbers of incidents is the very reason given for the proposed cutting of 10 rural fire engines and that the effect on the community would be 'negligible'. Therefore, by your own reasoning, I would suggest that this service, in conjunction with animal rescue charities would have a negligible effect on the community and would help to maintain public confidence in the service.

## Proposal 7: Changes to 4-Watch Duty System.

*Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)?*

**Concerns:**

**This proposal has nothing to do with Risk Management.**

This proposal has nothing to do with risk management but is purely about cutting further firefighter roles and money saving. The IRMP is supposed to be used to identify risk and allocate resources accordingly, and not as a cost cutting exercise. Further reducing full time posts will nullify the formation of a 'resilience pool' as the pool will also be called upon to cover crewing shortages due to sickness, leave, training etc at the shift stations.

*Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements at the 5 ESFRS fire stations listed above, if the crewing arrangements are changed, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?*

Not worthy of a response.

## Building and Home Inspections

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?*

**Concerns.**

**Not at the expense of response resources!**

I have no objection to increasing public awareness to the dangers of fire and the provision of information to reduce fires. However, this cannot be at the further expense of operational cover which is already stretched too far.

## ESFRS' Finances in the Future

*Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?* **Concerns.**

To many cuts in my area. As a Wealden resident I have to say no! Wealden residents contribute over £2 million more to the Fire Authority budget than any other district outside of 'The City' yet receive the worst service. As a reward, Wealden residents get the following benefits from this IRMP; cut 1 fire engine and 6 firefighters from Uckfield, cut 1 fire engine and 6 firefighters from Crowborough, cut one fire engine (crew) from Heathfield, cut one fire engine (crew) from Wadhurst, cut 4x4 support from Wadhurst. Would I pay more? Would you??

*To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?* **Concerns;**

Value for money is being eroded. The answer to this question very much depends upon your knowledge of the levels of service being provided. To quote a figure for Band D properties has always made the service look like excellent value. However, every time you make an increase in the precept you also reduce the levels of service provision through more cuts. Yes, these proposals **ARE** serious cuts and cannot be disguised as anything else despite the 1488 pages of statistical drivel offered as public consultation documents which are incomprehensible to the uninitiated.

## Appendix B:

**Graphs 1-6** below depict both the current availability of fire engines at the six day Crewed fire stations and the potential availability during evenings and weekends if the proposals are instigated. Under the proposals all six of

these stations will have their second fire engine removed and full-time personnel will only crew the remaining fire engine during weekday daytime. Crewing for evenings and weekends will be wholly reliant upon the availability of on-call personnel and with no detailed evidence offered in the consultation documents of how the 'resilience pool' would operate there is no evidence to prove that any of these appliances would have a guaranteed available crew at night or at weekends despite the stations' Tier 1 (day) and Tier 2 (night) status in the Operational Resilience Plan.

Graphs 7-10 below depict the current availability at the four on-call stations which are proposed as Tier 2 stations ie; available 24/7 under the proposals. No detailed evidence is offered in the consultation documents of how the 'resilience pool' would operate and there is no evidence to prove that any of these appliances would have a guaranteed available crew at any time, day or night.

In the absence of any specific weekend availability data, the only conclusion to make from that presented is that the 'resilience pool' will be insufficient to maintain fire engine availability at these stations let alone the additional six Tier 3 stations and a massive, successful, recruitment campaign will be required.

The reason of 'under use' is given for the removal of 10 rural pumps with a fleeting reference to the lack of an available crew. While activity may be low, no specific data is provided to show how many incidents these fire engines would have attended had they been available, how valuable they are to the resilience of the service when available or how many standby cover moves have been made because of their unavailability. Therefore 'under staffing' may be a more accurate reason!

Under the proposals, all 10 of these stations will be reliant upon the support of a 2nd fire engine support from the next nearest available station for 100% of critical incidents, property fires, road traffic collisions etc.

### 1. Battle

Blue denotes current guaranteed availability of one fire engine 24/7 and availability for weekdays daytime only under the proposals.

Red denotes potential availability of one fire engine during evenings and weekends under the proposals.



### 2. Bexhill

Blue denotes current guaranteed availability of one fire engine 24/7 and availability for weekdays daytime only under the proposals.

Red denotes potential availability of one fire engine during evenings and weekends under the proposals.



### 3. Crowborough

Blue denotes current guaranteed availability of one fire engine 24/7 and availability for weekdays daytime only under the proposals.

Red denotes potential availability of one fire engine during evenings and weekends under the proposals.



### 4. Lewes

Blue denotes current guaranteed availability of one fire engine 24/7 and availability for weekdays daytime only under the proposals.

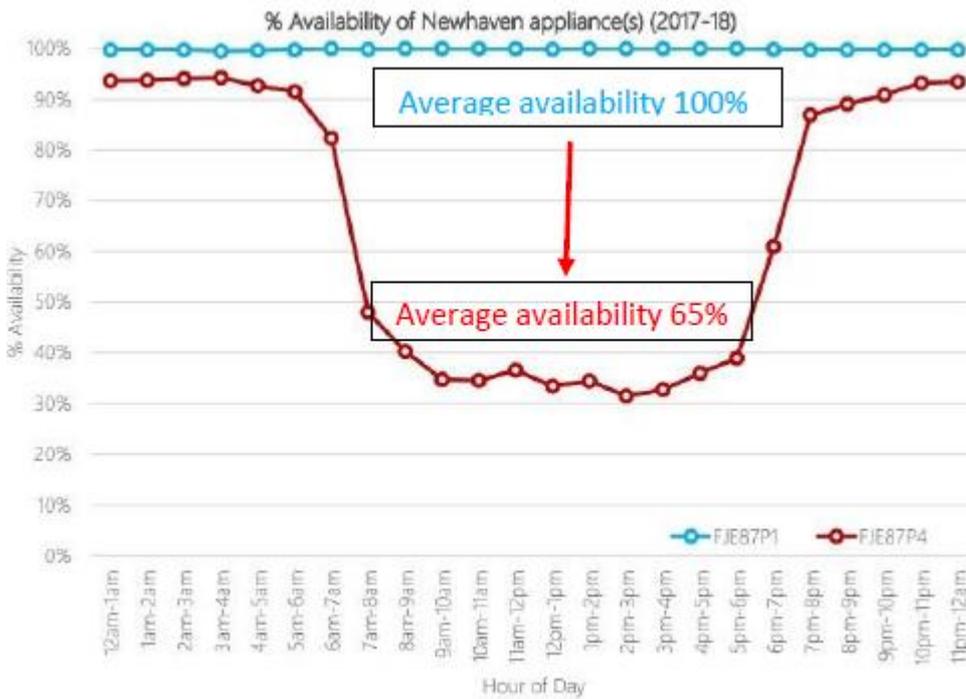
Red denotes potential availability of one fire engine during evenings and weekends under the proposals.



**5. Newhaven**

Blue denotes current guaranteed availability of one fire engine 24/7 and availability for weekdays daytime only under the proposals.

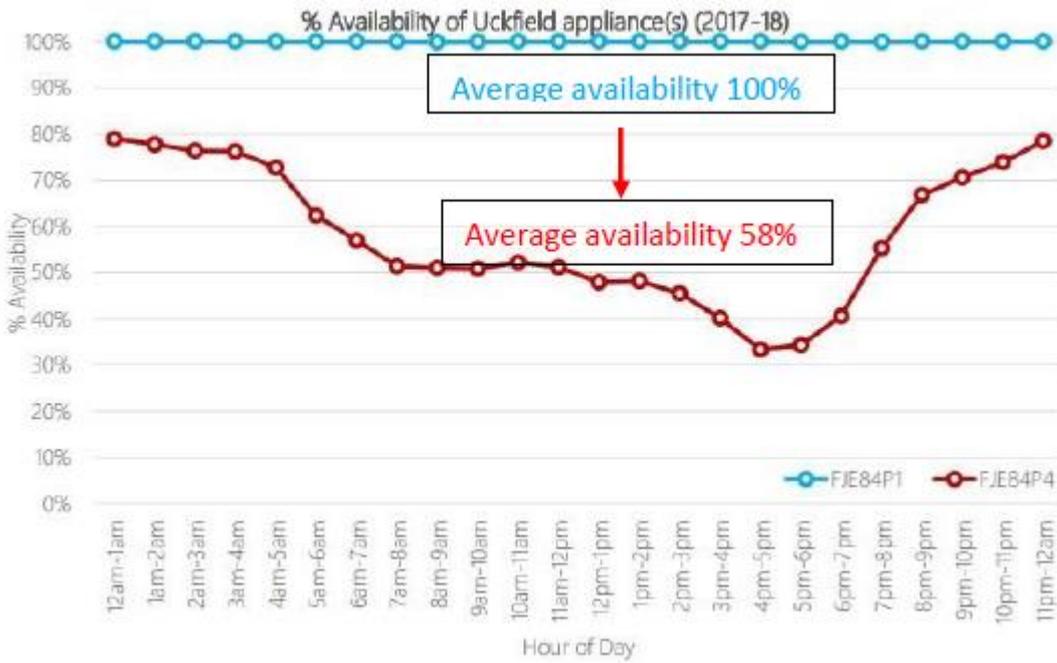
Red denotes potential availability of one fire engine during evenings and weekends under the proposals.



**6. Uckfield**

Blue denotes current guaranteed availability of one fire engine 24/7 and availability for weekdays daytime only under the proposals.

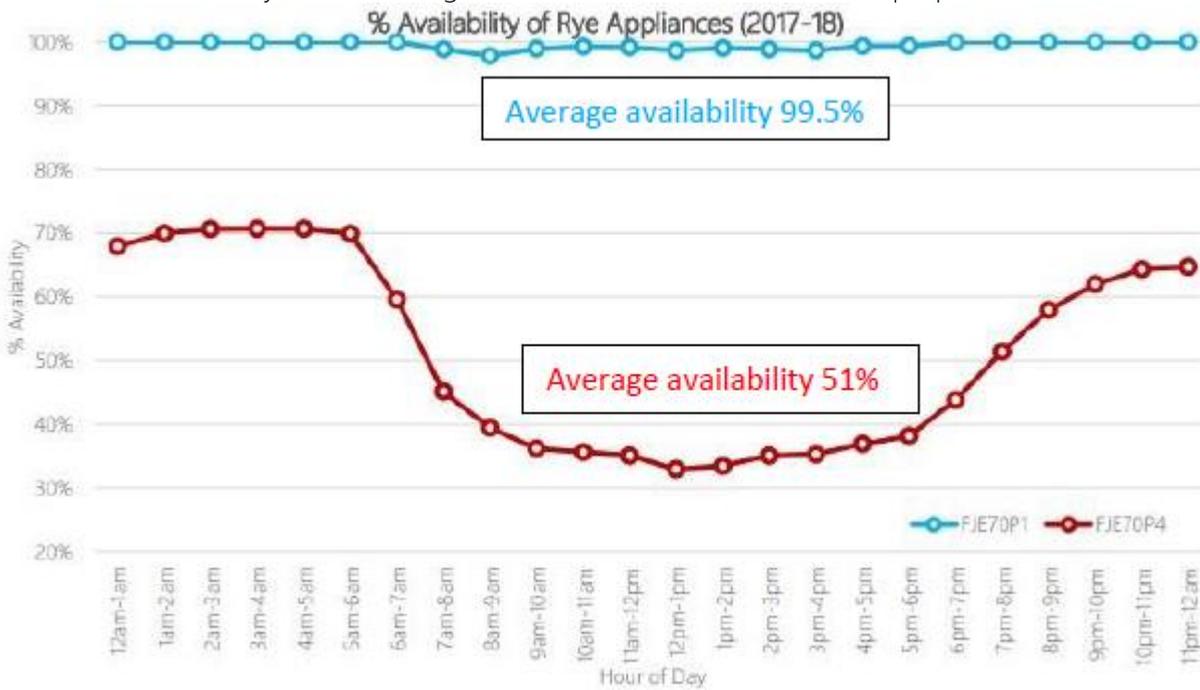
Red denotes potential availability of one fire engine during evenings and weekends under the proposals.



**7. Rye**

Blue denotes current availability of one fire engine which would remain under the proposals.

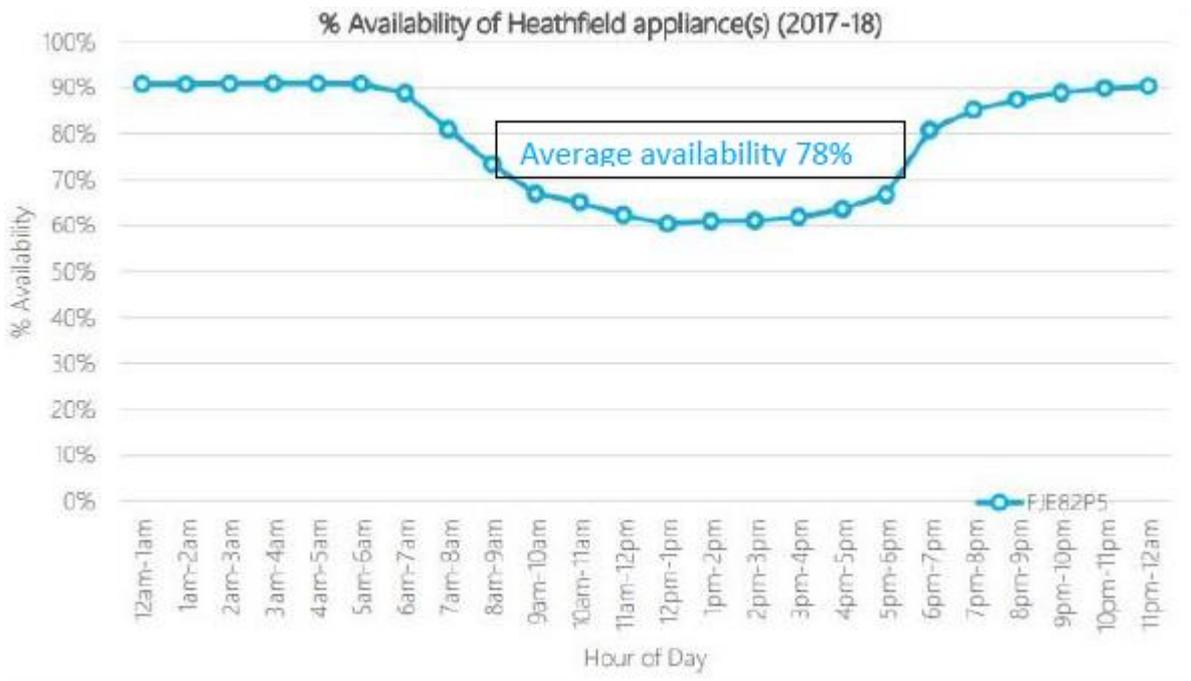
Red denotes availability of the fire engine that will be removed under the proposals.



**8. Heathfield**

Blue denotes current availability of one 'Maxicab' fire engine and the potential availability of a replacement standard fire engine under the proposals.

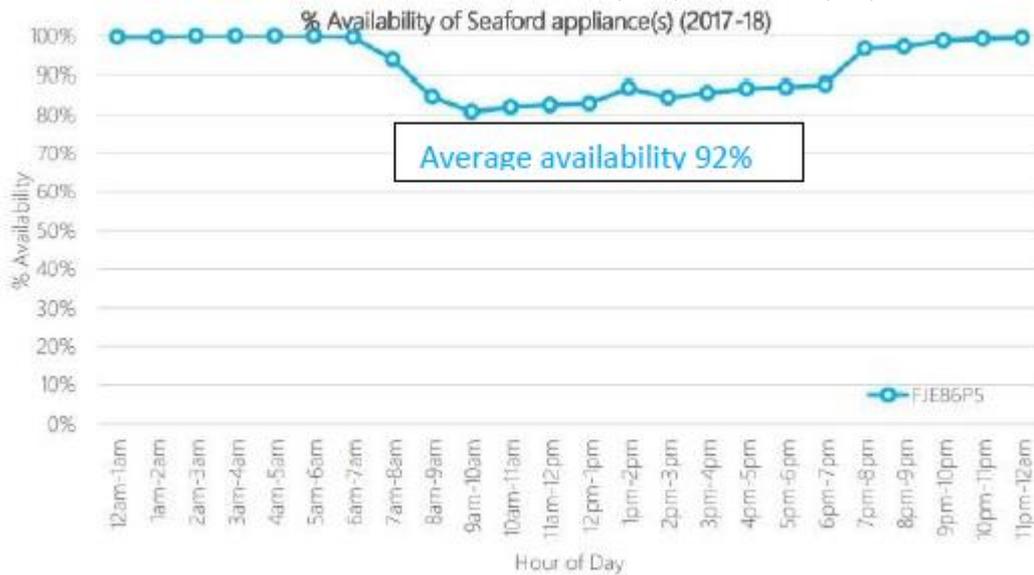
Note: Maxicab stations are deemed to be two pump stations as personnel form two crews via supporting staff in the station Landrover. This will be reduced to one pump under the proposals.



### 9. Seaford

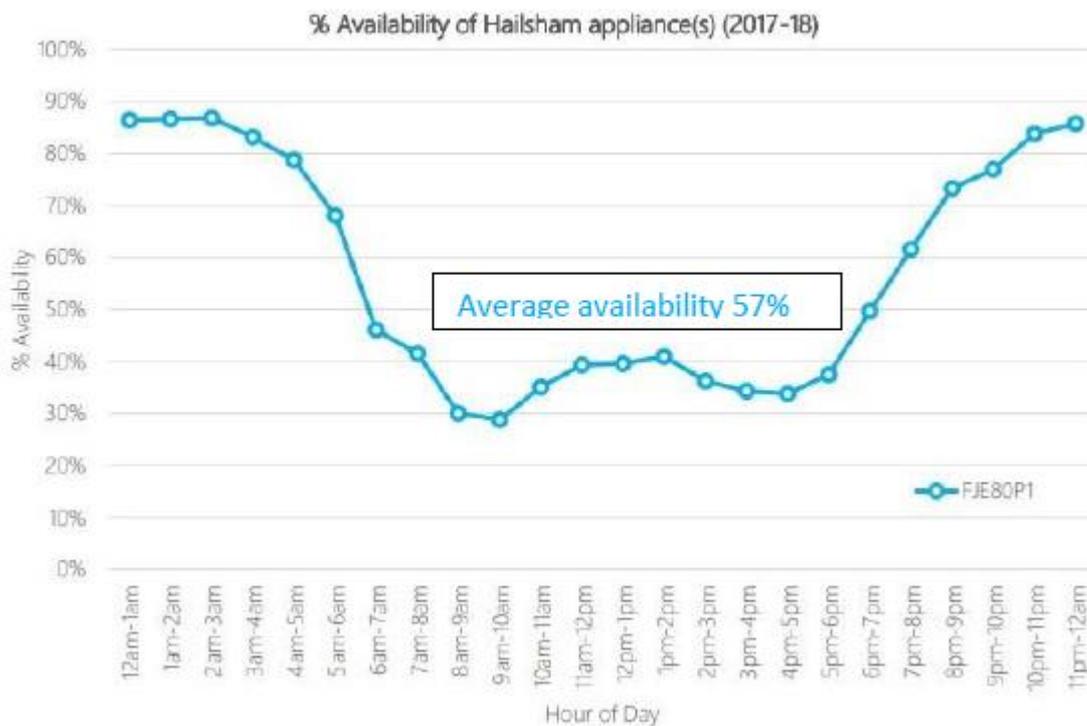
Blue denotes current availability of one 'Maxicab' fire engine and the potential availability of a replacement standard fire engine under the proposals.

Note: Maxicab stations are deemed to be two pump stations as personnel form two crews via supporting staff in the station Landrover. This will be reduced to one pump under the proposals.



### 10. Hailsham

Blue denotes current availability of one fire engine which would remain and its potential availability under the proposals.



**Further reply:**

Dear Cllr Barnes, Cllr Galley, Cllr Theobald & Cllr Powell,

Many thanks for your replies,

I can confirm that I have contacted my MP Nus Ghani who has finally replied in a manner suggesting that central government has been very generous towards fire & rescue services missing the points I raised to her completely. However, the funding to which she refers is funding to support services in dealing with the Covid19 pandemic.

I fully understand, though cannot accept, that government funding for public services will never reach previous levels and that underfunded, understaffed and underperforming services are deemed as acceptable by central government to protect the tax paying public. I reiterate that I believe this consultation to be the most dangerous document ever produced by ESFRS management. It is sad to see that ESFRS are no longer engaging on social media following claims and counter claims of misinformation. Not that I use social media, but I can observe and find this disappointing given that the service utilised that medium to launch the consultation but, having been factually challenged, have ceased engagement.

Please see attached revised availability graph document as I mistakenly included Wadhurst as one of the Tier 2 stations for which I apologise.

Many thanks for your work on this matter which I appreciate will result in difficult decisions having to be made by you all.

Best regards

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Dear Sirs

I wish to object to the proposed cuts to the Crowborough Fire and Rescue Service. Our town is constantly growing, more and more houses are being built, therefore, more and more people will come to live here. How then, can it be safe to reduce our fire service by 50%? Its crazy! During the dry months there are so many forest fires. If our fire service is cut by 50%, who will deal with these fires?

People will die, pure and simple. I'm sure you don't want blood on your hands.

STOP THESE CUTS!!!!!!

And, as an after thought, I personally pay a ridiculous amount of council tax and I'm quite sure there won't be a reduction in that will there?!!

Perhaps, instead of the fire station cuts, you should cut some counsellors jobs instead?!!

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

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Please reconsider cuts to services.

The public needs their support

[REDACTED]

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Why are there going to be cuts in Newhaven/Seaford fire service, when in both towns there are more and more house's and flats being built including a another tall block on Newhaven Marina land, 400 and another 500 on the Highway area.

Come on cuts here are madness please think again, IF you value peoples lives.

[REDACTED]

**Similar response:**

Hi there

was just wondering Why there are proposed cuts in this area when there 400 flats/houses proposed at Newhaven Marina, another 500 or so up on the Highway ! let along more house possibly on the East Side. You have spent money on a new fire/police station and they cant even practice on there tower! crazy planning to say the least. No doubt that the old Police Station will be sold off for more flats/housing adding even more lives to protect with just one engine, relying on other towns units to help out ! What if the bridge is open ? it's rush hour ? it's hard enough to more through the traffic on a motorbike !

These cuts must no go ahead, if we value people lives,

[REDACTED]

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Dear Senior Management Team

I am opposed to any proposal of cuts to be made at Crowborough Fire Station and have concerns as to what is acceptable and how to maintain a fully functioning fire station.

I am assuming that CFS has been functioning at sufficient capacity and that the station has proved it's self time and time again and that you as a management body have maintained a high service of excellence for Crowborough at the most economic level necessary without compromise although in truth I would imagine there has been lots of compromise such is the animal.

But as my wife and I enter into our retirement it is a concern that this station might be considered for cuts when in the next year or so a minimum of 350 dwellings will have been built in the Crowborough & Jarvis Brook area which will have an immediate impact upon the requirement of this station and the men who are there.

I believe that this station will see an increase in its need to respond over the next few years and therefore to propose cuts now would be a catastrophe, of course if the station is already overmanned and has too many vehicles then it should be under consideration but I cannot believe this is the case and suggest your consideration should be to increase the facility to the correct level of service required when these dwelling are completed.

Then this begs the question as to the economic position of the station in the past, and although I can appreciate this is a very difficult juggling act for this management team, to be able to propose any reduction in the facility of this station now would suggest possibly a lack of economic efficiency in the past.

Please carefully reconsider any proposed cuts you might have due to the obvious increase in the town population and property as this is a vital service, of which you are only too aware, and incidents do not always arrive singularly.

I would like to thank you for your service gentlemen and appreciate the difficult tasks you have.

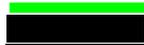
  
Dear Sirs/Madam

I have decided to write to you, as I am completely dismayed and disappointed at your terrible decision to effectively close our Fire Stations in Seaford and Newhaven. You are culling our vital services when with the massive increases to the local population, you should be informing us that you are increasing the local service. I feel we get a really bad deal in this area for the taxes we pay and you should be protecting our local jobs not reducing them!. What work will there be for people moving to this area with all the new housing stock locally planned or for the public safety for the homes, our schools and businesses, which we pay for in taxes, when you plan 50% staff cuts to the Newhaven Station and want to down grade it to one fire engine. I read that the demand to Newhaven Fire Station has already increased by 12.5% and yet more new housing is being built in Newhaven, Seaford, Peacehaven and Telscombe Cliffs This is on top of an already terrible decision and waste of public money moving the Newhaven Station to a completely unsuitable building which already affects there effectiveness and training, while I see the old station being now used for storage!! This is a basic need for our public safety in this area and you are playing with people life's by cutting these vital services to our communities. Please as my representatives, can you reconsider this pathway you seem to be taking us down.

Yours faithfully  


I have become aware that you have made the decision to remove funds from the Fire Services of Newhaven and Seaford, I am writing to ask why and where these funds will go. The Fire Service, as you know, does far more than put out fires. It saves those that are trapped in areas, it assists the police and the ambulance services. To axe 50 percent of Newhaven fire fighters is truly detrimental to the capability of the Newhaven Fire station, therefore jeopardising the lives of the thousands of residents.

So, I will ask my questions once more, with the hope that you will reconsider this rash and potentially lethal decision, why are you taking money from the emergency services, and where is the money that is so desperately needed by the Newhaven and Seaford fire services going?

Thanks,  


Dear All

Today I have received a flyer through the door, saying that although calls to Newhaven and Seaford Fire Stations have increased by 12.5%, this vital, life saving service is being cut.

This is a completely reckless and irresponsible move. Why is this being done? Without even a police station or other appropriate facilities to support the infrastructure of the town, how can we even begin to function as a suitable place to live? Are people who live in Newhaven unworthy of receiving support from the emergency services? Or have 10 years of needless cuts from the Tory government made it necessary for these changes? As a resident of Newhaven, I have never heard of any such plans, but I gather that this decision was made on my behalf by various council members and others. I certainly do not approve.

This comes hard on the heels of a letter informing me that there are 70 odd more homes due to be built along Transit Road in Newhaven. The very heavy traffic along the A259, additional housing being built above Augustfields and in Peacehaven AND the extreme lack of parking in the area notwithstanding, how can it be right to reduce emergency services and yet increase the amount of residents squeezed into one small area?

All of you need to think a little harder about the town of Newhaven and how much its facilities have been reduced and residents have been pushed to the limits already. I think you need to try seeing it for the important entrance to the UK that it is. It has massive potential, and should not just be written off as a place for the poorer people in society. How can we grow as a town and as a community if we are forever just dumped upon?

I look forward to hearing from you

[REDACTED]

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Dear Sirs,

I would like to take this opportunity to register my disgust against the proposed cuts by the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service in reducing the cover at the Crowborough Fire Station.

I cannot believe that you will be able to maintain any type of service if you lose one fire engine, lose 50% of the workforce, and reduce the evening and weekend cover. It is a disgrace and can only end one way with a loss of property or worse a human life!

Please think again about this ludicrous suggestion.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

**Further reply:**

Thank you for getting back to me so quickly.

I have to confess that I may have jumped the gun! I eventually went onto the ESFR website and read in rather more detail the proposals suggested. They all seemed to make sense, and rather more so than the flyer that was sent round.

I shall be a bit more diligent in future, but thanks for your comments as well. I feel much happier now.

Regards

[REDACTED]

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Questions in the survey are not put in such a way that people can argue for or against. For example, proposal 4 is comprised of 2 parts but the options for answering it are one or the other. Therefore one cannot say yes to one part and no to the other, or vice versa.

Further, proposals are put in 2 parts, so even if one disagrees with the first part, you still seek an answer for the second part that completely goes against one's opinion.

Attendance times:

An example - Originally, years ago, 2 pumps in 5 mins

Relaxed, 25 years ago, 1 pump in 5 mins and second in 8

Now, 1st pump in 10 mins

You now admit there will be a further reduced attendance in time

Weight of attack is further reduced by crewing.

Crew of 5 needed to fight an internal fire, but 4 is more the norm. Therefore the 2nd pump is needed straight away.

Can be argued that houses are better designed with fire precautions, safer materials, in mind, but conversely, more houses are open plan, ie, fire spreads quickly

Flexible crewing pool, just because other Fire Services use it, does not mean it is acceptable. A Ff needs to learn his/her area and being in a pool makes that difficult somewhat.

Changing W/T Ffs on Day Crewed stations would not only delay attendance times, but also make it unreliable. Many On Call Ffs book off early in the morning to go to work. They may also be delayed booking back on after work. You already admit that sometimes low On Call Ff availability means some appliances are only available 10-50% of the time.

At present you can guarantee a Day Crewed pump because of a W/T crew responding.

Removing the 2nd appliance from stations means that the 1st crew to arrive at a fire are relying on a delayed 2nd crew. This means that if the 1st crew only comprises 4 Ffs, then how can they commit B.A. into a burning building?

A return of the 2nd pump in Bohemia Road FS is most welcome and shows that the Fire Authority got it wrong years ago by removing it. However it should not be achieved by reducing the status of The Ridge. The Aerial appliances should be primary crewed, not shared. I can just imagine a scenario where Ffs are sent back to the Station to fetch an Aerial Appliance as the next nearest was too far away, or unavailable.

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Dear Councillors

I am writing to you to complain about the Fire Service cuts that you are proposing.

The Fire Service is an emergency service and therefore caters for the unexpected and it is impossible to determine when they may be required. It is plainly absurd to remove the second fire appliance from Crowborough when it was less than a fortnight ago that the Station got calls to two incidents within minutes of each other. Under your proposals I understand that one of those incidents would have had a significantly longer response time had these cuts been implemented prior to those calls.

The north of the county houses Ashdown Forest a heathland that does on occasion catch fire, those fires will be significantly worse if response times to incidents increase as your own documentation states they will. The road network in the area is also poor, not assisted by the state of the road surface, and has an accident rate above the national average, response times to accidents will also increase, which is a significant impact particularly as the ambulance service regularly fail to hit response targets in the north of county.

Your consultation talks about increasing the number of retained Fire Officers which is all well and good but you already struggle to recruit retained Fire Officers and perhaps you would explain how you are going to correct this?

I would urge you to vote against these cuts to an emergency service. I have no doubt that in the event that lifes are lost due to these cuts the residents will be seeking to hold you to account.

Please confirm that you will be taking residents opinions in to account and voting against these cuts.

Yours faithfully

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Hello there,

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen of Crowborough, East Sussex in the Wealden district. I would be interested to know exactly why you have voted in favour of cutting the fire service numbers and abilities in Crowborough and the surrounding areas. The fire service is an important part of the town, cutting the service would not only potentially lead to fatalities, it would also mean the time taken for fire services to reach

Crowborough/surrounding areas in the event of a fire, or incident. I would just be curious to know why this has been deemed an acceptable thing to do, particularly with there being bigger issues currently,

I look forward to your response,  
[REDACTED]

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I am writing to you all to express my concern at the proposed fire service cuts, and the fact so many of you are still supporting this action.

Firstly the way this has been pushed through whilst the whole world let alone the counties involved are busy, life threatening pandemic is disgusting.

I reside in Crowborough and have done for 38 years. In this time I have seen many huge incidents for which the for services have been required, from big forest fires, major road traffic accidents, hotels burning to the ground and who can forget Marley Farm, many of these involved not just Crowborough fire service, but many of the surrounding stations you are proposing to cut.

These were massive incidents that occurred when our town was a lot less populated.

With all the new housing developments the council has pushed through with 100's and 100's of new houses being built and the risks of house fires and road traffic accidents increasing, it is decided that the services we rely on need to be cut? It's madness.

Delaying response times in such life saving situations is pure stupidity, if it was one of you or your family members trapped in a crushed car, leaking fuel, desperate to get out, not knowing if it could burst in to flames at any second, how would you feel knowing that it could take 10 minutes longer for the fire service to arrive? Maybe even up to 20 minutes longer depending on what other incidents have happened in the area? Would it give you comfort? How can you choose saving a few pounds over saving lives?

I am absolutely shocked this is even being considered, there are so many other areas money could be saved with in the council authority that don't include putting people's lives at risk.

Regards  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Sir / Madam

Having read the future proposals for our fire station left me speechless. With an ever increasing population I can well imagine with only 1 appliance remaining in Crowborough a property could well become a total loss as opposed to relatively minor damage when appliances have to come from Uckfield & Heathfield. Some 3 weeks ago I took my dog for a walk at Gylls Lap where the final damping down of a forest fire was being carried out. I saw a total of 6 fire appliances including 2 capable of operating off road from Heathfield. I understand that you were first notified of this fire at 1 am so surely if Crowborough is downsized the chances of you being able to attend in sufficient nos to control any future fire is going to be reduced with the inevitable result that any fire will spread a lot further than this one had

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I am horrified at the proposed cuts to our service for the following reasons:

1. This town increases in size almost daily, with hundreds of new houses built in the last 5 years, and continues to do so.
2. Ashdown forest is on our doorstep, with forest fires a serious threat to both the town and outlying properties.
3. The fire service also provides invaluable assistance with safety advice and help to the largely elderly population of the town.

To cut the number of engines and firefighters and reduce evening and weekend cover is to put many people in this town at serious risk.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have just read about the proposed cuts to my local fire station Crowborough.

Firstly I can't believe this is taken place while the pandemic is still going on.

Crowborough is seeing more and more housing being built so to loose a fire engine seems ludicrous.

The first thing I think in a firefighters manual is to save life and this is needed usually at nighttime when deaths occur.

Let's not kid ourselves this is about money. If you want to save money why doesn't East Sussex and West Sussex fire services merge into one fire service. One headquarters, one training venue, one chief fire officer and senior posts can be cut to save salaries and pensions.

If the above happened all the frontline personnel and stations could be kept. I believe in London they done some cuts to high rise appliances going out all the time and looked what happened there Grenfell Tower burned down. So please leave front line serves alone.

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Galley,

My wife and I are Crowborough residents and have been for over 40 years. We are very alarmed to have received reports that plans to make cuts to Crowborough Fire Station are being considered.

As you will be aware Crowborough is growing and is the focus for several surrounding villages, for schools etc., which are also growing so it seems a folly to reduce the Fire Service at such a time.

It seems that modern local government is increasing costs for a reduction in services, which may be necessary for non-life saving services, but surely not for those whose purpose is to deal with incidents which may easily result in fatalities and destruction of property.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Please add my name to the petition objecting in the strongest possible terms to the proposal to reduce severely the already diminished local fire and rescue service and to underline the impact this will have on Wadhurst residents' safety.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Have I got the correct people To register my strong feelings about this threat of closure? It is imperative that we keep a strong station for this area.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Please take this email as my objection to the downgrading of fire services in East Sussex and Brighton and Hove

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**HASTINGS OLD TOWN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**

Integrated Risk Management Plan consultation

**Mark O'Brien**

**Deputy Chief Fire Officer**

Dear Mr O'Brien

HOTRA has always taken a strong and continuing interest in all public services provided locally. In May 2019 Julie King, Station Manager at Bohemia Road was the guest speaker at our agm attended by over 70 residents. Her contribution was clear, positive and well received. The only disappointment was the failure of ESFRS to recognise the special nature of the buildings, streets and twittens in the Old Town.

Several years ago there was a serious fire at Marine Parade when 7 houses and 5 businesses were destroyed. With a fire of this scale there would have been an internal report to help improve future performance. Despite requests that report has never been shared. The rebuilding took several years and the seat of the fire has never been rebuilt.

At that time members raised many questions especially around the resources available to fire crew. We worked closely with local management on a range of issues. Part of the upskilling resulted in a very good response to a fire in The Croft in a Georgian terrace with significant access problems.

HOTRA has been pressing for fire crews to have available a smaller size fire appliance as part of their range of kit. In particular we discovered that all Fire and Rescue services from Kent to Cornwall had invested in smaller appliances. This idea has been met constantly with resistance here in East Sussex. If this expenditure was justified across all of Southern England it would be interesting to know why ESFRS are ignoring this proposal. It is important that local responses can include this option as a tool available.

*To move on to the current consultation we are deliberately not using your survey format. This may be easier to manage and collate but it fails to give space to the deep concerns of local residents.*

We are opposed to much of what is proposed. Theresa May when Prime Minister announced that Austerity is over. This plan is a set of cuts with far reaching implications not just for Hastings but also for the rural areas.

1] The awful events of the Grenfell fire show that a major incident has to be responded to by 2 key elements –  
a] the number and training of fire crew;  
b] the availability of the right equipment.  
You make no reference to any lessons learned.

2] Fire crew – my experience of local fire crew over more than 20 years could not be better BUT there has to be enough and they must be properly equipped.

3] Fire engines – I do not believe that you have the right range of machines here in Hastings for your crews to respond most effectively. Apart from a smaller appliance available as a first response I am not aware what could be used on the tower blocks in Hastings.

4] Expanding building safety and prevention work – what a lovely idea. The Marine Parade fire was spread through the loft spaces. How will adjacent property owners achieve fire walls and other means ? The costs are larger than most can afford. Currently most prevention work comprises a 'chat' with no enforcement processes being used. Unless this is funded by the public purse it will not happen.

5] Response times – ESFRS always claim that they have responded within the guidelines. Can you let me have a copy of the policy that details what should happen from the 999 call to when the fire starts to be put out.

6] Reducing 999 calls – NHS cuts have resulted in ambulances parking outside hospitals before patients are admitted. A key part of the expectations held by the public is that a fire appliance will be dispatched immediately. They call – you respond. Simple tried and tested. Please think very carefully before changing.

7] Non emergency calls – whilst cat rescuing can be a source of amusement this type of call out usually generates positive publicity.

As part of the response to Covid-19, fire fighters are already taking on extra duties, such as assisting the ambulance service with their increased workload and delivering much needed PPE to NHS & other key workers. Now is not the time to try and implement disruptive changes, including further cuts, to our fire and rescue service.

The Labour Group of Councillors on Brighton & Hove City Council\* are calling upon East Sussex Fire Authority members to halt the current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) consultation and any plan to implement the changes and cuts to fire and rescue services in East Sussex in contains until the Coronavirus crisis is over and the post-pandemic financial settlement for local government and the fire service is settled.

These are unprecedented circumstances, so we reiterate that this is not the time for such a major restructure of the local fire service, or for what many believe are cuts dressed up as 'risk management improvements'.

Furthermore, we share the concerns of the Fire Brigades Union that the loss of both equipment and crew contained in the proposals would lead to a reduction in crucial coverage in some areas of the county, and therefore increase the risk to public safety. We also believe the comprehensive list of safety concerns the Fire Brigades Union have raised warrant thorough consideration before continuing with the public consultation, let alone with implementation thereafter.

The Labour Group on the Fire Authority proposed a motion, supported by others, to halt the consultation but were unfortunately unsuccessful.

We ask the Fire Authority members to recognise that over 23,000 people have signed a petition in opposition to the proposed measures contained in the IRMP, and that local MPs Lloyd Russell-Moyle, Peter Kyle and Maria Caulfield have also asked for a pause in the process.

We now call again upon all Fire Authority members to vote against the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025 and place a moratorium on any restructure until we fully understand the impact of Covid-19 on the fire service and the county.

In addition, we ask that any members of the public across Brighton & Hove and East Sussex who are outraged that further cuts to any of our essential services should be either planned or implemented during a time of national crisis – or at all - please email East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service as soon as possible to give them your views at: [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org)

*\*NB In accordance with the applicable laws, Cllrs Amanda Evans and Les Hamilton, being Members of the Fire Authority, were not party to this statement.*

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Dear Dawn and team,

I am taking this opportunity to write to you all regarding some of the proposals made in the ORR. I know you will all be overloaded with work regarding the COVID 19 Pandemic however this is something to digest and respond to when able.

As the lead instructor for the SWR team a lot of my spare time is spent trying to support this resource as best I can within the limitations of my role. I would love to have a more central role with more responsibilities and direction to further improve and develop the team but at present this does not seem possible.

Since the publication of the ORR I have been made aware from a variety of different sources that the perception that those in senior and middle management have adopted the view that the staff at Crowborough are "causing trouble", "refusing to play ball" and "full of troublemakers" to mention some of the variety of comments. I am also being told that part of the reason for moving the SWR team is due to those perceptions.

Could I firstly ask that you re-read my memo of 28<sup>th</sup> May 2017 (Copy Attached) where I have made some notes in red highlighting progression over the past 3 years.

### Team numbers:

At present we do indeed have a total of 7 people at Crowborough who are not part of the SWR team through choice. (This is due primarily to the way they feel they have been treated and lack of support whilst on the team and secondary due to some not being completely comfortable in fast flowing water).

We also have 4 members of staff who are working through their probationary periods but eager to be part of the team.

We have a total of 11 team members based at Crowborough at present however 4 of those have dual contracts and work over both whole-time and retained duty systems.

### Responding to calls:

Regardless of previous statistics weather does appear to be becoming more erratic. Between November 2019 and March 2020 inclusive the SWR team were able to provide a response to 21 calls and unable to respond to 2 calls due to lack of crews that we are aware of. Although the team have now been up and running for 10 years we still have many fundamental issues regarding mobilisation.

- a. East Sussex Fire Control (ESFC) regularly attempt to mobilise the wrong vehicles causing confusion and stress which in turn adds friction between those on the team and those not.
- b. As part of the ORR data on page 78 (Special appliance mobilisation over the past 9 years) it refers to 83T1 as 83T3 and on the centrally printed station numbers and call signs data sheet it refers to 83B1 as 83W1. This clearly demonstrates a misunderstanding across the service of the vehicle call signs we currently have.
- c. In-county response up until our Rigid Inflatable Boat (83B1) was defected and taken off the run by engineering would have been our Water Tender Ladder (83P4), 4X4 Land rover (83M1), 4 x 4 Unimog (83M2) and 83B1. As there is **no** single callsign for the Swift Water Rescue Team (Except when deployed as part of the National Resilience when it would be WC030) this creates constant confusion in ESFC regarding the correct vehicle mobilisation rarely ever taking place.
- d. Currently an in-county response would be 83P4 and 83M2. Out of county response during the period we are looking at (up until 83B1 was taken off the run) would have been 83 T1, 83M1 and 83B1. As you can see there is still confusion which is resulting in massively skewed figures being used to suggest to the fire authority that a SRT is not required in East Sussex.
- e. Although we now have a SWR vehicle which would allow crews to ride in one vehicle which would speed up mobilisation it is not a dedicated vehicle but doubles as a station van. It also cannot yet be used as a response vehicle as it has no main scheme radio, Satnav or Mobile Data Terminal fitted. We are still mobilising in 2 vehicles requiring 2 x Emergency Response Driver Training (ERDT) qualified drivers with 1 required as also having UNIMOG and off-road driving qualifications. A dedicated station van is also required to free up this response vehicle.
- f. Although work began in 2017 to re-write the water rescue manual note no further work has been actioned. Part of this project was to look at in-county response and crewing numbers required. If this work had continued we could now have a policy in place allowing us to respond to incidents in county with a minimum team of 4. This would make a significant difference to both the team availability, mobilisation issues as well as cost savings.

## Team kit and PPE:

Although the PPE we provide for water rescues is improving (particularly with the new level 2 dry suit and separate boots) there are still a number of nationally identified essential items missing that could compromise the safety of staff as follows:

**Level 2 Technicians:** Knife fitted to PFD for cutting away/self-rescue if snagged in lines. Yellow light or light stick attached to helmet. Blue light sticks for marking hazards.

**Level 3 Technicians:** Suitable thermal undergarments with flexibility to layer up or down depending on the tasks being completed. Dedicated summer and winter work gloves. Blue light sticks for marking hazards.

## Maintenance of Competence & Training:

I have recently been involved in instructing the level 2 water rescue refresher course based at Bewl water in Kent. For a number of years now the organisation has neglected to recognise that the level 2 training we are providing our staff is not fit for purpose and this has still not been addressed. As an organisation we provide drowning prevention advice to all members of our community which is the right thing to do however we are simultaneously neglecting our own staff and exposing them to unnecessary risks without providing suitable and sufficient training.

Our training does not meet the recommendations of DEFRA and although the guidance states we should be training in moving water to teach hydrology and self rescue techniques this is still not happening.

DEFRA states our basic level 2 water rescue technician course should be "a minimum of fourteen hours over a minimum of 2 days at a venue with suitable and appropriate hydrology features, up to class 2 water" and recertification course is required "every 3 years, of a minimum of twelve hours over a minimum of 2 days".

Currently our level 2 water recertification course consists of 3 hours at a still water venue every 3 years. This is clearly inadequate and I believe we are exposing our staff to unacceptable levels of risk.

SLT have been talking of developing a level 2+ category (which is not recognised by DEFRA) which will allow technicians to swim in still water. Although this is undoubtedly a step in the right direction we must firstly bring our training up to these nationally recognised levels before adding additional risk.

## ORR/IRMP Proposals:

Looking at the new proposed IRMP and the extraordinary Fire Authority Meeting notes dated 23<sup>rd</sup> April it would appear that the decision to remove a swift water rescue asset from East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service has already been decided without consultation. You note that "the data and analysis so far have demonstrated that we no longer need to maintain a swift water rescue team in its current guise and this capability will be withdrawn".

In response to this I have to disagree most strongly. Although there is no doubt that there are a lot of facts and figures within the ORR however the majority of the information is looking at sites of reservoirs, rivers (both primary, secondary and tertiary), ports, marshland and beaches. When we look at facts and figures there appears to be little correlation between these and your decisions made and in addition I believe these printed facts are flawed.

On page 39 of the station risk profile the figures and statements state that 83B1 and 83T1 have only been mobilised 5 times over the past 9 years. This is clearly referring to Out Of County response as part of the National Resilience Programme.

The following table taken from the ORR Report shows the number of times over the last 9 years that each special appliance has been mobilised to attend an incident. As you can see the figures below would suggest that 83B1 and 83T1 were only mobilised 5 times in the period .

## 5

## Special appliance mobilisations

Specialist Appliance Type	Station	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	5 Yr Ave	% No Arrival
Aerial Ladder Platform	Hastings Bohemia Rd	215	224	254	217	228	181	181	184	156	186	219 (11.9%)
Aerial Ladder Platform	Preston Circus	398	430	414	386	418	341	308	334	318	344	264 (7.9%)
Aerial Ladder Platform	Eastbourne	199	138	173	121	113	3	33	15	35	40	163 (19.6%)
Animal Rescue Uni Mog	Crowborough	129	102	116	98	105	70	81	80	54	78	404 (48.4%)
Boat	Crowborough	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	1 (20.0%)
Command Support Unit	Bexhill	0	0	17	24	34	24	27	32	32	30	106 (55.8%)
Command Support Unit	Lewes	0	0	24	26	49	29	48	41	61	46	140 (50.4%)
Foam Tender	Newhaven	7	8	6	6	5	2	0	1	5	3	24 (60.0%)
General Purpose Lorry	Uckfield	13	17	22	13	14	14	11	11	13	13	41 (32.0%)
HVP Support Vehicle	Crowborough	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1 (100.0%)
HVP Support Vehicle	Hove	3	0	0	4	4	2	3	1	2	2	7 (36.8%)
Incident response unit	Eastbourne	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1 (20.0%)
L4T (4x4 with Hosereel)	Hastings The Ridge	51	36	58	22	26	20	27	18	27	24	51 (17.9%)
L4T (4x4 with Hosereel)	Wadhurst	42	30	19	10	9	5	5	4	4	5	39 (30.5%)
L4T (4x4 with Hosereel)	Heathfield	30	31	37	27	29	36	16	15	13	22	46 (19.7%)
L4T (4x4 with Hosereel)	Crowborough	150	132	137	107	120	79	92	85	63	88	457 (47.4%)
L4T (4x4 with Hosereel)	Seaford	100	83	67	63	93	59	22	27	19	44	71 (13.3%)
Maritime Response Team 1	Newhaven	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	2 (33.3%)
Maritime Response Team 2	Newhaven	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2 (66.7%)
Prime Mover	Newhaven	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prime Mover	Hove	5	1	0	16	13	4	7	1	6	6.2	22 (41.5%)
Rope Rescue Unit	Battle	35	27	30	41	36	16	31	28	42	31	169 (59.1%)
Rope Rescue Unit	Bexhill	15	7	2	8	3	1	7	7	9	5	29 (49.2%)
Swift Water Rescue Support Vehicle	Crowborough	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2 (50.0%)
Technical Rescue Unit	Battle	29	24	39	46	46	25	38	45	43	39	200 (59.7%)
Technical Rescue Unit	Lewes	46	34	37	52	49	27	48	52	57	47	191 (47.5%)
Water Carrier	Uckfield	16	18	25	15	20	18	16	12	17	17	45 (28.7%)

The figures below are taken from the Station Risk Profile Report again reporting the total

Number of calls for SRT being 5 over a 9 year period.

#### Station appliance(s)

##### 83P1

- Turn-out time is 01:59 on station, and 05:20 on call. Both turnout times increased over time period.
- 15% reduction in mobilisations over 9 years.
- Mobilises 290 times per year – 68% in own area, 8% in Uckfield, 7% in Mayfield area, 4% OTB.
- Attends 5% more fires and 7% fewer false alarms than ESFRS.
- Mobilises to 34 critical incidents per year – 65% in own area, 11% in Uckfield, 8% in Forest Row area, 8% Mayfield.
- Attendance standard met 55% within 10mins, 84% within 15mins.
- 99.7% availability in 2017/18.

##### 83P4

- 54% reduction in mobilisations over 9 years.
- Average turnout time is 06:34.
- Mobilises 54 times per year - 73% in own area, 6% in Mayfield area, 4% in Uckfield, 3% OTB.
- Mobilises to 9 critical incidents per year – 70% in own area, 7% in Mayfield, 5% in Lewes area.
- Attendance standard met 83% of the time (100% critical).
- 62% availability in 2017/18. Low availability between 8am-6pm (43%).

#### Standby moves

- 18 cover moves per year, upward trend, with large increase from 2015/16 onwards – 50% in Uckfield, 31% in Crowborough, 9% OTB.

#### Special Appliances

##### 83M1 (Landrover L4T)

- 58% decline in mobilisations, average 88 mobs per year (2013-18), didn't arrive 47% of occasions. 29% of mobilisations OTB.

##### 83M1 (Animal Rescue Unit)

- 58% decline in mobilisations, average 78 mobs per year (2013-18), didn't arrive 48% of occasions. 32% of mobilisations OTB.

##### 83B1 (Swift Water Rescue Boat)

- 83B1 mobilised on 5 occasions during 9 years.

##### 83T1 (Swift Water Rescue Support Vehicle)

- 83T1 mobilised on 5 occasions during 9 years.

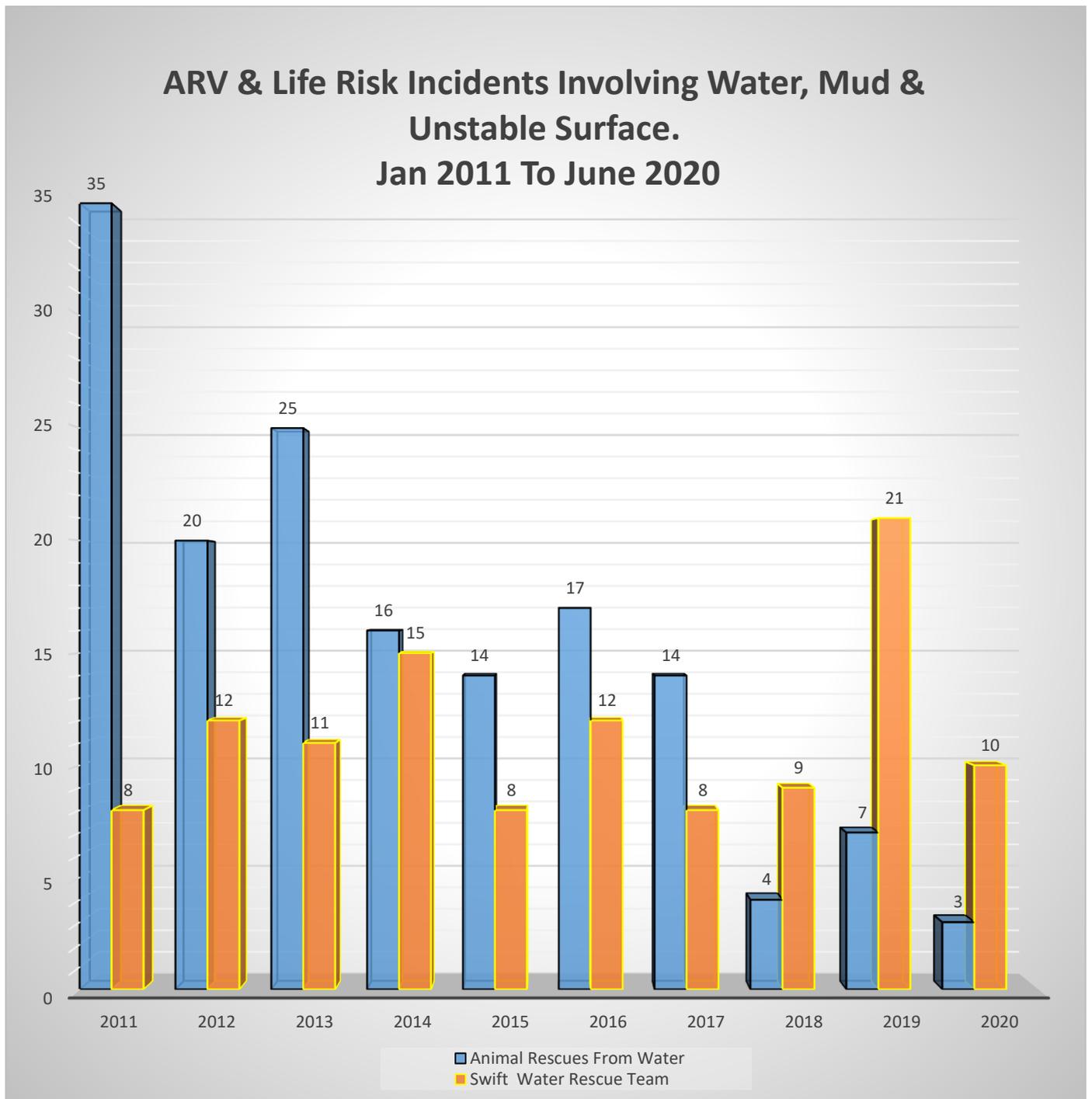
Below is a graph showing all animal rescues from water as detailed in Station 83 Fire Call Log Book shown in Blue and all mobilisations of Swift Water Rescue Team or Animal rescue team when miss-mobilised to rescue persons in water or unstable surfaces.

Total times SRT was mobilised in this period : **114**

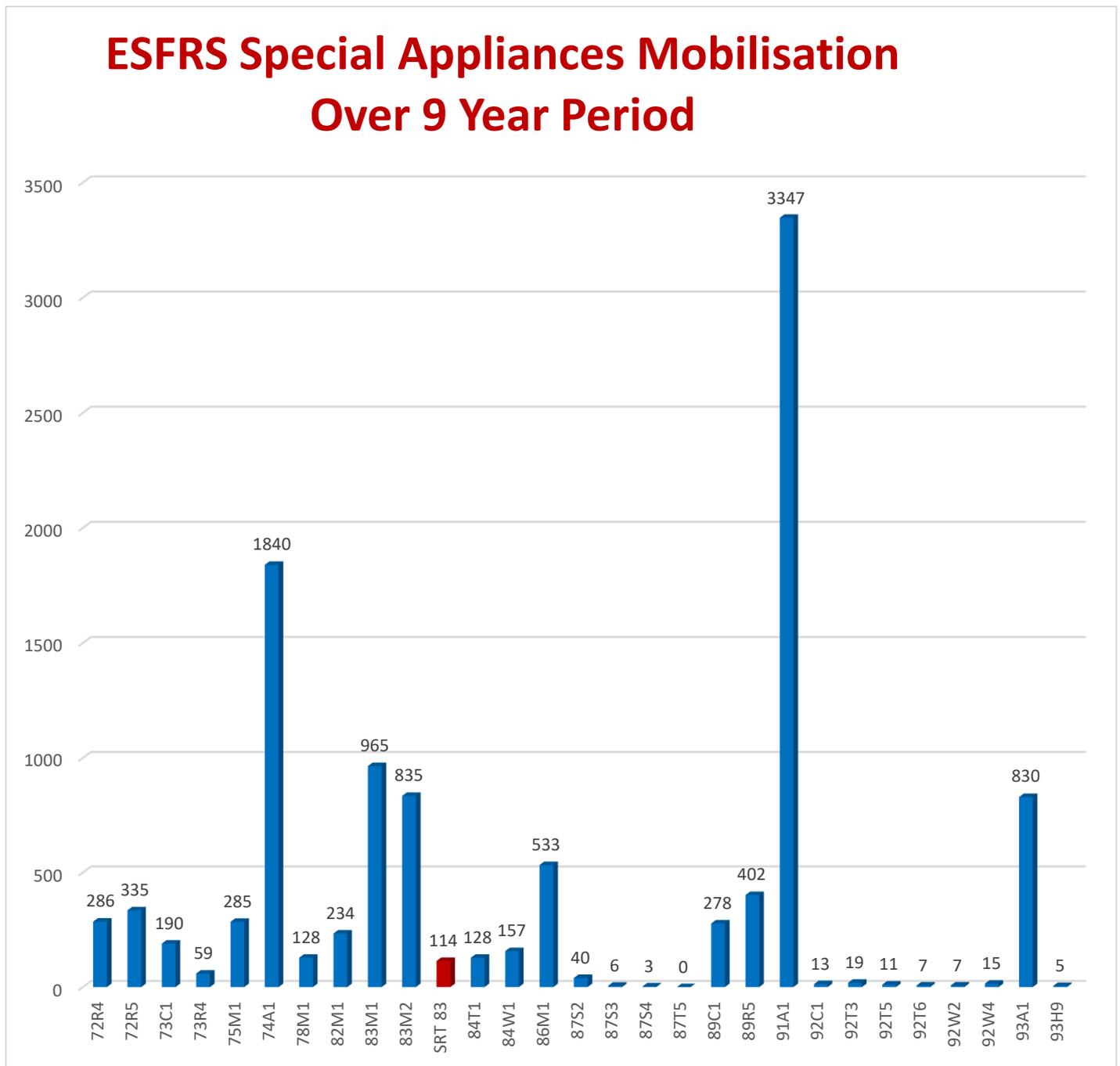
When compared to evidence collated in the Operational Response Review Main Report which states the Swift Water Rescue Team were mobilised 5 times in 9 years clearly shows an error in figures collated.

These figures only show the times that the Swift Water Rescue Team were mobilised and not any other incidents where mobilisation was not attempted due to team being booked Off The Run.

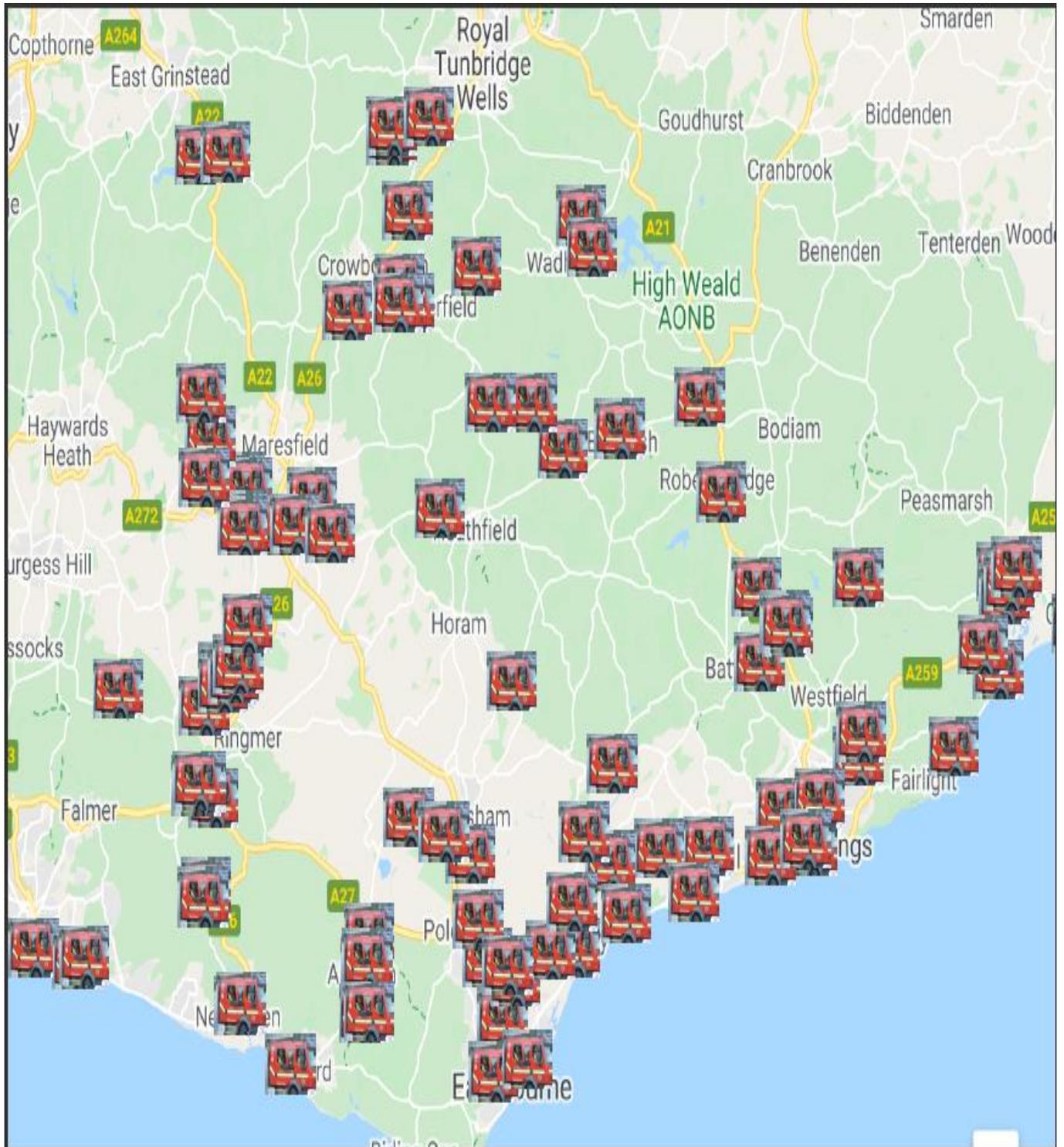
To ensure the safety of our crews we should also be vetting all animal rescue calls and sending some form of Swift Water Rescue Response when rescues are being carried out from deep moving water. This is the policy that Kent Fire & Rescue Service currently adopt to provide additional safety measures for their Animal Rescue Teams.



The following graph shows special appliances mobilised across the service over a 9 year period. Life risk incidents involving water, mud & unstable surface clearly marked in RED



A fairly even spread of calls across the entire county however this clearly shows a high number of calls in Wealden and surrounding areas.



Life Risk Incidents Involving Water, Mud & Unstable Surface 2011 – May 2020

Number	Date	Description
1	18/01/11	
2	18/01/11	
3	20/02/11	
4	04/04/11	
5	09/07/11	
6	02/08/11	
7	25/09/11	
8	30/10/11	
9	28/01/12	
10	13/03/12	
11	19/04/12	
12	20/04/12	
13	11/06/12	
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39	05/03/14	
40	17/05/14	
41	21/05/14	
42	07/08/14	
43	02/09/14	
44	04/10/14	
45	03/11/14	
46	12/12/14	

47	01/01/15		
48	08/01/15		
49	23/04/15		
50	02/07/15		
51	31/07/15		
52	24/08/15		
53	22/09/15		
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113	03/05/20	
114	25/05/20	

**Recommendations:**

Currently our full team strength is set at 24 to ensure sufficient resilience to provide relief crews when required.

1. Split the existing team into 2 x smaller teams of 12+ with 1 based at Crowborough (North of the county) and 1 based on the coast (Lewes as recommended in the ORR).
2. Split the 2 x existing sets of kit between 2 sites, 1 set stowed on SWR van (once fitted with radio and MDT) and second set on TRU based at Lewes.
3. Current SWR instructors to train new team members in house to level 3 technician standards.
4. Assign a single call sign and response vehicle to mobilise in county to simplify mobilisation.
5. Allow myself with the assistance of the team leader ( [REDACTED] ) and other instructors to review and re-write our water rescue risk assessments and manual note to agree on better ways to utilise resources within East Sussex.

**This plan would provide the following:**

- i. Reduced costs of basic training (utilising the competent crew at Crowborough rather than starting again with the team)
- ii. Reduced costs of training new team members in Lewes by training new members in house rather than external training providers.
- iii. Provide resilience across the service.
- iv. Provide crews based at Crowborough to support, train and maintain competence of Animal Rescue Operatives.
- v. Maintain the wealth of knowledge and experience built up by instructors and technicians over 10 years.

This would provide best service to cover the whole county at minimum cost. We would keep our existing instructors and technicians and wealth of knowledge and experience at Crowborough whilst supporting the animal rescue team.

If insufficient crew members puts both teams off the run then sufficient numbers from both teams could be mobilised to form 1 team meeting at RV point or incident therefor increasing capability.



ESFRS should be proud to provide the Swift Water Rescue Team as a national asset. Once replacement boat is on the run we should re-register our team as a national asset and be in a position to assist other brigades if required. When East Sussex next experiences major flooding we will also be relying on assistance from other brigades.

This research has been shared with the Consult mailbox as well as union and fire authority members.

I hope you feel these proposals are worthy of your full consideration,

Looking forward to your response,

Kind regards,

[Redacted signature]

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With more homes being built in Newhaven it doesn't make sense reducing the fire service in Newhaven, and with arson in the area Peacehaven Cissbury Ave. Newhaven Elphick Rd and last night First Ave.. If the bridge is open and there is a fire in Seaford it will take longer for them to get there, So one fire engine and they are dealing with a fire in east of Newhaven Avis way the bridge is open and there's a fire in Newhaven Town centre ?

[Redacted]

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To Senior Management Team ESFRS

Dear Sir/Madam

I write to oppose the cuts to Crowborough Fire Station as well as to the whole of East Sussex.

I strongly object to the proposals for:-

The loss of one fire engine at Crowborough Fire Station.

The 50% loss of full time firefighters

The reduction in evening and weekend fire cover and longer response times.

My objection is on the following grounds:-

With several new housing developments underway in Crowborough the station will be serving a larger area and community. These cuts would put stresses on the current system, increasing the risk to the public at present, with the risk surely exacerbated by an increase in the community it serves in the near future.

Yours faithfully

[Redacted signature]

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Dear Sirs,

Myself and my wife would like our names added to the petition to 'stop the cuts'

Your faithfully,

[Redacted signature]

I was most concerned to hear of proposed further cuts to the capabilities, equipment and manpower of Wadhurst Fire Station.

The population of the village and surrounding area is increasing and is likely to carry on doing so for many years to come.

Given the geography of a rural location, reducing the capability at the local fire station to a hollowed out state makes no sense. It would mean relying increasingly on crews from surrounding areas as support. The response times involved could endanger lives, let alone thinking about the potential for increased damage to property.

For once, can the sensible decision be taken and the Wadhurst Fire Station status and capacity be left well alone.

yours

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Dear All,

I am writing you to in respect of the cuts that are proposed at the fire stations in East Sussex.

I am in disbelief that anyone can justify risking lives to save costs, especially as a lot of the senior employed people making these decisions don't take the risks like the firefighters do on a daily basis and are on such high salaries. They should be ashamed of themselves. Dawn Whittaker for example. She is currently taking home £150k a year and supposedly we need to make cuts. Perhaps you should start with her! Her linkedIn page states the following:-

*Proud to serve the public and to assist in keeping our country safe*

What a joke!! If cuts need to be made she should definitely be the first to go.

I have experienced the terrifying situation of having a fire at my house. If the fire brigade hadn't arrived and put the fire out it could have been a terrible situation. I have 2 young children and it is hugely worrying that we could be left in a situation where we had no support or rescue. I also have a vulnerable 80 year old mother who lives on her own who could just as easily have an accident or leave something on that catches fire, she would have no hope of survival if these cuts are made.

How can anyone justify taking firefighters and fire engines away in East Sussex. The risks are too high. Every minute counts when there is a fire. Surely anyone making decisions like this would know that.

The integrated risk management plan / proposal that is out in the public domain is not explained to the general public. It like we are being blind sided and it's all a cover up to get away with this ludicrous idea of making cuts.

We are so lucky to have such a great support with our firefighters. They have stepped up all the way through the coronavirus situation, put themselves at risk to help everyone through this torrid time and on a daily basis and this is how they are being repaid.

I will be protesting against this in every way I can as it is completely unacceptable.

I look forward to your response.

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Similar response:

Dear All,

I am writing you to in respect of the cuts that are proposed at the fire stations in East Sussex.

How can anyone justify taking firefighters and fire engines away in East Sussex, this leaves no support for each other, let alone the timescales of getting there and what impact that would have. The risks are too high. You could have a road traffic accident, Ashdown forest fire and a house fire all at the same time. How would you prioritise that? Who's life who you choose to save? The pressure you would be putting in the firefighters before they have even arrived the scene would be immense. Don't you think they give enough by putting their lives in the line already?

The proposal of having retained firefighters in place of full time is ludicrous. How can retained firefighters expect the get through the crowborough cross traffic lights in rush hour in their own vehicles? its bad enough outside of those hours. In addition, there are also so many road closures that the moment which have been going on for extremely long periods of time, we are having to divert all the way round crowborough to get to the other side, I don't see this coming to an end anytime soon, bringing even longer response times. Every second counts when there is a fire, anyone making these decisions knows that.

How do you expect to hire retained fire fighters to live near to the fire station, restrict their lives so they are nearby when they are on call, when they may or may not be called. The additional time getting to the station means of the fire being much larger and harder to tackle, and putting their lives at risk even further as it's taken more time to attend. The worst part is that they are more likely to turn up to someone who, as they have been left longer, could be arriving to a death as they are too late. How can you ask people to do that? Certainly not an engaging, sought after role to be applying for that's for sure.

The integrated risk management plan / proposal that is out in the public domain is not explained to the general public. Its like we are being blind sided and it's all a cover up to get away with this ludicrous idea of making cuts.

I am in disbelief that anyone can justify risking lives to save costs, especially as a lot of the senior employed people making these decisions are on such high salaries and don't take the risks like the firefighters do on a daily basis. They should be ashamed of themselves. Dawn Whittaker for example. She is currently taking home £150k a year and supposedly we need to make cuts. Her linkedIn page states the following:-

*Proud to serve the public and to assist in keeping our country safe*

How can she have this as her opening statement when she is making these decisions? If cuts need to be made perhaps you should start with her.

I have experienced the terrifying situation of having a fire at my house. If the fire brigade hadn't arrived and put the fire out it would have been a completely different outcome. I have 2 young children and it is hugely worrying that we could be left in a situation where we have no support or rescue.

I also have a vulnerable 80 year old mother who lives on her own who could just as easily have an accident or leave something on that catches fire, she would have no hope of survival if these cuts are made.

We are so lucky to have such a great support with our firefighters. They have stepped up all the way through the coronavirus situation, put themselves at risk to help everyone through this torrid time (and on a daily basis) and this is how they are being repaid.

This proposal is completely unacceptable.

I look forward to your response.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Councillor,

### CUT BACKS OF FIRE FIGHTING SERVICES

I am writing to you with considerable concerns over the proposed cut backs of Fire Fighting Services in Newhaven, Peacehaven and Seaford. Given the dense population and numerous businesses and schools, et cetera it seems a dangerous thought!!!!

Lives and properties and businesses will be in a more vulnerable position. Given our recent challenges this seems yet another thing for us all to worry about.

PLEASE RECONSIDER!

Best wishes, [REDACTED]

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Dear Sirs

We would like to register our objection to the proposed cuts to local fire services.

These are dangerous proposals and put residents at a higher risk.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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I am astonished that there are proposals to reduce services at Crowborough Fire Station. Leaving aside the domestic requirements the Fire Services from Forest Row and Uckfield join forces with Crowborough to tackle serious fires that occur on the nearby Ashdown Forest. The loss of any response could spell disaster for our wildlife and recreation. Of course, both are important but during the Covid 19 lockdown the Forest has provided a vital resource for those wishing to exercise whilst having plenty of space for social distance. The Ashdown Forest also has a Nature Reserve which provides ideal conditions for some of our rare and protected species and it is doubtful whether some of these would ever return if fire destroyed their habitat.

I would ask that proposals to make cuts in these vital services are halted before our local area loses much more than the capability to tackle serious fires.

Regards

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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Please add our names to the Petition against proposed cuts to our local fire service at Wadhurst.

Insanely shortsighted - now more than ever we need a fully coordinated and integrated service working at local level.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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### Further reply:

Thank you for taking the trouble to reply to our email, and for clarifying the situation. It was in response to the flyer we received that we had commented, but now that we can better understand the matter, we shall be referring to the official consultation document, which will enable us to obtain the full information.

With kind regards,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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I understand that this authority has an obligation too review the above mentioned services and you have told my mp maria Caulfield that this review is not a funded based review especially as maria has offered to go too central government and obtain extra funding therefore it can only be concluded that your recommendations are of a

funding nature ,these recommendations would clearly jeopardise the safety of residents covered by east sussex fire authority.

I urge you too postpone this review until such times as this pandemic persist ,once hopefully it has I recommend that you survey local residents,businesses,credit homes and nhs providers which in my opinion would provide you with a clearer understanding of what is required to service the area your authority covers as too me cutting tendoes personnel and massively reducing staffing levels will ultimately lead too a greater risk (danger) of residents businesses care homes hospitals factories and ofcourse incidents wether they be on highways or private property !

Too conclude I believe this review is in error and urge you too think again

Regards

[REDACTED]

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Hello,

I would like to say how disappointed I am that Fire Services are being cut to Crowborough. With a large and growing town it is essential we have the number of Fire Fighters and fire trucks available, especially as the Council are always considering even more housing.

We need these services not only for the residents, but also because of the Ashdown Forest being a potential fire hazard more than other areas and I like so many other long term Crowborough residents, urge the councillors to save money elsewhere with less life and death consequences as essential services. We have a very large active community here in Crowborough and the people are very vociferous on social media about this issue and some of them are very persistent about this.

Why not offer apprenticeships and part time work to train up new local people from the area and cut out all the petty officials and red tape to launch a new initiative in the town seeing as the area has so much community support and young families?

There is absolutely no reason to lessen services as there are plenty of people in Crowborough only too happy to enrol if it wasn't so ridiculously impossible to even be accepted into the training? Why make the services less when you have so many young and able bodied workers who would love to work locally for a career in the fire service, even part time, if the "red tape" petty officials didn't make it impossible? It would take one post on Facebook and you would get applications within minutes. There are plenty of retired fire chiefs who would only be too happy to help train up new people in the community. If Boris is going to announce Apprentices to kick off the economy shortly, why not let Crowborough be one of the first to try the training fire fighter initiative?

Please re consider the fire service cuts - surely there is another way you can save the costs without going straight for the fire trucks and services in such a large area as Crowborough which has way more surrounding villages to attend to than other towns.

Many thanks for listening.

Best regards.

[REDACTED]

**Further reply:**

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for taking the time to reply.

There is a protest outside the Fire Station today in Crowborough. This will inevitably lead to drawing wider public attention now to the proposals of the unpopular fire service cuts. I am sure someone at the protest will be bound

to upload any footage to social media which will then be picked up by BBC South Today or other local news outlets and before you know it, the issue is on the telly as part of the evening local news.

Drawing wider attention to an issue is usually what protests are for and I think it is a shame this proposal wasn't nipped in the bud and scrapped before people felt the need to protest publicly because their voices are not being heard. Who wants these cuts? No one I know. And no one I know knows anyone else that wants them either. I can't find one person who agrees with the cuts.

In answer to one of the councillors' replies on the fact that modern housing hardly catches fire these days, may I point out that Crowborough is not just modern housing but is in part made up of old traditional buildings, some public and some hard to access including some of the historical buildings in the High Street as well as the surrounding villages. May I also point out that the local community remember the Poundgate fire some ten years ago which involved 4 fire engines, when a row of old cottages caught fire spreading to the adjacent roofs of the other cottages of which there were three. An elderly bedridden man was trapped upstairs in the top floor who refused to leave one of the cottages, had to be rescued for his own safety, involving more fire fighting skills being called in as the fire was still blazing next door requiring even more back up.

The fire originally had two fire engines and rapidly needed a further two making four in total to tackle the fire and contain the blaze at the emergency scene. The man later died but not from the fire itself from which he was rescued, but from the "aftershock" as he was in his 90s and vulnerable, had been in this own house bedridden for over 20 years and was very upset to be moved at all in the confusion let alone in such dire circumstances.

This may "hardly ever happen" but has happened in living memory as far as the locals are concerned. If it did happen again who would be accountable if there weren't enough fire engines or firefighters on the scene in any unforeseen emergency? What would be the consequences if this resulted in loss of life? People will rightly assume any cuts were solely down to "putting costs over safety" as what other reason would anyone make cuts to emergency services?

This is the red line you cannot cross in most people's minds. You wouldn't hear the end of it and the very fact that this is now probably going to be in the public eye, is a disaster waiting to happen if it goes ahead in a number of ways. Why take a chance on emergency service cuts when the potential consequences of not having enough back up in a black swan emergency are so dire? I am unaware if the high rise Tower Block is still part of the Beacon School complex in Crowborough but I hope not.

My feedback on what I hear as a community volunteer in the area and having lived here since the 60s, would be to scrap the idea, even today. The timing of these proposals are also adding fuel to the already discontent mood and come across as a bit callous to be honest. People feel that they have got enough to deal with without being told their emergency services are being cut as well.

If you take away basic emergency services from people, especially in such a high council tax area, people will then start questioning whether it is right or not to even pay their council tax at all.

To say that people are now sounding like Peter Finch in the film "Network", is an understatement. This particular proposal has sparked outrage and one commenter raised this question and here are an example of some of the replies to give you an example of the mood.

**"Question. Who does not support the Fire Services having all they need?"**

Answers below.

"The same bunch of people who thought we didn't need masks as there are hardly any pandemics?"

"Someone who sells his last fire extinguisher on Ebay because it is a waste of space and never used?"

;"The Clowns to the Left of me or the Jokers to the Right?".

It goes on.

Unpopular proposals and decisions the public hate such as any suggestion towards the cutting of security and emergency services, especially in this climate, will only lead to drawing attention back to the bad decision makers themselves and even more pushback. Do we really need it to come to protest before this is listened to and scrapped?

Who is in charge of this out of control clattering train?

Best regards.

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I am utterly appalled at the decision to cut the fire services in Crowborough. This is nothing but ridiculous by way of the fact that we are so close to Ashdown Forest and all the hundreds of extra housing in the town. I have nothing but admiration for our firemen who will also be put under such pressure. Surely our present experiences make us more in need of all our key workers not less. We've been working hard to save lives not give them up to lack of fire protection

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Dear Sirs,

My wife and I were appalled to learn of proposals to reduce the cover afforded by the Fire Brigade at our local, Crowborough, station.

If cuts in any services are unavoidable, to cut the sharp end of life-saving services is the height of irresponsibility.

We strongly urge and request you to do all in your power to prevent the proposed cuts.

Yours,

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Ladies & Gentlemen

I strongly disapprove of any proposed cuts to the Crowborough Fire Station.

With increased housing planned for the Crowborough Area, and the close proximity of the Ashdown Forest, any cuts to the Fire Service seem totally ill conceived.

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I have just learnt of a proposed reduction in the emergency fire services, especially at Crowborough. I would strongly object to this happening as i live in a highly wooded area of East Sussex, close to Birchden Wood and Broadwater Forest, Groombridge, and would be concerned at the time it might take to respond if a fire occurred, possibly caused by campers or picnickers or even a discarded cigarette.

I urge you to reconsider and continue with the present cover.

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Dear Mr Barnes

we live in the Newhaven district and have been recently been made aware of intended cuts to the Newhaven Fire Department.

We want the council to know that neither our family nor the people in our neighbourhood support such cuts, in fact we think that it is abominable act on behalf of the council, one that puts people in grave danger.

We urge you to reconsider the cuts towards Newhaven Fire Department and perhaps avoid human casualties.

As we feel very strongly about this issue we intend to campaign for our Fire Department and any decision regarding these cuts will reflect on how we chose our next councillors.

Please support Newhaven Fire Department and refrain from executing your planned cuts.

Regards

[Redacted]

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Dear Senior Management Team at ESFR

I am writing to ask you to protect Crowborough Fire Station from the proposed cuts. It is hard enough to live in Crowborough with no police force, ambulances which have to come from Paddock Wood it is really unfair and unkind to expect this community to manage without a fire services as well.

We need the fire service here in Crowborough. We are a large community and are ignored by the council on pretty much every level and it feels like no one at East Sussex County Council give two hoots about our community, whilst everyone is tucked up in Lewes. The fire service is important to us and protects us and our heritage of Ashdown Forest from fire. Quite apart from the other works they cover like RTAs. Please protect lives and don't allow these cuts to happen.

Please don't let ESCC take our fire services as well and please support our fire service.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted]

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Dear Sirs,

I have been reading the documentation regarding the proposed changes to the service.

The research seems very comprehensive, in fact one be led to believe that since it has revealed inconsistency due to the movement of tectonic plates, it has been unnecessarily exhaustive.

I have, however, not noted any great scrutiny of the changes in demand over previous years, or indeed a projection of how it may increase as housing increases. It seems unlikely this basic information would not have been accidentally ignored from such a granular analysis, and so the reader is led to believe it may have been deliberately omitted.

The documents also appear to omit any reference to those occasions when the full service is mobilised to attend significant events, how they may not receive the same level of attendance and the impact of this, and how secondary incidents are attended or impacted during these times, e.g. a major fire on the Ashdown Forest, or a tower block fire requiring all hands in Brighton.

Again, the reader is left assuming the absence of such critical analysis is driven by a desire not to point out that the planned cuts will leave the service less able to provide the necessary service in such situations.

Please revise the documents to include these elements so that they are a true reflection of the impact of the planned cuts.

I trust the tower block cladding removals are going well? I recall the fire service attendance to Glenfell was significant. If the fire service response to such an incident in Sussex were short of that needed, due to cuts, those proposing such cuts would be held accountable.

Many thanks

  
Crowborough resident

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Dear Councillor Barnes

I am writing in relation to the current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) document that has been presented to the Fire Authority and is currently out for public consultation.

I feel that there are a number of problems with the proposals, the consultation process, and the way the proposals are being presented to the public and Fire Authority.

I agree with the Fire Brigades Union view that these proposals represent major cuts to frontline fire appliances and firefighter posts across the service.

In relation to the conduct of the Fire Authority during this period, I was disappointed to see the amendment not being passed that would have delayed the review of these proposals. It showed a disregard for the severity of the pandemic we are still faced with.

I would also dispute the allegations made on radio station Uckfield FM on 1 June by Councillor Roy Galley, who alleged that the Fire Brigades Union was spreading untruths. His statements in the public eye showed bias, and a misguided interpretation of the proposals.

Below are the main IRMP proposals as the service presents them (in their online leaflet) with my view on their positive and negative impacts. Please note, my responses are as a member of the public, but influenced by my knowledge of the current working systems as a serving operational firefighter.

**Proposal 1:**

*We plan to enhance our operational resilience by increasing our core number of fire engines available at the start of the day to 18.*

Firstly, there is a real problem with the first question in the consultation pack. It is leading as the only serious answer can be yes, more fire engines please. This is achieved primarily by:

Adding a pump to Hastings, whilst reducing evening and weekend cover of the second station in Hastings (The Ridge)

Introducing a tier system to try and guarantee three more retained stations have guaranteed availability (similar to Rye currently)

Introduction of a resilience watch, to fill crewing gaps

At the moment there are two fire engines and an ALP available 24/7 in Hastings, the proposals indicate it will be three and an ALP, however The Ridge would have a longer response time in evenings and weekends, and if the Bohemia Road 2nd fire engine goes out it leaves the ALP unavailable.

I view this as a downgrade to resources in Hastings, and the replacement of the current full proof system of crewing which guarantees appliance availability.

The document states it wants to put a dedicated second pump into Eastbourne too, alongside a new Aerial Appliance, following the same crewing model as Bohemia Road. The extra dedicated ALP in the county is an excellent proposal, but jump crewing it compromises the benefits of the extra fire engine.

I view this as a compromise on what could be a good proposal to have two fire engines and an ALP in Eastbourne, if all primary crewed. This would guarantee a speedy weight of response in a built up coastal town.

The service presents this as an improvement, but from what? At the moment there are a guaranteed 15 fire engines available for immediate response. In fact this number stated by the service (question 1 in the consultation) is misleading. It is 14 immediate response, ie. personnel on station responding to a fire call with a 1 minute turnout, and the 15th is Rye, whose crew would respond on alerters which is a 5 minute turnout from station.

So taking that into account we can decipher that the '18 immediate response fire engines' proposed (question 1 in the consultation) is also misleading. We would still have 14 immediate response, each day, but the remaining would be either 5 minute turnout (Seaford, Hailsham, Heathfield) or jump crewed so can not be viewed as immediately available (Hastings 2nd and Eastbourne 2nd), since a choice would need to be made between a fire engine and aerial appliance.

The statements made by the service also completely ignore and do not communicate clearly that on the weekend 6 of the 14 'guaranteed' fire engines would be crewed by on call staff with a 5 minute turnout, not immediate, or 1 minute on station turnout.

My final point on this element of the proposals, and it does extend to the rest too, is that the impact of the proposals are hard enough to decipher and communicate by someone who works in the system, let alone a member of the public with no prior understanding of the service structure.

#### **Proposal 2:**

***We are proposing to change staff contracts at our current Day-Crewed fire stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield.***

Currently these stations guarantee 24/7 cover, the service have proposed this can still be achieved by utilising on call staff for evenings and weekends. I feel that whatever the new contracts and pay structures may be (nothing has been presented to current personnel) it would be incredibly difficult to recruit and maintain the number required, let alone achieve a balance between the skill sets and experience between the wholetime and on call contingents.

The service states that they would offer retained contracts to those working the new wholetime duty system. This would actually be a necessity in my view, since it takes 2-3 years to reach competence in role, a year to drive (following reaching competence) and the move of role from firefighter to Junior Officer is based on experience and personal drive to move up in position. The fact is some firefighters do not aspire to become junior officers, and the decision is not taken lightly by those lacking experience.

Also, the day crewed stations house most of the specials (rope rescue, technical rescue units, 4x4 vehicles) use of which are not part of basic training.

The current day crewed personnel are offered retained contracts, and many take them for the 4 day rest period from shift. The new proposals look to ask personnel to work monday to friday (or longer days 4 days per week) and give up their weekend and evenings. This is not a family friendly proposition, especially in light that their take home pay will be reduced significantly with the removal of housing allowance (so that they can respond at night currently from home) therefore in my view many staff will feel forced into taking up retained contracts to manage the shortfall in household income.

Aside from the above issues, and the associated firefighter posts lost, my main opposition to the duty system change on day crewed stations is that when there is an incident in my area, or my parents area (uckfield) of a saturday or sunday daytime, they will be waiting at least 5 minutes longer than they would now for a sufficient amount of fire appliances to make a safe intervention. My parents closest immediate response fire engine would be 20.5 miles away. With an aging population, and the inherent risk that more people need assistance to evacuate their homes, this proposed delay is in my view unacceptable.

**Proposal 3:**

*We are proposing to change the number of fire stations that have two fire engines based on them.*

The service presents these second fire engines as underused, but actually they have been historically under resourced. The mobilisation of the second appliances relies on the on call, or retained section personnel. The same people that the service expect to be able to guarantee cover for 7 fire appliances over evenings and weekends, and 4 around the clock.

I have no doubt in the dedication of on call staff, but their dedication is in the face of poor pay structures, and driven ultimately by their desire to support their communities. I feel that the pressures inherent in the proposals on on call staff would not be balanced with adequate remuneration. In principle, I do not see the proposals as family friendly, and for those people who currently give day cover at day crewed stations during the week (the hardest to achieve for most people) they would no longer be required at all.

**Proposal 4:**

*We are proposing to change the way we crew stations in Hastings and introduce an additional fire engine.*

Refer to my response to Proposal 1, but also please examine the fact that adding a fire engine to Bohemia Road station does not offset downgrading 4 of the 5 closest stations - Bexhill, Battle, The Ridge, Rye.

A colleague recently asked the service for a response to a question relating to The Ridge being down graded from shift to day crewed. How has the risk there changed to justify the downgrade? Why at some point it has been deemed that it should be a shift station, and that is no longer needed? The response given by the service said that 50% of the calls The Ridge attend are on Bohemia Road's ground. I hope you can see that this is not an answer, and alludes to the fact that the risk hasn't changed in a way that would warrant a downgrade. If this fact is to indicate that those 50% of calls could be picked up by the new 2nd appliance in Bohemia Road, this would only serve to reduce cover in Hastings at those times, since this would make the aerial appliance unavailable, and whatever standby move brought into Hastings would be from a surrounding station with less resources than before, leaving their area uncovered.

To reinforce the point that the proposals are too complicated for the public to decipher, the service have decided to submit information and statistics to reinforce their decisions, whilst making no relation to what resources are actually required at an incident, For example a small house fire requires at least 2 fire engines to make a safe intervention, larger premises 2-4, where there is life risk more still, and where 3 or more floors or the roof is involved the incident commander will understandably want the attendance of an aerial appliance. When faced with the prospect of requesting more resources, what will be chosen to send first, another fire engine, or the aerial appliance? I have heard from a senior manager that the 4 crew members could split and two bring the second fire engine and 2 bring the aerial... but the resources are not worth much without the adequate crew. I would also point out that the aerial appliance does not go alone, it has to go with a support pump (fire engine).

**Proposal 5:**

*We want to make changes to how we provide and crew specialist vehicles including aerial (high reach) appliances.*

To talk about Bohemia Road Hasting getting an additional fire engine requires you to also talk about aerial cover. The same crewing model is proposed for Eastbourne, whilst Preston Circus in Brighton would remain primary crewed.

The emphasis on Brighton staying primary crewed is due to the number of high rise premises there, but the aerial appliance is not only used for high rise. We have seen an increase in its use to assist the ambulance service, and it is invaluable at premises of all heights, but particularly those above 3 floors (the usual reach of the highest ladder on a fire engine (12.5m)).

Hastings has two main high rise premises (Four Courts and Kennedy Court as I remember) but the whole seafront and squares are made up of 4-6 story terraces, converted flats, HMO's, which all benefit greatly from the guaranteed attendance of aerials, as does Eastbourne seafront. I welcome the introduction of a new aerial appliance in Eastbourne, but despair that it would be crewed in a shared crewing model. At the times when a weight of response is required, alongside aerial cover, I fear that there would be compromises made.

#### Proposal 6:

*Our previous Integrated Risk Management Plans committed us to a number of proposals and programmes of work. Most have been completed however, there are some which were "on hold" until now.*

What this section actually covers is AFA's, bird rescue, and attendance to lifts rescues / release.

We could look at statistics how many AFAs turn out to be fires, but that is beside the point. If alarms are sounding at a premises, they should be able to expect that the fire service will attend and ensure things are ok. The owners and responsible people for business premises should be penalised if they do not have adequate keyholder or contact details in place to expedite a quick outcome when attending false alarms, but there should still be a response to the call.

A responsible person turning up to their building on fire is bad enough if there is no fire service attendance, but would be much worse and dangerous for the public if no mobilisations had been made at all.

My understanding of trapped animal rescue, mainly bird trapped in netting on buildings, has always been that it supports the other agencies such as the rspca and other local groups to save the animal, but also to mitigate the chances of them or a member of the public scaling building, leaning out of windows, using unsafe ladders etc and putting themselves at risk.

I would also point out that these jobs can be seen as good practical, non time critical practice for ladder pitches and aerial use outside of training scenarios.

I absolutely agree that building owners need to have proper provision to release people from stuck lifts in a timely manner, but to have a scenario where the trapped person has to rely on this is not fair on the public. People can become poorly very quickly when trapped, and the stress of such incidents can have a very detrimental effect on peoples mental health. There is no need to reduce the lift rescues the service attends, the public should always be able to count of the fire service attending when they need them.

Relating to cost savings, there is no need to make adjustments to these types of calls, what benefits that could be made will always be at the cost of someone falling when trying to rescue a bird, or entering a building which they shouldn't because the emphasis has been placed on them to assess the situation. I urge you to ask the the fire authority to ask the service to remove these proposals.

#### Proposal 7:

*We are proposing to make changes to the duty system that is operated at our six fire stations that are crewed 24/7 on the traditional four watch system.*

As someone who works the shift pattern, I am very worried about the impact it would have on my family life, and the relationships we build at work through the current watch systems.

The service teaches that a team approach to incidents is of upmost importance, the change to a flexible duty system would destroy the watch culture, and the team environments they facilitate.

I have particular worries that peoples mental heath will be affected by the proposed change, because managers will not be able to monitor their staff effectively over periods of time. Managers will not see over the course of 2 days and two nights (the current duty system) that person A is increasingly withdrawn, not sleeping, not interacting with colleagues in the same way... mental health issues will be missed and this will impact not only the firefighters who are experiencing difficulties, but also their families due to the shortfall in monitoring and opportunity for intervention.

There are no advantages to the proposed duty system relating to peoples wellbeing, their training, shift pattern stability, so If the move to flexible crewing is about saving money, I think it would be fair for the service to spell out what it saves, and the firefighters and union could support them in lobbying for more funding to cover the shortfall.

A final point on the proposals. The IRMP is supposed to be about what the risks are, and how the service would like to address them going forward. It has nothing to do with meeting a budget, or reducing costs (as outlined on page 61).

A go-to response by the service in relation to firefighter post cuts has been that many will be used to bolster the protection work already done by the service. MPs have come forward to say that they have not been asked for more funding to enable the service to deliver in these areas, and this route should be explored before cutting frontline posts.

As indicated at the start of this letter, I am very disappointed that the proposals have gone to consultation during the pandemic. As a member of the public living in East Sussex, I urge you to reject the proposals, and ask that they be reviewed in partnership with the workforce at a more appropriate time, when there will be a more clear view nationally for the role of the modern fire service.

Thank you for your attention, and I would appreciate a response to this letter.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

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Dear Sir

It has been brought to our attention that there is to be a downgrading of the services that Crowborough Fire Station is able to provide.

We fully appreciate that times of austerity are far from over and that there will no doubt be further cuts to public service budgets in the near future as a result of the financial consequences of current pandemic. What we find surprising is that a cut in staffing, and evening and weekend cover, is being considered for our local station, particularly with Crowborough being adjacent to the Ashdown Forest.

We know of instances of fires having to extinguished on the forest this year already, and we know, having been Crowborough residents for nearly 40 years, that this is a frequent occurrence every year. This surely makes it essential, and is more than adequate justification, for a high standard of cover to be maintained at our local fire station. If you add to this the increase in the number of housing developments in the town in recent years, and with more being planned, we are unable to see any justification for any reduction. Reducing the workforce in the

manner proposed will put an additional strain on already strained resources and lead to slower response times, with resources having to be drawn from further afield.

We therefore ask that our names be added to the growing number of concerned Crowborough residents asking you to reconsider the drastic cuts that are currently be proposed.

Yours

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I have just heard of the ridiculous plan to reduce the number of staff and engines at Crowborough Fire Station. With a population of 30,000 in Crowborough and surrounding districts, and given the new housing developments underway, there is a good case for increasing the service rather than reducing it! More people and property increases the risk, not reduces it.

I am beginning to wonder what services my ever increasing Council Tax actually provides. First we have cuts to the Police Force (no permanent presence in Crowborough) now it is the Fire Service.

It seems that saving money is more important than saving lives. I trust that common sense will prevail, and this absurd proposal will be dropped.

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Crowborough

Cllr Roy Galley,

I have been informed that it is intended to make significant cuts in Front-line Fire Services across East Sussex, including major reductions at the Crowborough Fire Station with a loss of one Fire Engine and a 50% loss of full-time Firefighters. We wish to strongly oppose these cuts which we believe will reduce protection in a wider-ranging area and could, in certain circumstances, endanger life because of extended reaction times.

Given the recent experiences following the cutbacks in Front-line Services in other areas of Government, it seems that this is not the time to be making changes in the Fire Service. East Sussex is a large area with extended distances which means that coverage can already take significant time. In addition the area includes the Ashdown Forest and a reduced Fire Service would pose a significant risk in the event of a Fire - an increasing possibility given climate change.

I accept that there is always a need for Government to review services for cost effectiveness, but in doing so the most important item remains Service to the Community and the plans outlined for East Sussex Fire Service do appear to include the easy saving - Front-line Services. One wonders how a similar 50% reduction in support staff for Councillors and the number of Councillors elected would be viewed by those involved because of the increased workload that would result.

This reduction in Fire Services must be abandoned.

Yours sincerely,

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Dear Councillor Lambert

I live in the County Division Seaford South.

I am concerned that the Consultation on Fire Service Provision is being rushed through when

A the essential proposal is incomplete as acknowledged by the Introduction to the Management Plan 2020 - 2025 that was before you and your colleagues in April

#### RECOMMENDATION iv

... note the intention to bring back a fully costed project implementation plan, and additional suite of detailed impact assessments, to the Fire Authority meeting in September this year (2020).

1.12

... Whilst these assessments indicate that there are no material barriers to the implementation of the proposals as currently outlined, it is recognised that there is significant further detailed analysis to be completed over the next few months in order to fully understand impacts and implications. Any material matters will be brought back to the Fire Authority in September as necessary, to help inform Fire Authority decision making.

B The country is absorbed in the Covid-19 situation. Not just Fire Service staff, but councillors and the very people the Authority seeks to consult

C One thing that the Covid-19 situation has clearly demonstrated is that the standards for disaster prevention in the UK and the track record of ignoring commissioned reports on preparedness is not fit for purpose. This at the very least questions whether the 2018 National Framework is fit for purpose as a basis for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Fire Service.

Thank goodness the periodic renewal did not come up last year so there is a chance to defer the new plan under the very real "once in a century" situation we now find ourselves in.

The Government made the renewal timetable and just like it has extended MOTs it can in these extraordinary times release East Sussex from the requirement to put in place a new plan now. To be realistic it would get the Authority off the hook as this plan is not mature enough to go out to consultation let alone be implemented.

Councillor Lambert, seize the opportunity in June, with your fellow councillors to defer this process, by all means allow the missing significant detail to be completed - but defer the decision until lessons have been learned from Covid-19 and we have more head space to address the issues.

The elections in May 2021 may seem a long way off - but Emergency Services will not be forgotten, nor the way that Councillors appear to have allowed themselves to be railroaded when they should have lifted their heads - looked around them and seen people were in no mood to be consulted on an incomplete plan. The administration, of course, will always seek to meet its goals, you councillors have the authority and the responsibility to not allow that institutional need to override the greater public good.

Please persuade your party colleagues and other Councillors to take this action. Two local MPs have already supported this deferral.

Yours etc

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Dear Sir/Madam

I write to object to the Fire Authority's proposals for a reduction in the cover provided by the fire station in Crowborough by removal of the second fire engine and changes to staffing arrangements.

The proposals are not justified by the evidence base which is both inaccurate and out of date for the following reasons:

In the Crowborough Station Risk Profile, the population estimate of 27,416 is a 2017 figure only with no projection of future population growth over a 5, 10, 15 or 20 year period.

In the Profile the demographic analysis is based on the 2011 Census which is nearly 10 years old.

The position taken in the Profile that there are no major large scale developments proposed in the area is clearly wrong as the map on page 44 is out of date as it only shows a site in Mayfield but not major sites in Crowborough such as Mead House (68 dwellings) or Walshes Road (160 dwellings).

Therefore the flawed evidence base does not justify the proposals to downgrade the Crowborough station and it is essential that an accurate up to date demographic analysis including future projections is undertaken before any decision is made about the future of the Crowborough station.

The failure to take into account the future demands on the Crowborough fire station with only a single fire engine available and changes to the staffing arrangements with reliance on support from other towns would put both lives and property at increased risk.

Regards

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I write in response to the request for feedback on the Planning for a Safer Future consultation.

I live in East Guldeford and have very real concerns about the plans to remove one appliance from Rye and to downgrade The Ridge.

At the perimeter of the county it already feels as if we are forgotten when it comes to fire (and police services). I note from the consultation document is heavily geared towards Brighton and Hove and services at this end of the county seem to be overlooked.

The reduction in Rye concerns me:

1. Response times: particularly for East Guldeford and Camber. We are already outside of response targets and if back up were needed it would take more than ½ an hour to get anywhere near here. There have been a number of fires in recent years out this way. Also, We live on a particularly dangerous part of the A259 and regularly see the fire services responding to events. The time between an accident and emergency services arriving can be excruciatingly long and these proposals would only make that worse.
2. High risk buildings: Rye itself is an historic town and the many ancient buildings are higher risk – The George Hotel Fire last year has had a real impact on the town both psychological and economic.
3. Additional risks from peaks in Camber's population especially in good weather. Cambers population can rise from a few thousand to thirty thousand in a day and holiday makers themselves seem to bring greater risk with them.

In this eternal quest to cut costs the value of safety and lives seems to be forgotten.

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I have received in the post today,(15th.June), a letter inviting me to take part in the public consultation.

Although the letter makes no mention of the closing date for comments, I understand it to be 19th June 2020, leaving just four days to obtain and study the plan and return it.

Further it is understood that the consultation was launched on 24th April 2020, seven weeks ago.  
Why has it taken seven weeks to inform the public?

I have also been giving information that the Fire Authority committee at their April meeting, voted against a proposal to delay to launch the consultation, in retrospect does this now appear to have been the wrong decision?

[REDACTED]  
Roy

Following our conversation on Friday I would be grateful if you would provide further information on some of the questions that arose from Wadhurst Parish Council meeting last Thursday

The meeting was addressed by Ben Ashton of the FBU

From the debate at WPC I am seeking more information on the following:-

1) The removal of the Land Rover - This was stated by FBU , and in a leaflet they have distributed, a a move that would decrease the level of safety in the parish.

Is my understanding correct that that the 2 appliance status of Wadhurst relates to the Maxi cab rather than the appliance and Land Rover

2) Are the details of the incidents to which the LR has been called out available and how many were in Wadhurst Parish rather than neighbouring parishes/towns

3) I am told the Wadhurst Fire Station is one of the less busy stations in terms of call out but FBU saying it is one of busiest- which is correct?

4) The proposed single appliance would mean that an appliance attending a house fire would need to wait for another appliance to attend before entering the property.

Is this correct and are their exceptions to the 2 appliance rule in emergencies.

5) The retention of the LR (in form on new Mercedes vehicle) would only cost £100 per week

6) The removal of the Foam equipment from Wadhurst was perceived as another reduction in services. Whilst the current equipment is outdated modern equipment is available so further information on the reasons for withdrawal sought.

Whilst there was a general discussion on the consultation on which I fed in the main aims for the proposals WPC were most concerned with the reduction in facilities at Wadhurst and understand their response to the consultation will be in relation to Wadhurst.

[REDACTED]  
Please save our Fire Station in Crowborough. Crowborough is growing so fast with planning for many more houses that it is vital we retain our Fire Station. They also have an annual electric blanket check which many people attend . They often find faulty blankets which are confiscated thus removing a potential fire risk. This is a very important service.

Yours Faithfully

[REDACTED]  
Dear Councillor Barnes,

I am writing to you as an operational firefighter with 10 years experience and knowledge of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) to express my concern over the proposed cuts put forward in the current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2020-2025. I am also a resident and taxpayer in Brighton and Hove.

The IRMP document states that the proposals will make the public safer by putting resources in the right place, at the right time for dealing with emergencies. This is misleading. The proposals amount to a severe reduction to the number of fire engines and fire cover across the county. This IRMP proposes to downgrade ten fire stations from two pumps to a single pump status. Proposed changes to duty systems and shift systems will see a significant reduction in the numbers of both whole time and on-call operational firefighters. Whilst there are plans to improve cover in some areas, these improvements will be temporal, and will be made by reducing fire cover at times when there is arguably more need. There is an understandable desire to put more resources into prevention and protection, but I urge you not to achieve this by diverting resources from operational response. Even with the best prevention and protection strategies, it will not be possible to prevent incidents occurring, and we must ensure we have enough resources to meet the risks we face for the safety of firefighters and the general public. Modelling presented in the IRMP suggests that ESFRS need 18 appliances to meet the expected level of activity. What is clear from the data is that this expectation applies regardless of the time of day, or day of the week. A reduction in cover at night time and the weekend to achieve better fire cover in the day during the week is not supported by the evidence.

Incidents in East Sussex are unfortunately on the rise, and with our population predicted to increase by a further 7% by 2029, this trend is unlikely to change. The statistics presented in the IRMP state that ESFRS attended an average of 9,123 incidents a year between 2013 and 2018. This disguises the trend that incidents are increasing and that firefighters in the county are responding to more and more incidents as our population and premises grow, our numbers of visitors increase and the volume of cars on our roads continues to rise. The facts speak for themselves – the Fire Statistics Data Tables prepared by the Home Office record that in 2014/15 ESFRS attended 8812 incidents; 2015/16 8950 incidents; 2016/17 9238 incidents; 2017/18 9524 incidents; 2018/19 9490 incidents; and incidents year ending Dec 2019 were at a high of 10,007. These figures clearly illustrate an increase in demand, a demand that is predicted to grow as modelling indicates ESFRS needs to increase operational fire cover from 14 to 18 appliances.

An appliance is only guaranteed if it is crewed with whole time firefighters. Even with proposed changes to on-call contracts, appliances cannot be guaranteed when crewed with Retained Duty System (RDS) staff. Availability may improve, but by the very nature of their arrangement, we must acknowledge that RDS colleagues have other primary commitments that will change. Cover that can be given by an individual one week will always be subject to change as, for example, people take on new jobs with different hours or locations, move house, or start families. At present ESFRS crew 14 fire engines and 2 aerial ladder platforms 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Whilst these proposals do aim to increase the number of appliances available during the day Mon-Fri, this improvement is at the expense of fire cover at night time and over the weekend. It is worth reflecting that the HMICFRS report published in December 2019 found that ESFRS was good (though not outstanding) in the following areas - responding to fires and other emergencies; responding to national risks; making the best use of resources; and making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future. In every other area inspected ESFRS was found to require improvement. In order to improve areas judged to be good, but not outstanding, the inspectorate recommended that "the service should improve the availability of its on-call fire engines to respond to incidents" as "it struggles to have as many fire engines available as it needs."

If these IRMP proposals are approved, fire cover and resilience will be significantly reduced the majority of the time. The proposals would reduce whole time cover at day crewed stations from 24hrs per day to either 10.5hrs or 8.5hrs per day Mon-Fri and 0hrs on the weekend. This would reduce the number of appliances crewed by whole time firefighters across the service from 18 fire engines to 8 fire engines plus 1 aerial ladder (or 6 plus 3 ALPs) outside of these weekday hours. The data does not support a reduction in cover and an increase to response times at night time and over the weekend. The data provided in the IRMP for incidents per year on

day-crewed stations by day of the week shows that on average, these stations attend 245 incidents per day. The data demonstrates that the day of the week has little bearing on the number of incidents occurring in these station areas – Thursdays are quietest with 237 incidents, and Saturdays are busiest with 256 incidents; Sundays 240; Mondays and Fridays 243; and Tuesdays and Wednesdays 249. The data proves that incidents are on average marginally more frequent on the weekend at 248. This does not support the proposal to reduce fire cover and increase response times at the weekend. This is further emphasised when looking at the data on critical incidents by day of the week in these areas – over the year, day crewed stations attended 17 critical incidents per day on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. This drops slightly to 15 on Fridays and 16 on Saturdays, before increasing to 20 critical incidents on Sundays. So incidents are likely to be more frequent on the weekend, and proportionally more of those incidents are likely to be critical in nature. Unfortunately, the Operational Response Review (ORR) findings report that over the last 3 years there have been an increase in the number of critical incidents per year, and that the proportion of incidents per year that have been critical has been rising for the last 5 years. Overall, 53% of critical incidents occurred within whole-time shift areas, 26% in day-crewed station areas and 21% in on-call station areas. A further indicator that reducing cover and increasing response times in the evenings and weekends in day crewed areas will present more risk to the public.

When examining the data presented in the ORR on total incidents by hour of day (Mon-Sun), the evidence shows that the number of incidents attended actually tends to increase throughout the day, peaking between 5pm and 8pm. It is also noticeable that ESFRS attend a similar number of incidents around 10am in the morning and around 10pm at night. These patterns have remained consistent over the period examined (2009/10 to 2017/18). It is also significant to note that over the nine years of data used, there was a greater reduction of incidents during the daytime compared to the night time. This suggests that as an organisation we do not have a proven or successful strategy for reducing incidents at night and that we will continue to receive a similar, or higher (as incidents overall are increasing), number of calls at night time. I can advise you from my own operational experience that these incidents are often more serious and frequently require more resources due to the added sleeping risk factor (people asleep are slower to respond and can be disorientated making them at higher risk of fire). There is no rationale for prioritising fire cover at the times proposed in the IRMP to the detriment of fire cover when it is equally as needed.

Having an understanding of how non-emergency cover moves are made is fundamental to understanding the potential significant impact of these proposals. As detailed in the ORR, standby moves have been increasing year-on-year over the past 9 years, and have accelerated over the past 3 years, so that ESFRS now undertake almost 200% more cover moves than 9 years ago. In addition to the number of incidents attended in 2015/16, ESFRS made 1086 standby moves; in 2017/18 ESFRS made 1556 standby moves; and in 2018/19 ESFRS made 2301 standby moves. This means that in 2018/19 ESFRS fire engines were mobilised 11,791 times, significantly more than the average of 9123 incidents quoted. These non-emergency moves are critical to providing the residents of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove with adequate fire cover and to ensure we meet, as far as possible, our attendance standards. There is clearly a causal link between number of incidents and number of standby moves. I would also suggest the reduction in 2016 of standard crewing on fire engines from 5 firefighters to 4 firefighters should not be overlooked. Incidents Commanders now need to request more fire engines at incidents to get the resources they need to implement safe systems of work because each fire engine now supplies a reduced number of personnel – more fire engines attending incidents also necessitates more non-emergency cover moves. These cover moves divert resources away from the typically lower risk areas in the county, usually depriving our more rural areas of their fire engines which are drawn into our towns and cities on standby. Non-emergency cover moves also frequently incur costs to the taxpayer as RDS staff need to be called in to provide the resilience the county needs away from their home station areas.

The significance of cutting seven 91P4 fire engines and the loss of cover and resilience these appliances provide to East Sussex residents should not be underestimated. At present, if the primary appliances or special appliances at Lewes, Uckfield, Crowborough, Newhaven, Bexhill or Battle are mobilised to an incident, under current ESFRS policy standby moves are not required if the 91P4 secondary appliances are available (the seventh station to be affected is Rye which is an on-call station). At four of these day-crewed stations, despite a decline in availability,

second appliances were available between 58% - 65% of the time in 2017/18 (significantly better cover than the statistic of 10-50% of the time presented in the public IRMP document). Whilst these 91P4 fire engines may attend some of the fewest numbers of incidents, these figures alone do not tell the whole story. Whenever these resources are available, residents in these towns get a faster two pump attendance and fire cover within 5 minutes if the primary appliance is unavailable (for example at an incident, crews needing to decontaminate, mechanical fault etc.) Furthermore, ESFRS is not required to make a standby move, thus maintaining cover on other station grounds that would otherwise be negatively impacted by a standby mobilisation. There have been some suggestions that these appliances are being relocated to provide better cover where risks are higher. This is not the case. The proposals are to remove these assets completely. I must emphasise that these appliances being put at risk really are unsung heroes, and that I am very concerned at the potential loss of resilience these 91P4 appliances provide.

In addition to downgrading the seven fire stations already discussed, the IRMP also proposes to downgrade three maxicab stations. These stations have a two pump status but are equipped with one maxicab appliance capable of transporting larger numbers of crew to an incident than an Extended Rescue Pump (ERP). The future design of appliances was discussed at a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meeting on 18/10/18. The minutes from this meeting evidence that SLT approved the recommendations that "Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst be provided with a standard ERP (Extended Rescue Pump) appliance when existing maxicab appliances become due for replacement as the current approach was not operating as originally intended. It was SLT's preferred option for this rather than to extend its life." Further, "maxicab appliances at Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst are removed at end of life, an additional new Water Tender (WT) appliance to be provided as a second pump to accompany new ERPs." The incident data used in the ORR takes us up to the end of 2017/18 financial year. This data would have been available in October 2018 when the decision was made by SLT to replace the three maxicabs with two pumps – an ERP and WT at each station. With no new data, it is difficult to understand why a proposal has been put forward in the IRMP to downgrade these stations to single pump status when a decision had recently been made to reintroduce two pumps at these stations and maintain the station status as dual pump as the previous arrangement was "not operating as originally intended." I would suggest further interrogation of this proposition is required to understand the evidence base for this proposal.

The data used in the ESFRS analysis covers a period up to 2018, data for the 2018/19 tax year is not included. This is important because ESFRS made significant changes to the way appliances are mobilised across the county with the introduction of the 4i mobilising system in March 2018. This system uses intelligence to mobilise the quickest appliances to incidents, rather than send the primary and secondary appliances attached to particular "station grounds." The concept of station grounds is still retained for administrative purposes e.g. delivering Home Safety Visits, however the mobilising system now takes into account factors such as appliance location, whether an appliance is already mobile and available, and the length of time on-call staff will take to respond when deciding which appliances to send to an incident. This new system has altered the call profile of stations and it is disappointing there has not been an analysis of this new data to inform the current IRMP. This data would help us understand the implications of some of the proposed changes. I would recommend referring to the ESFRS report "Predicted quickest appliance to Road Junctions – 4i analysis headline notes" dated 15/11/2017. As you will see from the modelling, the introduction of 4i was expected to have a significant impact on whole time shift and day crewed stations. This is because when available for immediate response, these appliances would be quickest to some areas covered administratively by on-call appliances. The modelling also predicted that shift stations would travel further to incidents at night as being available from station would mean a quicker response time into day crewed areas than alerting for day crewed and on-call staff. Some of the headlines [sic]:

"Brighton will see some of the biggest changes ... Hove is the quickest appliance into West Sussex ... Roedean's area extends well into Newhaven's 'ground' when Newhaven provide an on-call response at 'night'... It is estimated that Eastbourne can extend its reach as quickest appliance into Polegate (Hailsham Station Area), and along A27 East & Westbound (Pevensey & Seaford Station areas) ... Day-time response from Lewes extends heavily into Barcombe's Station area ... At 'night-time', Newhaven extends its coverage into some of Seaford town ... During the 'day', Bexhill can move slightly into Bohemia Rd's area along A259, but at night, this is reversed.

Bohemia Rd also extends up into Battle/Broad Oak areas along A21 during retained hours ... At night time, Bohemia Road would be quickest to incidents to the north along A21 ... Uckfield station area extends its coverage into the north of Barcombe's station area. Hailsham's coverage reduced by Eastbourne, Lewes, Uckfield and Battle during the day."

All the modelling presented in November 2017 predicted that there would be noticeable changes to mobilisations in all areas historically covered by available on-call appliances. The IRMP states that the current changes proposed will have a "negligible impact" on attendance standards whilst acknowledging that "it would mean that we would take slightly longer to attend during the daytime at the weekend" in day crewed station areas. It is important to recognise that these proposals would not only mean an increase in response times at the weekend, but that provision of fire cover in the whole time shift areas will be affected. The modelling available tells us that appliances located at Brighton, Hove, Roedean, Eastbourne and Hastings are already travelling further to incidents at night, which reduces cover available in our highest risk areas. Day crewed primary appliances are already travelling further to incidents in the daytime. If these changes are introduced the impact on shift stations at the weekend will be very significant. Not only will these appliances start travelling into day crewed areas as there will be no immediate response from station, in all likelihood these shift appliances will also provide more cover to the neighbouring on-call areas currently being picked up by the day crewed stations. The significance of this impact should not be overlooked, especially in the Hastings area where there will be no immediate station response at Bexhill, Battle, Broad Oak and Rye. I would suggest requesting sight of the predictive modelling for first and second attendances were the 10 station downgrades to be approved. The modelling we have from November 2017 provides a strong indicator as to the real impact that will occur on both attendance times and particularly on fire cover more broadly across the county.

It would be welcome to have further information to help interpret the statistics in the ORR concerning appliance availability. The ORR states that the data presented is based on unavailability due to staffing. The trend identified is that the availability of 91P4 appliances has declined over the data period 2009-2018 by an average of 19.4%. It can be seen that at some stations, there has been a steady decline, for example Uckfield's 91P4 has dropped from a high of 90.9% availability in 2013/14 to 58% availability in 2017/18. At other stations availability has remained more consistent, for example Newhaven's availability has fluctuated between 78.8% and 64.9% over the whole period and has an average decline of -0.4%. The IRMP document states that "our on-call firefighters are currently paid a small retaining fee but the majority of their pay comes from attending emergency calls. There has been a significant reduction in the volume of calls they are asked to attend so on-call firefighters are asked to provide cover for long periods of time but with a much-reduced financial reward for doing so. Despite efforts to recruit and retain staff, this has led to problems finding enough on-call staff to keep fire engines available to respond."

It would be helpful for ESFRS to provide data for the same period (2009-2018) to inform us how many staff were transferred / migrated from on-call to whole time in each calendar year, and how many fixed term contracts were issued in each calendar year. I expect these figures will illustrate that there has been a direct correlation between; 1) the decision to reduce the whole time establishment by dropping standard crewing on appliances from 5 to 4 (leaving no capacity in the whole time system to provide cover for long term sickness or temporary promotions etc.); 2) the decision to use fixed term contracts and RDS transfers to cover deficiencies in the whole time establishment; 3) the reduction in resilience provided by on-call appliances; and 4) the inevitable reduction in mobilisations of these appliances perpetuating the cycle described in the IRMP. Far from being a *fait accompli*, I anticipate the data will illustrate that the problem of finding enough on-call staff to keep fire engines available to respond has been exacerbated by staffing strategies introduced to address the challenges created by previous cuts made to the establishment and to fire cover in the county. Cutting the ridership factor from around 12 to 0 created a crisis in crewing whole time appliances. Addressing this crisis by "robbing Peter to pay Paul" has significantly contributed to the lack in availability of 91P4 appliances – for example, many RDS staff are unable to provide the same on-call cover once they have been utilised to keep whole time appliances available. In some cases, where fixed term contracts have been used to cover deficiencies in day-crewed staffing, available RDS have had to cover the whole time shortages at night time by crewing the primary appliance as the crew members on fixed term contracts do not always live in the local area.

Despite messaging often to the contrary, it is not possible to remove resources from operational response without there being significant repercussions. In 2015 the Fire Authority agreed to the removal of one fire engine from Hove. Prior to this resource being cut, the City of Brighton and Hove had an establishment of 5 fire engines crewed with 24 firefighters available for immediate response all year round. We now have 4 fire engines crewed with 16 firefighters (with the loss of a fire engine and reduction in standard crewing). The ORR highlights that 91P4 (the second fire engine at Preston Circus) is the busiest appliance in the service to be mobilised to incidents – both in terms of ESFRS appliances, but also compared to Family Group Two whole time shift appliances. In 2017/18, 91P4 also made 18% of all standby cover moves undertaken by the service. This high number of mobilisations of course has an impact on other areas of the business – crews' ability to undertake training and the time to engage in community and prevention work is inevitably reduced. As a firefighter based at Preston Circus I would like to take the opportunity to remind you that the minimum number of appliances needed to fight a fire in a block of flats containing six floors or more is six fire engines, one aerial ladder platform and one control unit. Under these proposals during the day time Mon-Fri, this type of incident would take all the resources from Brighton, Hove, Roedean, Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford (as the guaranteed available appliances) with a further five appliances required for standby moves. At night time and over the weekend the impact of these cuts would be even more dramatic. All major developments in Brighton & Hove include the introduction of more high rise buildings – the Circus Street development, the Outer Harbour development, New England House expansion and the Preston Barracks development to name a few. Fires in high rise premises in Hastings and Eastbourne also need the same weight of response but have less resources to draw on locally, meaning a delay in the ability for firefighters to put in place our safe systems of work. The downgrading of ten fire stations from dual pump to single pump status will directly affect residents in these towns, and will also have an impact on fire cover across the whole county, especially when incidents occur such as high rise fires that need significant numbers of resources.

It is welcome that ESFRS have acknowledged that fire cover in Hastings does need to be improved to meet the risks in the east of the county. It is important to remember that prior to changes set out in the IRMP in 2015 and implemented in 15/16, Hastings had two whole time primary crewed fire engines that were supplemented by an on-call appliance at The Ridge that was removed from service. You may recall if you were a member of the Fire Authority at the time, the rationale set out by members for approving this decision was that savings made by removing the RDS appliance at The Ridge would be utilised to improve weekend cover at Battle. The new proposals plan to reverse the improvements made at Battle by reducing weekend cover and increasing attendance times. Statistics in the IRMP illustrate that on average 23% of the incidents attended by Battle occur in Hastings. If you examine the data in the ORR, you will see that overall, mobilisations from Battle have also increased year on year since the on-call appliance was removed from The Ridge. Introducing a second appliance at Bohemia Road is a welcome proposal. However, it is suggested this would be done in tandem with a reduction in cover at Battle and Bexhill (who attend 10% of their incidents in Hastings), and a downgrading of The Ridge from whole time to day crewed. This second appliance would also be dual crewed with the aerial, which attends on average 186 incidents per year. It is important to draw your attention to the statement in the IRMP that the negative impact on Bexhill's performance with the removal of 73P4 will be offset by the introduction of a second dual crewed appliance at Bohemia Road, suggesting this resource will be pulled out of Hastings to cover neighbouring areas because of the reduction in cover there. At night time, the two appliances at Bohemia Road would be supported by on-call appliances, which we know from the data cannot be guaranteed. As it is proposed to dual crew the additional appliance at Bohemia Road with an ALP, any incident requiring aerial cover would effectively reduce the immediate response available in Hastings to one fire engine. To make use of both fire engines, an aerial response would have to be provided by either Eastbourne or Brighton. A slower response from surrounding stations at night time and the weekend, an increased reliance on Bohemia Road to cover a much larger area, and the dual crewing of the second pump with an aerial does not represent an improvement in fire cover for Hastings.

It is welcome that ESFRS modelling supports the retention of 3 aerial ladder platforms in the county and that the Combined Rescue and Aerial Platform (ARP) will be replaced with a dedicated ALP and Extended Rescue Tender.

The IRMP implies that Eastbourne will be given an additional resource. This is not the case. Eastbourne currently has two fire appliances, one of which can be used as either a fire engine or an aerial. Replacing one combination vehicle with two vehicles that will perform the same functions with the same number of crew is not an increase in resourcing. I am concerned that a shared crewing model has effectively been introduced in Eastbourne without due process because of the failure of the combination vehicle to be able to provide dual functions simultaneously. It would be welcome to have more analysis of the data to understand whether this would be appropriate for Bohemia Road. The combined appliance went "on the run" in Eastbourne on 01/04/14. From the data presented in the IRMP we can see that between 09/10 and 13/14 aerial cover was provided by Eastbourne on average 110 times per year. Following the introduction of the combined appliance, which effectively brought in a shared crewing model, the average number of times Eastbourne provided aerial cover between 14/15 and 17/18 fell to 21.5 times per year. It would be helpful to have a better understanding of these figures and the potential impact on aerial response times with shared crewing models. The aerial isochrones map works on the presumption that all three aerial appliances are available. If they are no longer primary crewed, we know this will not be the case. There needs to be more information about how this change in provision would work. A significant fire in Hastings requiring aerial support could have to wait for an attendance from Brighton, a very significant delay, especially if life risk is involved.

A Scrutiny and Audit Report was delivered to the Fire Authority on 04/02/16 entitled "Aerial Rescue Pump – Implementation Review and future crewing arrangements". This report set out the findings of a review into the ARP that had been in service since 01/04/14. The report concluded that unless solutions were found, the safety systems built into the appliance meant that the dual functions could not be used simultaneously. Advice was given to the Fire Authority to consider reducing the crewing of the ARP from 6 firefighters to 4 firefighters (reducing the establishment by 8 posts). Members were advised that "this option maintains the savings proposals. However, whilst this would ensure the agreed savings could be delivered, the Fire Authority would need to accept that, in the longer term, the ARP could no longer then be used for dual functions simultaneously. The final crewing model would only support the ARP being used as a standard fire appliance or as an aerial appliance. It would provide an either or capability." Fire Authority Members were reminded that a risk in reducing the establishment was that "the availability of RDS stations surrounding Eastbourne, traditionally viewed as providing back-up in the event of a large or protracted incident in the town, is now limited, particularly during the day. Pevensey, Hailsham and (to a lesser extent) Seaford, struggle with day time availability and this will, therefore, mean that back-up for those larger incidents will take longer to arrive. Maintaining 10 firefighters across the two Eastbourne appliances, therefore, provides a degree of resilience in those cases where additional resources are required."

Taking into account the risks highlighted, the decision was made to effectively introduce dual crewing at Eastbourne by reducing the whole time establishment by 8 posts. It is worth revisiting the figures in the ORR because since that decision was taken, on-call appliance availability at these surrounding stations has continued to decline – in 2015/16 Pevensey was available 55.5% of the time dropping to 50.2% of the time by 2017/18; in 2015/16 Hailsham was available 88.5% of the time dropping to 56.8% of time by 2017/18; and in 2015/16 Seaford was available 94.8% of the time dropping to 92.4% of the time in 2017/18. The warning issued in February 2016 is even more critical today. Seaford, Hailsham, Heathfield and Rye have been identified as four stations where efforts will be focused on improving on-call cover. If achieved, this may go some way towards mitigating the risks identified by effectively dual crewing the second pump in Eastbourne with the aerial in 2016. However, we must remind ourselves that this proposal aims to reverse a decline in on-call availability. Whatever the reason for this decline, we must acknowledge that at present Hailsham and Pevensey are under-resourced to provide the resilience Eastbourne needs. As it takes a significant period to recruit and train competent on-call staff, it would perhaps be prudent to primary crew Eastbourne's two appliances and aerial ladder (when the ARP is replaced), at least until the Fire Authority can be satisfied that adequate support can be provided from surrounding stations to warrant re-visiting this proposal. I would suggest that a much more detailed examination of Hastings resourcing should be undertaken before any decision is made to reduce cover by dual crewing the aerial at Bohemia Road. This appliance is busier than the aerial appliance in Eastbourne and attends an average of 186 incidents per year. There will also be less support available from neighbouring stations if the changes to day crewing go ahead. These changes would put significant pressure on the two Bohemia Road appliances, especially at night and over

the weekend. The risk profile of Hastings and the relatively high number of aerial mobilisations for this station necessitates caution when considering any reduction to resilience.

The risks of dual crewing aerial appliances were highlighted recently with the large fire in Lancing at a scrap metal yard on 05/06/2020. An ALP was required to bring the fire under control, however West Sussex were unable to supply aerial cover because they dual crew their ALP at Worthing. The crews from Worthing had already been mobilised to the incident on fire engines necessitating East Sussex provide the aerial capacity (which includes a support pump) to our neighbouring county. This left Brighton & Hove and the west of East Sussex without aerial cover from 13:54 until 18:30. Having booked back into station, Brighton's ALP got called to life risk rescue at 18:45. Thankfully, on this occasion the Brighton ALP was back and available just in time.

The trends identified in the data evidence that incidents for ESFRS are on the rise, we continue to attend a significant proportion of incidents at night, we have had the least success at reducing incidents during the night, and there is no evidence to suggest that we attend less incidents on the weekend. The data in the ORR does not support changing our crewing model from one that provides consistent availability of appliances throughout the day and over the year, to one that increases fire cover during the day, but reduces cover at night and over the weekend. The reduction of our establishment from 33 fire engines (36 when including maxi cabs) to 26 will impact firefighters' ability to respond to emergencies across the county. These cuts will lead to increased response times and will negatively impact not only the public's safety, but also on that of firefighters. I strongly urge you to ask the service to provide additional data. It would be welcome to see evidence of the following:

- Data examining changes to mobilisation patterns following the introduction of 4i in March 2018
- Modelling to predict how a reduction in cover at night time and over the weekend will impact on first and second attendances
- Modelling to predict how a reduction in cover at night time and over the weekend will impact on those appliances available for immediate response
- Modelling to examine the impact of dual crewing aerial appliances in Eastbourne and Hastings
- Data illustrating the number of times a non-emergency cover move was not required due to the availability of a 91P4 appliance
- Data confirming the number of RDS transfers and fixed term contracts to compare against data on appliance availability

Finally, the proposals being consulted on were drafted prior to the Covid-19 public health crisis, and do not account for the new risks posed by this pandemic. There has clearly been a national shift in how the country understands the vital roles of key workers and emergency services. Whilst there have been no announcements about how this will be reflected in future budget decisions, it is clear that after years of austerity our fire service needs investment. It is encouraging there is cross-party consensus between our local MPs to secure additional funding for ESFRS from central government to prevent any further cuts to an already overstretched service. This extra funding could enable ESFRS to provide the 18 appliances needed to meet our expected level of activity, and could also enable further investment into prevention and protection. Many thanks for taking the time to read this submission. I would be happy to discuss further any of the points raised should that be helpful to you.

Yours sincerely,

Jake Kaye

FBU Branch Secretary, Preston Circus Fire Station

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To Whom it may concern.

██████████ I am a wholetime operational firefighter at Preston Circus fire station. I am writing to you all today to express my deep and profound concerns regarding the misleading and potentially catastrophic proposals set forth to you by my own service in the forthcoming IRMP.

Firstly, the Service has publicised that they are going to provide three more fire appliances (conventional fire engines) at the start of the day. This would raise the total from fifteen to eighteen. Whilst this sounds fantastic in principal, you are being misled. Omitted from this statement is the fact that two of these appliances are to share their crewing with the aerial ladder appliances at Hastings and Eastbourne.

This is a terrible and dangerous proposition for a number of reasons. Firstly it's important to note that the Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) is a vital piece of equipment for dealing with all manner of incidents involving tall buildings. It can provide a significant weight of water attack on a fire externally, minimising risk to internal crews, and preventing fire spread. It also serves as an invaluable means of escape for casualties and indeed firefighters who may become trapped within a tall building involved in fire.

Sharing the crewing between this specialist appliance and a regular fire engine puts fire crews and specifically our Junior officers and watch commanders in a terrible position whereby they have to choose which type of appliance to send to a tall building. Sending the ALP renders the remaining fire engine useless due to insufficient crewing. As a result another fire engine will have to be mobilised from another station within the county. By the Service's own admission this will result in a delayed attendance.

The other option is to send a conventional fire engine in place of the ALP. Yes, this provides more firefighters quickly to the incident, however, once in attendance, the junior officers again in the terrible situation of potentially having to send firefighters into a highrise building to fight fire and conduct search and rescue operations without Aerial cover. This moral pressure to act without adequate resources is a burden which should never be placed on firefighters but one absolutely guaranteed by these IRMP proposals.

Meanwhile, one of the remaining two aerial appliances will be mobilised, once again causing life threatening delays, not to mention crews leaving their own city without aerial cover should another highrise fire break out on their station ground.

Imagine for a moment that your own building is involved in fire. Is delayed attendance acceptable. Is a throwaway line "slight delay" an adequate trade off? Should officers be placed in a position where they have to gamble with the lives of the public and their own crews due to insufficient resources? The answer is of course no. With the three year anniversary of the Grenfell disaster landing on the day I write this letter, I am immensely disappointed that this is even a point that needs to be made, not to mention the fact that my own service is knowingly putting the public at risk by attempting to mislead you.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the proposed changes to the wholetime shift pattern. Personally, I believe that the current pattern is one of the best elements of my Job. I and everyone I work with agree that this is the most efficient and family friendly way to keep a fire station crewed 24 hours a day. On hearing of these new proposed shift systems, a member of my watch said

"The shifts here have allowed me to raise my children"

The proposed solutions are ludicrous propositions concocted by people who do not work within the shift pattern. While not only creating difficult, potentially unworkable consequences for firefighters and their families, they also serve to destroy the watch system. Fire service watches not only work and train together, they eat, study and effectively live together. Experienced firefighters teach newer firefighters like myself. This is how strong and capable teams are made. This team approach and watch camaraderie is the bedrock of the fire service and contributes enormously to our effectiveness.

These two issues are by no means all of the dangerous and misleading elements of the IRMP, but I hope that I have made my position on them clear. It is my sincere hope that you consider these facts when rendering your decisions.

Regards.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Sir or Madam,

In response to your letter dated June 2020 and received on 15/6/2020, I feel it would have been fairer to the public to have sent them out at the launch of the consultation in April, you to give us a little more time to consider our responses more carefully as I understand the closing date for replies is 19/6/2020.

Having read the full document "Planning for a safer future" my feeling is that the whole exercise has been conducted during the Covid19 pandemic in the hope that we would all be too concerned with that, to worry about Fire cover in the North of the county to be of little interest. The document reads as though we in this area - North of Hailsham- never have cause to call on the ESFRS.

It appears the authors have never had any experience with the day manning or retained system, as they seem to expect that employers are going to just allow their employees to rush away at any time they are required, and can they afford to allow this? They also expect them to leave their families during the evening's, nights and at weekends, when there are likely to be family events etc. I notice all Fire Stations in this area are always advertising for retained firefighters. Can the service NOT keep those they do employ?

Please keep our local stations without further cuts in this area as we are NOT overly well served by the numbers already, and surely if any fire engines are cut we should receive a reduction in our ESFRS contribution via our Council Tax

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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Thank you for the invitation to take part in the consultation with regard to the proposed changes to East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

Here are my reflections on your letter (June 2020) which I believe has also been sent to many reside in order to justify the changes you propose.

In my view, even on a cursory reading they are not convincing. In fact they had the opposite impact.

With your indulgence let us look at the content.

Many of the things you highlight should not be considered as '*...we will ...*' they should already be part of your ongoing, established. 'mission statement.' And there are some that venture into that of the 'Motherhood and Apple pie'

I would be interested in the criteria used to measure the sweeping and precise statements regarding percentile improvements in risk, which you then say is no more than '*...what we intend to do...*' And relate this with '*...we need to make some changes and redistribute our resources...*' in the light of the reduction in services at Crowborough; its population growth ; and particularly the risk assessment of the very adjacent environs of Ashdown forest ; with its increase in visitor numbers and the predicted climate changes leading to drier summers.

I am also at odds with your '*we will*' bullet points and what they actually tell me.

Lets look at them in order.

1. Fire stations. So they will remain open. With the growth in the East Sussex and its consequential increased funding one would expect nothing less. But for Crowborough residents and Ashdown forest, the changes will reduce the service and increase the potential risk

2. The resilience plan '*that aims to increase the number fire engines available at the start of the day*' Is just a nebula statement. It doesn't tell me what happens 'outside the start of the day' or when that would be. I also note the operative word you use is '*aims*'

3. More appliances by 2025. '*If all proposals go ahead*' In other words its on your wish list.

4 to 7. Are just things that one would expect to be incorporated in any plan and in some respects should be up and running as basic elements of your organisation.

I make no comment on the '*enhanced contracts*' as this can only be a subjective opinion which is open to objective interpretation by those directly involved.

Finally you make the Cardinal error of potentially slagging off those who oppose the changes you propose, which is an insult to the many residents who have already signed up to voice their concerns.

Yours Sincerely

[REDACTED]

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Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to add my voice to the many Crowborough residents who have been alarmed and dismayed by the proposal to reduce services at our local Fire Station. I understand that the Council proposes to dispense with one Fire Engine, cut 50% of full time Fire fighter jobs and reduce off peak fire cover.

Have any officers or members of East Sussex Council been to Crowborough recently? If so, you cannot fail to have seen the huge housing developments going on at sites such as Walshes Manor and Pine Grove.

We need at least as much if not more local cover to provide adequate facilities for what is a vastly increasing local population.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

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I am writing to express my concerns at the cuts which are being proposed by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service affecting the fire station at Crowborough.

Given that Crowborough is an expanding town it does not make any sense to me that the level of protection is being cut at this time. I know that the fire service also provides important cover for the Ashdown Forest which is invaluable in protecting our beautiful countryside. Their presence in Crowborough is a great reassurance to the local community.

I hope that this decision, which is in my view both irresponsible and incompetent, will be reconsidered in the light of public opinion.

[REDACTED]

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Dear Sirs,

I have tried to read and understand your risk assessment/consultation documents but it is far too deep for a normal person to digest!

However, initially I have one question for you which is: What is the total cost to date for the work involved with carrying out the risk assessment & consultation and how long has it taken to prepare and submit.

I look forward to hearing back from you as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

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I write to oppose the damaging and life threatening proposed changes to the East Sussex Fire Service.

At the very least and before any changes are made, there should a comprehensive and wide public consultation, ensuring that the view of all households are canvassed and decisions are based on public opinion and support.

Boris Johnson claims that austerity has ended. These proposals, if implemented, would demonstrate the reverse.

[REDACTED]

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Dear Cllr Roy Galley,

I am concerned to learn of the proposed cuts to the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and that this consultation is being rushed through whilst we are still in the midst of a public health crisis.

I am struggling to understand how, as has been suggested, the service can be 'safer' when the proposals are to cut the number of available fire response vehicles from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye, Uckfield, Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst fire stations. How can the necessary resources be in place if there is a reduction in the number of whole time firefighters by 30 and those on call by 60?

I am baffled that this claim is being made whilst the fire brigades own frontline staff are telling us that these cuts represent a clear and present danger to public safety. Are they lying to us?

I am sure you would have shown your appreciation for our front line staff during the recent public health emergency. However we cannot respond to the sorts of emergencies the fire service are called to with platitudes or rounds of applause. For this we need a properly funded fire service, with sufficient firefighters and fire response vehicles.

The coronavirus crisis should give us pause for thought when it comes to matters like this. The disaster of Grenfell should not be forgotten. The lesson is clear: public safety must take priority.

I urge you to pause the current consultation and reject any proposed cuts to our fire service.

Yours,

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Sir/Madam,

I would like to register my opposition to the cuts proposed.

I find the proposals morally reprehensible as well as dangerous, given the health and safety of local taxpayers.

Please reconsider and desist from this outrageous proposal.

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Please find below the Wealden District Council response to the 'Planning for a Safer Future' consultation.

The questions are taken from the response document.

Would you be so kind as to acknowledge receipt please.

Q1. To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?

**Strongly Agree**

Q2. Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?

**Tend to Disagree**

The Uckfield area has and is likely to have increased numbers of dwellings over the coming years which is could increase risk. In addition the consultation document highlights the risk of road safety in the Wealden area. The Council therefore urges caution on the proposals to change the crewing system in the Crowborough and Uckfield areas in particular. We also note that changing the crewing system may mean longer response times during evenings and weekends.

Q3. Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, if the crewing change is agreed by ESFRS, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?

- Option A (6 staff – 8.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 33 posts)
- Option B (7 staff – 10.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 27 posts)

Option B (7 staff – 10.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 27 posts).

Q4. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?

Neither Agree nor Disagree.

We think this is an operational decision to be assessed on risk and experience.

Q5. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three "maxi-cab" stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations?

Neither Agree nor Disagree.

We think this is an operational decision to be assessed on risk and experience.

Q6. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?

Don't Know

Hastings is not in the Wealden area and therefore we have no view on this proposal.

Q7. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises?

Tend to Agree

Provided that ESFRS work with local businesses to ensure that they comply with fire regulatory standards, are made aware of these changes and that those businesses responsible for false alarms are informed and checks made to ensure that they service their alarm systems in accordance with guidance.

Q8. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance?

Tend to Agree

Provided that any person(s) trapped are not in distress or any other immediate danger. This proposal must, as the document outlines, be accompanied by education of building owners about the importance of regular maintenance and servicing of lifts and having alternative rescue arrangements in place.

Q9. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?

Tend to Agree

The Council understand that such rescues are disproportionately expensive and tie up valuable resources. However ESFRS should be mindful of the distress that such issues can cause to some people and which may persuade some people to undertake high risk activities to facilitate a rescue.

Q10. Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)?

Don't Know

These sites do not serve the Wealden area and therefore we have no view on this proposal.

Q11. Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements at the 5 ESFRS fire stations listed above, if the crewing arrangements are changed, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?

- Option A – 'Flexible Rostering Duty System' at all 5 fire stations.
- Option B – 'Group Crewing Duty System' at Preston Circus, Hove and Roedean only (the 3 City stations).
- Don't Know

Don't Know

This is considered an operational decision.

Q12. To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?

Strongly Agree

Prevention is always better than cure and can be a better use of resources. However research and evaluation must be part of any prevention work to ensure that it is effective and is leading to less emergency calls to ESFRS or other emergency services. In addition some of the other proposals in this consultation rely on improved prevention work with local businesses in particular.

Q13. Would you be willing to pay more in Council Tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?

The Council considers that this question is for the Council Tax payers across the County to answer.

Q14. To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?

The Council considers that this question is for the Council Tax payers across the County to answer.

Q15. In what ways do you think that ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future?

This is something the Council is reluctant to comment upon and is considered an operational decision.

Q16. To what extent do you agree/disagree that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate?

Strongly Agree

Q17. How did you hear about this consultation?

By direct email.

Q18. If you have any further comments you would like to make about any of the proposals in the consultation, please write below.

The Council are keen to protect the communities within its boundaries and to work together with ESFRS to ensure they get the best service possible. The area is going to see significant housing and other developments in the

coming years, particularly in the southern parts of the District. ESFRS must take this into account when deciding on the way forward and make any changes and proposals subject to regular review to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.

Q19. Are there any positive or negative impacts from ESFRS that you believe should be taken into account? If so, are you able to provide any supporting evidence and suggest any ways to reduce or remove any potential negative impact and increase any positive impact?

The proposals in this consultation will have both positive and negative impacts on our communities. It is important that those communities are communicated with and any changes and the rationale behind them explained. It will be important to particularly highlight the positive impacts of the changes. We would encourage ESFRS to continue to positively engage with the Council's Planning Policy Team to ensure that they are aware of forthcoming housing and other development proposals, thereby continuing to offer the best service possible within their available resources.

Q20. Are you providing a PERSONAL RESPONSE, or one on behalf of an ORGANISATION?

**ORGANISATION - Wealden District Council**

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I am wondering if this proposed cut is shortsighted. To save money now in the wake of debt from coronavirus must seem essential, yet shortly down the line reinstating a service when it proves necessary would no doubt incur more cost. Also, this virus precaution to save lives makes me think the government values people's lives. This action to cut a lifesaving service seems to throw that ideal out the window.

Please consider and reconsider before any painful cuts are made.

[REDACTED]

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Dear Sirs

I call upon all Fire Authority members to vote against the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025 and place a moratorium on any restructure until we fully understand the impact of Covid-19 on the fire service and the county.

Thankyou.

[REDACTED]

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Just to inform you that the letter informing me of these proposals arrived today, 16/6/20. The closing date for public response is 20/6 - surely too soon for an effective perusal of your documents. I feel this is unreasonable if you genuinely want a considered and informed response from the public.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]

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Dear Madam/Sir,

I am writing out of grave concern for the plan to impose cuts on the fire service in this time of national crisis, where public services are needed like never in our lifetimes.

As part of the response to Covid-19, fire fighters are already taking on extra duties, including assisting the ambulance service with their increased workload and delivering desperately needed PPE to NHS & other key workers. Now is not the time to try and implement disruptive changes, including further cuts, to our fire and rescue service.

I am calling upon East Sussex Fire Authority members to halt the current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) consultation, and any changes and cuts to fire and rescue services in East Sussex, until the Coronavirus crisis is over and the post-pandemic financial settlement for local government and the fire service is settled.

In these unprecedented circumstances, this is no time for such a major restructure of the local fire service, or for cuts dressed up as 'risk management improvements'.

I share the concerns of the Fire Brigades Union that the loss of both equipment and crew contained in the proposals will lead to a reduction in crucial coverage in the county and increase the risk to public safety. The comprehensive list of safety concerns the Fire Brigades Union have raised warrant thorough consideration before continuing with the public consultation, and any final implementation.

Over 23,000 people have signed a petition in opposition to the proposed measures contained in the IRMP, and local MPs Lloyd Russell-Moyle, Peter Kyle and Maria Caulfield have asked for the process to pause.

I call upon all Fire Authority members to vote against the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025 and place a moratorium on restructure until the impact of Covid-19 on the fire service and the county has been understood in terms of its needs and funding.

I hope the members of the Fire Authority will consider their public duty and vote against these cuts.

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted signature]

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To whom it concerns,

Please halt your planned cuts to East Sussex Fire Service as it will put lives and livelihoods at risk.

Kind regards,

[Redacted signature]

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Please do not make cuts to the fire service in Sussex. It is a great service.

Thank you

[Redacted signature]

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To: Mr M. O'Brien,  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service  
Church Lane, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 2DZ

From: [Redacted]  
Date: 16 June 2020

### **Planning for a Safer Future**

Thank you for your letter, the Integrated Risk Management Plan and questionnaire.

Your letter, dated May 2020, was delivered to my address on 12 May. You indicated that the consultation commenced on 24 April – so I received your letter 19 days after the start date for consultation.

I could not get through to your office using the telephone number or the email address given in your letter. Eventually I managed to get through to someone who promised to send me a copy of the five- year plan. It arrived on 19 May (26 days after the start of the consultation: 28 days before the end). In other words, I (and possibly other householders in my area) had about half the time period allocated for consultation.

I have completed the questionnaire and sent it to Opinion Research Services.

These comments are observations on the quality of the wording and numerical data in the Consultation document.

## Planning for a Safer Future Consultation

These are some personal observations on the quality of expression, and the presentation of relevant statistics in the report. It is questionable whether valid judgements can be made on the issues.

### PROPOSALS 1 and 3

My response is DON'T KNOW

(a) The figures given in the questionnaire and in the consultation document do not seem to relate to each other, and hence it is difficult to use them to make a judgement.

It is NOT clear how many fire engines you have now. On page 44 of PSF you state that there are 24 fire stations with at least one fire engine, and that 9 of these stations has a second engine. That suggests that there is a total of 33. In addition, there are 3 other stations that have a maxicab (each being equivalent to two fire engines). This suggests that the ESFRS has the equivalent of 36 fire engines.

(b) You state that the second fire engine at some stations is underutilised. Presumably, the untitled table of figures on page 45 is supposed to provide evidence to support this judgement for the underutilisation of the second fire engine.

This table is abysmally poor.

There is no title to it, so it is not clear what it is there for.

You have NOT included any figures or labels that enable an easy comparison of underutilisation in different stations. If you calculate the % of CRITICAL incidents for which the second fire engine was utilised, it ranges from 3.6% at Rye to 20.4% at Crowborough

(c) It is not clear what the bar graph on page 45 represents, because the axes are not labelled, nor is there a title.

(d) I assume that Proposal 1 can only be valid if Proposal 3 is accepted.

(e) In the questionnaire, on lines 9 and 10 of Proposal 1, and in the Consultation document the criteria do NOT include words like 'saving lives' and 'ensuring safety'. Instead, we have a lot of management-speak. Benefits to the community are defined solely in terms of numerical assessments. Perhaps, unsurprisingly, all % given have improved since the last data collection exercise. According to the consultation document the data 'proves' the value of 18-immediate-response fire engine. It does no such thing. It may support the idea of change – but that is not the same thing as 'proving' the need. Whoever wrote such claptrap has no idea of the meaning of the word 'proof'.

(f) The meaning of the question in this Proposal is ambiguous. An increase from 15 to 18 is clear, you then confuse the issue by referring to 6 further fire engines – why did you not say an increase from 21 to 24? What has happened to the 'maxicab' engines?

### PROPOSAL 2

With reference to the Consultation document, page 42, paragraph 3, I am not sure if the effect will be a concentration of experienced firefighters for day-only (Mon-Fri) and a concentration of less experienced (and those with less security of tenure, and thus, probably, less commitment) for all other times. Surely there should be some overlap in personnel so that accurate and up-to-date operational information can be passed on from one team to another.

In paragraph 4, you state that you may take 'slightly longer' to attend, and that this will have a negligible impact. Such an unquantified statement is unacceptable. If you want us to make a judgement, then we want some PRECISE comparative data.

This section of the consultation document and questionnaire are very poorly presented.

If I had wanted to deliberately confuse my audience, this is exactly how I would have done it – question 2b – OPTION 2A and 2B.

This deliberate obfuscation makes me deeply suspicious about the whole proposal.

NOWHERE have you explained how you arrive at a reduction of 33 posts or 27 posts.

NOWHERE have you provided sufficient information to indicate how much money is being saved, and what will be the knock-on effects on staff.

How dare you ask the public to adjudicate on two options when you do not provide any usable data on which those options are based?

#### **PROPOSAL 4**

(a) On page 46, line 2 of the consultation document, you refer to an 'immediate 24-hour response. What does this mean?

On the same page, in the section 'Benefits to the Community', you state that the area served by Bohemia Road station has a significantly higher risk profile than the area served by The Ridge station. Where is the data for this statement?

(b) You state that there is a strong correlation between deprivation and the number of fires that occur. Where are the data, or a graph?

(c) In the penultimate paragraph of this page, data would be very useful.

(d) In the last paragraph on this page, you mention '24 hour whole-term firefighters'. What does this mean?

(e) In the last paragraph, lines 2 and 3 are very confusingly expressed.

(f) On page 47, the table of figures is highly inaccurate. There is no explanation of what the table is designed to explain. The bar graph has eight bars, the first seven of which correspond to the first seven rows of figures in the table.

Very misleadingly, the last bar of the graph is headed 'critical incidents', whereas the last column of the table is headed 'All Hastings'. To add to the confusion, there are numerous errors in the calculations in the table, making it virtually useless.

This Proposal should be the easiest to approve, and yet you have contrived to make it impossible, because the 'supporting data' that you have provided is badly expressed with little or no relevant content.

#### **PROPOSAL 6**

5a I am not sure that describing 'false alarms' as being the same as the term 'unwanted fire signals' is wise. (Are there ever any fire signals that are wanted??) It seems to set a very dangerous precedent for some unknown person at the fire alarm call centre to decide that a fire alarm is 'unwanted'.

I appreciate that my comments could be interpreted as playing with words, and the issue could be resolved by a more appropriate use of words on your part.

My view is that it is MUCH more sensible for the authority to make a significant charge to the owner of the building for the accidental/unnecessary sounding of the fire alarm.

5b You have not provided data on Lift releases – merely that you have to do it 'regularly'. Of course, that could mean anything - once every day, once every week, or once every five years.

5c Trapped birds – agreed.

#### **PROPOSAL 7**

Page 53 (consultation document), paragraph 1, line 3 '.....resulting AND crewing.....' Is there a word missing?

Page 53, paragraph 2, lines 3 and 4 '.....improve how we.....' is not necessary.

Page 63, paragraph 2, line 5 What is meant by 'weight' of response?

It is not at all clear what the differences are – nor what are the advantages of Option B. It seems as though we are being directed to choose Option A!!

Q 6a on the questionnaire. You propose to change the crewing arrangements without giving clear reasons. You mention that both options will result in a net reduction of posts. Are these full-time or part-time posts?

#### **Building and Home Inspections**

So much depends on how effective they are. I can find no comment in the consultation document to help make a decision on this.

#### **ESFRS's Finances in the Future**

You wrote these comments before the financial implications of the pandemic were contemplated. Doubtless the vast amounts of public funding involved will have very serious knock-on effects on that available for supporting the fire-service. Any proposal that involved an increase in Council Tax to fund the fire service would probably be a non-starter for a very large proportion of the population, since it would involve unimaginable hardship, when the priorities are expenditure on food, medicine and keeping warm.

### ESFRS's Purpose and Commitments

The distinction between purpose and commitments is not at all clear. It might be helpful for you to indicate NOW how the actions that you will take in the next five years will demonstrate that you have fulfilled specific parts of your purpose and commitments. This will provide evidence that will enable Council Tax payers in 2025 to decide whether you have fulfilled your purpose and commitments.

By the way, the VALUES that you parade on page 10 of the consultation document – such as accountability and respect, are not borne out by the time delays that I mentioned on page 1 of this document.

### And finally.....

.....you have sections on such issues on Diversity and safety.

Your comments on diversity seem to include only ethnicity, but nothing on gender, age or sexual orientation.

Why??

You mention safety principles. These were written before the current pandemic exposed the high aspirations of NHS managers and government officials as little more than windy rhetoric – especially with respect to Personal Protective Equipment. In the light of the lethal consequences, we shall need a great deal more than a 20-word bullet point on this.

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We want to protest about the cuts proposed for the Fire Service. It's ridiculous they could cut a service of that importance.

Dear Sir

We wish to express our grave concern at the proposed cuts to Crowborough Fire Station.

As you are no doubt well aware Crowborough is the largest inland town in East Sussex and is still growing. Even now there is building work going on and many new houses are being built. In view of an ever enlarging population and our proximity to the Ashdown Forest - always a fire hazard - it seems illogical to be even thinking of making cuts to our Fire Service.

Our concern is widespread and we who live here are distinctly unhappy at the prospect of a reduced service when inevitably the service will be even more needed.

Dear Sirs,

I would like to add my voice to those campaigning against the reduction of Fire Station services in Crowborough, and East Sussex.

Like many services, it is obviously very hard to justify the continued expenses when perhaps there has not been a major fire, or a major road incident or a major civil or criminal issue. However, just ONE Fire, or incident which can not be dealt with, because of the proposed changes, and it will be seen to be nothing less than a short sighted scandal, provoked only by the short term desire to lower expenses. Other, less dangerous savings, must surely be more justifiable than the current proposals.

I implore you (All) to reject the proposals, and leave the level of service, **excellent service**, in fact, exactly how it is.

Respectfully yours, [REDACTED]

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Senior Management Team East Sussex Fire and Rescue

I am writing to you today to plead with you not to reduce the capacity and service at Crowborough fire station.

To be down sizing this fire station is crazy, Crowborough as a town is expanding there are large number of new homes being built all across the area and on surrounding land. More homes mean more chances of fires and the subsequent damage to property and lives. Why down size when the town is growing it makes no sense.

One of the main roads running through Crowborough and the surrounding area is the A26. This road has a very poor record for serious road accidents and a high number of them resulting in serious injury and even death. I have called the emergency services and have had the prompt deployment of fire and rescue to 2 incidents directly outside my house in recent years. One resulted in those injured having to be cut from the wreckage and airlifted to hospital. Also many of the roads around the Crowborough area are minor country roads and statistically more dangerous for road accidents. So why are you thinking of reducing the service at Crowborough Fire Station especially with increased road usage making the possibility of accidents higher.

Crowborough lies on the edge of Ashdown Forest a large expanse of heath & woodland due to our warming climate this area is getting dryer and dryer and the number of fires on the land are increasing. A large fire broke out a few weeks ago and was luckily brought under control by a number of engines including those from Crowborough. Reducing the service at Crowborough would mean more engines having to come from further away and putting additional strain on these areas.

Crowborough lies at the extremities of East Sussex and by this geographical location means that it is far away from other fire stations. Reduction in the service at Crowborough would result in longer response times for incidents in this area.

As I have stated in my previous points these incidents will increase due to the expansion of the town, increased road usage and environmental effects on the surrounding area.

To reduce the capacity at Crowborough fire station is ludicrous and will result in unknown but can be imagined terrible outcomes for this area.

I would urge you to reconsider this decision and to not put cost savings before saving lives.

Yours Sincerely  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I have tried to find information regarding the cuts in service which are scheduled for Newhaven Fire Service, but have drawn a blank.

I have received a letter from Maria Caulfield in which she states that the changes are not a funding issue. I'm assuming that there are other good reasons for the cuts and would be grateful if you could tell me where I can find that information.

Many thanks,  
[REDACTED]

**Further reply:**

Thank you for your prompt response. I can now understand. You're optimising the service for the East Sussex. Some will "win", some will "lose" but overall the service will be better.

Regards,  
[REDACTED]

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Colleagues

I'm slowly coming to the end of the campaign for "no cuts to our Fire & Rescue Service in East Sussex."

I have had a really wonderful time but I do wish that I could magic away the sense of hopelessness many Parish Councils (PC's) told me about as they face cuts, increase in response times and, sadly, more of the same incidents where people have passed away.

We can see where the resources will be reduced and having to explain that to a Parish Cllr or Clerk was difficult but necessary.

It should be highlighted the PC's as above were on the ball and stopped me from speaking as they unloaded their tales of not being listening to and needing someone to take their concerns seriously. It needed no prompt from me, as soon as they know I was talking about the fire service these issues were brought to my attention by the Clerk/Cllr in charge.

**Do the Fire Authority know who these communities are?  
Do they know the name of the person they need to speak to?**

**If they don't then I have a legitimate question as to why they're cutting the fire service for these vulnerable folks.  
If they do know then why are they cutting?  
Why are they not engaging?**

Cutting when there is no idea what it is being cut is reckless.

Its not within my remit to provide a response to these type of incidents but I help where I can.

I had cause to tune the radio on a few days ago.

On the radio programme I found it staggering the Fire Authority is now **accusing the Fire Brigades Union Secretary of East Sussex of lying**, this is a serious allegation, Cllr Galley is making an allegation to say the Secretary, Firefighter (FF) Parry, has lied in his role as a trade union official.

This is higgly-piggly hogwash.

FF Parry and his small team wouldn't know a lie if it bit them on the back side. The reason this is because they are firefighters, key workers who save life and limb, protecting property and I dare say have been working alongside our fantastic colleagues in the police and ambulance to keep people alive at very dangerous incidents.

I've gone through the consultation and what the Fire Brigades Union has put out in to the public domain is an accurate reflection of what the Fire Authority have proposed.

Cllr Galley is able to make his own mind up about that issue but he needs to withdraw that accusation now. FF Parry is not a liar, we need that on the record.

The 'Trust Independents' and Cllr Ben Cox appeared on Uckfield FM following Cllr Galley's outrageous attack on legal trade union work and representation and its to their credit, they were going crackers at his comments, it made me smile that the female constituents in our area have more facts than Cllr Galley.

They were outspoken and direct and I thought it was good that they were allowed to express their view.

They were scathing about Cllr Galley and quite right. We trust FF Parry over anyone else - he does the job.

I've heard one complaint about the cuts being opposed and that was from someone who didn't even run a PC.

Its quite clear to me the Fire Authority need three steps;  
Meet with the Fire Brigades Union and political parties to resolves the cuts issue  
Withdraw the accusation about the Fire Brigades Union Secretary for East Sussex, he's a colleague, not a criminal  
...following that, the Chair and the Secretary need to engage to stop the cuts, come to an agreement for our community which does not sacrifice safety or jobs.  
I look forward to your response Cllr Galley.

I hope FF Parry can meet with you but it might be you've burnt one thread to many on the bridge.

I've never known an allegation be presented in public like this, you chose the radio to try and smear a good man, **what is that about?** I've never known it be presented with zero evidence like it has been here. You have sullied the name of a good man, shame on you and shame on your politics.

The Fire & Rescue Authority should remedy this by deselecting you as Chair - **why would they want someone who attacked someone like FF Parry?**

I hope you get what you want Cllr Galley - God willing.

I look forward to your response.

Go raibh maith agat, do chara,  
[REDACTED]

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To the Management Team

Dear Sir/Madam,

We write to advise you that we strongly oppose the proposed cuts. Our Local Fire Station is at Crowborough and we are indebted to their efforts when our house, in Rotherfield, suffered a major fire on [REDACTED]. Although we had to vacate our home for 6 months whilst repairs were carried out there is no doubt the work they performed minimised the overall damage to the property and its contents. We hate to think how much this level of service would be affected by the loss of a fire engine half of the full time Firefighters.

Please think again.

Regards  
[REDACTED]

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I request that these proposed cuts are not carried through.

[REDACTED] NEWHAVEN.

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NEWHAVEN FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

It is very alarming that East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service should be considering cutting the number of Fire Engines and Personnel at Newhaven Fire Station.

Over recent times there has been a very significant increase in development within Newhaven and the surrounding area with much more development that may follow.

In recent times there has been the advent of the Waste Incinerator on the North Quay and now there is also the increased activity on the North Quay with the construction of the new concrete works.

The West Quay has seen the advent of the Rampion Wind Farm operation and now the Brett Aggregates Facility together with other commercial activities within the West Quay.

There is also the Port Access Road and Bridge which will pave the way for much greater industrialisation within Newhaven Harbour and the neighbouring land.

Much of this industrial development has been sanctioned by East Sussex County Council and taken together with the industrialisation proposals within the Lewes District Council Local Plan for the land adjacent to Newhaven Harbour and the Port Access Road it is totally counter intuitive to even consider cutting Newhaven Fire and Rescue Services.

There has also been very significant residential development within Newhaven and the surrounding area in recent years with much more residential development planned including the Newhaven Marina Development..

We have witnessed much over recent years of the 'Dump It On Newhaven' culture of both East Sussex County Council and Lewes District Council and for East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service to now even consider cutting Fire and Rescue Services within Newhaven and the surrounding area is totally unacceptable and would put local people, property and businesses at very significant risk..

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Seaford

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Dear Sir/Madam,

This email is sent on behalf of Chiddingly Parish Council as agreed at our (remote) full council meeting on the 16th of June 2020.

Chiddingly Parish Council wishes to object to the 'Planning for a Safer Future (IRMP 2020-25)' proposals. We have not written a report detailing our issues as Crowborough Town Council and Uckfield Town Council have already created reports which we as a Parish Council would like to fully endorse/support. From what we have seen of their minutes, these reports have already been shared with you, as well as public in their own domains. It made no sense to re-invent the wheel in this situation.

There is concern of massive oversight in the proposals specifically relating to non-fire related incidents ie RTCs and flooding, and also a lack of future planning for the vast amounts of new housing going up in East Sussex that could directly increase the amount of work that ESFRS will have.

If you have not yet received the documentation from Uckfield or Crowborough Town Council as referred to above, please do contact me and I will get this to you.

Please may we have a response to confirm receipt of this objection.

Kind Regards,

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Dear Councillor Galley

I wrote to you on 13th May nearly three weeks ago about my concerns over the cuts to East Sussex Fire Service. I am disappointed that I have not received a response from you to my concerns. I hope that ignoring public concerns is not the approach you are taking when it comes to considering these cuts. Recently we had a large fire on Ashdown Forest, imagine how catastrophic the damage could have been had we had half the number of crew and friends engines to tackle this blaze. This would be the position we would have found ourselves in should these cuts go ahead. I hope you will do me the courtesy of responding to my concerns and look forward to hearing from you.

Cuts cost lives!

Yours sincerely

**Further reply:**

Dear Councillor Roy,

Although it would have been straightforward for you to search out e-mails from 13th May and see my initial concerns as you were not able to do so please find them below:

*I am writing because I have recently become aware of the proposed cuts to the East Sussex fire service. As a resident of Crowborough I am very concerned about the fire services ability to function effectively and keep the public safe if we have a reduced number of fire crew and appliances in East Sussex. Do you support these changes? The implications of which will mean that fire cover is reduced and resilience lost. I am concerned that reductions of the sort proposed would mean that it would not be possible to cover all households in the county and that it would become a post code lottery as to whether a fire crew could attend an incident. I do not want the lives of my family and friends put at risk in this way and as a servant of the public neither should you. I am sure that the proposed cuts are just a cost cutting exercise and have not been proposed with the livelihoods of our firefighters or public safety in mind. I am further shocked by the back door method in which these changes are being proposed at a time when we are in lockdown and there can be no public meetings or discussion on the subject. Shame on those who have chosen this time, a time when we have never needed our front line workers more to try and implement such drastic cuts with blatant disregard for public safety. I sincerely hope you will see it as your public duty not to support these cuts.*

In response to your e-mail here are my concerns around the comments you made.

I am concerned that the consultation with the public is taking place during lockdown and therefore there can be no public meetings at which we could voice our concerns.

As you can see from my previous comments I am fully aware that Crowborough fire station is not going to be shut down however I am concerned that it will be rendered less resilient and ineffective by the proposed cuts. Whilst the second appliance may not be used frequently Crowborough is too remote and distanced from other stations for us to have to rely on back up from a crew travelling from another station in the event of an emergency.

My understanding of the proposed changes to shift patterns is that there will be a high reliance on on call crew which cannot be guaranteed and who are also notoriously difficult to recruit and retain. Currently you can rely on an appliance to be crewed for a full 168 hours a week under your proposals the crewing level would be only a guaranteed 42 hours a week. Do you really feel that this 75% reduction in guaranteed crewing hours is justifiable and also safe for the people of Crowborough.

is it justifiable to improve Fire Prevention at the expense of Front line appliances surely both are of equal importance.

I find your remark about housing somewhat crass. Did you really take into account the 900+ houses being built in the Crowborough area over the next few years. Even if modern housing contains fire spread better our resources

are going to be stretched to the limit and a better contained fire does not make it a safer fire for a firefighter. Also have you considered the large number of residents who do not live in a house built in the last decade and whose lives will be put at considerable risk by a reduced less efficient fire service.

A further two points that make Crowborough an especially challenging area for the Fire Service are the A26 which runs directly through the town This road is a notorious hot spot for car accidents. Would you want to wait an additional 20 minutes trapped in your car if the Crowborough crew were already on a call whilst another crew travelled from Kent or Uckfield?

The second point is our proximity to Ashdown Forest which with the increase in extreme weather becomes a tinderbox that could go up in flames at any moment.

I do hope that you will carefully considered all points being raised by concerned members of the public.

Cuts cost lives!

Yours sincerely

██████████

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Dear Fire Authority Members,

I am writing to you to convey my disappointment and concerns with the IRMP proposals that you have approved to go to public consultation.

I am a wholetime Crew Manager, who has served at Crowborough Fire Station for over █ years. I have lived in Crowborough for the majority of my life, so the fire cover to my town, affects me not only on a professional level, but also a personal level.

Firstly given the current pandemic, this consultation should never have gone forward, as no-one knows what the role of firefighters could be after COVID-19, given we have taken on many new roles to support the public and our fellow emergency service partners.

I have read numerous times that the proposals are not cuts, and that it is not about financial savings, but about efficiency, but less fire engines, means less efficiency.

I appreciate that potentially cover in Eastbourne and Hastings maybe slightly improved, but at the cost of aerial appliance cover.

With these proposals fire cover in the north of the county is going to be massively affected, especially in Crowborough and Uckfield.

Attendance times are going to increase, there is no arguing that fact. At Crowborough, the time it takes for an appliance to turn out from station could increase by 2-3 minutes during the night. At weekends, with no wholetime crew on station during the day, it could realistically take 10 minutes for an appliance to turn out from Crowborough. That could cost lives, that will be the difference between property saved, and property lost.

The idea of removing wholetime firefighters from day crewed stations at night and weekends is ludicrous, and I would like to explain why. Retained firefighters play a vital part across the fire service, but being a retained firefighter is a part time job, these firefighters have full time jobs, that naturally will always have to take priority. Put simply, you cannot rely on or guarantee retained fire cover. I would like to share some statistics with you that prove this. Going back to 2016 up to the end of April 2020, we have worked out when a fire engine at Crowborough would have been available between 5pm-9am without wholetime staff. In 2016 it would have only been available 18% of the time. In 2017 it was 12%, 2018 it was 8.7%, 2019 it was 1.37%, and for the first four months of this year, it would have been available just 2.48% of the time, if the proposals go ahead. The weekend statistics if the proposals are approved are just as worrying.

I expect the response to this will be that the service will implement a massive Retained recruitment. However this will also fail, due to several reasons. It takes years for a retained firefighter to be deemed competent in role. There is also specialist skills to gain such as driving, and becoming a Junior Officer, which very few actually want to do. The main reason why this system would fail is that almost all new retained firefighters join retained as a way in to wholetime, whether that be on fixed term contracts or migration within East Sussex, or joining neighbouring services. A few weeks ago, Kent Fire and Rescue service advertised for wholetime firefighters. Over 50% of Crowborough's Retained section all applied, and potentially, if they had all been successful, Crowborough would have lost over half of its retained section. This is not just a local issue, retention of Retained staff is a problem everywhere.

The proposed duty system for day crewed stations also has personal impacts to my colleagues and myself. Effectively half the staff will be forced to work somewhere they don't want to, whether that be in a non-operational role, or in the pool of firefighters that don't have an actual station, and are used to fill gaps. On top of the money I would lose, I would then have to pay travel costs to any of the shift stations, which are all about a 60 mile round trip from Crowborough.

The other half that are left at the day crewed stations, are then forced to work Monday to Friday, for far less money and on a system that is completely un-family friendly.

I have two young daughters, so if I have to work Monday-Friday, I won't ever be able to take my children to school, or pick them up. With the financial impact, I may be encouraged to take out a separate Retained contract, meaning I will have to work weekends and evenings. So my family life will pretty much cease to exist. This still wouldn't cover what I stand to lose not only in my monthly pay, but also the massive effect it would have on my pension. My other option is having to move my wife and daughters away from our families and friends to an area where property is cheaper, where their upbringing and education could be affected in a very negative way.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I urge you all to reject the proposals that have been put forward and send SLT back to the drawing board to find an IRMP that doesn't cut frontline staff, won't put lives at risk, supports the services core values, and doesn't have a negative effect on service delivery.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email by replying to me at [REDACTED]

Yours Sincerely

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Dear Sirs

I do NOT support the cutting of fire-fighters being cut. Imagine if something happened at one of the political party conferences here one year and at the same time a fire in a village where Fire Trucks have to take time on narrow lanes to try and save property.

Or a fire in a block of purpose built flats or conversion in our squares and roads with their beautiful architecture. We need to be prepared.

Yours faithfully

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Dear East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service and Fire Authority Councillors.

Please accept this letter as our response to the proposals put forward in the Planning for a safer future as part of your IRMP, Proposal 3, to remove the second fire engines from on-call stations.

These proposals are extremely dangerous and will impact heavily on a critical lifesaving service. They will negatively impact public safety as well as firefighter safety and will also impede firefighter's ability to rescue and assist members of the public.

Rye Fire Station – Response.

In Rye, we have two fire engines. These have been here since 1989 when the new station opened. 31 years of service with two engines, which cover the risk profile of our area and over border risks. The risk profile data (Site-Specific Risk Information) shows that Rye has the highest proportion of Level 1 risk sites, as part of the areas total risks and represents 8% of all Level 1 SSRIs across the ESFRS area. Rye has a lower percentage of level 2 & 3 SSRI's compared to the average for ESFRS, however these risks are in an area of conservation and special scientific interest. Heritage is a key feature of Rye and must be protected for future generations.

The fire risks within the citadel are critical as the majority of buildings are terraced, and constructed from timber, open roof spaces allow uncontrolled fire spread and little in the way of fire prevention, other than smoke alarms. The fire station is situated within the town and can respond very quickly to fires, which showed with the George Hotel fire. Our first engine arrived within 11 minutes, followed by our second engine a few minutes later, providing a safe system of work to fight the fire.

The cuts have also been planned on the static population of Rye, but with a tourism and caravan park population which together can peak at 10,000 to 15,000 extra people to protect and the added risks created when Camber sands is busy, again peaking at another 20,000 extra people on our ground! Rye also has the highest number of water risks, rivers, lakes, sea and beaches in East Sussex.

Camber also is put at particular risk by removing the second engine from Rye. ESFRS state that the fire service should reach incidents within 15 minutes from on-call stations and many parts of Camber fall outside of our target time, even for Rye. When a critical fire in Camber occurs, crews will have to wait up to 25 minutes for the second engine to arrive if our second appliance is removed. This puts incredible pressure on the crew and Officer in charge of the first engine (RYE) to act without the support of the second engine, putting fire-fighters lives at risk or not rescuing members of the public. This should not be a choice any officer in charge needs to make.

Below is a quote from a Local Councillor (West Sussex) which sums up this point very well.

*"Some time ago now, the West Sussex Fire Authority forced through huge cuts to the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, despite massive opposition. The result? All reversed after a humiliating inspection found the service had been reduced to "inadequate". In fact, getting things back up to standard will undoubtedly have cost the council and the fire authority much more than having left it properly resourced in the first place".*

*"I cannot believe our next door neighbours in East Sussex could knowingly try and go down this route having seen what happened to us. The East Sussex councillors on their fire authority should have learnt from this whole sorry saga, which undoubtedly left our residents in greater risk.*

*My full support to many councillors in Brighton and Hove and wider East Sussex, set out in this report, who are fighting this - together with the East Sussex Fire Brigade Union who are making all the right points about why such cuts are a terrible decision. It will be a tragedy if they are ignored and it will also hit neighbouring areas such as West Sussex and Kent if the service's capacity in East Sussex is reduced and they cannot support larger fires and calls taking place here as well."*

The same adverse effects have been seen and felt in the Surrey Fire & Rescue Service after brutal cuts were enforced. Surrey Fire Service now has to rely on cross border support for many fires in areas which were deemed to be low risk? Support from London and West Sussex, which are both underfunded as it is!

We do not want to see these issues in East Sussex!

Question. Why are the Fire Authority cutting services?

The HMICFRS concluded that East Sussex's response to incidents was GOOD.

The risk assessment carried out by East Sussex FRS has been incredibly thorough and should be applauded. So why use this assessment to reduce the capability of the service under the guise of "Improvements" or "Safer Future"?

There is an opportunity here to really improve the service and although this will cause change to existing service structures, it should never reduce the capability of how effectively the service operates.

Our example of how this could be achieved in Rye is this –

The proposals call for our second appliance to be removed, stating that it is not on the run often enough and does not attend many incidents.

Rye has the highest number of water courses, lakes, rivers, sea / beach risks in East Sussex, yet no capability to respond to any of these risks? Our area has seen the highest number of deaths through drowning over the past few years, both within inland water sources and camber sands beach.

Invest in water safety training within Rye and use the second appliance to manage this risk effectively. Having specialised equipment on the second appliance. This would increase staffing levels at Rye, make it more attractive to new recruits and also make retention of staff more manageable. Another benefit for staffing the second appliance sufficiently, would be to cover P1 when out on calls saving the service thousands of pounds each year on standby crews.

On data collected from the past 18 months, our second appliance with little or minimal staff managed to provide standby cover for P1 on 55 occasions and attend 26 incidents. (Turn out sheets for 33 Calls, some stood down before attending on scene)

If staffing levels were increased approximately, a further 100 standbys' to Rye could be avoided, saving the service thousands of pounds each year.

It would also have been able to attend incidents with P1 on approximately 16 additional occasions, saving vital time it takes for appliances from The Ridge or Bohemia Road to arrive.

The proposals also indicate that The Ridge will become Day Crewed and retained, On-Call at the weekends and at night.

This would exacerbate the difficulties with having appliances arrive in good time during these periods for incidents in rural parts of Rye and Camber. Having to wait for up to 30 minutes for a second appliance would definitely put firefighters lives at risk, having to deal with potentially critical incidents alone, no safe system of work, public pressure to act, moral pressure to act. The brutal truth is, IT WILL HAPPEN, at some point in the future. Now is the time to ensure this situation, when it arises, can be dealt with effectively, and firefighters can work knowing they have the support of their colleagues in the second appliance.

The firefighters, Crew Managers and Watch Manager at Rye are proud to serve their community. All dedicated to protecting the lives of everyone who lives or visits our historic town, beautiful countryside and beaches. The goodwill shown by everyone who works at Rye Station and commitment to keeping our pumps on the run is being eroded. Recruitment has been neglected over the past five years and it shows. Over 13 experienced firefighters have left the service with just 5 new recruits remaining on station, making a total staffing level of 13 on-call staff. (5 of which work wholetime at other stations which reduces their availability) making a net loss of 8 firefighters!

The qualifications held by the solely On-Call staff are insufficient to put a pump on the run, with only one ERD driver, one Lead BA wearer and no Junior Officers.

We need recruitment and training to replace the staff lost as this would be easily enough to keep the second appliance on the run and possibly effect a new branch of Water Safety, preventing drowning and saving lives! More Road Safety events with the thousands of motorcyclists who visit Rye throughout the summer! More emergency care capabilities to assist our ambulance service when required.

This is the key to Rye's future, improvement of what we do, not cuts to our resources.

Giving the public true value for money and a service which can effect change and save lives.

You cannot do any of this with one Appliance.

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I trust you will not mind my emailing you regarding the above proposals a number of which concern me.

Firstly many of the assumptions are made using "sophisticated analytical tools where incidents of fire or flood might occur "I do not believe any such tools would have predicted the fire and its consequences my wife and I suffered [REDACTED]

Seven of the stations are to lose one fire fighting appliance. In the case of Crowborough that represents 50% of the fire fighting capacity of the station, if further appliances are required these will come from other stations many of which have also lost one of their engines. The consequences of all this are endless.

The report states that in the evening and weekends there will be "on call firefighters" i.e. Retained firefighters. In 3.1.7 the report admits that "there are challenges finding sufficient crew to keep fire appliances available to respond" Further there is an admission that there could be "slower response times"

However, Hastings Bohemia station is to get a second appliance "to make residents even safer" so much for the safety of Crowborough residents!

I am a Chartered Surveyor by profession 3.6.3.7 "non attendance at low risk commercial premises where there is a no sleeping risk" intrigues me. I managed a large ind/whse estate in Sussex where no one slept at night so no one could confirm whether there was a fire or not. I presume ESF&R would not attend. If this is the case then the sooner the Hampshire Act is implemented in Sussex the better.

These proposals are no more than a cost cutting exercise that will in my view leave ESF&R resembling the Police Service in the county.

Regards

[Redacted signature]

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Dear Cllr Galley and Chief Fire Officer Dawn Whittaker,

As a nearly fifty year resident of Crowborough and thirty year resident of Eridge Road (the A26) - I am astounded that anyone is proposing to cut fire services for Crowborough in particular, but in other rural fire stations as well. I have read the documents concerning the proposals and it seems to me that the exercise is one of cost cutting, rather than providing a proper or adequate service which we, the council tax payers, fund every year. I can understand the need for efficiency, but trimming emergency services to balance the books might look good on paper - until there is an emergency.

Rather than looking just at savings to be made, perhaps we should look at the downside that a reduced service will probably bring if fire stations are reduced to a single appliance.

In Crowborough we are fortunate that for speed of response the fire station is located on the main A26 trunk road. This road has an extremely bad accident record going back many years and if one appliance is called to a road accident and then there is a fire somewhere else at the same time, the only alternative will be to call on Uckfield - some ten minutes away, who might also be on a call. Tunbridge Wells might send an appliance to the fire, but if the A26 is blocked by the accident - what then? Maxi cabs will carry more crew, but you really need the flexibility of two appliances in the largest inland town in East Sussex that is so remote from the fire stations along the coast.

Then there is the proximity to the Ashdown Forest - often as dry as a bone and frequently subject to forest fires. One appliance only carries so much water, and although there is a bowser at Crowborough and a 4 X 4, a second large appliance with more water can be fighting the fire from the other side to stop the spread. There are no handy sources of water, no standpipes and few lakes on the high, dryer reaches which mostly catch fire. Another aspect which is often overlooked is the fact that Crowborough town sits at the second highest point in East Sussex at nearly 800ft, though the fire station serves the outlying district in each direction. All the roads to the town are steep, particularly so in the case of St Johns and in the winter there is often snow cover which can make them impassable. What if one appliance goes out on a shout and then gets trapped by abandoned vehicles? A second appliance will still be available to turn out to another emergency in the town, whereas calling another from Uckfield or Wadhurst is going to take significantly longer in bad weather - if it can even reach Crowborough.

As Crowborough is in a northern central location in the county, we should be increasing cover, not diminishing it - especially now that so many new housing estates have started to be built and more are planned.

From the information in your proposals:

- 99% of high-risk dwellings are covered - improved from the present 93%

- 93% of all incidents are within our attendance standards isochrones - improved from the current 81%
- 92% of all households are covered - improved from the current 80%
- 92% of our population is covered - improved from the current 75%
- 92% of our over 80s population are covered - improved from the current 75%.
- 92% of all households are covered - improved from the current 80%
- 92% of our population is covered - improved from the current 75%

If 92% of all households are covered and improved from the current 80% - Can you please explain how reducing the number of appliances by 50% will improve the situation in Crowborough from 80% to 92% coverage.

I am afraid that the sums simply do not add up. As a former teacher I look forward to seeing the working by which you have arrived at this answer.

Regards.

**Further reply:**

Dear Chris Fry,

Thank you for your response and the explanation regarding my concerns. However, I am still a bit unclear how these proposals benefit Crowborough in particular - as I and about 25,000 other people live here and which is the largest inland settlement in East Sussex and remote from the other large urban settlements along the coast.

It may well be that the proposed changes benefit East Sussex as a whole, but that is of no comfort to people in Crowborough who are effectively having their coverage reduced to satisfy an overall commitment.

You say: *Another of the Fire Authority's proposals is to remove the second fire engine at seven fire stations, of which Crowborough is one. However, coverage will be maintained at Crowborough because it will still have its main fire engine available 24/7.*

That might be the case by which you reassure people, but then another statement in regard to crewing gives the following response.

*We propose to introduce a 'Day Only' crewing model, maintaining a 24/7 response from these stations through a different crewing pattern. In this arrangement, full time firefighters would be on-station during the daytime Monday to Friday, with on-call firefighters providing cover in the evening and at weekends. The differences between the existing system and day-only is that day-only does not require the fulltime staff to provide additional on-call cover during the evening and weekends. This cover is provided by existing and newly recruited on-call staff (see Proposal 1). The evidence in our ORR demonstrates that this is an effective way to provide emergency cover on these stations based on community risk. The community would still have a 24/7 response from these stations but it would mean we may take slightly longer to attend during the daytime at the weekend in these station areas.*

It will almost certainly take longer if we are to rely on the other (nearby) and only retained stations for backup. According to timings available on Google maps:

Forest Row to Crowborough - 21 mins. Wadhurst to Crowborough - 20 mins. Heathfield to Crowborough - 20 mins. Mayfield to Crowborough - 15 mins. And Uckfield to Crowborough - 15 mins, though presumably with the same crewing pattern for evenings and weekends.

Has any thought been given to how long it takes on our rural roads to get from one place to another - always assuming ideal driving conditions ?

In the whole (beautifully presented I have to say) document, the word minutes only appears six times and is only in relation to expected response times within expected guidelines of 10 to 15 mins. Add to this the response time for retained firefighters and the possibility of a road journey from another station in the event of the first appliance being called away somewhere else and the minutes add up.

Geographically and given the locations of the other nearby retained fire stations, Crowborough is well suited to be a properly manned rural hub in the north of the county as effectively it now is. To reduce capacity here to suit mathematical calculations based on the supposition that it will help East Sussex overall is not a practical solution.

I oppose these proposals most strongly.

Regards,

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*To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?*

Strongly disagree.

We strongly support the proposals to increase the number of 'immediate response' engines, as we can see that this would increase the coverage statistics. But this must not be achieved by reducing the total number of 'resilience' fire engines in East Sussex from 13 to just 6.

Under Proposal 3, Lewes and Newhaven fire stations would have just a single engine, so would be unable to provide a resilience engine if one were needed in Seaford. Therefore, in such an event, a resilience engine would need to come from a smaller station such as Barcombe. That would significantly increase the time required to get a resilience engine to Seaford, as well as leaving Barcombe without any engine at all. The increased delay resulting from the reduction in the total number of engines will lead to an unacceptable increase in the risk to households, businesses and firefighters.

*Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?*

Strongly disagree.

We strongly disagree with the proposals to reduce the number of permanent watches in Lewes and Newhaven from two to one and to replace the second watch with a 'flexible crewing pool' made up of on-call firefighters.

Even if it is possible to recruit and retain sufficient on-call / retained firefighters living within 5 minutes of the fire station (which is highly unlikely), having all evenings and weekends covered by a scratch crew who do not work together regularly will unacceptably increase the risk to households, businesses and firefighters.

Our many detailed concerns with this proposal include:

- The crew that provides evening, night and weekend cover are entirely different to the permanent crew, so will have limited experience operating the engine and equipment
- Recruiting and retaining these on-call / retained firefighters is extremely challenging (currently, Lewes has only managed to recruit and retain 3.5 'units' of retained staff; 12 would be required to cover the loss of the second watch):
  - The salary offered (£11k-13k/annum) would not be enough to attract people to do this as their only job; therefore they will have other work commitments which will affect their availability
  - Turnover of these staff is very high; most take it as a last resort but accept other, permanent jobs when they become available
  - The turnover is a particular problem as training firefighters in all of the necessary disciplines generally takes about 2 years

- Being all on call all evenings, nights and weekends is a very family -unfriendly arrangement.
- The on-call crew (who will have other jobs) will be a scratch crew with availability dictated by other work commitments; therefore assembling a crew with all of the right skills to crew an engine properly (driver, breathing-apparatus specialist, junior officer, etc) will be difficult with a high risk that not all staff will be properly skilled (risking both their lives and the lives of people caught in the fire)
- The crew will also have limited experience of working together and will not know each other's strengths and capabilities well, reducing the efficiency of the response and increasing the risk to residents/employees and firefighters
- There would be less emergency/contingency cover available when there are multiple calls (currently the other permanent firefighters can be called on when necessary as they do not have other jobs).

*Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, if the crewing change is agreed by ESFRS, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?*

We strongly disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only', and do not support either of the alternative options proposed.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?*

Strongly disagree.

We strongly disagree with the proposals to remove the second fire engines from these seven stations. Removing seven fire engines from these fire stations will significantly increase call-out times, increase the risk fire engines not being available to attend an incident, and unacceptably increase the risk to households, businesses and firefighters.

In addition, climate change is expected to significantly increase wildfires and flooding in East Sussex (as evidenced by recent wildfires in Ashdown Forest and elsewhere). By their nature, these incidents require the attendance of many fire engines for long periods. Against that background, reducing the number of fire engines by nearly a third would be irresponsible.

Our many detailed concerns with this proposal include:

- For bigger incidents in Lewes and Newhaven two engines are deployed as a matter of course, providing additional equipment, resilience and flexibility; this would be lost if this proposal were implemented.
- If a second engine was needed it would need to be called from another station, which would very significantly increase call-out times and increase the risk to Lewes and Newhaven residents, businesses and fire fighters.
- With the net reduction of 10 fire engines (Lewes, Newhaven, Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Rye and Uckfield, plus the "maxi-cab" stations at Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst), the risk that there is not another fire engine available at all also increases exponentially.
- Also with the net reduction of 10 fire engines, there is a far higher likelihood of the Lewes, Newhaven, Seaford and Barcombe primary engines being called out to fires in other areas, leaving the towns without any local fire service at all and increasing response times unacceptably.
- A recent wildfire in Ashdown Forest required 8 engines in attendance. If all of these second engines are removed, that would leave some fire stations (including some "core" stations) without any engine available in the event of a local fire.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three "maxi-cab" stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations?*

Strongly disagree.

The "maxi cab" fire engines allow two fire crews to attend an incident in a single fire engine. Removing this capability from Seaford and the other stations will reduce the effectiveness of the response, increase the time

required to respond to larger incidents and increase the likelihood that other fire engines will need to be called in from nearby fire stations.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?*

Don't know.

There is no direct impact of this change in Lewes District.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises?*

Strongly disagree.

Although 96% of AFA (Automated Fire Alarm) alerts turn out to be false alarms, that means that 4% of the alarms are real incidents. In the dense commercial areas at the centre of Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford (where there are usually people living above the commercial premises and often other businesses immediately adjacent) the quicker response from responding to AFAs will sometimes be critical in avoiding loss of life or the spread of the fire to other businesses.

For example, in September 2012 a fire that started in Olives Yard quickly spread, engulfing 4 shops and 40 firefighters only narrowly avoided a nearby block of flats from also being destroyed.

The relatively small savings that might be achieved by not responding to AFAs could be very quickly dwarfed by the cost (in lives and property) of a fire that has longer to take hold.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance?*

Neither agree nor disagree.

We agree with the principle that the building owners should resolve the issue when there is no risk or distress for the people who are trapped. But we question how often this will be possible without causing risk or distress to trapped occupants.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?*

Strongly disagree.

We understand that the Fire service normally only attend these incidents after it has been asked to by wildlife charities. This would normally be because there is no way to free the animals without the specialist equipment that the Fire Service have and/or because the animal is in considerable distress.

If the animals are not rescued by ESFRS there will be a much greater risk of the public / others trying to rescue trapped or dying animals and birds themselves without suitable equipment, putting themselves at considerable risk.

*Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)?*

Tend to disagree.

Although these proposals do not affect Lewes District directly, we have serious concerns about the replacement of permanent fire fighters with 'flexible' or 'scratch' crews for the reasons given in response to Proposal 2, above.

*Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements at the 5 ESFRS fire stations listed above, if the crewing arrangements are changed, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?*

Don't know.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?*

Tend to agree.

We agree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety. But these must not come at the expense of front-line services.

*Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?*

Council tax contributions to the Fire Service are not reducing. The cuts are being proposed because of reductions / uncertainty in Government Grants. We therefore are firmly of the opinion that central Government must provide assurances that Fire Service grants will not be reduced, so that the Fire Service can make proper plans for the future without the need to make these dangerous cuts to front-line services.

The policy of cutting front-line services to the bone has clearly been shown as a mistake by the Covid-19 crisis and the inability of the NHS to respond adequately. These proposals should be reconsidered in the light of Covid-19. Furthermore, West Sussex FRS implemented similar changes 4-5 years ago. Their most recent inspection report rated it as one of the worst Fire Services in the country (inadequate in its protection of the public and looking after its staff; and requiring improvement in the way that it keeps people safe and secure and the way it uses its resources). It now requires £34m of investment to address the many failings identified by the inspection. Trying to make similar savings in East Sussex would therefore have a high risk of actually costing more in the medium term.

*To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?*

Agree.

We agree that ESFRS offers value for money currently. However, if implemented, these proposals would make draconian cuts in services while only saving £1.0m-£1.6m of savings by 2024/25. In that case we would not agree that ESFRS would offer value for money.

*In what ways do you think that ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future?*

We would encourage ESFRS to look at ways to simplify its service and to reduce administration costs (e.g. reduce reporting and/or the use of highly-paid consultants).

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate?*

Tend to agree.

We have no concerns with the current purpose and commitments of ESFRS.

*If you have any further comments you would like to make about any of the proposals in the consultation, please write below.*

As public bodies, ESFRS have a duty to take into account the impact of their decisions on human rights, under the Human Rights Act 1998, and also on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation). Are there any positive or negative impacts from ESFRS that you believe should be taken into account? If so, are you able to provide any supporting evidence and suggest any ways to reduce or remove any potential negative impact and increase any positive impact?

Hello ESFRS

I've been alerted by a local City Councillor that this Consultation is taking place and is about to close. I represent the 174 households of two 15 storey blocks in Brighton. I've read some of the FBU publicity about the IRMP proposals - and some of the ESFRS explanation of your case.

Our experience of the Veolia Fire of August 2019, against the background of Grenfell, has made for a heightening of awareness & a keener sense of vulnerability within this Community. (We were very grateful to the firefighters involved - and I appreciate the ongoing involvement of ESFRS in associated work - including participation in two Public Meetings).

In relation to High Rise Fire Safety, there can be poor communication between Residents, the Local Authority & ESFRS. As is human, risk awareness tends to dissipate over time : questions raised are left hanging - risks identified are highlighted, but actions often slow or stalled.

I'd make the following points :

1.

You refer to misinformation. I'd suggest the charge might be applied to each 'side'.

You refer to planning around the budget you might expect - and simultaneously say that you're 'not looking to cut'. If plans are built around an anticipated reduction in funding (2020-2025), it would be honest to make clear that the plan is partly conditioned by that 'requirement' to cut overall funding. I can understand that Resources can be 'freed' & reinvested : but when you say you weren't looking to cut but that 'some efficiency will be achieved' .... your words contribute to the opacity involved in analysing what is being referred to in relation to 'efficiency savings' ... 'cuts' ... risk ... and, critically, the assessment of effectiveness.

2.

I remain very concerned about the potential effectiveness of ESFRS in responding to High Rise fires. The speed & nature of any ESFRS response (ladder access & height, reliance on Fire Door delay), resident distrust of the Building Alarm strategy and 'Stay Put' - are some of the issues. In this context, I distrust the influence of 'efficiency' economies on the assessment of risk. I would urge ESFRS to take a stand against budget cuts : if you believe there is (literally) no possibility of avoiding budget reductions - then I would ask you to be honest with the public (& the FBU) about what would have been done with a budget that maintained its spending power. I assume that mutual respect and cooperation with the FBU will always be influential in impacting overall Fire Service effectiveness.

3. On two different ESFRS pages, the following statement and statistics were listed :-

**Our evidence shows these proposals will improve emergency cover:**

- 99% of high-risk dwellings are covered - improved from the current 93%
- 92% of all households are covered - improved from the current 80%
- 92% of our population is covered - improved from the current 75%
- 92% of our over 80s population are covered - improved from the current 75%.
- 92% of all households are covered - improved from the current 80%
- 92% of our population is covered - improved from the current 75%

The repetition must be an unfortunate proof-reading error.

The references in your evidence to current levels of emergency cover seem, on the face of it, both extraordinary and alarming. It would be interesting to go deeper into these figures and the quality of evidence they're based upon. With their experience and workforce knowledge, would the FBU have their own evidence-based view of these sets of figures?

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Nettleton & Dudeney Residents Association

### A one paragraph 'Addendum'

Hello again ESFRS

With my apologies for the omission, I forgot to include any reference to the effects on skilled crew & staffing overall following the IRMP. I've seen references to improved contracts for many part-time staff - but also to the possibility of 30 full time staff and 60 on-call staff being lost. I don't know whether the Consultation has any potential to influence staffing levels or any revised financial provision: I hope so. Given the recent contribution of the Fire Service during the lock-down for Covid-19, it seems shameful if Central Government & regional Fire Authorities proceed with the implementation of a plan that applies cuts in funding and brings about the loss of some of the very key workers we've been so reliant upon.

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Hello,

I have a very simple question.

How long is slightly longer in time? Please could you define in minutes.

This of course should be available to all public and not just reserved for those who have to email privately requesting this data.

It is in your consultation document after all which does not define it in anyway other than a generic term.

I look forward to a speedy response as promised in your social media platform.

[REDACTED]

### Further reply:

Thank you for this response but once again it is lacking the answer to the question how long is slightly longer in minutes?

Surely this can be answered as part of the IRMP?

I am of course fully conversant with the meaning of actual and perceived risk, interestingly a lot of incidents I attend incorrectly perceived risk has allowed actual risk to be realised. It seems to me there is an attempt to make the actual risk look less by using charts to show things such as when risks are realised. These of course can be misleading as just because a risk is only realised on a few occasions it doesn't mean it's any less of a danger. In fact it would indicate that the control measures currently in place are working.

Once again please if I could request the slightly longer in minutes. I would be disappointed if this cannot be made available.

Regards.

[REDACTED]

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Rye Town Council response to consultation on East Sussex Fire & Rescue's Planning for a Safer Future: Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025

The plan proposes seven changes to current operations that will affect the Parish of Rye. We would make the following comments to the Chief Fire Officer as part of ESFRS's call for consultation.

### **1. Operational Resilience Plan (ORP)**

The new contract for retained staff does not appear to cover their training time, which is essential. Furthermore, it does not appear to consider why people look to become retained officers in addition to their full-time work. We would presume it is to give public service, learn skills and be of use to their community, rather than for financial incentive.

We understand that Rye retained staff have had to take leave from their full-time employment to train (often for 1-2 weeks) as firefighters, with little incentive to do so. We are concerned that not enough is being done to up-skill Rye firefighters.

We understand that ESFRS has lost nearly a quarter of its frontline staff in recent years. Furthermore, the average age of an ESFRS officer is 46 years. It is becoming more difficult to recruit in Rye, with a growing need for personnel during the day and at weekends. Rye's demographics are becoming older; fewer self-employed people work within five minutes of the station; employers are less happy to let staff go during the day; and cover eats into family and leisure time - especially at weekends. Recruitment for Rye should not be solely the responsibility of Rye Fire station but managed centrally. It takes considerable time to train full time and retained staff, and therefore ensuring their retention and development is critical.

We are concerned that a 'flexible crewing pool' could become over relied upon as opposed to a static one that builds local knowledge in each station, and is less resilient because it is being used everywhere and has no back up.

### **2. Changes to day-crewed duty stations**

The new contract gives staff longer to attend at some stations with a knock on effect at day crewed stations Monday to Friday office hours crewed but evenings, nights and weekends retained staffed only increasing attendance times at these stations, tier 3 stations and back up fire engines. Attendance at fires from Rye is in the 'middling' attendance times on the data mapping, which is due to the logistics of where the town is geographically and its road infrastructure. According to Mosaic data, there are a larger than average number of institutions outside the agreed attendance time, such as business and caravan parks, plus the number of water incidents, tourism, flooding, listed buildings, and heavy industry such as Tradbe (the only Tier 1 COMAH site in East Sussex). We understand that Eastern Rother and Camber is the second highest area in East Sussex to fall outside of the attendance standards and Eastern Rother. Camber and Rye are in the top 5% of the most deprived areas in Britain, which statistics prove are some of the most at risk due to fire related incidents..

### **3. Removal of second fire engines at day-crewed and on-call stations and reclassification of three "maxi-cab" stations**

A second appliance already exists at Rye, which services the community well and does not need replacing with a more modern machine, so there are only maintenance costs to consider for the foreseeable future.

Rye is strategically positioned to aid smaller village stations and taking away a second appliance reduces Rye's resilience. Removing the appliance puts more pressure on our closest stations to cover the town if the Rye appliance is already in use, thus reducing their availability in their own locale. Not having a second engine places more reliance on the surrounding stations and increases response time:

For a supporting fire engine to come to Rye from The Ridge in Hastings (10 miles) would take 19 minutes, and to Camber (14 miles) 26 minutes. The Ridge, at present, is crewed 24/7 365 days of the year, but it is recommended to be made day crewed (on station immediate response 08:30 - 18:30, night time on call with a delay of 4 minutes). Broad Oak is 12 minutes away (seven miles) plus the four minute mustering time, therefore 16 minutes to Rye. Broad Oak is a retained fire station and at present is not available at

times during the day under the new proposals a tier 3 station. Broad Oak would not have to be available, but could be given up to 30 mins to muster a crew.

All of the above could/will lead to a greater loss of property, injuries to the public and fire fighters and, potentially, more deaths.

By resourcing and tailoring training for Rye fire fighters, greater upskilling to operate and drive the second appliance plus ICS Level 1 incident command, means that there are more personnel at Rye available with more skills across the county, making it more resilient. It also saves money that they are on site and available, rather than bringing in firefighters from across the county to work in Rye, where currently trained staff are not always available due to a lack of suitably trained staff ( drivers and ICS level 1 incident commanders ). Local people are more likely to have local knowledge that could, potentially, save vital minutes in attendance time by understanding the roads and built environment in which they work.

#### **4. Changes to the resources in Hastings**

It is proposed the second appliance should be posted to Bohemia Road due to social statistics, however, these are mirrored, albeit to a smaller degree, in the Rye area. Camber, for example, is in the top 5% of deprivation in the UK. Therefore, if you are arguing for increased capacity for social reasons in Hastings, Rye and the surrounding area should retain a second appliance for the same reason. Furthermore, although Camber has a static population of around 800 residents, during the summer season (with its holiday and caravan parks plus day-trippers) it can host in excess of 15,000 to 30,000 people. This can lead to extended attendance times due to congestion on the roads. We know that caravans pose a high risk due to their construction and close proximity to each other, and they contain gas cylinders. Thus, having a second appliance to hand quickly is imperative.

At present, the second fire engine at Rye is only available 55% of the time, which we understand is due to the fact that insufficient numbers of officers are trained (drivers and ISC 1 Level commanders) and, therefore, it cannot be used when needed. Statistics, therefore, would show a much greater use if it were operational.

ESFRS's own policy of offering fire fighters at retained stations fixed term contracts at whole time shift stations is having a detrimental effect on crewing at Rye. With 3 at present on these contracts, all drivers and 2 ISC 1 commanders, there are fewer operational staff with the required qualifications available which means the 2<sup>nd</sup> fire engine is less available at Rye.

Having this second fire engine available from Rye (averaging six minutes behind the first) is critical for the safety of the firefighters, giving an incident commander the required amount of personnel to be able to tackle a critical incident safely.

**We feel strongly that the second appliance should not be removed from our town.**

#### **5. Special vehicles – including aerials (high-reach vehicles)**

We are concerned that taking away the swift water response can only be detrimental to a coastal station such as Rye. Rye works with other agencies, such as Pett Level Independent Rescue, rendering humanitarian assistance to illegal immigration, which has seen increased activity in the past few months on our beaches.

With Rye's listed buildings, as we saw with the major fire at the George Hotel in the High Street last year, the town would benefit from a closer aerial ladder. Is there any guarantee that this will be come from Hastings and not Eastbourne if the changes to crewing are implemented increasing its attendance times?

#### **6. Review of previous IRMP proposals**

We note that a smaller vehicle has been dismissed, but we would be interested to learn if such a vehicle would be more beneficial to Rye to gain access to the medieval citadel, getting into holiday homes and manoeuvring

around nearby business parks, costs for a smaller vehicle against a full sized fire engine and potential savings, Devon and Somerset, Cambridgeshire, Warwickshire all have smaller fire engines in their fleets.

## 7. Changes to full-time staff duty systems.

We are aware that Rye relies on The Ridge for supporting fire engines. Reducing the Ridge to day crewed from full time shift crewed would mean extended attendance times if Rye was reduced to 1 fire engine. Back up to this area takes time because of the logistics. We are unable to rely on Kent crews crossing the border because they operate on a crew of just three firefighters at times, whereas East Sussex has a minimum crew of four. Transfer of equipment and working practices is not always possible between brigades. We, therefore, feel that such a change in systems from shift to day crewed at The Ridge fire station would be detrimental to the town of Rye and, furthermore, the villages and businesses it assists.

We also make the following observations:

- A. This document appears to look only at front line services for 'efficiency savings', but does not appear to consider savings in other areas, such as back office work. These proposals suggest the removal of specialist teams, vehicles and personnel rather than efficiencies elsewhere in the overall service.
- B. Following on, there is no reassurance that ESFRS is investing in 'future proof' IT systems that could save money in the longer term. We understand that the new mobilising system and control room once with West Sussex is due for replacement and the operation of this valuable service will be run by Surrey in the future. The current system has produced mixed results with many problems and breakdowns and we hope that lessons will be learnt from this before such a system is outsourced for ESFRS.
- C. We are concerned that, at a time of global upheaval, now is not the time to consider future plans based on the system that we knew. We feel it would be more advantageous to wait a few months to see what resources and responses are needed post this global pandemic so that they are more robust.

Councillor Rebekah Gilbert, Rye Deputy Mayor  
on behalf of Rye Town Council

*Note Rye Town Council is grateful to serving fire fighter, Councillor Shaun Rogers, who provided it with additional information.*

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I wish to complain to your intention to reduce further the fire services in Newhaven. Services need to be at the current levels to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Newhaven residents.

Good afternoon

Please could I make the following response, agreed by Withyham Parish Councillors and on behalf of Withyham Parish Council, to the ESFRS consultation:

***Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan - To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?***

Strongly Disagree

Due to reducing the number of 2nd Fire engines available at 10 stations (Bexhill, Battle, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye, Uckfield, Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst), i.e. a loss of 10 potentially available fire engines

***Proposal 2: Changes to Day-crewed Duty Stations - Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?***

Strongly disagree

Because the replacement of full time 'on station' crews with 'on call' crews at night and week-ends will lengthen response time and leave less experienced crews to deal with emergencies.

Neither A or B is acceptable.

*Proposal 3: Changing the Number of Fire Stations with Two Fire Engines - To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?*

Strongly disagree

Because although these fire engines may not respond to as many calls as the main fire engine, they provide continuing cover when the first engine is called away.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three "maxi-cab" stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations?*

Strongly disagree

Because the Maxi-Cabs enable a single machine to take a full life-saving team to an incident.

*Proposal 4: Crewing and Fire Engine Changes at Hastings - To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?*

Strongly disagree

Disagree with the introduction of a day crew system at the Ridge.  
(Agree with a second engine being stationed at Bohemia Road.)

**Proposal 6: Demand Management**

**Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises?**

Tend to Agree

*Lift releases To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance?*

Tend to Agree

*Trapped birds To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?*

Tend to Agree

*Proposal 7: Changes to 4-Watch Duty System - Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)?*

Strongly disagree

Because flexible rostering means that the crews will not know when they are off and when they are working beyond the 6 week rosta period, which means that family and childcare commitments will be impossible to plan ahead.

Option A and B are both rejected.

*Building and Home Inspections To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?*

Strongly agree

More staff should be employed to provide this valuable service, not by taking staff off the fire engines.

*ESFRS' Finances in the Future Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?*

Not Applicable – as we are a Parish Council we do not pay council tax

*To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?*

Tend to agree

*In what ways do you think that ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future?*

We have no suggestions

*ESFRS' Purpose and Commitments To what extent do you agree/disagree that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate?*

Strongly agree

*How did you hear about this consultation?*

ESFRS emails

*Further Comments If you have any further comments you would like to make about any of the proposals in the consultation, please write below.*

1) Withyham is a rural area in the north of the county with isolated farms, a large number of big houses and narrow lanes. The reduction in the number of fire appliances available is of great concern as other 2 engine fire stations in the area are also having their vehicle numbers reduced to 1. Should a major incident arise during the OC cover we are concerned at the ability of the stations in the area to cover such a situation. WPC opposes the proposed changes

2) By 'dual-crewing the Aerial Ladder Platforms at Eastbourne and Hastings this could potentially leave only 1 fully crewed ALP to cover the whole of East Sussex and this is potentially unsafe.

3) By switching from 'fully crewed' to 'day crewed' this would increase call out times at night and week-ends. These are not lower risk times and therefore danger to life and property would be increased.

4) No mention is made anywhere in the Risk Management Plan of consultation with, or information from the adjoining fire services of West Sussex, Kent and Surrey which are relied upon for assistance in major incidents. The capabilities and plans of these neighbouring fire services are vital to the safety of East Sussex residents in a major incident, so this must form part of the risk assessment.

5) There is no mention of how long it would take to get multiple engines to properties such as The Horder Centre Hospital or care homes where there will be many people needing specialist rescue. Getting rid of the second engine at Crowborough (and many other stations) will put these people at increased risk.

6) The Fire Service should be planning for a 'worst case scenario' not simply looking at historical data and planning the minimum number of engines and crews that could deal with past incidents.

Covid-19 should have taught us not to be complacent in planning for emergencies.

Debbie Siddle  
Clerk  
Withyham Parish Council

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Sir/Madam,

Whilst I wish to air my opinion reference the above, I have no desire to complete the online consultation questionnaire which I find 'loaded'. If I object to a proposal to change the crewing system from 'daily-crewed' to 'day-only', I certainly would not then wish to state a preference as to which form of on-call working I would prefer. I oppose such proposal in it's entirety, full stop !

I note your comments 'it would mean we may take slightly longer to attend during the daytime at the weekend in these station areas'. You state your analysis shows 'this represents a very small number of incidents & this proposal will therefore have a negligible impact on community risk, attendance standards & incident demand'. No guarantee can be given in this regard. Consequently this is not something I could support.

I would also oppose the proposal to remove the second fire engines from the seven listed Fire Stations. As for the rescue of trapped birds, whilst I accept this is not a priority, & should only be considered when resources allow, I consider that to abandon such activity completely, to be a callous act.

Kindly therefore, note my objections to the proposals.

Please also note this is a personal response, & I do not work for the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.

Sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

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Dear Senior Management Team at ESFRS and Cllr Galley,

It is with great dismay that we learn of the proposed changes / cuts to the Crowborough Fire and Rescue Team, and would take this opportunity to ask you to seriously reconsider.

We believe this is not appropriate and will result in putting Crowborough residents and residents of the surrounding areas at a greater risk. There are many new housing developments going ahead in the immediate area already, increasing the population by several hundred. There will be other development proposals in the near future too. It seems ludicrous to even suggest reducing the full time crew and losing an engine at the fire station when the population is increasing. Longer response times would endanger the lives of all residents and is totally unacceptable when it could be prevented.

We also live close to the Ashdown Forest where unfortunately fires often occur and the brave souls from Crowborough Station are amongst those that attend. With a growing population, it is unfortunate that more 'accidents' of this nature will occur.

Road Safety is also an issue and although not directly the responsibility of the fire service, their attendance is greatly appreciated and needed. Again with the growing population that is already guaranteed with the new housing developments, road safety will be an even bigger issue.

The fire service is an important service and these cuts should not go ahead.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

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It has come to my notice that Crowborough Fire Station is under threat of being halved both in a fire appliance and fire fighters.

We surely cannot allow this to happen.

At a time when there appears to be new properties going up all over Crowborough we will need both fire appliances and fire fighters more than ever.

If we were to loose one fire appliance and 50% of the fire fighters and we had a major fire in Crowborough how long would it take for other appliances to come up from Brighton or elsewhere.

By the time they got here the building would have been completely destroyed.

Why has Crowborough got to loose out again, you have taken away our police station, so we do not have any police patrolling Crowborough anymore, and now you want to reduce the fire cover to this town, and we will be expected to pay the same amount of council tax for less cover over both services.

Your Sincerely

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### East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Consultation – HBC submission

In responding to the consultation 'Planning for a Safer Future' we would wish to make the following points:

We recognise:

The challenges facing ESFRS to modernise, provide best value for public money but also to operate within an uncertain and ever tighter financial envelope. However:

We are extremely concerned about:

- The reduction in overall trained firefighter posts out of the whole ESFRS system.
- The move to a day-crewed system at the Ridge, in Hastings, meaning that the station moves from its immediate response to being only full time staffed between Monday – Friday and relying on on-call firefighters providing cover in the evening and at weekends. We are concerned that this will lead to a delay to major event responses where all three appliances are required or where there are concurrent emergencies in our town. We noted that the average attendance time in the Hastings Old Town area was 7.01 minutes (the average across the County and City was 8.12 minutes). The conclusion we must draw is that this will now be longer when serviced by the Ridge at weekends and evenings. As you will be aware our town has in recent times experienced a series of major fires involving empty buildings, including a huge conflagration in the Old Town. This is coupled with a changing climate where we are experiencing longer periods of drier weather, putting areas such as our country park at a greater risk.
- The ability to recruit and retain enough on-call firefighters to cover the move to day-crewing, especially if the new contracts are aligned only to periods where cover is needed at weekends/evenings. What would be the plan B if this was not achievable?
- The change proposed to the crewing of the "aerial ladder platform" (high-reach vehicle) at Bohemia Road to a shared crewing model – it is not clear if this is the same as a flexible crewing pool? The number of HMOs in Hastings always necessitates this facility to be available and staffed.
- Whilst you have explained the rationale for the timing of this consultation, our belief that this review and subsequent changes should not be made whilst all of your partners and community are dealing with a global pandemic. We would be happy to support your case to government for an extension so these matters can be appropriately debated within local communities.

We welcome:

- The focus on prevention, support to businesses and the evidence and risk-based targeting of resources. We would advocate that the fire and rescue services are funded at an appropriate level to avoid the need to choose between competing priorities from within the existing system. Despite the assertion that the changes are 'low risk' based on previous experience, in the context of the emergency work that ESFRS, low risk can always mean there is a threat to life if the service is not able to respond adequately.

- Introduction of an additional (second) fire engine at Bohemia Road, in the light of the higher risk profile of this part of our town, although we recognise that this is at the cost of provision in other parts of the town and the county, and to the number of overall firefighter posts in the ESFRS.

In response to demand management questions, we support the moves to direct limited resources into prevention, protection and training, with the following caveats:

- Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) – Whilst the 96% statistic offers a seemingly obvious direction for you, we would wish this to be well publicised with businesses together with clear criteria, particularly where lack of appropriate maintenance is an issue.
- Lift releases – we would not support a move to delay in responding to freeing people in distress when stuck in lifts. We would however be prepared to consider supporting the introduction of a fee for attending such calls, if it is clear that there are not adequate maintenance and support arrangements in place.

Jane Hartnell  
Managing Director  
Hastings Borough Council

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Dear ESFRS

The proposals 2 and 3 outlined in your Consultation on IRMP 2020-25, have a direct impact on our local fire station in Uckfield.

Proposal 2 reduces the immediate on-site wholetime crew, increasing response times.

Proposal 3 reduces the station to one single fire engine.

Each of these changes conclude with the comment that these reductions in capacity would have “negligible impact.”

Although I thought it was a very slick presentation, it does not seem accurate to entitle this “Planning for a Safer Future.” Surely you would accept that cuts (even those deemed to have negligible impact) can indeed cost lives. Would not “Planning for a Slightly Less Safe Future” have been more appropriate?

Yours sincerely



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**Planning for a safer future: Consultation by East Sussex Fire Authority**

1. I have an interest to declare in that my son is a serving firefighter with ESFRS. However, these comments are entirely on my own behalf as a concerned resident in East Sussex.

**General**

2. The proposals are presented as very positive ideas which appear to broach no objection. I do not think that this is a very fair way to present such an important issue. I can well imagine that many people who might look at these proposals will be ill placed to formulate a critical response. They will in fact have a major impact on our service and should have been presented with a carefully balanced analysis to enable consultees to offer balanced comments.

3. The document is longer and more complex than needed for a public consultation. A Q&A is a good idea in principle, but the term "leading questions" comes to mind. Who on earth is going to think that increasing the number of day appliances from 15 to 18 is not a good idea without seeing all the detailed implications?
4. Issuing this consultation document in the middle of the coronavirus crisis is highly inappropriate. On such an issue there really needs to be the possibility for some public meetings to air the proposals and answer questions that interested parties need clarifying in order to take an informed view.
5. I understand that a Government review of fire services is planned. It is therefore surprising that the fire authority should choose to pre-empt the upcoming review in the middle of a national crisis. It is true that Government reviews are, more often than not, a byword for finding the next cuts. However if this is meant to preempt Government cuts, it is likely to backfire, since the reduced staffing is likely to be taken as the baseline and further cuts. A career in government departments gave me plenty of examples of across the board cuts, which were blind to any savings previously achieved. We would then be left with an unsustainable service which has to give up all but the most basic of services.
6. Now that essential services in which workers risk their lives for others are very much in the public spotlight, we could well expect the Government review to have objectives other than the usual cost cutting exercise.
7. For the reasons mentioned above, I think that you should go back to the drawing board and either:
  - start this process again;
  - or at least postpone it until the government's intentions are known.

#### Increase in the number of day appliances from 15 to 18

8. This is poorly explained and, while positive in appearance, I understand that the increase in the number of appliances comes partly from the re-designation of some appliances and that not all may have immediate crews available. It also focuses on daytime cover and goes hand in hand with a reduction in nighttime and weekend cover.

#### Reducing the number of second fire engines at some stations

9. This removes local resilience and seems reckless. At a large house fire nearby a few years ago, I recall that at least 4 fire engines were present, therefore mobilising the first fire engines from all neighbouring fire stations. If an additional fire, or a traffic accident had happened in the area at the same time, under the proposals fire engines would have had to travel from Eastbourne or Brighton. The document mentions a small delay, but in that example I suggest the delay would have been at least half an hour, whereas, currently, a second local fire engine could be deployed.
10. There were large fires in the North of England last summer, which lasted weeks. Here we have the Ashdown forest and South Downs on our doorstep and the risk should be properly considered, since a local fire service with one appliance per station could be quickly overwhelmed. The current second engine gives some resilience, as was obviously considered necessary in former times. What has changed to justify such a reduction in the capacity of the service?

#### Changes at day crewed stations:

11. The proposed changes in shift patterns mean that night and weekend cover at these stations would be left entirely to on call fire fighters, thereby resulting in an initial delay. It is also dependent on recruiting a large number of on call firefighters, to replace the full time firefighters no longer working nights and weekends on the current shift pattern.
12. This is presented with a proposal to improve the retained pay of on call firefighters. This would of course be welcome, but I understand that it would be linked to increased contractual obligations that are likely to make it difficult to recruit the required numbers. Becoming an on call firefighter is a second job for people from all walks of life who wish to serve their community. They need sufficient flexibility to combine on call firefighting with their main job and their family commitments. Imposing more defined hours would make recruitment difficult and the improvement in the retained pay is unlikely to be sufficient to mitigate this.

### Changes at 2 days + 2 nights stations

13. The six week shift pattern proposed for stations retaining the 2 days + 2 nights shift pattern is poorly explained and it is not clear why it is necessary to make a change. If it is to require staff to attend different stations to cover in case of training or absences, surely the County is not so big that this couldn't be done on an ad-hoc and flexible basis, as I am sure happens currently. This system seems over complicated and will make it difficult for staff to plan their personal lives. It also could compromise the watch system where firefighters work as teams. This is obviously important in this type of work.

### Incidents which the fire service will no longer attend

14. Fire alarms:- while a good proportion of fire alarm calls may be false alarms, it seems to me there will be a serious delay in attending a real fire if the owner has to go and check the alarm first. This would lead to additional risks for the business, neighbouring properties and residents. Why not levy a charge for false alarms instead? It would be an incentive for businesses to keep their alarms in good functioning order, would be a source of income for improvements in the fire service and would eliminate the risks of responses being slowed
15. Trapped birds:- it is mentioned that the animal welfare societies do not have the means to rescue birds trapped in roof netting. Apart from the animal welfare implications of stopping such rescues, there is also a risk of members of the public attempting rescue themselves and having a serious accident as a result. I also understand that such incidents have a value as training exercises with high level appliances, without the pressure for firefighters of being in life threatening situations.

### **Pay**

16. The Prime Minister has talked about better showing our appreciation for health and care workers, including with better pay. I hope that will also apply to firefighters who risk their lives all year round and who are extremely underpaid both in absolute terms and in comparison with comparably skilled jobs.
17. Not only is the pay low, but there appears to be no sliding pay scale once fully trained, or pay progression linked with performance. This is a public service. May I ask how it compares with other public services like, for example, local authority staff or the police service? Do they not have pay progression of some kind?
18. There is also little incentive to seek promotion, since the pay differentials between grades is too minimal to reward responsibility. I believe this is detrimental to the service in the long run, with not enough firefighters climbing the ranks to become the leaders of the future service.

### **Cost and benefits**

19. Finally, I have only been able to find the slightest acknowledgement of the fact that a key driver behind this review is staff cost saving. Whether or not that is the case, it is still important to look at financial benefits and disbenefits of any proposals. For example:
- delaying reactions to alarms saves pointless call outs. On the other hand, the delay in responding to real incidents may ultimately cost lives and/or property;
  - not dealing with trapped birds saves resources, but there is a value to the countervailing training benefits and public safety in preventing members of the public putting themselves at risk to rescue birds.
20. These and all other aspects of the review can be measured and compared in money terms. This would provide a transparent presentation of the measures to enable interested parties to assess their value which is certainly not achieved by many pages of text expressed in qualitative terms.

Yours sincerely



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Dear Councillor Galley

Planning for a safer future: Consultation by East Sussex Fire Authority

Having discussed these proposals with a family member of the fire and rescue service, I wish to make representations against them because of their serious implications for the safety of our service, as well as the safety and welfare of its employees.

### General:

A general point is that the proposals are presented as all pros and no cons. This is improbable. They are worded to highlight each change as an improvement, without acknowledging any drawbacks to these changes. Yet they represents a root and branch upheaval of our local service, which deserve a balanced analysis for the public to consider.

In addition, the manner in which comments are invited is not equitable: the document is lengthy and complicated. It will have been tempting for consultees to rely on the summary on the right hand side, together with the Q&A which it is suggested is used to send comments. However this Q&A is worded in very **leading terms** under which only a favourable answer is possible and there is no space for additional comments until the very end (*e.g. the first question asks whether we are in favour of the number of day appliances increasing from 15 to 18. Of course we are, but the issue is not as straightforward as that, although this is not explained in the document*).

### Timing:

I object most strongly to the issue of this consultation document in the middle of the coronavirus crisis. This compromises the consultation process, because it makes it more difficult for the public to arrive at a proper understanding of the proposals and their implications: there can be no public meetings, no public decoding of the proposals. This is a one sided coin, with no opportunity for the union or staff to show the other side of the coin and thereby allow the public to take an informed view. Could this not be termed an abuse of procedure in the current circumstances? **I believe that this consultation should be postponed until such time as it can carried out in a transparent way.**

Furthermore, we are told that a Government review is imminent. It is therefore doubly surprising that the fire authority should choose to pre-empt the upcoming review in the middle of a national crisis. It is true that Government reviews are, more often than not, a byword for finding the next cuts. However if this is meant to preempt Government cuts, it is likely to backfire, since the reduced staffing is likely to be taken as the baseline and further cuts could well be requested. A career in government departments gave me plenty of examples of across the board cuts, which were blind to any savings previously achieved. We will then be left with an unsustainable service which has to give up all but the most basic of services.

In addition, we are now in a state of flux, with promises that essential services in which workers risk their lives for others will be better regarded and rewarded in the future and there is much talk of "building resilience" within these services. The Government review could therefore have changed objectives and this is not the time to conduct a cost cutting exercise.

### Increase in the number of day appliances from 15 to 18

This is poorly explained and, while positive in appearance, I understand that the increase in the number of appliances comes partly from the re-designation of some appliances and that not all may have immediate crews available. It also focuses on daytime cover and goes hand in hand with a reduction in nighttime and weekend cover.

### Reducing the number of second fire engines at some stations

This removes local resilience and seems reckless. At a large house fire nearby a few years ago, I recall that at least 4 fire engines were present, therefore mobilising the first fire engines from all neighbouring fire stations. If an additional fire, or a traffic accident had happened in the area at the same time, under the proposals fire engines would have had to travel from Eastbourne or Brighton. The document mentions a small delay, but in that example I suggest the delay would have been at least half an hour, whereas, currently, a second local fire engine could be deployed.

The current health crisis should inform thinking, showing as it does that disasters are unpredictable. There were large fires in the North of England last summer, which lasted weeks. Here we have the Ashdown forest and South

Downs on our doorstep and the risk should be properly considered, since a local fire service with one appliance per station could be quickly overwhelmed. The current second engine gives some resilience, as was obviously considered necessary in former times. What has changed to justify such a reduction in the capacity of the service?

### Changes at day crewed stations:

The proposed changes in shift patterns mean that night and weekend cover at these stations would be left entirely to on call fire fighters, thereby resulting in an initial delay. It is also dependent on recruiting a large number of on call firefighters, to replace the full time firefighters no longer working nights and weekends on the current shift pattern.

This is presented with a proposal to improve the retained pay of on call firefighters. This would of course be welcome, but I understand that it would be linked to increased contractual obligations that are likely to make it difficult to recruit the required numbers. Becoming an on call firefighter is a second job for people from all walks of life who wish to serve their community. They need sufficient flexibility to combine on call firefighting with their main job and their family commitments. Imposing more defined hours would make recruitment difficult and the improvement in the retained pay is unlikely to be sufficient to mitigate this.

### Changes at 2days + 2 nights stations

The six week shift pattern proposed for stations retaining the 2 days + 2 nights shift pattern is poorly explained and it is not clear why it is necessary to make a change. If it is to require staff to attend different stations to cover in case of training or absences, surely the County is not so big that this couldn't be done on an ad-hoc and flexible basis, as I am sure happens currently. This system seems over complicated and will make it difficult for staff to plan their personal lives. It also could compromise the watch system where firefighters work as teams. This is obviously important in this type of work.

### Incidents which the fire service will no longer attend

Fire alarms:- while a good proportion of fire alarm calls may be false alarms, it seems to me there will be a serious delay in attending a real fire if the owner has to go and check the alarm first, with additional risk to the business, neighbouring properties and residents. Why not levy a charge for false alarms instead? It would be an incentive for businesses to keep their alarms in good functioning order, would be a source of income for improvements in the fire service and would eliminate the risks of responses being slowed

Trapped birds:- it is mentioned that the animal welfare societies do not have the means to rescue birds trapped in roof netting. Apart from the animal welfare implications of stopping such rescues, there is also a risk of members of the public attempting rescue themselves and having a serious accident as a result. I also understand that such incidents have a value as training exercises with high level appliances, without the pressure for firefighters of being in life threatening situations.

### Pay

While this is not mentioned in the document except in relation to the retainer for on call firefighters, I think the review that should be taking place is on pay. This comment is based solely on my own observation.

The Prime Minister has talked about better showing our appreciation for health and care workers, including with better pay. I hope that will also apply to firefighters who risk their lives all year round and who are extremely underpaid both in absolute terms and in comparison with comparably skilled jobs.

Not only is the pay low, but there appears to be no sliding pay scale once fully trained, or pay progression linked with performance. This is a public service. May I ask how it compares with other public services like, for example, local authority staff or the police service? Do they not have pay progression of some kind? While working in a particular Government Department, I also had a period when pay progression was suspended for a time. As a result my pension is nearly half that of my husband, who worked in a different Department where pay progression had been maintained. I therefore feel very strongly about this. Pay progression based on performance is a valuable and equitable incentive in any profession.

There is also little incentive to seek promotion, since the pay differentials between grades is too minimal to reward responsibility. I believe this is detrimental to the service in the long run, with not enough firefighters climbing the ranks to become the leaders of the future service.

There also seems to be inequalities in the fire service pension system, which I intend to write to you about separately.

May I ask how it compares with, for example, local authority staff or the police service? Do they not have pay progression of some kind? While working in a particular Government Department, I also had a period when pay progression was suspended. As a result my pension is nearly half that of my husband, who worked in a different Department where pay progression had been maintained. I therefore feel very strongly about this.

These and all other aspects of the review can be measured and compared in money terms. This would provide a transparent presentation of the measures to enable interested parties to assess their value which is certainly not achieved by many pages of text expressed in qualitative terms.

There is a lot of talk currently about "increasing resilience " in the NHS once the crisis is over. It seems to me the same should apply to the fire service. Instead these proposals pare it to the bone.

Yours sincerely

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To Whom it May Concern

I have recently received a leaflet about the proposed changes to Crowborough Fire Station. I was hoping you'd be able to explain the reasons for reducing the staffing and fire cover provided by Crowborough Fire Station to the surrounding area?

Further to this, as a resident of Crowborough, I'd specifically like to know what you predict the effect on attendance times for first and second fire appliances will be, I'd like to know how pre-determined attendances to different incidents will be affected and I'd be interested to know the justification behind these changes.

As well intentioned as these changes to the organisation of East Sussex Fire and Rescue may be; I'm curious to know whether this is a strategic shuffle of fire appliances to redistribute necessary cover, or if this is a penny pinching exercise and you intend to plug holes left by cuts to whole time staff with retained firefighters?

I hope this email finds you well and I look forward to your response and a correspondence with you regarding this matter.

Kind regards

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To whom this may concern

I would like to raise my objection to the proposed planned cuts to the Fire Service. This will put our Communities at risk.

Please keep me informed of any developments in this area.

Kind regards

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Dear Chief Fire Officer Dawn Whittaker

### **Re Proposed changes and cuts to our fire service**

Thank you for your letter dated June 2020 about the public consultation on the future proposals for East Sussex Fire and Rescue service.

We have read your document, that you suggest people study and although we find some of the document compelling, we have particular concerns about the fire stations in Uckfield end Crowborough.

We are geographically at the very northern end of the area that your service covers, and we strongly feel that both Uckfield and Crowborough should retain their current allocation of two fire engines plus the current staffing levels and shift patterns.

We do not feel that adequate account has been taken of the proposed expansion of housing in both Uckfield and Crowborough and the additional load this potentially will have on the fire service. In addition, fires often happen on Ashdown Forest which necessitate both the Crowborough and Uckfield fire engines attending. This is particular to our area of the County. Fire crews and appliances can be involved in fighting fires on Ashdown Forest for a considerable length of time and if there were only one appliance in each station this would leave our area very vulnerable.

The changes to the way staff are rostered and allocated in the stations also is of great concern and the response times to emergencies will be impeded by those changes.

If these proposals were to be implemented the Fire and Rescue service will lose experienced knowledgeable and highly skilled firefighters who will be difficult to replace. They also have an excellent knowledge of our locality and the particular issues within it. These proposals appeared to take no real cognisance of what knowledge and experience will be lost through these proposed changes.

Within the document there appears to be an implicit assumption that the central control location will be moved to one that covers a much greater geographical area. This raises enormous issues about the knowledge of those call handlers and the ability to direct locally based personal and appliances to the right place. We feel this is a money driven initiative rather than what is best for the service.

In fact, the basis of this document also appears to be an attempt to cut the budget while currently there is no requirement to do this. This seems short sighted and unnecessary.

We are also genuinely concerned that this consultation is happening while there is a national emergency to deal with a global pandemic and the current restrictions mean there are not adequate opportunities to attend meetings and discuss these proposals publicly.

We believe this consultation should be suspended until the national emergency is over and any consultation can happen in an appropriate, transparent and open way.

We support both Uckfield Town Council and Crowborough Town Council in their objections to these changes and would support their recommendations to you on the subject.

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As a member of Lewes Town Council, these are my responses to the consultation.  
Lewes Town Council is making a corporate response, and this will be sent separately.  
The implications to Lewes are contained within proposals 123 and 6.

### **Proposal 1**

#### Operational Resilience Plan

Changes to the service will mean that Lewes station will go from 2 appliances to 1.

It is not known how many "on-call" staff will be needed to guarantee 100% availability of one appliance. Without a full complement of staff, full cover cannot be guaranteed.

This also means that an incident somewhere else will take away that engine, leaving Lewes without capacity. I cannot accept that this is in the interests of Lewes residents.

### **Proposal 2\_**

#### Changes to Day Crewed Stations

The loss to Lewes of 6 wholtime jobs of fully trained firefighters cannot be balanced by replacing them with "on-call" staff.

- The crew that provides evening, night and weekend cover are entirely different to the permanent crew, so will have limited experience operating the engine and equipment.
- Recruiting these on-call / retained firefighters is extremely challenging, particularly in a reasonably prosperous town such as Lewes:
  - The salary offered (£11k-13k/annum) would not be enough to attract people to do this as their only job
  - Therefore, they will have other work commitments which could affect their availability
  - Turnover of these staff is very high; most take it as a last resort but accept other, permanent jobs (inside or outside the service) if they become available
  - The turnover is a particular problem as training firefighters in all of the necessary disciplines generally takes about 2 years (so if staff turnover more often than that there is never a fully-qualified crew)
  - Being all on call all evenings, nights and weekends is a very family- and friends-unfriendly arrangement (e.g. never being able to go to the pub or have a drink in the evening or at weekends) which few people would accept for the salary on offer
- By necessity, the on-call crew (who will have other jobs) will be very much a scratch crew with availability dictated by other work commitments; therefore assembling a crew with all of the right skills to crew an engine properly (driver, breathing-apparatus specialist, junior officer, etc) will be extremely complex with a high risk that not all staff will be properly skilled (risking their lives and the lives of people caught in the fire)
- The crew will also have limited experience of working together and will not know each other's strengths and capabilities well, reducing the efficiency of the response and increasing the risk to residents/employees and firefighters
- There would be less emergency/contingency cover available when there are multiple calls (e.g. when the Technical Response unit is out (currently the other permanent firefighters can be called on when necessary as they do not have other jobs).

(Currently, Lewes has only managed to recruit and retain 3.5 'units' of retained staff (a 'unit' is someone on call 120 hours/week); 12 would be required to cover the loss of the second watch.)

The replacement of trained full time firefighters with "flexible crewing pool" will increase stress and risk to them as the strength of working in established teams will be compromised.

I cannot agree that this change is in the interests either of the residents of the town, nor the firefighters resident here.

### Proposal 3\_

#### Second Fire Engines

For bigger incidents in Lewes , two engines are deployed as a matter of course. This provides additional equipment / resilience and flexibility, which would be lost if this proposal were implemented.

If a second engine was needed, it would need to be called from another station (assuming one is available) which would very significantly increase call-out times (increasing the risk to Lewes residents, businesses and fire fighters).

On the other side, if there was an incident elsewhere in East Sussex, Lewes would be far less likely to be able to provide an additional engine for fear of leaving the town unprotected.

A recent wildfire in Ashdown Forest required 8 engines in attendance. If this number of second engines are removed, that would leave some fire stations (including some "core" stations) without any engine available in the event of a local fire.

## Demand Management

Stop call out to Automatic Fire Alarms

1. Risk of fire spreading in high-density / old commercial areas in Lewes. Although 96% no fire, in 4% there is a fire and this could spread rapidly in dense areas such as Lewes. Increased risk of loss of life, especially in the flats above many of the town centre commercial properties.

Lift rescue stopped

2. Limited impact, but questionable whether this will make a great deal of difference as unlikely that the lift maintenance teams will respond within an acceptable timescale.

Stop rescuing trapped birds

3. Much greater risk of the public / others trying to rescue trapped or dying animals and birds themselves, putting themselves at considerable risk.

Council tax contributions to the Fire Service are not reducing. The cuts are being proposed because of reductions / uncertainty in Government Grants. We therefore are firmly of the opinion that central Government must provide assurances that Fire Service grants will not be reduced, so that the Fire Service can make proper plans for the future without the need to make these dangerous cuts to front-line services.

Furthermore, -West Sussex FRS implemented similar changes 4-5 years ago. Their most recent inspection report rated it as one of the worst Fire Services in the country (inadequate in its protection of the public and looking after its staff; and requiring improvement in the way that it keeps people safe and secure and the way it uses its resources). It now requires £34m of investment to address the many failings identified by the inspection. Trying to make similar savings in East Sussex would therefore have a high risk of actually costing more in the medium term.

According to ESFRS risk profile for Lewes, incidences have increased 0.3% since 2009, and Lewes itself is rated as the 3rd busiest day crewed area within East Sussex. There are proportionally more fires and RTCs and twice the number of non-residential fires compared to figures within East Sussex.

Add to this the increasing potential for consequences of climate chaos: flooding and wildfires, and the increase in the size of the town both in residential and business property, it is very clear that reducing capacity of the service provided to the town is compromises safety to our residents and to the firefighters who live here and we cannot accept it.

  
  
Town Councillor, Priory Ward, Lewes

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Dear Sirs

Councillors have looked into this and they think prior to commenting it would be best to hear from East Sussex Fire and Rescue.

They say;

'This seems to be mainly about risk management, though it does mention cost savings a few times so they suspect its more of a driver than it indicates. That being said most stations have seen a 20-30% reduction in incidents so a reduction operational cost is possibly appropriate.

- On page 44 it states resources will be moved to where they are most needed.
- It also states 7 (Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield) will cease to be two engine station and become one, though it fails to state where those resources will be reallocated.
- 3 Stations (Seaford, Heathfield, and Wadhurst) already have one and are being reclassified instead of a maxi-cab to a single, it doesn't directly suggest this will decrease the number of firefighters at these stations but it doesn't explicitly say they will be reclassified there.

- There will also be an additional engine at Hastings.
- This means at most a reduction in 6 engines not 10, with a new aerial unit this would actually mean reducing 35 to 30 vehicles, given not all engines can respond now as there is a lack of crew this in itself doesn't seem so alarming.
- Any losses in available crews are a little less transparent, as lots of the proposals overlap, and it isn't clear if losses in one add to another, which could mean the proposed 30 vehicles aren't able to be used which may be worrying.

In all they feel this is a complex report with multiple overlapping proposals. Given this affects a public service, Councillors feel there is a need for a more transparent view of the impacts of the proposals in particular with the staffing levels. A simple existing and proposed - net loss/gain in hours and number of personnel would help greatly.

Alison Stevens  
Clerk to Berwick Parish Council

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We have been notified of a downgrading of Rye Fire Station to a single appliance, and I have examined the ESFRS consultation document which is titled "Planning for a Safer Future".

Rye has a densely packed centre, with most of the houses in the Citadel area being grade 2 listed or above. Many of the streets have houses which, because of their age have attics that communicate. As residents of the Citadel we have been concerned for years that any fire could thus rapidly spread sideways to involve multiple buildings, quite apart from most being of timber construction and therefore likely to burn fast.

The recent fire at "The George" Hotel is an example of how rapidly fire can take hold and cause substantial damage. To reduce the number of appliances stationed at Rye, not least as it covers extensive holiday camp accommodation at Camber and Dungeness power station, is a significant threat to the town. In the case of "The George" a long ladder appliance had to be called, and it took at least 20 minutes to arrive; with only one appliance in Rye, were there to be another fire like this the delay before others could be brought across will lead to loss of property and possibly loss of life.

I have noted the figures for the number of fires requiring only a single appliance. I do not agree that this fact justifies the proposal given the layout and historic importance of the town, which is more vulnerable than any of the other towns where the proposal has been made.

The Fire Brigades Union is concerned that the proposal is dangerous. So am I. Indeed I would go so far as to suggest it would be negligent, not least given the inappropriate title of the consultation so far as Rye is concerned.

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I have read the proposed suggested changes to the service and I am incredulous.

Once again the north of the county is to suffer with resources concentrated in the south.

This is highly questionable with the highly vulnerable Ashdown Forest seeing increasing traffic and visitors and the related fire risks.

As for the suggestion that a fire service can be run 9 to 6 is clearly a nonsense-try asking those who suffer a possible life threatening fire between the hours not covered!

The 50per cent cut in highly trained and skilled operatives in the growing town of Crowborough is a major concern and with the loss of related equipment raises the question of the meeting of legal levels of coverage and service levels.

Please reconsider these series of dangerous proposals which will put lives at risk and threaten people's livelihoods. Quite frankly one begins to wonder why we pay council tax....no local ambulance service, pot holes everywhere, road gullies remaining blocked after four years, etc etc. And now devastating proposals around the fire service.

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I have received your circular letter, dated June 2020. This paints a completely different picture to the proposed plan than I understood.

I am a resident of Crowborough and have been for more than 50 years, having seen it grow from a village of 9K to the largest inland town in the county of some 24K+. The growth continues with several hundred new properties under construction or in the advanced planning stage.

With this in mind. I cannot see the logic or common sense for our local fire station being reduced in man hours, one main vehicle and the amount of full time staff. To make matters worse, my understanding is that our nearest assistance - Uckfield - is to suffer the same cuts. To my mind, such action can only lead to unacceptable delays and greater risk of damage to property and even more seriously, loss of life.

I would respectfully urge you to reconsider this plan and at least maintain the status quo.

I thank you for the opportunity for me to make my feelings known and sincerely trust these and other like minded comments will and surely must be taken into account.

Respectively

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On the non emergency calls agree birds should not be rescued.

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Dear Sirs

### **ESFRS Consultation Proposals**

I am writing on behalf of the Parish Council, in response to the recent consultation you have published, entitled Planning for a Safer Future.

The Council is of course very supportive of ESFRS and the fantastic work done by its staff, and it recognises your limited resources. However the Council would like to put on record that it does not support your proposals to remove a second fire appliance from Battle and Bexhill, and to move to 'day only' at Battle and Bexhill.

Yours faithfully,

Clerk to Crowhurst Parish Council

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Dear Sir/Madam

### **South Highton Parish Council response to the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Consultation 'Planning for a Safer Future'**

South Highton Parish Council considered this consultation at their meeting on 16th June 2020 and resolved to present the following comments to the consultation.

The Council has read the ESFRS Response 'Statement on consultation decision' dated 28th April regarding the decision to hold the consultation during the Covid-19 pandemic and expresses concern at this decision; the consultation must take into account what fire and rescue services should look like in the future – the pandemic, and its effect on fire and rescue services, must be taken into account within the consultation process and the Council hopes that this will be the case.

The Council is concerned at the following statement on page 42 of the consultation document regarding Proposal 2 – changes to day crewed duty stations “the community would still have a 24/7 response from these stations but it would mean we may take slightly longer to attend during the daytime at the weekend in these station areas”. The Council, and many residents, feel that the proposed introduction of a ‘Day Only’ crewing model, with evenings and weekends being covered only by on-call firefighters, would lead to significantly increased response times and that any additional time taken to respond to an incident has the potential to put lives at risk.

Furthermore, the Council would like to raise the issue of increased traffic on our surrounding roads and how this would affect the proposals. Page 20 of the risk management plan notes that the population of East Sussex is set to increase by 55,000 by 2032 which will undoubtedly lead to increased traffic on our roads and increased households within our towns and villages. In recent months, the area has had significant development approved, particularly within the Newhaven port area, which will result in increased traffic on our roads. In addition, the recent closure of the Newhaven Port lorry holding area over the weekends has forced many large heavy-goods vehicles back onto our surrounding roads and the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a large influx of tourists to the South East coast. The Council, and residents, feel that now is not the time to be reducing available fire engines and crewed stations.

The Council could not find any reference within the proposals to deal with the Newhaven Swing Bridge opening. The swing bridge causes significant tail-backs and queues which are only set to increase with the new industrial developments in the area; with the removal of second fire engines at Newhaven, Seaford and Lewes, residents would like to be assured that there would be no delay in response if an incident occurred whilst the swing bridge was operational.

South Highton, and the local area, has seen increased flooding, particularly over the winter of 2019 and residents are again concerned that the removal of second fire engines at nearby stations could result in reduced capacity and response times to respond to flooding incidents.

Thank you for taking our concerns into account, we look forward to seeing them addressed during the consultation process.

Yours Sincerely  
On behalf of South Highton Parish Council  
Stephanie Mills

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Dear Senior Management Team of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

I am concerned to hear that there are plans to cut a fire engine and 50% loss of full-time fire fighters at Crowborough, plus a reduction in evening and weekend fire cover. I am concerned to hear this as are many others in Crowborough as we are concerned about the safety of this proposal. Can you please re-think it and explain how you think Crowborough and surrounding villages would be safely covered under such a proposal. Under such a proposal how would fire engines get to houses quickly enough in emergency situations? We are all very concerned about this.

Yours faithfully

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SEAFORD TOWN COUNCIL

Response to Consultation by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service on ‘Planning for a Secure Future’

The Consultation document has been forwarded to and considered by members of the Council and we would ask that the following points are taken into consideration :-

1.Overall the review should be more honest about the fact that one of the main purposes must be to make up a deficit in funding. This is only acknowledged indirectly in the final pages. However, the decision not to close any stations in East Sussex and Brighton is welcomed

2.It is noted that Seaford is reclassified from a maxi-cab station to an ordinary single engine. There is concern over the future effectiveness of the cover at Seaford particularly at a time when there is significant housing growth in the town and the town already has a high elderly demographic with limited mobility, many living in blocks of flats. Survey responses from previous years may not necessarily be relevant to the next 10 years when so much growth is envisaged

3.We should comment on the proposed changes at Newhaven as it is close enough to be considered a local station; we are fortunate in having two stations operating in a relatively small area. However, the proposed removal of fulltime staff covering evenings and weekends at Newhaven and reliance instead on an unmanned station and on-call staff will inevitably affect emergency cover in both towns

4.The proximity of Newhaven to Seaford may have been taken into account in the review of staffing and general cover but it should be pointed out that a road accident blocking the A259 between the two towns would effectively prevent any assistance from Newhaven to any fire or other incident occurring in Seaford and vice versa

5.The additional flexibility generally in having a mobile pool of fire officers to supplement stations around the county may sound like a good idea but it may adversely affect officer morale which comes from attachment to a particular team or watch at a specific home station. Also, it is difficult to see how the proposed reduction of officers by 33 or 27, depending on which option is followed, can actually improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the county service.

6.Charging fees for attending false alarms may be appropriate in certain circumstances but proposing not to attend alarm calls from low risk commercial premises discriminates against small business and could have grave consequences for those businesses and their neighbours. As regards lift releases, any proposed delay in responding would be a concern but there would be support for charging in these cases

Geoff Johnson  
Planning Officer  
Seaford Town Council

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We reference to receiving a leaflet regarding closure of certain fire stations in East Sussex, This is an absolute ludicrous idea with population alone in Crowborough. There are new homes being built as we speak, we live next to Ashdown forest which has many fires and also road and traffic accidents. How can this be a viable to the safety of the community to have a fire engine being called from a station that's miles away. More lives will be lost and disasters not being able to be dealt with as quickly. I really hope for the sake of the community and jobs that will be jeopardised this does not happen especially in Crowborough as this is my home town.

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Response of Lewes District Council (LDC)

### Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan

#### Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?

#### LDC Response

Strongly agree/ Tend to agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Tend to disagree/ Strongly disagree

The Council supports the proposal to increase the number of immediate response fire engines at the start of the day to 18. On its own, and as the *Planning for a Safer Future* consultation document mentions, these would have an impact on coverage overall.

However, under Proposal 3 - *We are proposing to change the number of fire stations that have two fire engines based on them*, Lewes and Newhaven fire stations for example, would have a single fire engine. These fire stations would be unable to provide a resilience fire engine if one were needed in Seaford. Therefore, in such an event, a resilience engine would need to come from a smaller station such as Barcombe. We are concerned that this might increase the time required for a resilience engine to travel to Seaford if needed, any may leave Barcombe without a fire engine for that period. The Council is concerned by the potential for heightened risks faced by households, businesses and firefighters that could result from increased delays arising from the reduction in the total number of fire engines.

## Proposal 2: Changes to Day-crewed Duty Stations

### Question

Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?

### LDC Response

Strongly agree/ Tend to agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ **Tend to disagree**/ Strongly disagree

The Council disagrees with the proposals to reduce the number of permanent watches in Lewes and Newhaven from two to one, and to replace the second watch with a flexible crewing pool made up of on-call firefighters.

### Question

Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, if the crewing change is agreed by ESFRS, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?

### LDC Response

Option A/ Option B

The Council disagrees with the proposal to change the crewing system from "day-crewed" to "day-only". Consequently, neither of the alternative options proposed are supported.

## Proposal 3: Changing the Number of Fire Stations with Two Fire Engines

### Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?

### LDC Response

Strongly agree/ Tend to agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ **Tend to disagree**/ Strongly disagree

The Council disagrees with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from the seven fire stations. Removing seven fire engines from these fire stations has the potential to significantly increase call-out times, increase the risk that fire engines will not be available to attend an incident, and increase the risk to households, businesses and firefighters.

In July 2019 Lewes District Council declared a climate emergency. Climate change is expected to increase wildfires and flooding in East Sussex. By their nature, these incidents require the attendance of many fire engines for long periods. A reduction in the number of fire engines, and by seven in total, may compromise the ability of ESFRS to respond to any such incidents.

### Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three “maxi-cab” stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations?

LDC Response

A concern is that by reducing the capability of Seaford fire station as well as other stations, this may decrease the effectiveness of any response, and has the potential to increase the time required to respond to larger incidents. This may also increase the likelihood that other fire engines will need to be called in from nearby fire stations.

**Proposal 4: Crewing and Fire Engine Changes at Hastings**

Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?

LDC Response

Strongly agree/ Tend to agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Tend to disagree/ Strongly disagree/ **Don't know**  
There is no direct impact of this change on Lewes District.

**Proposal 6: Demand Management**

Question

Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs): To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises?

LDC Response

Strongly agree/ Tend to agree/ **Neither agree nor disagree**/ Tend to disagree/ Strongly disagree  
The *Planning for a Safer Future* consultation document explains that on average, ESFRS attends 9,200 incidents each year. Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) account for 34% of all these calls, but 96% of the calls initially categorised as AFAs turn out to be false alarms.  
We remain concerned that in the dense commercial areas at the centre of Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford, where in many cases people are living above the commercial premises and often other businesses immediately adjacent, the ability to respond quickly to AFAs will be critical in avoiding loss of life or the spread of fire to other businesses.

Question

Lift releases: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance?

LDC Response

Strongly agree/ Tend to agree/ **Neither agree nor disagree**/ Tend to disagree/ Strongly disagree  
The Council agrees with the principle that the building owners should resolve the issue when there is no risk or distress to the people who are trapped. However, there remain questions concerning how often this will be possible without causing risk or distress to trapped occupants.

Question

Trapped birds: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?

LDC Response

Strongly agree/ Tend to agree/ **Neither agree nor disagree**/ Tend to disagree/ Strongly disagree

It is the Council's understanding that the Fire Service normally only attends incidents involving trapped birds after it has been asked to do so by wildlife charities. This would normally be because there is no way to free the animals without the specialist equipment that the Fire Service has, and/or because the animal is in considerable distress.

The Council is aware of the many competing responsibilities of the Fire Service. However, if the animals are not rescued by ESFRS, there is potential for greater risk to the public and others in attempting to rescue trapped or dying animals and birds themselves. Without the suitable equipment of the Fire Service, the public may place themselves at risk.

### Proposal 7: Changes to 4-Watch Duty System

#### Question

Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)?

#### LDC Response

Strongly agree/ Tend to agree/ **Neither agree nor disagree**/ Tend to disagree/ Strongly disagree

Although this proposal does not directly affect Lewes District, there are concerns about the replacement of permanent fire fighters with flexible and/or on-call crews.

#### Question

Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements at the 5 ESFRS fire stations listed above, if the crewing arrangements are changed, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?

#### LDC Response

Option A/ Option B

The Council disagrees with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements. Consequently, neither of the alternative options proposed are supported.

### Building and Home Inspections

#### Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?

#### LDC Response

Strongly agree/ **Tend to agree**/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Tend to disagree/ Strongly disagree

The Council agrees that alongside existing services provided by ESFRS, more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and would offer more public assurance about fire safety.

### ESFRS' Finances in the Future

#### Question

Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?

#### LDC Response

Yes/ No/ Don't know

No comment.

#### Question

To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?

LDC Response

Strongly agree/ **Tend to agree**/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Tend to disagree/ Strongly disagree

The Council agrees that ESFRS currently offers value for money. However, the proposals as set out have the potential to compromise the overall ability of ESFRS to maintain its range of services and consequently, this may reduce the organisations' ability to provide value for money moving forwards.

Question

In what ways do you think that ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future?

LDC Response

Some of the potential ways that organisations can look to make savings include simplifying services, or by sharing or multi-purposing office spaces to reduce administration costs, for example.

**ESFRS' Purpose and Commitments**

Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate?

LDC Response

Strongly agree/ **Tend to agree**/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Tend to disagree/ Strongly disagree

The Council has no concerns with the current purpose and commitments of ESFRS.

If you have any further comments you would like to make about any of the proposals in the consultation, please write below.

No response.

Are there any positive or negative impacts from ESFRS that you believe should be taken into account? If so, are you able to provide any supporting evidence and suggest any ways to reduce or remove any potential negative impact and increase any positive impact?

No response.

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Dear Councillors,

I'm hoping that the residents of Seaford, Peacehaven, Telscombe Newhaven and surrounding villages can rely on you to oppose the proposal to reduce fire and rescue services in their areas.

To reduce the capacity (of both fire engines and staff) in Newhaven seems very short sighted to me. One fire engine to cover such a large area and population could be problematic, especially if the swing bridge was open and, therefore, the seaford crew were held up trying to assist if 2 appliances were deemed necessary.

Having spent so much money on the new fire station only a few years ago, it is difficult to comprehend why it is being proposed to half its capacity. Will the excess capacity be offered for community use. The whole concept of this building was so good in principle with 2 of the emergency services being housed in one building.

Unfortunately the police no longer use the building to anywhere near its full potential. Are the old police and fire stations ever going to be sold or developed for the benefit of Newhaven?

I look forward to receiving your reassurance that you will oppose these proposals.

Regards

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Dear Ms Hart

I would like to register with you my wholehearted opposition to any proposed Cuts to Rye Fire Station. I understand it is currently the 4th busiest on call in East Sussex.

Across East Sussex, the proposed cuts would see the loss of up to 30 full time posts and up to 60 retained fire fighter posts.

1 fire engine crewed with just 4 firefighters to cover approximately 106sq kilometers - in proximity of an airport, 2 major holiday camps in Camber, Dungeness nuclear power station and 1 upper-Tier Comah (Control of Major Accident Hazards) site.

When The George Hotel in Rye burned down last year, it took 8 fire crews to deal, promptly and effectively, with the blaze - and to ensure the entire High St didn't go up in flames as well. I still have pieces of molten lead that prove just how hot the fire was.

There have been 6+ incidents of arson in the Rye area over the last couple of years.

Hastings Pier burned down in 2010, as have Eastbourne and Brighton piers.

The East Sussex coastline between Hastings and Brighton/Hove has some extremely high buildings and tower blocks. One of which I saw in flames on Hastings seafront a few years ago.

The entire country benefited during the Covid 19 pandemic when the extra work by firefighters included helping to deliver health and other vital supplies; assembling Personal Protective Equipment; most crucially of all, assisting ambulance/emergency services including with deceased victims.

Just one lesson that the current Government, and local authorities, ought to have learned from the current Covid 19 pandemic is that Cutting already over-stretched Public Services has very serious Consequences.

I hope that you and your colleagues, in Parliament and local government, will be opposing these proposed cuts and thereby showing Rye and all Emergency services they have your full support for their crucial work.

It is Vital Work that we all have benefitted from.

Thank you for your time.

yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

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If Bexhill Fire station is not covered 24 hours a day how can this be safe? If there is a fire at night retained firefighter would have to be contacted and go to the fire station to man the appliance.

What is the maximum extra time involved by your proposals?

[Redacted signature]

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To whom it may concern at the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Fire Authority,

Please find below a response to the 'Planning for a Safer Future' consultation from the Brighton and Hove City Council Green Group of Councillors.

The submission is put forward on behalf of all nineteen Green Councillors, who may also send on individual responses using the online form.

Our response reflects our concerns that the changes proposed, while perhaps not intended to have a detrimental impact on fire safety, could lead to a poorer service and have particularly negative impacts on Brighton and Hove. Our response is also informed by feedback from staff represented in the Fire Brigades Union, who we recognise as offering valuable insight into how work is delivered 'on the ground.' We also note that a public petition calling for a rejection of the proposals has amassed over 29,000 signatures at the time of writing – a sizeable public opposition.

We have been alarmed to read that the Medium Term Financial Plan suggests that the authority may need to make savings of between £0.7m and £3.6m by 2024/25. Though we appreciate that the Authority is under pressure to deliver a service that falls within more recent budget constraints, the 'savings' that are suggested in the proposals do, in our view, represent cuts to budgets that are already suffering the effects of underfunding across the past ten years. We recognise that the Government is reviewing how much is spent on public services such as the Fire and Rescue service, however we note that three MPs have spoken out against current proposals, with Green MP Caroline Lucas calling for increased funding to the service. Our group of Green Councillors also remain outspoken about cuts to public services, particularly our fire and rescue service, and we also refer you to public statements we have made in this regard.

While we are relieved to see that none of the city's fire stations will be closed as part of these savings, nonetheless, we are resolute in our view that the removal of secondary engines from surrounding towns will have an impact on the capacity of the service to respond to fires across the region and therefore in our city.

As a result, we have serious objections to the proposals which we urge you to consider. We hope the below serves as a useful general response from the group, and that the detail below will serve to augment any additional individual responses received through the online survey.

Sincerely,

Brighton and Hove Green Group of Councillors  
(As undersigned)

Councillor Steph Powell, Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty, Councillor Hannah Clare, Councillor Steve Davis, Councillor Lizzie Deane, Councillor Marianna Ebel, Councillor David Gibson, Councillor Amy Heley, Councillor Elaine Hills, Councillor Siriol Hugh-Jones, Councillor Leo Littman, Councillor Alex Phillips, Councillor Tom Druitt, Councillor Jamie Lloyd, Councillor Sarah Nield, Councillor Martin Osborne, Councillor Clare Rainey, Councillor Sue Shanks, Councillor Pete West

Response of Green Councillors on Brighton & Hove City Council:

## Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan

### 1.Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?

### Green Councillor Response

#### Tend to disagree

We have reviewed this question in line with **Proposal 3** "*We are proposing to change the number of fire stations that have two fire engines based on them.*"

The proposal to increase the fire engines at the start of the day from 15 to 18 does, in our view, not improve any fire cover in the Brighton and Hove area, as Brighton and Hove will still persist with 4 engines.

We are concerned that the secondary fire engine at Preston Circus (91P4) will be taken out of the city to cover neighbouring fire stations like Lewes and Newhaven. This is because Lewes and Newhaven fire stations would now have a single fire engine, and these stations would therefore be unable to provide a resilience fire engine if one were needed in central Brighton.

## Proposal 2: Changes to Day-crewed Duty Stations

### Question

2. Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?

### Green Councillor Response

#### Tend to disagree

The changes to day crewing station will mean that they only provide day cover Mon – Fri. Our concern is therefore that the Preston Circus crew will go on calls further towards the Lewes area, due to the reduction in the immediate response provided by Lewes, most notably at night-time and weekends (when a good number of incidents tend to happen).

We are concerned that the same will also happen with Roedean, as they will be taken out of the city to cover Newhaven's ground at night-time and at weekends, due to them being on a 5-minute delay more of the time.

As far as we are aware, the current system of Watch crew works well. It ensures a current minimum of 10 staff on duty to get the vehicles out, and ensures that the staff are trained to get those vehicles out, i.e., an Incident Commander, a driver, and ideally 2 fire-fighters competent with breathing apparatus.

There is a danger that Managers will be in the office managing cover rather than out doing prevention and training work.

The system has worked very well since 1975. The FBU want to keep this system in place and we support them in this.

### Extra Question

3. Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, if the crewing change is agreed by ESFRS, which of the two options (A: reduction of 33 posts or B reduction of 28 posts).

### Green Councillor Response

We support neither option so would prefer to opt for 'don't know' if possible.

## Proposal 3: Changing the Number of Fire Stations with Two Fire Engines

### Question

4. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?

### Green Councillor Response

#### Strongly disagree

The removal of second fire engines will again see Preston Circus and Roedean taken out of the city more often and further afield to cover gaps left by the removal of other second fire engines. Roedean

will be "Newhaven's second fire engine" and first to attend at night and weekends. This will significantly increase the amount of time Roedean is unavailable to cover Brighton and Hove. Preston Circus will be covering a lot more of Lewes as a second fire engine.

This proposal also means there are less fire engines to back-up the city. It is worth pointing out that B&H needs a minimum of 6 fire engines for a high-rise fire. We only have 4 in Brighton and Hove, so we are always relying on neighbouring fire stations to support us, most notably Newhaven and Lewes, who are both set to have a fire engine cut.

The recent wildfire in the Ashdown Forest required 8 engines in attendance. If this number of second engines is removed, then that might leave some fire stations (including some "core" stations) without any engine available in the event of a local fire.

In 2019 Brighton & Hove City Council declared a climate emergency. It is expected that climate chaos will happen, and that we will see an increase in wildfires and flooding across East Sussex, including Brighton and Hove. We need all of our fire engines to remain as is.

### Extra Question

5. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three "maxi-cab" stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations?

### Green Councillor Response

**Disagree.** We are concerned that this refers to down-grading 10 fire stations from a dual-status to single-pump station.

We remain concerned that as a result Roedean's fire engine will be taken out more and more from the city, leaving the city vulnerable.

## Proposal 4: Crewing and Fire Engine Changes at Hastings

### 6. Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?

### Green Councillor Response

#### **Tend to disagree**

The Hastings proposals are a cause of concern for Hastings. However, with regard to Brighton and Hove, we are concerned this will mean there will be no guaranteed second Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) for Brighton to call upon. The Recent Pankhurst Avenue fire in Hanover & Elm Grove in Brighton required two ALPs.

## Proposal 5 – Changes to the provision of specialist vehicles, including aerial appliances.

The reduction of whole-time and retained staff on day-crewed stations and the removal of second fire engines means that there will be less staff to crew big incidents. If there is a large incident in Brighton and Hove and we need both fire engines and special vehicles to come, we question whether there will

be enough staff to crew all those vehicles. This in our view could lead to damaging delays in Brighton and Hove getting the back-up that it requires.

## Proposal 6: Demand Management

### 7. Question

Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs): To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises?

#### Green Councillor Response

#### Tend to disagree

The *Planning for a Safer Future* consultation document explains that on average, ESFRS attends 9,200 incidents each year. Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) account for 34% of all these calls, but 96% of the calls initially categorised as AFAs turn out to be false alarms.

However we note from feedback that Fire-fighters believe that AFA's are never false alarms to start with, and that alarms go off for a reason. Irrespective, without checking, actual fires can be left to burn for longer periods of time, needing more resources to put them out once they are called.

### 8. Question

Lift releases: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance?

#### Green Councillor Response

#### Strongly disagree

We are deeply concerned that this proposal is being made without regard to what other services may or not be available. While we recognise that the Fire Service could be better supported by more appropriate corporate management of lifts, it remains that the fire service have the equipment and expertise to deal with incidences of people trapped in lifts. There is also a high degree of trust in the fire service as a responder to these incidences. Lift maintenance teams may not respond in an acceptable timescale.

Crucially, we note from feedback that Fire-fighters believe that lift rescues are vital for fire-fighters to attend as not only does it mean they can maintain a core humanitarian service to the people of Brighton and Hove, it also gives them a chance to keep familiarity with high-rise buildings in the city if there was a fire. We stand with this comment, particularly following the tragic Grenfell fire.

### 9. Question

Trapped birds: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?

Green Councillor Response

**Strongly disagree**

If animals are not rescued by ESFRS, there is potential for greater risk to the public in attempting to rescue trapped or dying animals and birds themselves.

Fire fighters say that bird rescues are a good way of fire-fighters doing real-life training with the ALP, and that it stops the public putting themselves in danger, leading the fire service in turn to be in the position of rescuing them.

Furthermore it remains the case that while not the fault of the fire authority, animal charities do not have the funding, equipment or necessary training to (in some cases) scale buildings or deal with this safely and appropriately. Should that support be forthcoming this proposal could perhaps be reviewed. However in present circumstances it feels unhelpful that the fire service would be asked to step back from assisting with this kind of work, given the considerable expertise and public trust in the service, as well as the training required.

## Proposal 7: Changes to 4-Watch Duty System

Question

10. Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)?

Green Councillor Response

**Strongly disagree**

We are concerned that both options A and B could have a negative impact on Brighton and Hove. Flexi-rostering has been flagged as presenting accessibility issues with regard to being 'family-friendly' and could be detrimental to both male and female fire-fighters with childcare. This needs to be addressed and recognised.

Option A also means some crews will never work/ train with the same crew. It is the case that individuals may be less effective on incidents due to unfamiliarity with the team and in contrast with team-building, such conditions can also affect morale, perhaps unnecessarily.

Option B takes 4 fire fighters out of Brighton and Hove and reduces the Watch strength at Hove and Roedean to 5. Our concern is that when leave is rostered this will leave both stations always crewing at the minimum. This in our view is unacceptable as it means when they are sent to house fires they will not have the safe amount of crew on the scene to rescue people or put out fires, until the second fire engine arrives. As above, the arrival of the second fire engine could also be delayed owing to the impact of other proposals in this document.

### 11. Question

Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements at the 5 ESFRS fire stations listed above, if the crewing arrangements are changed, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?

#### Green Councillor Response

Option A/ Option B

We would prefer to state 'don't know,' as we agree with neither and feel other options than those prescribed need to be explored, in consultation with the service crews.

## Building and Home Inspections

### 12. Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?

#### Green Councillor Response

Tend to agree/

More building and home inspections and visits is a positive way to reduce risk and would offer more public assurance about fire safety.

We note the National Fire Chiefs Council's statement that:

"...[these interventions] has resulted in a reduction of risk and a dramatic drop in demand for fire and rescue services, and consequent reductions in the number of deaths and injuries from accidental fires in the home."

As the service is under pressure to 'make savings,' prevention is better than cure, in this regard.

## ESFRS' Finances in the Future

### 13. Question

Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?

#### Green Councillor Response

Yes/ No/ Don't know

### 14. Question

To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?

Green Councillor Response

**Strongly agree/**

Surveys tell us that firefighters are viewed as one of the most trusted professions – across the globe. The level of public trust and engagement with the service cannot be underestimated. The service in this regard goes beyond ‘value for money,’ and we also believe it is vital that the approach to changes to the Fire Service are not only viewed through a ‘monetary’ lens. Indeed, to continue to strengthen our communities, adopt new, innovative practices and support hard working fire crews, we need stronger investment from central government, to deliver a better service – not further savings. We would urge the Fire Authority to continue to take an active role in asserting the human value (not only ‘value for money’ aspect) of the Fire Service and to consider further lobbying for this.

15. Question

In what ways do you think that ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future?

Green Councillor Response

The advent of Covid-19 has necessitated changes to ways of working which has in some cases reduced the need for permanent office space – where some staff in clerical roles are working from home, the service may wish to consult with them on their needs with regard to office space.

Recruiting staff on permanent contracts would also offer better terms and conditions for staff, improving retention but also reducing recruitment costs overall.

Energy efficient buildings, and exploring the possibility of support for building repairs in line with this, may also represent an opportunity for cost-savings and improving carbon emissions. Refurbishments of existing space may also offer positive opportunities in future for cost savings.

Expertise could also be shared with other authorities – rather than the current practice, which appears to necessitate paying for consultants.

Further lobbying for funding and advocacy on behalf of our local fire service would also be a welcome approach.

**ESFRS' Purpose and Commitments**

16. Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate?

Green Councillor Response

**Tend to agree/**

Once again, we note that the Fire Service is held in high esteem by our communities, and we strongly welcome the focus on prevention.

If you have any further comments you would like to make about any of the proposals in the consultation, please write below.

We remain concerned that the length of this consultation and the detail of proposals involved will have put off many members of the public from responding, and would urge the Authority to consider if this could be simplified in future.

**Are there any positive or negative impacts from ESFRS that you believe should be taken into account? If so, are you able to provide any supporting evidence and suggest any ways to reduce or remove any potential negative impact and increase any positive impact?**

No response.

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Cllr Roy Galley

Chair East Sussex Fire Authority

and

All members of the Fire Authority and Crowborough and Uckfield Town Council Mayors

### Don't hide bad news in a time of Crisis - Harvard Business Review – May 2020

Having read your article, submitted to the Fairwarp Echo, I was more than a little surprised how unspecific it was in outlining the implications of the proposed cuts put forward for consultation. It also did not specify who was being consulted; there was no suggestion local residents should, or, are expected to respond or by when. It was also unclear as to why the Fire Service were proposing these cuts; presumably they are having to respond to the limitations of the budget allocated by you, the Fire Authority. To imply you are responding to their demands is a flagrant misrepresentation of the truth.

How our nation responds to the Covid 19 crisis, will define the legacy we leave for the generations who follow us. What we have learnt above everything during the Covid 19 pandemic is that our key workers are in fact key to the well-being of our whole population, regardless of age, gender or ethnicity. The lack of planning that engulfed Care Homes is systematic of concentrating resources in the wrong areas.

*Question No 1 - How many firefighters does it take to evacuate the average size Nursing Home in the short space of time before a fire in any of the ageing buildings, modified for use as a care home, is uncontrollably alight?*

(Fires in Nursing/ Care Homes are most likely to be at night, when staffing levels in the home and in the Fire Service are at their lowest).

We live in changing, challenging, times. East Sussex's climate is one of those changes and it contains one of the largest heathland areas in the country, prone to wildfires; the extent of similar fires across the globe has been dramatic over the past twelve months. You will have no doubt read your copy of 'Ashdown Forest Living' where it warns

'the wildfire danger on Ashdown Forest is extreme. Particularly dry antecedent conditions mean ignitions are likely, resulting in fires that will be difficult to control.'

East Sussex Council, of which you are a member, have had responsibility for the Forest and its inhabitants, both wildlife and human, since 1974 with a controlling number of seats on the Board of Conservators.

*Question No 2 - As part of your consultation process, have all residents of the Ashdown Forest been specifically informed that the reduction in Fire appliances at both Crowborough and Uckfield increases the risk to their property and themselves?*

(This will undoubtedly affect their insurance premiums. They need to know this.)

I presume the damage of wildfires getting out of control due to a reduction in resources and manpower and the subsequent damage to property and wildlife is considered a risk worth taking.

Wildfire is not the only climatic 'disaster' that could affect this area. Changes in rainfall patterns, increases the chances of flooding in many areas in the county; particularly areas normally covered by Crowborough and Uckfield.

*Question No 3 - Why has the Fire Authority not fought for improved budgets for the Fire and Rescue Service in the same way as the Police and Crime Commissioner has, when the underfunding of their service is totally obvious to anyone with an insight of the inadequate and outdated equipment being used.*

Although 3 or 4 new appliances are being sought, these are not replacing the appliances being withdrawn but replacing old and outdated equipment elsewhere.

*Question No 4 Where stations are being reduced to a single appliance, what backup is available should that one and only appliance be involved in an incident on its way to an emergency.*

An appliance can be stood down from an emergency response due to a number of different protocols.

*Question No 5 - Are the Members of the Fire Authority aware that the decision they are proposing is most likely to result in the demise of the Fire and Rescue Service as we have known it.*

Why? Until now Retained Firefighters have supported Day Stations out of hours; the perception that there will be sufficient good will amongst firefighters, both full-time and retained, to provide a safe level of cover out of hours is dangerously ill conceived.

Your deceptive reference to the number of false calls suggests a change in response times; this can increase the chances of a fatality or fatalities. I cannot understand the logic, if the one and only appliance sent from Crowborough or Uckfield should be at the farthest point of its outreach and another call comes in, the consequences are serious, providing the correct risk assessment has been undertaken.

*Question No 6 - If Crowborough are on an animal rescue on the south coast, or in Kent, is there sufficient man power left on station to man the remaining appliance?*

Or

*Question No 7 - If there should be a barn fire, at night, containing animals which appliances would you suggest sending?*

Having celebrated VE Day, it was after this that there was a re-evaluation, by the British public as to what was important in life and it wasn't economic thrift. It was recognition that public service was even more important and public services needed to be funded appropriately. After years of underfunding and poor decision making by East

Sussex Fire Authority , for which you take ultimate responsibility, the Service is now totally ill equipped for its next major challenge, whether it be another hotel fire at the wrong time of day or a major forest wildfire or too many serious incidents at the same time.

The timing of this consultation can only be attributed to a desire to push through an unpopular and reckless proposal at a time when most peoples' attention and concern has been a world wide pandemic. To take a decision with such huge implications for the safety of the local population when no one, including most of the Fire authority's members, has any idea what kind of society will result from these unprecedented times, is foolhardy and irresponsible. This country is a very different one that went into this pandemic and is different still to the one before events in America and around a number of cities in this country. It is therefore a very different one to that when these proposals were first written, to blindly follow the same line of thinking would show a complete lack of understanding of the community you purport to represent.

I have today received in the post a letter, apparently instigated by the Fire and Rescue Service themselves, which purports to respond to claims that do not present all the facts! Nor does the letter! Like all the communications supporting your proposals and encouraging taking part in the consultation it give no date as to when the consultation ends; in fact in the ESFRS letter it could be mistakenly thought that the public has until September when the Fire Authority meets. On this basis alone, a legal challenge would be successful on these grounds alone.

The offer of enhanced contracts to retained fire-fighters is an interesting preconception. When the Service will most need them, is when those community fire stations, downgraded to 'business hours', will become reliant on those already having completed a days work and willing to give up their weekends and disregard family duties! What kind of enhanced contract is that?

Improved emergency cover, statistics, by concentrating cover in highly populated areas, the majority of rural areas will have increased response times and lower levels of cover. Nowhere have I seen this implication of the redistribution of resources outlined. I presume you are fully aware of how a similar redistribution of resources in the ambulance service has gone so terribly wrong.

I hope you have found time, to read this letter but also, to respond positively to the issues raised within it.

Yours sincerely



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Dear Mr Galley

I have read ESFRS IRMP and as you are the Chairman of the Fire Authority, I would like to raise some concerns I have with these proposals.

Proposal 1, it states you are proposing to enhance the operational resilience of ESFRS, by increasing the number of core fire engines available at the start of each day to 18.

Will these 18 fire engines remain available all day everyday after the start of the day (unless they are at an incident of course), or will the service allow this figure to drop to below 18 fire engines after the start of each day as it progresses, thus not increasing the operational resilience at all??

Proposal 2, Changes to Day Crewed Stations, the current day crewed rota system allows all staff who work this shift system to provide on call hours at evenings and weekends. By changing this shift system to just day crewed, means these individuals do not have to give on call cover at night or weekends. The service will have to recruit and retain a lot more new on call firefighters to keep the stations available during these periods. You will notice

around the UK Fire and Rescue Service that they already struggle to recruit and retain on call staff do you not envisage this a problem?

Proposal 3, Changing The Number of Fire Stations With 2 Fire Engines On Them. I heard you're interview on Uckfield FM saying you will only be reducing the number of fire engines in ESFRS by 5 and not 10 like the FBU have stated. I realise when being interviewed mistakes are sometimes made, after all we are only human. Could you correct your mistake as you are proposing getting rid of second fire engines at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Uckfield and Rye, I make that 7 fire engines. You must also be aware as Chairman of the Fire Authority that Wadhurst, Seaford and Heathfield Fire Stations are currently classified as 2 fire engine stations. The actual physical second fire engine at these stations has already been taken away and replaced at these with a maxi cab fire engine, this type of fire engine carries more firefighters, but the station is still classified as a 2 fire engine station. So if you downgrade and replace a maxi cab fire engine with a normal fire engine you have in effect reclassified this station as a one fire engine station, in effect on paper removing 3 fire engines worth of crew. So hypothetically speaking the FBU are right, you are proposing to downgrade 10 2 fire engine stations to one fire engine as you are also proposing to cut the hybrid maxi cab fire Enugu was to a standard fire engine.

As the ESFRS Fire Authority Chairman you will/should be aware that for an Incident Commander to initially put a safe system of work in place to deal with a dwelling fire (not high rise that takes more crew) in the initial stages, there is a task analysis that says you need 7 firefighters to do this. if your proposals go through you will need 2 fire engines to initially attend this type of incident to allow an incident commander to put this safe system of work in place.

ESFRS generally ride with 4 firefighters on a fire engine. The City fire stations are quite fortunate the second fire engine turns up fairly quickly as support, but in the more rural areas (as in your constituency), it is a longer wait for a second fire engine to turn up, so by getting rid of second fire engines, which add resilience to support incidents, you are making them wait longer to put that safe system of work in place, thus compromising firefighter and public safety.

Proposal 4, Changing The Way Hastings Stations are Crewed. Whilst I think it is fantastic an additional immediate response fire engine is being put into Bohemia Road Hastings, because the risk is greater, as it is a more deprived area, by making The Ridge Fire Station a day crewed station, at evenings and weekends, due to the turnout time for on call staff and the way the 4i mobilising system works, that second fire engine at Bohemia Rd will pick up most of the calls on The Ridge fire ground, as it will be the quickest and nearest fire engine at night and weekends, this ties up this fire engine dealing with The Ridge firecalls removing it from the fire ground with the greater risk. This will also be the same if you share crew this second appliance with an aerial appliance. If the aerial gets a call the crew from this second fire engine will crew the aerial appliance, making the second appliance unavailable. My point is that over the last nine years as stated in your proposals Bohemia Road has the most life risk fire incidents. ESFRS initially sends 3 fire engines to a fire incident where persons are involved, or trapped by fire, by share crewing the second appliance with the aerial appliance, you are either leaving the aerial appliance unavailable if all 3 Hastings fire engines are required, or if the aerial appliance is required at the persons involved fire incident, then the second fire engine at Bohemia Rd becomes unavailable. So if you need 3 fire engines to initially deal with a fire incident that involves people you are adding to the response times for vehicles to attend especially at evenings and weekends when The Ridge turnout time will be increased by at least 5 minutes, thus increasing the risk.

Proposal 5, Changing how you provide and Crew Special appliances. I see you are proposing to primary crew the aerial appliance in the City of Brighton and Hove, but are proposing to share crew the aerial appliance capability at Hastings and Eastbourne. I have already highlighted concerns regarding share crewing aerial appliances at Hastings above I would also like you to realise that ESFRS is quite unique, its high rise risk is quite high, something like 6th in the country outside London for the population of high rise buildings. So I believe share crewing the aerial capability at Hastings and Eastbourne increases risk to the public and compromises firefighter safety. When

there is a fire and an aerial appliance needs to be used, it needs to be got to work as soon as possible for a rescue and is no good turning up later to a fire as it's access to where it needs to pitch will get compromised.

Also the ESFRS Hierarchy of Working at Height states an aerial appliance should be considered first, as it provides a stable working platform and should be considered before working off fire service ladders.

I should also point out that if the aerial appliance that is primary crewed in Brighton is unavailable due to mechanical issues, the aerial appliance from Hastings or Eastbourne gets sent across to cover the greater risk in The City. So if proposals go ahead to share crew the aerial appliances at Hastings and Eastbourne and they are sent to the City to provide a primary crewed aerial capability, this will then not only remove the aerial cover from Hastings or Eastbourne, but also make the second fire engine at these stations unavailable, so you are increasing the risk in these areas. Aerial appliances in ESFRS, certainly over the last year, are being used more and more as we work collaboratively with SeCamb, to assist in the removal of patients so keeping aerials primary crewed throughout ESFRS is vitally important.

Proposal 6, Other IRMP decisions whilst I agree rescuing birds takes up a lot of fire service resources, ESFRS should still respond to a life risk where individuals are stuck in lifts and they should also provide a full response to commercial fire alarms at night, which like all fire alarms should be treated as a fire until confirmed otherwise by the Fire and Rescue Service, after all ESFRS are not just there to save lives, but we also have a duty to save saveable property. Perhaps Central Government should ask for funding from Insurance companies to pay for the services of the fire and rescue service to keep their insurance payouts to a minimum.

All in all, I believe this IRMP is not about reducing risk, but about how to make savings which will increase risk.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

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Dear Dawn

As we continue to work closely together in order to provide the best possible services to the communities of Sussex, we welcome and support your evidence led approach in compiling the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2020 –2025 for consultation. As a key partner agency it is imperative that we always strive to improve the services that we offer, as we work closely together protecting the public and saving lives. Through our joint response to road traffic collisions, fire investigations or managing major incidents, the principles underpinned through the JESIP approach of collaborative working having never been more important. We know through our own Force Management Statement (FMS) process that understanding your operational demand can only help shape and inform your response to managing risk and highlighting opportunities in order to deliver a better service to the public and partners.

Thank you for sharing your approach in producing your IRMP and on behalf of Sussex Police we look forward to continuing working closely with you.

Kind regards  
Jo Shiner  
Chief Constable  
Sussex Police

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### Planning for a Safer Future Survey

That is for you to decide. The people are not experts in fire safety and therefore cannot comment in any useful fashion, however I hope this is not a prelude to asking for more money on the precept. The people, especially the poorer people, are fed up with being milked by all Government led departments whether at local or national level.

The national average wage is £26,000 and the average Council Tax takes 9% of that wage or 4.5% if two people are living and working from the same house which is patently an abuse by Local Government. We need to find a better system that keeps costs down and reduces Council Tax demands. The ultimate pressure must be upon reducing Council Tax.

So I would ask you to consider not only how you can improve the fire service as is your wont, but also how you can reduce the cost of implementing it in the interests of the people. Little effort appears to be made by local Councils that waste vast sums of money. An example might well be the payment of a parish clerk that should be a voluntary position perhaps carrying some prestige rather than a salary.

Thank you.

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## Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025

### Proposals Affecting Crowborough Fire Station

#### Proposal 1

##### Operational Resilience Plan

#### *To Provide 18 Immediate Response Fire Engines*

I have concerns that 10 of these are on RDS stations and so they cannot surely be classed as 'immediate'. In your own words, "they will take slightly longer to attend".

#### *Proposal 1a – Flexible Crewing Pool*

This multi-skilled suggested workforce will not be good for the workers. Turning up every day to not know where you may be working to provide cover, working with individuals you have never worked with before cannot be good for the way the Service is used to providing an efficient workforce. We are used to a Team approach in everything we do, how can this be achieved with this system?

#### *Proposal 1b - New Contracts where required which are aligned to periods where cover is needed to maintain Fire Engine availability.*

It is assumed RDS are going to sign up to these contracts, in fact in the FAQ's form that the Service has issued it stated they may not have to sign up to them at all. How will the availability improve as a result? I do not disagree that the RDS system needs to be reviewed but if they do not sign up to it and are still employed what happens then?

#### Proposal 2

##### Changes to crewing on day-crewed stations

The crewing models the Service have suggested are going to slow response to the whole of Wealden that unfortunately is a fact of which you acknowledge. This is the same for Crowborough, Uckfield, Bexhill, Newhaven, Lewes and Battle as well that will have similar systems. One of the crewing models you suggest, Option A is for the wholetime staff to be on station five days a week 8.5 hours, this may be from 0900-1730 in the daytime, then the remainder covered by our Retained colleagues at night time and at weekends. This will not only lead to a reduction in cover for an extra 2 hours in the day (currently we work 0830-1830 daytime) but will lead to this same reduction at the weekends. What you fail to include is that the wholetime Firefighters generally live closer to the station as a result of previous recruitment and having to live 5 minutes from station. This means that at night they are generally quicker to respond as the time frame for retained staff has been increased due to difficulties in recruiting. Currently your statistics will reflect this as the wholetime are shown in them, if they are lost in these periods the time to turn a Fire Engine out will drastically increase. In fact through my stations own research we have found that in the evening if we were to go to the suggested model in the proposals the availability for just one appliance is the following:

2016 – 18%

2017 – 12%

2018 – 8.7%  
2019 – 1.37%  
2020 – First 4 months this year 2.48%

And for the weekend is:

2016 – 56%  
2017 – 20%  
2018 – 13.6%  
2019 – 0.96%  
2020 – First 4 months this year 8.82%

Granted the weekend is better during 2016, but cover has drastically reduced. These are figures that you will not have as your system cannot be setup to account for the loss of the wholetime personnel who are currently already being paid and support the more favourable statistics that the Service show in the IRMP. The numbers shown above will have to go a long way to make up to the 100% availability in the evenings and weekends that are currently provided for one appliance. And with Crowborough having twice the amount of houses built in the next three years than it has had in the last nine this could be devastating.

*Wealden Planning figures – 450 homes 2011-19, 938 homes 2020-23/24. With the collapse of the Wealden local plan this could be more.*

Some staff on day-crewed stations have had 5 shift changes in the last 17 years, how does this affect their family and mental health which the Service are so keen to acknowledge is high on their priorities (as they state on page 57 of the proposals in terms of introducing 'Champions')?

In addition the IRMP states *"This option results in a net reduction of 33 posts providing the opportunity to reinvest highly trained and skilled staff into the service-wide flexible crewing pool, training, prevention and protection teams"*. I believe that the Government nationally have issued an additional £20 million in funding for us to complete more fire inspection and enforcement and as a result of our HMI recent report this is needed. But I would say that we have been cut over the years as well so it is probably underfunded from what we have lost and as a result had to remove. I would however have concerns about the Service trying to take some resources from our response to provide more for the inspection work. Strangely enough in the HMI report ESFRS scored well on the resources and being generally in the correct places and response to incidents being good. However what ESFRS are currently suggesting is more taking away from one that is performing well to give to another, how many years before we realise this is a mistake?

Option B is similar in terms of cover although gives the extra 2 hours back in the daytime, but still reduces the weekend.

### Proposal 3

#### Removal of Second Fire Engine at various stations around the County

The third proposal on your plan is to lose the second Fire Engine at Crowborough as well as many other stations. Although this resource is not used as much as some other appliances in the County it is there when the first Fire Appliance goes out to cover the residents of the town and the surrounding areas so is a vital resource that we should not remove if we can avoid it. This provides a quick backup to life saving incidents such as RTC's and house fires. This is particularly relevant for Crowborough being so far to the north of the County. This unfortunately would not really be a statistic that the Service would record as it would mainly (although not solely) be when they are called to another station ground, using 83P1 as an example that could be Wadhurst, Heathfield, Forest Row or even over the border to places like Tunbridge Wells. I have found out statistics and already this year Crowborough have attended 43.5% of other stations calls. As stated above being so far north of the County and the retained stations sometimes being unavailable this is what it is sometimes needed for. In addition this area can be very isolated leaving Crew and Watch Managers in a very different position than our colleagues on

the coast at incidents, waiting a lot longer for a second appliance to assist.

### Proposal 5

#### Changes to how Specialist vehicles are crewed including aerial appliances.

I believe that at this time it would be irresponsible to not 'primary crew' the aerial appliances in East Sussex. We do not know yet the outcome of the Phase 2 Grenfell Report and so I feel this should be at the very least known prior to making decisions to reduce the crewing of these vital resources, especially in areas such as Hastings and Eastbourne.

Removing the Swift Water capability altogether when we know that global warming is affecting drastic weather fluctuations is moving in the wrong direction. We should be keeping these at least as they are and then if necessary increasing the capability when the evidence is gathered on further periods of weather variation. In the 2017-20 IRMP it stated that we have a '*significant length of coast as well as numerous inland rivers, lakes and reservoirs*'. "*We are also involved in a number of rescues and unfortunately body recoveries every year*" - A number that has not changed that much I believe but your statistics in the ORR are under representing such incidents, this may be due to recording data for those but the local stations that have this team have records that more accurately record when water has been involved and the team required.

The reduction in off-road capability can surely not even be considered, especially after incidents like the recent forest fires which are rectified in the whole by utilising the 4x4 capabilities we have. The fact we have to call other services in for much of the recently attended ones shows that we are under-resourced if anything.

A recent fire on the forest involved seven 4x4 vehicles, including all our 5 Land Rovers and 2 Mercedes off road vehicles from West Sussex. That is not including the amount of standby moves and appliances that were called on as a result. Surrey has similar area to us, but the Service has the use of 3 Mercedes Unimog's and 10 x Land Rovers all fitted for Wildfire capability. We have under half of this and it is looking at being reduced by removing Wadhurst's capability which is often Crowborough's first back-up. I understand you need to look at where they are allocated but please do not reduce to the point that we are greatly overstretched and relying too much on other Services for 'mutual-aid'.

#### Additional Comments:

[REDACTED] based at Crowborough station, I have lived and worked in the town for [REDACTED] years, in total I have over 20 years' experience in being a Firefighter. I love my town and the community I serve and am proud to be part of that. I have built my life around this lovely area of Wealden. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. As stated already the shift pattern I work has changed 5 times in the last 17 years, all these times I have had to make adjustments to my family life as a result, it then ends up coming full circle to the pattern we told you that works or very similar to that. Unfortunately this as you can imagine leads to unnecessary stress and anxiety of which I am sure you are aware. I know the Service has to change sometimes and as you can see from the above comments I have done so, but please from this feedback listen to us, your staff. We can find ways to help save and improve (I have many ideas!). I hope you take these comments on board and if further feedback or clarity is required on some of my comments please do not hesitate to contact me.

[REDACTED]  
Crowborough Fire Station

#### **Similar response sent to Cllr Dowling:**

Dear Mr Dowling,

I write to you as I am sure many of my colleagues have over the past few weeks regarding the proposed decisions in East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's IRMP. These decisions are going to impact our community in a big way. I



decision if you want further clarification on the station personnel's views? Obviously social distancing etiquette being followed, or I would be more than willing to setup a Facetime / Webex meeting if you prefer.

Yours Faithfully

  
FBU Health and Safety Representative  
Crowborough Fire Station

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I have responded via the on-line consultation but also wanted to add some concerns as a direct comment.

I have great sympathy with the situation that East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service finds itself in, with the service having to save £12 million over a 5 year period and an annual loss of 7.5% in grant funding from central government.

I realise that this exercise is about looking where available resources should be deployed including elsewhere in the County – but I cannot believe that these number of reductions would be considered if the government had not put the Fire and Rescue Service in this impossible situation.

I specifically wanted to raise the situation with Lewes fire station. I strongly oppose the reduction of one fire engine and although I can see that under the plans, there would still be 24/7 cover from Lewes, the document does accept there would be some reduction in capacity due to both this and a reduction in full time firefighters.

Without a second appliance, the logical consequence is that incidents will need to wait for an appliance from another station to arrive at some points in the week. Page 42 of the IRMP accepts that “it would mean we may take slightly longer to attend during the daytime at the weekend”.

I also think that two other factors have emerged since the data was collated that fed into the IRMP:

1. Climate change. 2020 has been one of the driest May months in the South East since records began - [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/891286/South\\_East\\_England\\_Water\\_Situation\\_Report\\_May\\_2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/891286/South_East_England_Water_Situation_Report_May_2020.pdf).

There are already well documented cases of ESFRS having to attend forest fires on Ashdown Forest across 16 and 17 May 2020, other areas near to my ward include Chailey Common (fire broke out on May 13th) - and there are other areas of open countryside - for example Ditchling Common - nearby. Page 18 recognises the record breaking hot summer of 2018 but I believe further work is needed to fully understand the impact of climate change on our area and any extra demands that will be placed on our fire service as a result.

2. Impact of Covid 19. For example, many more people are now working from home, and I believe further study of what this could mean in terms of fire risk - appliances being overloaded for example - should be undertaken before making any final judgements on the firefighting resources needed.

As I stated earlier, I recognise that the IRMP is a legal requirement and that the Minister of State required Fire Authorities to continue with their IRMP consultations despite the Coronavirus outbreak.

In James Brokenshire's letter to Fire Authorities dated 23rd April, he stated that while authorities could delay the publication of their consultations, this would not protect them from the Secretary of State making an intervention against an FRA who failed to have due regard for the framework. I appreciate this has left the ESFRS in a position where they have had to pursue the consultation on the IRMP while in the middle of the Coronavirus outbreak and before the impact is known.

The Government should instead be lobbied to relax this requirement to meet the requirements of the framework at this time and to reverse funding cuts to East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, so that changes to fire stations such as Lewes would not be necessary. I also challenge the MPs for East Sussex to lobby the Government to secure these changes.

Cllr Rob Banks

Plumpton, East Chiltington, Streat and St John Without

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Carry on it will come home to roost. Disgraceful

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Dear Madam or Sir

**Re: East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).**

We would make the following observations on the ESFRS IRMP.

The town of Rye is amongst the jewels of this country; the Citadel, the old part of the town, contains many timber buildings, and must be considered as a potential risk on that basis. The recent fire that destroyed much of the George Hotel was attended by eight engines.

Furthermore, in the context of the Rye station, the IRMP identifies Camber as a potential problem because of its housing stock, a problem which is exacerbated particularly in the summer months by the numbers of tourists who flock there, making access difficult at times.

Because of these factors we would not recommend any reduction of service at the Rye station.

Similar arguments apply to The Ridge, Hastings station, which affords a significant time-saving, probably at least ten minutes on the Bohemia Road station in reaching incidents in the villages between Hastings and Rye – we would particularly cite Fairlight and Pett, where the roads are not good and frequently prone to accidents. On that basis we would not recommend any reduction of service at The Ridge station.

Yours faithfully

Stewart Rayment

Hastings & Rye Liberal Democrats

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Dear East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.

I refer to the consultation on the Planning for a Safer Future consultation.

My interests stems from being a member of the Lewes Conservation Area Advisory Group (LCAAG) and also being a member of the Friends of Lewes (FoL) executive committee.

I am conscious that Lewes has a significant number of historic buildings and two conservation areas with a large number of listed buildings, including Grade 1 category buildings. Many of the buildings within the town are timber framed, including newer developments such as the Printworks in St Nicholas Lane. Significant areas of the town such as Cliffe High Street, High Street, Market Street, Southover High Street, East Street, South Street and elsewhere have no fire breaks, and/or contain open roof areas to the buildings. Consequently, there is an inherent risk that any fire within such buildings will be able to spread very quickly along streets. Clearly, recent fires, such as that at the former Intersport building and Harveys shop in Cliffe High Street may have had a different outcome to a much wider number of buildings, with a potential loss of life, if the arrival of the fire service had been longer. Malling House itself was only saved with the prompt and ready availability of experienced fire fighters and two fire appliances.

I have had a look at the changes proposed and whilst I left a message to be called back, no one has phoned and therefore I am making my comments on the basis of my understanding of the document. Because of the technical language used and the way the document is written I have to say it is not easy for the layman to readily understand, or grasp the implications of the changes. Overall I think the changes will have a negative impact on the fire service ability to deliver the current level of service and the specific changes will reduce the amount of fire cover within the town of Lewes and should be resisted.

The loss of one fire appliance from Lewes will have detrimental consequences for the town. This will mean an immediate back up appliance is not available and no appliance is available if there is either a second incident in the town or the first appliance is required to support an emergency in a nearby town. This change is unacceptable.

If I have understood it properly it is also proposed to change the crewing arrangements in the evening and weekends, when the risk of a significant fire emergency is seemingly greatest. At these times it appears that reliance is to be placed on less experienced firefighters who will be unable to respond as quickly as the day crew.

I cannot see that these changes meet the obligations on public authorities under section 61 of the Environment Act 1995 to conserve the heritage of the area.

I therefore wish to oppose these aspects of the proposals.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email.

Yours sincerely



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Dear Sir / Madam,

I write to you with my views on the proposed IRMP for East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. The main theme of this IRMP is to reduce the number of fire fighters and firefighting equipment including fire engines throughout the county but particular impact will be felt at day crewed stations.

With the removal of second appliances from a number of day crewed stations the fire services ability to provide a timely and effective response will be reduced. Though it is acknowledged that the availability of a fire engine crewed by 'on-call' firefighters is largely down to the availability of crew, that lack of availability should not be used as reasoning for the removal. Stating that you currently send appliances in from other towns is merely conceding that you cannot provide a timely and fully effective response from the home station. It seems somewhat ignored that the 'on-call' fire fighter system is having trouble maintaining suitable crewing and has done for many years. In the longer term a well-trained and effective on call system could provide the much needed savings while maintaining the level of protection required. I do not see the RNLI which is a charity have trouble with retention and crewing, have any studies been carried out to examine whether the fire service could adopt or learn lessons from other voluntary groups or the RNLI?

Once the 'on call' element that largely crew second appliances is lost it will be very difficult to reinstate it later. On a similar note many day crewed stations are set within local authorities that have increased planning approvals for development of housing. Although I accept that the risk of a fire in new developments is probably low it is still in overall increase in risk in comparison to the previous status quo. It should also be considered that the chances of other incidents occurring that require fire and rescue will increase due to an increase in population and traffic movements. I feel as addressing these prospects as 'low risk' hides the fact that there is an overall increase in risk. The need to ensure Eastbourne has effective equipment to tackle high rise incidents is of great importance and I concur that the need to have an Aerial Ladder Platform similar to Hastings is required. However, I note up until approximately 10 years ago Eastbourne did have one of these. It was replaced by a hybrid appliance. Needless to

say after the devastating impact of Grenfell, minds are focussed on ensuring the fire service has the equipment it requires. However, was the hybrid brought in to cut costs in relation to replacement equipment and crewing? The hybrid seems to have had a very short service life in comparison to the nearly 20 years of the ALP at Hastings. I hope that this IRMP does not result in the loss of skills, resilience and equipment that will later need to be reversed as seems to be the case with the ladder platform at Eastbourne. Particularly with personnel and skill sets, these are very hard to regain once they are lost.

With regard to full time firefighter crewing I see some levels of contradiction. Although I accept that the number of calls has gone down, the IRMP states that full time crews are sent to assist crews at neighbouring stations where second appliances are not available. Yet the risk is low enough to reduce the full time on site crewing of the stations. This reduction will mean an increase in attendance time which will ultimately affect victims and the crew at the scene initially. This extended attendance time is already an issue if the appliance is coming from another town, nevermind the additional time for arrival on station for crews to kit up and leave the station. The downgrading of the Ridge is also a point that reinforces points of concern. With 2 stations in Hastings The Ridge also serves areas outside of Hastings such as Guestling and the ground towards Rye. Whereas I believe it to be prudent to establish a second appliance at Bohemia Road, I find it concerning that Hastings Old Town (which I believe is covered by the Ridge) will have a delayed turn out at night. The Old Town is of such concern by way of the nature of construction and the 'back to back' manner of the layout. Hastings has approximately 930 listed buildings and many of them will be left with a delayed response which I do not believe fully appreciates the risk in the area.

I am also conscious that the reduced hours will delay response during the evening rush hour.

In summary the current arrangement of day crewed stations serves a purpose that is suitable for the largely increasing risk around them. Full-time firefighters provide a response and that response can be reinforced in a timely and cost effective manner with the use of on call firefighters.

I feel that the document is mis-leading citing low risk, lack of availability of second appliances (which is hiding a separate issue) and is not sustainable in the long term.

Moreover many of the recommendations I foresee as requiring reversal at a later date.

I trust my views will be taken into consideration when the authority makes a final decision.

Yours Sincerely

[REDACTED]

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### Telephone conversations – summary responses

In response to flyer through door. [REDACTED] would like to record her opposition to Crowborough Fire Station being under threat. She has received a leaflet and she wants to make sure her voice is heard. She is opposed to the cuts and very grateful for the times we have assisted her in the past. Once, when we were responding to an incorrectly fitted smoke alarm by a third party and once when we assisted the ambulance to get into her house after she had suffered a stroke. She wanted to place on record her thanks for the times we have helped her.

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"I don't think it is fair to lose the Fire Station at Newhaven. At 82, it is a worrying point that they will be coming from Brighton. It is a disgusting decision."

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[REDACTED] has received a leaflet which tells her to contact her local MP regarding the IRMP – she would like to make the following points

- She doesn't agree with cutting the service; Would like to know where the Services will come from with cuts to Newhaven and Seaford; How far are you going to cut the Service; She thinks the cuts are quite drastic – the leaflet says it will affect weekends and night times as they are being cut.
- (On being asked if the leaflet was from anyone in particular) She was unable to find anything but she has assumed it has come from Newhaven Fire Station. It appears the leaflet has caused her some anxiety, she does not have access to the intranet.

- ESFRS contacted her back. She was very concerned to receive a flyer telling her as a Seaford resident that ESFRS were getting rid of 10 fire engines and their Firefighters.
  - She as reassured that the proposals would not be published if they weren't safe or feasible. The purpose of the IRMP proposals were explained and that ESFRS were not shutting any Fire Stations and any posts liberated would be reinvested into prevention and protection.
  - ██████████ understood the concept of prevention being preferable to picking up the pieces after a fire or other emergency.
  - ██████████ felt far happier after the chat and although she didn't want to go through each proposal, she was happy to agree with them in general."
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"It is wrong. We are cross in Seaford that everything is being cut, we are a big town and need a fire service. Also Not happy that you can only respond on line. A lot of people do not have access."

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Main concerns were that we were removing a fire engine and reducing the staff. She had got her information from a flyer posted through her letterbox. After explaining the CFA proposals would not close any Stations and that they do not plan any redundancies ██████████ felt more assured with them but recognised the closing date is this Friday.

We explained the proposal to remove 7 fire engines that were low activity and this was partly due to the successes in fire prevention etc. as well as the reinvestment of staff from response to prevention, protection etc.

██████████ re-confirmed she was far more assured that the proposals made sense.

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"I am against the cuts, I agree with Fire Brigade it is all wrong."

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"I think for a big town like Seaford, the cuts seem very drastic and concern me."

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"They have given us a lot in Newhaven that we don't want (eg housing) and not a lot of what we do want. They are taking away part of the Fire Service which is needed and I do not agree with it."

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██████████, who does not use the internet or email, would like to state his support for the proposals."

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'Hello, I'm just ringing to say I'm against all these cuts in the fire station'.

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Against cuts to Newhaven FS; Strange thing to do when the Peacehaven community is growing in size; Building houses as fast as they can in the area. No access to internet, extremely worried.

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"Concerned about proposed cuts; Population in the area is becoming greater, amount in the community is going up; Proposed cuts there will be less cover for life and property; How are the cuts justified; If there is a large incident and appliances from all surrounding areas are being used the cover in the area will be completely depleted and there will be no cover for life and property rescue. He is an ex retained firefighter from Newhaven and is extremely concerned and anxious about the proposals.

ESFRS called back to confirm we had received his comments and answer his concerns. He was pleased to talk through the various proposals. Further to below:

I'm very concerned; it seems a drastic decision. With the increase in calls and population and property, these cuts are going to be drastic; You only need a major incident or two and FRS cover is stripped bare – what would happen to Newhaven, who would cover it if the second fire engine wasn't there; Increased response times are going to increase risk to a dangerous level"

End Telephone responses

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# COUNTRY CARERS

Tilling Green Community Centre  
Mason Road  
Rye  
East Sussex  
TN31 7BE

Tel: : 01797 223329  
Mob : 07960 063658 (24hr)  
Fax : 01797 223242  
Email : jayne@country-carers.co.uk

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Sally-Ann Hart,

I am writing to you as the Owner/Manager/Carer of Country Carers Ltd, a domiciliary care business based in rye covering the local rural area of Fairlight, Pett, Camber, Northiam, Beckley, Brede and furthermore, with regards to the cuts to the local fire stations. We have had many of our Service Users rely on the local fire stations and I believe we can all agree what a fantastic job they do, so why is it that they are putting a proposal forward that is going to make this job harder for these firefighters and putting lives at risk.

These firefighters put their lives at risk on a daily basis to serve their local community and these cuts that have been proposed are only going to make that a higher risk. Do you believe that is fair?

Stated by the leader of the fire service herself that there will be "slightly longer" response times, is this practicable?

If a member of the local community is calling the fire service, they are doing so because they are in need of help, do you think that it is right that those in need of help at a distressing time for them should have to wait for a "slightly longer" response?

Why can no one clarify how long "slightly longer" is and that it is in fact putting the local community at further risk, those that have faith in the fire service and yourself as a leader to keep them safe.

As based in Rye I would like to raise the concerns that I believe I can speak for, on behalf of the majority of the community, regarding the cuts and changes that we are facing in Rye. The proposal is for them to lose their 2<sup>nd</sup> fire engine, this means that they will have to wait for a 2<sup>nd</sup> fire engine to come from further afield. If the 1 fire engine from Rye is called out to an incident in the local area such as Camber is it fair that these firefighters on that fire engine are going to be put at a high risk in having to wait for a 2<sup>nd</sup> fire engine to arrive as the nearest will be from Kent, who have different policies to East Sussex and can't work in conjunction fully. This would result in a 2<sup>nd</sup> fire engine having to come from Hastings.

Also to add to the previous point the service is making further cuts to The Ridge, making them a day crewed station and on a retained system at night and weekends resulting in a longer response times from themselves as the 2<sup>nd</sup> fire engine to attend a call Rye are already at ( I would calculate this as at least a 25 minute response time) is this fair for the firefighters at the call already from Rye to be waiting this amount of time to carry out their jobs safely and effectively effecting those that are in need of help. Those that pay their

council tax for this service, because with these cuts I believe there is not going to be a reduction in the council tax costs. So, people of the local community are expected to carry on paying a cost for a local fire service that is no longer going to be the same and is going to be reduced yet their costs are not.

Please remember that these are a fire and rescue service, I ethicize the word rescue because they are not just related to fire and attend many different incidents across the community, another question I believe the community will have as I do, is that will this result in them not being able to attend all different incidents due to cuts? Putting further risk to the community.

This community voted for yourself to be a leader and to have trust in you to keep them safe and to do the best for them, letting these cuts go ahead, do you believe that this is what you are doing? Because I am sure the majority of this community believe that these cuts are only going to put their lives at risk when they really need help.

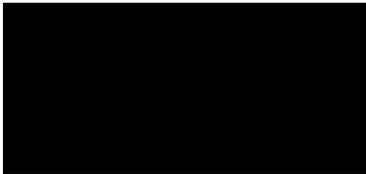
Thank you for taking your time to read this and I look forward to receiving your response

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jayne Graham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jayne Graham  
Company Director  
Country Carers Ltd.

tel 01273 582620



East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service  
East Sussex Headquarters  
Lewes  
East Sussex.



For the attention of Councillor Roy Galley

Dear Mr Galley.

We write to state how horrified we are to read of all the cuts that are proposed to our East Sussex Fire brigade,

I read in the Argus of your proposals which make no common sense whatsoever.

Leaving Newhaven (our local station) with one engine and crew as day cover and a part time crew out of hours must not happen.

Looking at the size of Peacehaven. Telscombe Cliffs. East Saltdean, Newhaven and possibly Piddinghoe and Rodmell the population must be in excess of 60,000. Newhaven and surrounding roads are at times very busy. I also understand that Roedean is to be down graded to one appliance which means that will not always be available, at peak times traffic would certainly slow its arrival to any call out

I would very much like to attend your council meeting on this proposal and suggest that this should be an open public meeting. I very much hope that common sense prevails at this time and no cuts are made to what is a sensible and adequate provision of staff and appliances for East Sussex.





8th June 2020

Senior Management Team  
East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service  
Headquarters  
Church Lane  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 2DZ

Dear Sir/Madam

CROWBOROUGH FIRE STATION

I am writing in response to a leaflet received regarding proposed cuts to Crowborough Fire Station, namely loss of one Fire Engine, 50% Loss of full time Firefighters and a reduction in evening and weekend fire cover which will result in longer response times.

I am very concerned to hear of these proposed changes as I am fearful that lives will be put at risk not having the level of protection we currently have and pay for.

As we are all very well aware, fire spreads very quickly and the quicker an engine can get to where it is needed the better the outcome, and if a Fire Engine has to come from further afield, the more valuable time will be lost getting to its required destination.

Crowborough is one of the largest, if not the largest inland town in the South East and still growing very rapidly. I would consider the town needs a fully functioning Fire Service for its town and surrounding area, especially with the Ashdown Forest very close which has forest fires on a very regular basis especially over the summer months.

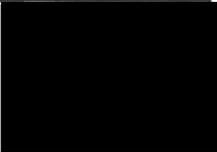
I received a letter from you in May headed 'Planning for a Safer Future'. I cannot see that Crowborough will have a safer future if these proposed cuts go ahead.

I oppose these cuts and hope that the matter will be reconsidered and if cuts are needed, they be found somewhere else, and we continue to have the level of protection all day, every day that we currently have.

Yours faithfully



  
Market.15

  
13 May 2020

**Mrs Nursat Ghani MP  
House of Commons  
London SW1 0AA**

**Dear Member of Parliament for Wealden**

**Saving Lives and Maintaining all Fire Services at Crowborough Fire Station**

**Please save the fire service in Crowborough which is about to suffer savage cuts by removing round the clock cover and cutting one of the two fire engines stationed in Crowborough.**

**This is a massive blow for fire safety in Crowborough which may lead to lives lost and property damage. Crowborough, as you know, is a growing town with many housing estate with young people. This is a considerable fire risk and firemen have already lost their lives saving family and friends.**

**There is no logical excuse for cutting our fire service back and leaving us vulnerable in these very worrying times. What is the matter with this Government if they think that cutting public services will lead to a healthier and happier society? They seem to be hell bent on destroying all the public services so carefully built up over decades.**

**Please fight to save our Fire Service and keep Crowborough safe. Stop cutting public services and leaving us vulnerable.**

**Yours sincerely**

  
**Copy to:**

**The Chief Fire Officer  
Crowborough Fire Station  
Beacon Road  
Crowborough  
East Sussex**

[REDACTED]

Dear Sir

I have had notice that  
There is a proposal that  
Crowbough Fire station will lose  
50% of its firefighters and one  
fire engine.

This seems to be very irresponsible  
as there are many fires on the  
forest and car crashes on the  
road to Crowbough. I feel this  
is putting lives at risk.

As the fire station's response  
will be extended, with please

loses also I live in a wooden  
bungalow. If I have a fire

I would like a fast response.

As I am sure you would

if you have caught fire.

Please think again it not all  
about money yours sincerely its  
[REDACTED] Saving lives



**East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service**  
 Headquarters  
 Church Lane, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2DZ  
 Telephone: 0303 999 1000  
 E-mail: [enquiries@esfrs.org](mailto:enquiries@esfrs.org)  
 Web: [www.esfrs.org](http://www.esfrs.org)

**In the case of emergency please dial 999**

2025 4841



Our Ref: [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org)

May 2020

Dear Householder,

**Planning for a Safer Future**

East Sussex Fire Authority is consulting on its five year plan and would like your help in planning for the future so we can make the right decisions.

We want to make sure we put our resources in the right place, at the right time to deal with emergencies and help prevent them in the first place.

Our proposals include:

- Crewing – we’ve looked at the shift patterns worked by our firefighters ✓
- Fire engines – we’ve looked at the type and number of fire engines we have ✓
- Expanding the building safety and prevention work we do in communities ✓
- Reducing 999 calls – we’ve looked at how we can engage with the community and with businesses ✓
- Non-emergency calls – we’ve looked at whether we should still go to some kinds of calls, such as bird rescues, where no human life is at risk ?

You can find out more and give us your views at [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture)

Paper copies can be requested by emailing [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org) or writing to:

**Planning for a Safer Future**  
 East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service HQ  
 Church Lane  
 Lewes  
 BN7 2DZ

The survey is open for eight weeks from 24 April 2020. The findings of the consultation will be considered at a Fire Authority meeting in September.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us via [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org) or by calling 0303 999 1000.

Yours sincerely,

Mark O'Brien  
 Deputy Chief Fire Officer

*Thank you for earlier, sorry not on E, mail  
 Had a "Fire engine" put in some time ago  
 NOT needed to be put in. THANK YOU*





**East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service**  
 Headquarters  
 Church Lane, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2DZ  
 Telephone: 0303 999 1000  
 E-mail: enquiries@esfrs.org  
 Web: www.esfrs.org

**In the case of emergency please dial 999**

2025 4024



Our Ref: consult@esfrs.org

May 2020

Dear Householder,

**Planning for a Safer Future**

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We want to make sure we put our resources in the right place, at the right time to deal with emergencies and help prevent them in the first place.

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- Reducing 999 calls – we’ve looked at how we can engage with the community and with businesses
- Non-emergency calls – we’ve looked at whether we should still go to some kinds of calls, such as bird rescues, where no human life is at risk

*Birds - cats can look after themselves - Dogs down a cliff could well be an exception.*

You can find out more and give us your views at [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture)

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East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service HQ  
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If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us via [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org) or by calling 0303 999 1000.

Yours sincerely,

Mark O'Brien  
 Deputy Chief Fire Officer



2 June 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have been an operational fire fighter in East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service for [REDACTED] years. I felt compelled to write to you to try and enlighten you as to the distorted manner in which East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service is publicising their plans for the up and coming IRMP. I am disappointed that the questions being put to the public are very leading and appear designed to solicit answers that are supportive of the plans rather than gauge true public opinion.

I can't go through every inaccuracy of the proposals in this letter as it would continue for longer than you have time to read it, and so I have picked out a few points to acquaint you with the reality of the consequences of these plans.

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service have stated that they are going to provide an extra three fire appliances across the service at the start of the day raising it from fifteen to eighteen. The plans at Eastbourne are to replace a combined pump and aerial appliance with a dedicated pump and aerial, but to only have enough crew to ride one or the other. This is the same as the current situation as the combined vehicle can't perform both functions at the same time. There are no plans to improve fire cover and crewing in Eastbourne. The reality of this plan is that if the aerial ladder platform stations (Eastbourne and Hastings) get an emergency call to a fire in a tall building, (four floors and above), then the officer in charge will have to make a decision to either take the aerial ladder platform or the fire appliance. If the aerial ladder platform is chosen then this will render the fire appliance useless as there would not be sufficient crew to crew it. A fire appliance from another station will then need to be mobilised causing a delay in mobilisation, a delay in attendance to the incident and possibly a delay in fire fighting actions due to restrictions on fire fighters at the incident denying safe systems of work to be carried out due to the amount of firefighters in attendance. The consequences of these delays surely does not need to be documented here. East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service say themselves that due to the potential new dispersal of fire appliances throughout East Sussex that we make take "slightly longer". This statement is unhelpful. Firefighters and the public need to know how long is "slightly longer". If you were suffocating in a burning building unable to get out, or trapped in a car by the steering wheel crushing your chest would you be happy with "slightly longer"? The firefighters aren't comfortable with this proposal and this weak clarification as to how much longer it will take to arrive at the scene. The quicker Firefighters can get to work, the safer the situation can be for them, and the more successful and positive outcomes they will witness. "Slightly

longer” could be translated to “slightly deader” whether that applies to fire fighters who will be morally pushed to go beyond safe working practises or members of the public who need the Firefighters help urgently.

The second point that needs clarifying is the change to the shift pattern. East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service state that they want to “introduce a more family friendly work pattern”. I am a mother of two school aged children. The shifts as they stand are arguably the most family friendly solution for providing 24 hour cover at a fire station, please leave them alone! East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service propose to change this to what I consider an unworkable system if you have a young family. It gives us parents six weeks to sort adhoc childcare out. Impossible. Child care providers are not flexible. They want money in advance and set days per week throughout the year. Anyone who states differently has never tried to secure childcare. The partners of the firefighters are employed too and do not work on such “flexible” systems and therefore will struggle to cover the shortfalls of child care. To apply this system shows that there has been little consideration given to the employees of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. I for one would have to consider my future in the Fire Service should this proposal go ahead. I would be forced out of a career that I have worked hard for and love. It would not only be women that would be affected by this as a lot of firefighters are primary carers, but it would most definitely discourage women in the from looking at East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service for a career in the future which is a real shame as this has always been encouraged in the past. East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service has always boasted about the family friendliness of the way we work and this proposal quashes that in an instant.

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service has a mantra - Pride, Accountability, Integrity, Respect. I am proud that generations of my family have served the public of East Sussex as firefighters and that I have continued this tradition with [REDACTED] years service at Preston Circus. To maintain my integrity and because of the accountability I feel to my colleagues and the people we are here to protect, I have felt compelled to write to you directly to express my concerns about these plans.

I hope I have given you a clearer more honest account of what these proposals would really mean if they were to go ahead.

Thank you for your time in reading this, I look forward to your reply.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

# OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED CUTS TO EAST SUSSEX FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE AND BATTLE COMMUNITY FIRE STATION

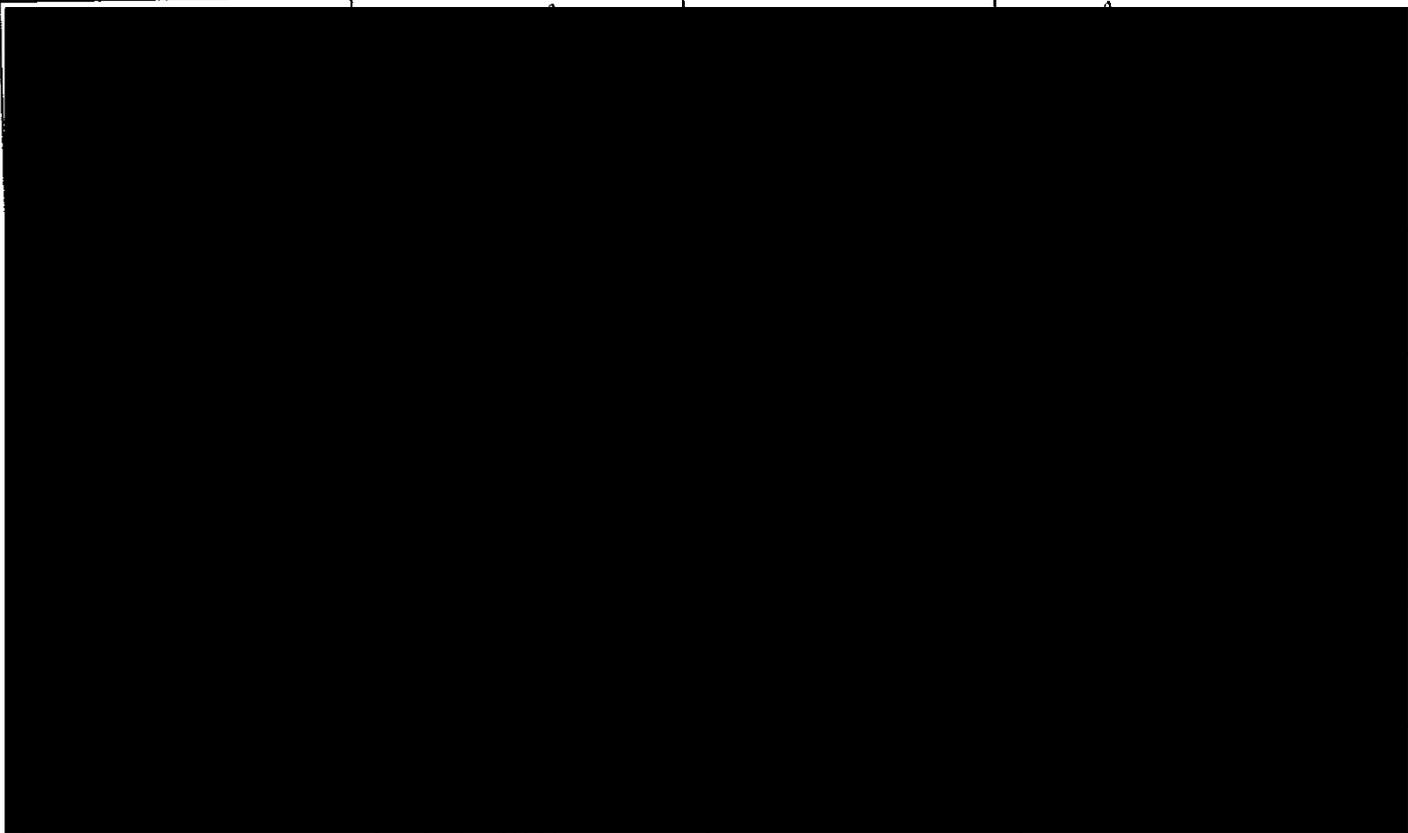
St Martins Sheltered Housing, St Martins, Battle, TN33 0DR

15 JUN 2020

Counsellor Huw Merriman

We, the residents of St Martins, after reviewing the information given in the public consultation, strongly disagree with the proposals put forward by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.

We are unable to access the internet as a group of residents and many of us do not have email accounts.

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	SIGNATURE
			

Contact



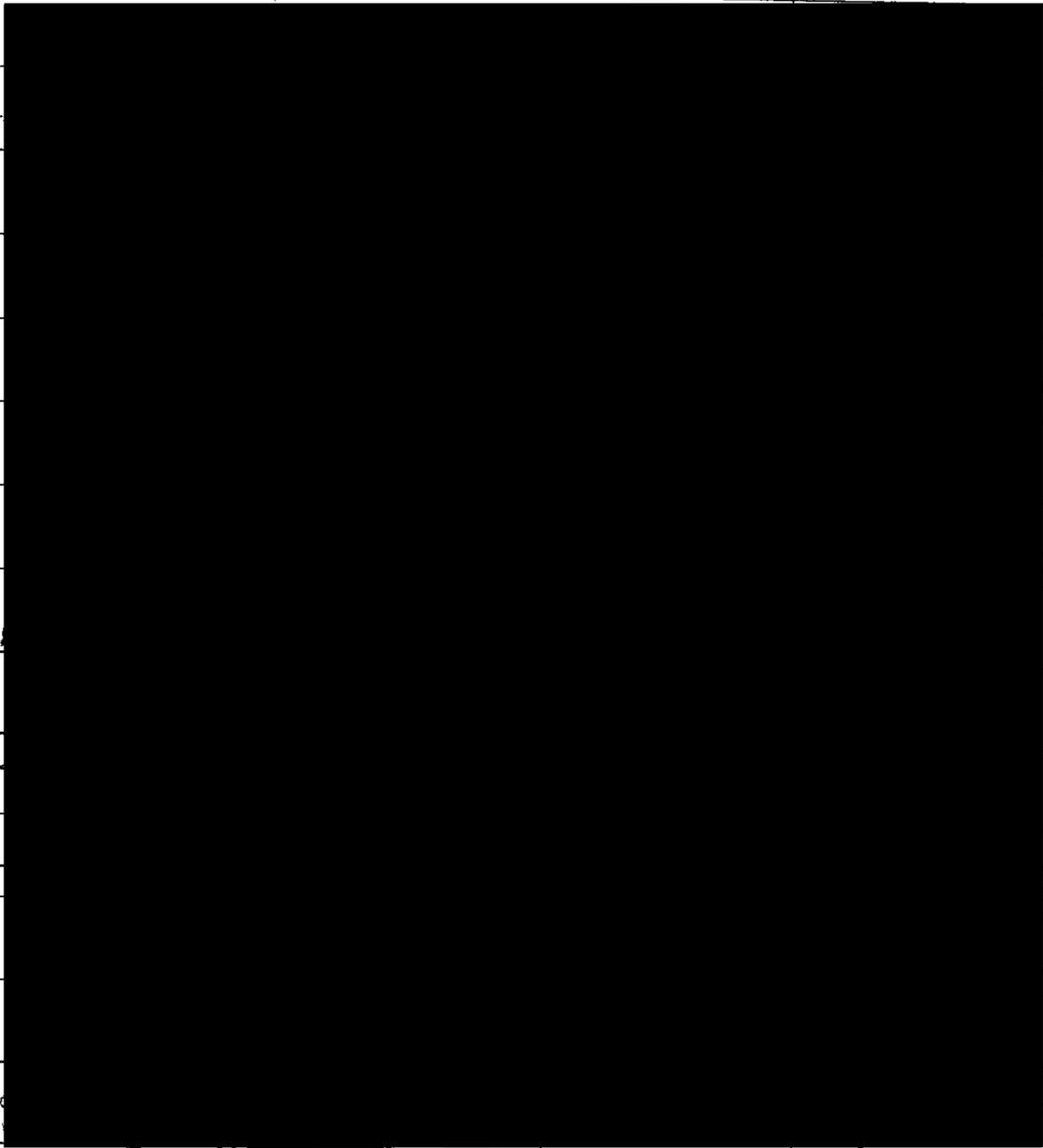
29 May 2020

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	SIGNATURE
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01

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	SIGNATURE
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cc  
do  
*[Handwritten signature]*  
o


# FAIRLIGHT PARISH COUNCIL

*Clerk to the Council: Pauline Collins*

Planning for a Safer Future  
East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service HQ  
Church Lane  
Lewes  
BN7 2DZ

29<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Sirs

## **Re: Planning for the Future**

I am writing on behalf of Fairlight Parish Council in response to your consultation on this matter.

The primary effect of this proposal on our parish relates to the changes to our local fire station on The Ridge in Hastings.

As we understand it this station is currently crewed 24 hours a day while under your proposals it would revert to day crewed, meaning that in the evening, night and early morning firefighters would have to travel from home before setting out to an incident or alternatively a crew from Bohemia Road would have to respond.

The distance from The Ridge to the centre of Fairlight is 2.7 miles compared to 5.3 miles from Bohemia Road.

Inevitably, whichever station was able to respond first it would take longer to reach Fairlight than it does at present.

In the 2011 census it was found that Fairlight had 42.6% of residents over the age of 65 against a national average of 16% meaning that in the event of a fire or other incident they would be likely to be more in need of third-party assistance than in many places.

There are also a large number of timber framed properties in Fairlight and so speed is of the essence if a Fire Appliance is required.

A further factor is the narrow lanes between Ore and Fairlight. There have been many instances of lorries and buses being unable to pass each other particularly on Fairlight Road in the vicinity of Hastings Country Park causing further potential for delay.

In the last year there has been a fatal fire in the village as well as a fatal car accident. The longer the delay in attending such incidents in future the greater the risk to life.

Fairlight Parish Council considers that the planned change at The Ridge is unacceptable and is wholly opposed to it.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PC Collins', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mrs Pauline Collins  
Parish Clerk/RFO

Dear Cllr Roy Galley and Chief Fire Officer Dawn Whittaker

It is with some concern that we read the proposals for a reduction in the cover provided by the Fire Service in Crowborough. The Crowborough and District Chamber of Commerce is strongly against the proposed removal of the second fire engine and changes to staff contracts at our local station.

Reliance on what the demand has been in the past in order to make decisions of this nature bears no relation to what might happen in the future. Your consultation document fails to take into account the impact of the significant extra housing currently going into both Crowborough and Uckfield, which will obviously increase the likelihood of incidents happening. The analysis that has been undertaken is clearly out of date. For example, in the Crowborough Station Risk Profile, the population estimate of 27,416 is a 2017 figure with no projection of future population growth over an appropriate plan period. The demographic analysis is based on the 2011 Census which is nearly 10 years old. The position taken in the documentation that there are no major large scale developments allocated in the area is clearly wrong, the map on page 44 of the profile is out of date as it only shows a site in Mayfield but not sites at Mead House or Walshes Road in Crowborough. Therefore this flawed evidence base alone cannot justify the proposal to downgrade the Crowborough station.

The inability to adequately respond to an emergency because of a delay caused by waiting for an additional appliance to arrive from another location will inevitably put both lives and property at increased risk. In our opinion the best case scenario for a back up engine to arrive from Uckfield, assuming that it is available at the time, would be at least 20 minutes.

Crowborough's location on the extremes of the county presents extra challenges, so the Chamber considers it will not be sufficiently covered by a single engine and that a reliance on support from other towns would be devastating should a major incident occur.

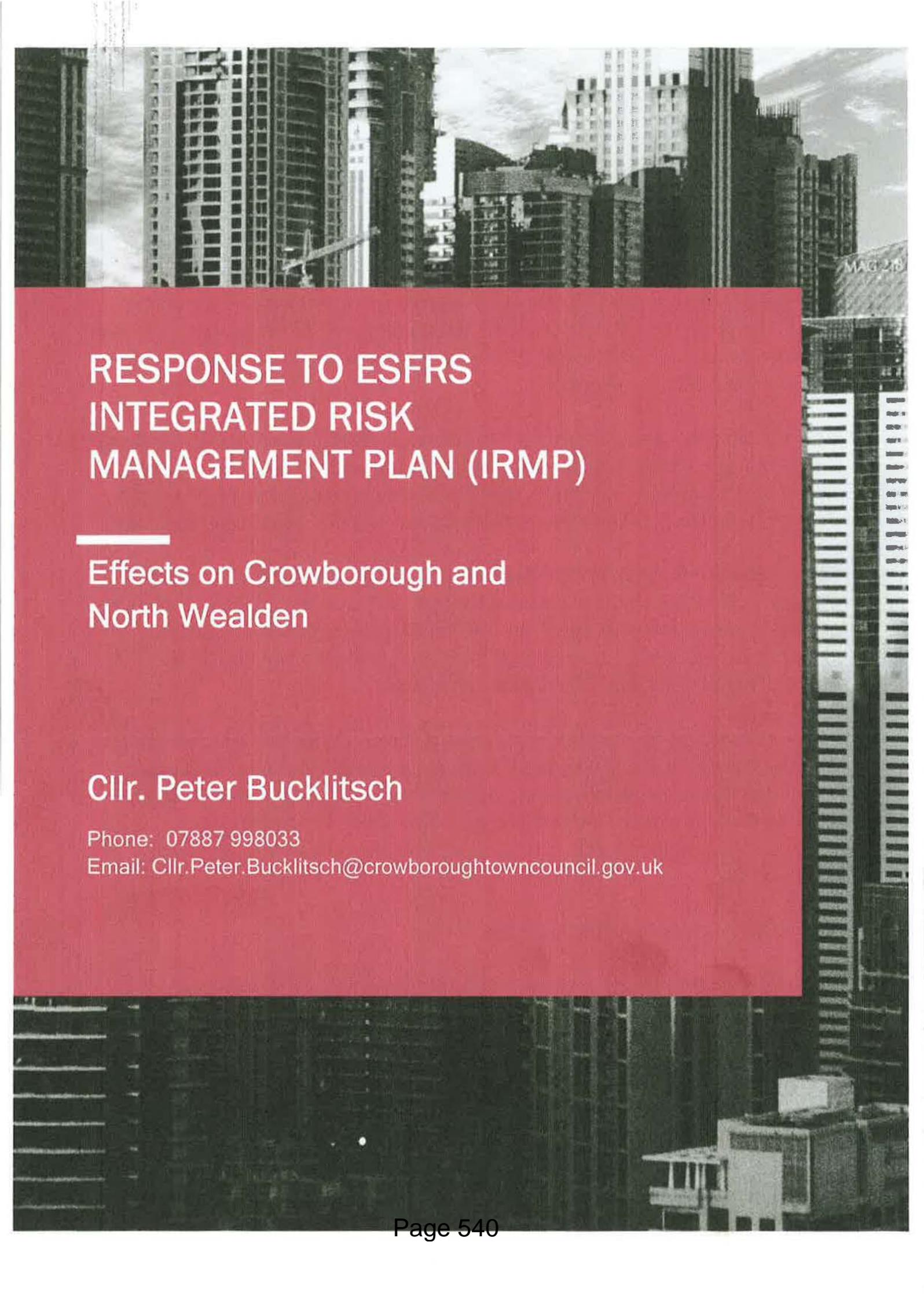
With the climate shifting towards seemingly prolonged dry periods there will likely be a rise in the frequency of fires on Ashdown Forest. Previous incidents have required more than one engine to respond, this would also be significantly impacted by the changes.

These objections, in conjunction with the suggested changes to the crewing model, make the proposals unacceptable to the Chamber and we believe will leave East Sussex Fire & Rescue unable to provide the level of service required in Crowborough.

Regards

Jeremy Woolger

President & Chairman  
Crowborough & District Chamber of Commerce



# RESPONSE TO ESFRS INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (IRMP)

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Effects on Crowborough and  
North Wealden

**Cllr. Peter Bucklitsch**

Phone: 07887 998033

Email: [Cllr.Peter.Bucklitsch@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Peter.Bucklitsch@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk)

# Background

## Crowborough Fire Station

As I live next door to the Fire Station (FS) I called in to get information on the IRMP. I met with two Station Officers. Rather than ask for their views, I elected to interview them on what I knew about the IRMP and to get their reactions to aspects that I saw as important.

The first question was whether the Crowborough machines were used solely in Crowborough. It was established that they supported the other FSs in North Wealden; Forest Row, Wadhurst, Mayfield and Heathfield, all solely Retained Firefighter stations. Often these were unable to respond due to staff shortages.

They explained that the IRMP was derived from the data in the Operational Response Reviews that are available for each station in the ESFRS. It was also explained that a driver for the IRMP was the HMI report that approved the operational responses but raised concerns about the educational side of ESFRS, home visits and commercial inspections.

I was informed that the control of the service in North Wealden was delivered from Haywards Heath, shortly to be moved to a location in Surrey, and that crews and machines were regularly used across the East and West Sussex boundaries, with Forest Row working with Crawley and supporting East Grinstead on a regular basis. Crowborough FS also worked regularly with Uckfield FS.

Key issues derived from the interview:

Crowborough did not just work in Crowborough but was the full-time core that supported the part-time stations nearby when staff shortages put them "off the run".

The proposals would have a severe effect on the earnings of the surviving full-time staff.

The effect of the proposed cuts would have an adverse impact on the morale of all staff, both full-time and Retained.

Removal of one fire engine would have an adverse effect on the ability of ESFRS to support other stations in the local area

## Research into IRMP

### Station Risk Profiles

Following my interview with the Crowborough FS personnel I accessed the Station Risk Profiles (SRP) for Crowborough and Forest Row. These profiles are full of statistical information mainly relevant to each individual FS, but in fact should be read in conjunction with each other.

#### Crowborough

The Crowborough SRP confirmed the information extracted in the interview. Page 4 of the SRP - Pump 83P1 was mobilized to other stations in critical incidents 35% of the time. I note that the figures do not add up as "Mobilises to 34 critical incidents per year - 65% in own area, 11% in Uckfield, 8% in Forest Row area, 8% Mayfield" totals 92%. The many interactions with Wadhurst FS do not appear in these statistics.

The reserve 83P4 Mobilises 54 times per year - 73% in own area, 6% in Mayfield area, 4% in Uckfield, 3% OTB. - Mobilises to 9 critical incidents per year - 70% in own area, 7% in Mayfield, 5% in Lewes area. Again, the figures do not add up to 100%.

This lack of attention to mathematical accuracy is continued in the SRP with page 6 - Crowborough is the largest inland town in East Sussex with a population of around 20,000, conflicting with page 3 - 27,416 residents within Crowborough station area. I believe that with the raft of new developments piling into Crowborough following the disastrous collapse of the Wealden Local

Plan a further 2000 or more people will reside in Crowborough, which would bring the population close to that of Tunbridge Wells.

### Forest Row SRP

The use of arcane language in this summary e.g. Isochrone, is unhelpful and indicates a wish to confuse rather than explain.

The headline summary - p3 - states that Operational cover is provided by one on-call fire engine. The origin of this is not made immediately clear until page 4 where 35% of 2nd pump attendances were by OTB appliance, 22% 85P1, 15% 84P1 and 14% by 83P1 (Crowborough). And:- Neighbouring FRS attend 10% of all incidents in Forest Row (West Sussex 9%, and Kent 1%).

Clearly the interaction between stations is complex and is driven by availability and need that is controlled by Haywards Heath.

## Effect of the Proposals

The issue for the residents of Wealden, in part represented by Crowborough Town Council, is summed up in the IRMP:

**Prevention** – This is about reducing the risk to our communities through education and engagement, the delivery of Home Safety Visits and through directing our resources to those identified at highest risk.

**Protection** – This is about reducing the risk to our communities by ensuring that premises covered under fire safety legislation, mainly businesses, are operating safely and within the law.

**Response** – This is about responding to fires, road traffic collisions, rescues, flooding and other emergencies efficiently and effectively.

The HMI report highlighted issues with Prevention and Protection, while approving of response. The IRMP is a response to that, but it is entirely wrong-headed to fatally degrade the response in order to deliver Prevention and Protection.

Ultimately, when we dial 999, we expect a fire engine, not a man with a clipboard to advise how we could have avoided the call.

The IRMP states that:

Phase Two of the (Grenfell) inquiry is now underway and our local plan will be reviewed and updated to capture any further actions that will need to be undertaken. P34

A major issue coming out of this enquiry is the reliance on statistically derived responses, which the LFB has found to be wholly inadequate, resulting in many needless deaths. This IRMP is following in this path of error by justifying frontline cuts on unsubstantiated data statistics.

The core of the IRMP is that changes to current staffing arrangements can resolve both current problems and future requirements. A policy based on unproven assumptions is not sustainable for an organization that is at the forefront of life saving emergency response.

Assumption 1: the new contract will be acceptable to the existing staff.

Assumption 2: the new contract will stem the loss of Retained personnel

Assumption 3: the new contract will stimulate recruitment of Retained personnel

Assumption 4: the surviving full-time staff will accept the pay cut and remain

The admission on Page 41 of the report indicates that these assumptions are unlikely to prove true.

Despite efforts to recruit and retain staff, this has led to problems finding enough on-call staff to keep fire engines available to respond.

The proposals are for a draconian change of working practices. Some have been tried in East Grinstead, with the result that this FS is "off the run" all too frequently. From the response of the staff I met, these changes are not acceptable.

Cllr Galley has stated in public that this is not about cost cutting. This approach is difficult to believe. The question is why is the frontline is being so drastically cut back? The table below (from the ESFRS web site) shows the headline budget items, with an estimated expenditure split between the core objectives of the Fire Service and the general overhead costs.

	£ '000	Sharp end	Non essential
Training	£2,318	£2,318	
Resources/Treasurer	£6,951		£6,951
Planning & improvement	£1,139		£1,139
HR & OD	£911	£456	£456
Safer communities	£18,271	£18,271	
Operational support	£3,581		£3,581
Corporate	£4,969		£4,969
	£38,140	£21,045	£17,096

Of the budget of £38 million nearly half appears to be spent on non-essential services. The section on staff is instructive.

Our staff are our most important assets. We have a wide range of professionals working in the Service, not just our firefighters but technical specialists, qualified inspectors, community safety practitioners, control room operators, analysts, IT experts, health and safety and HR advisers, communication specialists, accountants and more. The ORR presents us with an opportunity to reshape the way we deliver services to best meet the risks in the community, as a number of our proposals mean changes to crewing and duty systems and result in different or further training needs

It would seem from the above list that there are many activities that have grown around the core requirement, specifically, a Fire and Rescue Service. The obvious ones have been underlined.

This is a matter for the authority, however, and the focus of this response has to be the safety of the people of Wealden and Crowborough in particular.

## Rejection of the ESFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan

These proposals are unacceptable as they are based on unsustainable assumptions rather than hard facts, they are based on a dubious use of statistical data, and in my opinion would rip out the heart of the professional core of North Wealden Fire and Rescue services with considerable adverse effects on the quality of life of Crowborough residents and the wider area of North Wealden.

The surrounding villages would be vulnerable with the loss of the core full-time professionals in Crowborough, and the IRMP has failed to provide a Plan B if the recruitment solutions fail.

The Ashdown Forest would be vulnerable to large-scale fires particularly if this hot weather continues to be the norm.

The loss of one Fire engine together with the high incident of RTAs means that more adverse outcomes would be experienced by the residents of Wealden.

Contrary to the claim of efficiency without impinging operational effectiveness the most cursory glance at the data in the Station Risk Profiles contradicts that claim.

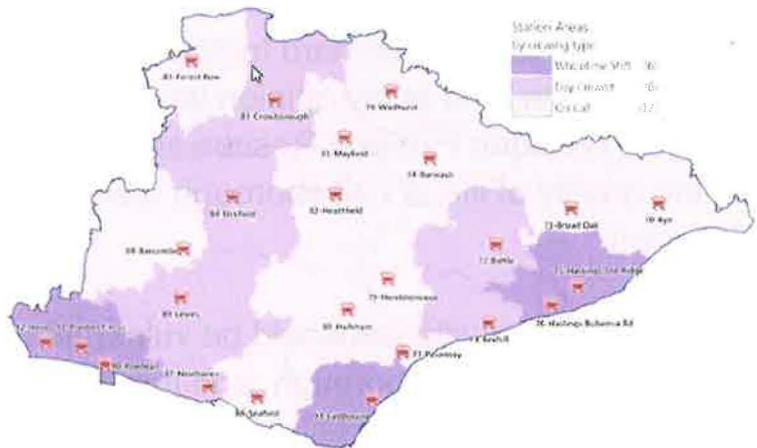
## Current shift patterns



### Some key information...

–24 fire stations,  
currently staffed in 3  
main ways:

- 'Wholetime shift': crewed 24/7, 365 days per year by full-time firefighters
- 'Day-crewed': firefighters are on-station during the daytime only (typically between 08:30 and 18:30). Outside these times, firefighters attend incidents by responding to an alert
- 'On-call': firefighters must live or work within 5 minutes of the fire station and are contracted to provide a certain amount of availability per week. They respond to an alert when an emergency call is received



Letter to Cllr Bucklitsch, Crowborough Town Council from CFO Dawn Whittaker

CC; Caroline Miles, CTC Clerk

Date 12 June 2020

## **Your Response to ESFRS IRMP document**

Cllr Bucklitsch

I write in response to a document that has been passed to us on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June, authored by yourself, identifying yourself as a town councillor and subsequently sent directly to me by the clerk to the Town Council on the afternoon of the 12<sup>th</sup> of June

I have also copied in the Clerk to the Town Council and would request that she distributes this response to other town council members.

I must add at the outset that is extremely disappointing that an elected representative has chosen to write such a document without seeking to clarify the facts and accuracy of its content with the service prior to wider circulation.

I will respond to your document by page, as it is littered with inaccuracy and accusation and misrepresentation, which I am obligated to address on behalf of the Fire Authority Members.

### **Cover – Page 1**

You title the document “Response to ESFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan” – this may appear pedantic, but the IRMP is actually a statutory document of the East Sussex Fire Authority

### **Page 2**

You outline the background to your document, stating you met with two Station Officers, we understand in fact you spoke to two of the local firefighters, not two officers.

You state that the “Crowborough machines” – we assume you refer to the Fire Engines, support other FS (assumed Fire Stations) in North Wealden. In actual fact all our appliances are required to cover any area in our jurisdiction, but also across borders as part of the S13/16 agreements in the Fire and Rescue Services Act. It is however not about supporting other Fire Mtations, it is rather more focused on nearest, available appliance.

It is incorrect to say that the IRMP is derived solely from the data in the ORR – the Response Review dealt principally with response to emergencies, but the IRMP also contains information and consideration from a much wider set of sources including the Governments sector reform plan, the independent HMICFRS report, the Hackitt recommendations, as well as reference to the Authorities financial plans amongst other sources. All of which is stated in the IRMP document

It is incorrect to state that the driver for the IRMP was the HMICFRS report. The IRMP is a statutory requirement that focuses on risk and resources to deliver all elements of the authorities statutory functions, of course it will have due regard to the Independent Inspectorate report, but it is not the driver – it is the statutory functions that are.

In para 6 - You state that “Crowborough is the full-time core” .Crowborough is not crewed full time. It is currently a day crewed station, which means it has a response from on station in the day time hours – but has an “off station” response in the evenings. You also refer to our

“on-call” stations as part time, that is a misleading – our “On-call” firefighters provide cover that runs over half our stations over 24/7. They do have periods off the run, like all stations, but some of those stations you name actually have better availability than the second appliance in Crowborough.

### **Page 3**

I am unclear on the basis of your conclusion that morale of all staff would be impacted by the proposals, as I understand it you have spoken to 2 of our 800 plus staff. I assume therefore it is your opinion.

I am also unclear of how you can conclude that the removal of one fire engine will impact on other stations, given the data analysis on which the recommendations are based on 9 years of incident analysis and with deep professional understanding of our sector.

3<sup>rd</sup> Paragraph – perhaps it is worth clarifying that the highest number of mobilisations from Crowborough station are actually onto another day crewed station – Uckfield, this is clear in the report and so it would have seemed logical for you to assess that station profile.

Para 4 and 5 – in referencing the number of mobilisations on page 4 of the station profile, you state they do not add up – that is because it is in the summary and does not reflect all mobilisations – if you look at page 34 the full list is there. Similar point in para for the second appliance

Para 6 – you suggest that there is mathematical inaccuracy, there is not, as explained above the page 4 is a statistical presentation of some mobilisations. I am afraid the error is yours in terms of interpretation of statistical presentation, which I would add was prepared by experienced analysts.

You state there is a conflict in the presentation of population data – there is not the population for Crowborough as a town is different to the population covered by the station area. They are two different figures.

### **Page 4**

The 2018 population statistic for Tunbridge Wells is 72, 041, so not at all comparable to Crowborough statistically and a misleading fact.

The station profiles are technical documents and do indeed contain a lot of information and technical language. In future we could provide a glossary to assist people.

Para 4 – Need is not driven by the Control and mobilising centre in Haywards Heath, our control room operators respond to demand and incident requirement to mobilise the nearest available appliance, at times this means the appliance may even come from West Sussex or Kent as set out the primary legislation s13/16.

Para 7 – I refer you back to the comment about the HMICFRS report made previously, but the second statement demonstrates a complete lack of knowledge or understanding of the fact that the Authority have 3 areas of statutory and absolutely have to balance resources available to deliver them, It is also important to understand that responding well to emergencies that create life risk is frankly too late – we will save more lives by preventing incidents, protection of the vulnerable and ensuring buildings are safe and this has been demonstrated nationally with a 50% reduction in deaths and injuries from fires as a result of investing more in these two areas. Had you chosen to engage with the service before writing that statement, the evidence would have illustrated this.

The final statement on this page is derogatory and emotive, it is frankly ridiculous to suggest that we, as a professional emergency service, are suggesting to send “a man with a clipboard” to a 999 call – again a misrepresentation of facts.

#### **Page 5**

The first two paragraphs are a misrepresentation of facts and given that ESFRS have two professional officers advising the national work groups on Building Fire safety, I would venture to suggest they may have a more in depth understanding of the issues and complexity of the built environment and to clarify all our data goes through statistical verification and is also qualified with the Home Office. It is ill advised for a lay person to make such claims without checking their own facts.

The assumptions you suggest are made without knowledge of the negotiation with the representative bodies, without knowledge of the pay protection policies and without knowledge of the revised contracts on offer – they are your assumptions

The final paragraph refers to changes made in East Grinstead (a West Sussex Fire Station). However the IRMP team have actually assessed different working practices in many different Fire and Rescue Services around the UK and analysed impacts, so once again this document shows a complete lack of qualified research in reaching any conclusions

#### **Page 6**

Whilst you might disbelieve Cllr Galley as Fire Authority Chairman, he is much better qualified and advised and is correct. The Fire authority have no interest, nor gain in cost cutting, rather they have a statutory duty to fulfil to ensure that the resources at their disposal are placed where the risk is and where it will have the greatest impact – take for a moment the proposal to reallocate an additional appliance and full time crews into Hastings town centre – the area that has the highest number of critical fire incidents in the whole of East Sussex, which only has one appliance – this needs addressing and in fact is no different to the provision of other key services – health, schools etc. are all provided across the county where they are actually needed.

The table you present and state “is from the ESFRS website” has been altered to suit your purposes and apart from being totally disingenuous is actually a falsehood. The headings “sharp End” and “non-essential” are your words and your conclusion is totally flawed – if you perhaps were better informed you would understand that the “non-essential services” include our fleet engineers, (that service the fire engines) Health and safety advisers, fitness advisers, operational policy team, accountants and many other key staff to ensure our firefighters are safe and the regulatory duties are delivered. They are in no way “non-essential”...they are in fact part of the Fire and Rescue Service.

Your final paragraph of this page would be served well by ensuring you present a factual and accurate document, rather than one built on limited understanding and poor research and analysis. Our Fire Service is full of professionals who have dedicated their lives and careers to the protection of the public and the focus of our daily professional lives is keeping people safe.

#### **Page 7**

The proposals presented are based on sound analysis of 9 years of incident data and a rich analysis of vulnerability and growth in the county, our data is validated by two external bodies, the Home Office and the Inspectorate. We use national data analysis software available to the sector and data sets from Health, the local authorities and other credible sources, which is the foundation of the IRMP.

Paragraph 2 – All proposals will have fully work business contingency and implementation plans prior to implementation – so the statement is misleading

Para 3 – An emotive and unsubstantiated statement, The vulnerability of any area to large scale fires has more to do with the weather and public behaviour and you do not have the knowledge to assess fire probability and behaviour in the same way as the technical and professional IRMP team do, several of them having spent their careers on the “sharp end”.

Para 4 – the removal of one fire appliance will in fact have minimal impact on the risk. It is correct to say that Wealden has a high rate of Road Traffic Collisions and indeed it's a fundamental reason why we have invested more in schemes like “Safe Drive, Stay Alive”, Safety in Action, Speed watch, Road watch and schemes through the Road Safety Partnership – all these prevention schemes are a critical part of reducing the number of accidents on our roads, but the number will not reduce if we just use a response strategy that gets us there after the accident has occurred, the Authority must have a balanced strategy.

Your final paragraph suggesting a “cursory glance” at the Station risk profiles is revealing – our professional IRMP team have spent nearly a year analysing 9 years of incident data, third party data, and demographic information in order to produce these profiles.

Your final page of the document shows the current crewing models of our 24 stations, 12 of them are on-call stations, 6 Day crewed and 6 Wholetime. In case your analysis has missed this fact, there are on-call stations that attend more incidents and have higher risk profiles than Crowborough and that is a matter the Fire Authority has to consider.

I am aware Councillor that you took part in the service stakeholder consultation that was run by ORS and I am awaiting a transcript of the meeting, which was being recorded to ascertain the facts, but at this point I have had complaints from staff that were supporting the event that the tone of your comments were antagonistic from the outset, stating that the figures were misleading, the proposals nonsensical asking for an apology from the staff and further stating that they were demeaning themselves. At this time these are unsubstantiated complaints, but should the transcripts and information from ORS validate these allegations, I can't allow my staff to be subjected to such comments from someone in public office without recourse, our Fire Authority members act in accordance with Core values and always treat staff and officers with courtesy and frankly I would hope and expect that to be the same expectation in other local authorities.

Yours etc



Council Offices • Pine Grove • Crowborough • East Sussex TN6 1DH  
Telephone 01892 652907 • VAT No: 210 4938 90

FAO:

Cllr Roy Galley, The Chairman of East Sussex Fire Authority  
Dawn Whittaker, Chief fire officer and Chief executive for East Sussex Fire  
and Rescue Service

1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

Dear Cllr Galley and Chief Fire Officer Dawn Whittaker,

At the Full Council meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> May the Town Council resolved that I write to you to express its unhappiness with the proposals suggested in the recent consultation document for the Fire service in Crowborough.

My Council is vehemently opposed to the changes proposed to staff contracts and the removal of the second fire engine at Crowborough Fire Station.

Inadequate account has been taken of the extra housing that Crowborough and Uckfield will have to take over the coming years and there is no clear information in the consultation document on the impact of local facilities should these proposals go ahead.

The document states that fatalities on Wealden roads is high. The Council is aware that the A26 has a poor record when it comes to road traffic incidents. This, together with the increasing amount of forest fires on the Ashdown Forest should be taken into account when looking at the proposed changes to the service provided for Crowborough.

The proposals include the increased employment of retained fire fighters who will be at the fore of weekend and evening call outs. Retained firefighters are notoriously difficult to recruit due, in part, to the maximum amount of time required to report to the fire station for duty and the willingness of employers prepared to lose staff at a moment's notice.

Crowborough sits on the extremity of East Sussex and as such is too far away from any other fire station. The loss of a second fire engine and the proposed changes to the crewing model will affect the time taken to attend an emergency in Crowborough. It is not acceptable to the Council, that as a result of the introduction of these changes, it will take longer to attend fires or traffic incidences in Crowborough.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter either by email to:  
[clerk@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk) or by letter to the address above.

Your Sincerely,  
Caroline Miles.

Caroline Miles.  
Town Clerk.  
Crowborough Town Council.

East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service  
“Planning for a Safer Future”  
Consultation Response

By email: [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org)

Mistral  
Shepherds Way  
Fairlight  
E Sussex  
TN35 4BB

Tel 01424-814178  
[cllr.andrew.mier@rother.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.andrew.mier@rother.gov.uk)

4 June 2020

## **Planning for a Safer Future: Consultation Response**

I am Rother District Councillor for Southern Rother Ward. My Ward consists of the villages of Fairlight, Guestling, Icklesham and Pett. I have one particular concern about the present proposals.

It is proposed that The Ridge should be staffed at night by retained firefighters instead of full-time firefighters as at present. It is already a ten minute drive from The Ridge to Fairlight Cove. Timings to the other villages will be similar. The additional time required to call out retained staff will add significantly to response times, which must already be at the margins of acceptability.

The need for good response times to the villages is increased by the high average age of the residents and their vulnerability. For example in Fairlight 42% of the population is aged over 65 compared with just 16% for England and Wales<sup>1</sup>. There are also many narrow lanes and timber properties in the Ward.

I request that you let me have the existing night response times (from receipt of a 999 call) to each of the four villages and the estimated response times should the station be staffed by retained firefighters.

I am unconvinced by the safety of this particular proposal and note that in the 2012 review Fairlight Parish Council raised similar concerns.

Please treat this letter as a response to the consultation.

Best wishes,



Cllr Andrew Mier

cc. Clerks to Fairlight, Guestling, Icklesham and Pett Parish Councils

<sup>1</sup> East Sussex in Figures 2011 census

# Wealden Green Party

Cherry Gardens Farm Groombridge  
Tunbridge Wells Kent TN3 9NY

Ms Dawn Whittaker  
Chief Fire Officer, East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service  
Church Lane  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 2DZ

19<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Dawn Whittaker,

We are writing to express our concern with regard to the recent consultation process that the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) has undertaken.

We consider that the format and many of the questions in the consultation has been designed to hide the true nature of the consultation, which is little more than a cost saving exercise, and will result in a degraded service, and in some instances is close to negligent.

The first question asks if respondents agree that the Service should change from 15 immediately available fire engines to 18 engines.

What it doesn't ask is;

Do you agree with reducing the number of fire engines available at 10 stations from 2 engines to 1 engine?

ie a loss of 10 potentially available engines.

These fire engines are not called out to fires as often as the main engines, but they are available to provide cover when the main engine is called out, which is the whole point of having a spare machine.

Also, the question about changing from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' is touted as an improvement, but in fact this change would lengthen response times at week-ends and in the night, and leave less experienced crews to deal with emergencies.

Changes to the '4 watch duty system', which has stood the test of time, to a 'flexible rostering system' will mean that working conditions are worsened for families, who will find it impossible to plan ahead for child care and schooling commitments.

The 'dual-crewing' of the Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALP) at Eastbourne and Hastings could potentially leave only 1 fully crewed ALP to cover the whole of East Sussex, which would be unsafe.

Switching from 'fully crewed' to 'day crewed' regimes at several stations would increase call out times at night and week-ends. These are not lower risk times and therefore danger to life and property would be increased.

No mention is made anywhere in the Risk Management Plan of consultation with, or information from the adjoining fire services of West Sussex, Kent and Surrey which are relied upon for assistance in major incidents.

The capabilities and plans of these neighbouring fire services are vital to the safety of East Sussex residents in a major incident, so this must form part of the risk assessment.

There is no mention either of the time it would take to get multiple engines to properties such as hospitals or care homes where there will be many people needing specialist rescue. Getting rid of the second engine at Crowborough (and many other stations) will put these people at increased risk.

The Fire Service should be planning for a 'worst case scenario' not simply looking at historical data and planning the minimum number of engines and crews that could deal with past incidents.

Covid-19 should have taught us all not to be complacent in planning for emergencies.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Keith Obbard



Cllr Patricia Patterson-Vanegas

Copies to;  
Roy Galley, Chair East Sussex Fire Authority  
Nus Ghani MP for Wealden



15-Jun-20

Dear Mr O'Brien,

Re: 5 year plan – Planning for a safer future

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your 5-year plan.

I have looked at your survey, but my comments don't easily fit into your proforma, on which largely I feel rather unqualified to give an opinion, though I fully appreciate and understand what a wonderful service you provide.

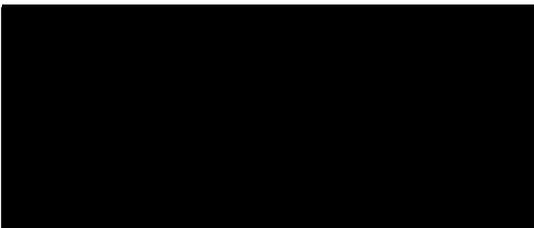
My main comments are as follows follows:

1. I would not welcome any diminution of service in Uckfield. I live in a very old house, one of the oldest in Uckfield. It is timber framed and by modern fire standards is probably not the most fire secure. The thought of a fire engine not being able to reach us because there is no immediate service in Uckfield, particularly at night is of concern.
2. We are an animal loving country and one of our intrinsic values is that we like to protect both our pets and all forms of wild life. We are well served in particularly by WRAS - Wildlife Rescue and Ambulance Service, RSPCA and other animal charities, but in some instances they have to rely on your help.
3. I can imagine a situation where there is a trapped animal or bird and the owner or concerned member of the public trying to rescue the animal themselves. I would certainly do that and I would also try to reach a stranded animal or bird on a roof or in a chimney. I think I am not alone. I am well aware of the risk of using ladders and climbing unsafe structures. I am 75 years of age, but I simply could not leave the animal to perish. I think I am not alone.

I understand that there are periods of inactivity when crews are on standby and could not these periods be used to carry out animal rescues, which are not usually urgent. Even if these periods are reduced by re-organisation, the crews would not always be in demand for fire emergencies.

Do please reconsider this aspect of your plan. It is important to our national traditions and character.

Yours sincerely,



*P.S. I do not expect a personal reply.*

# TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL



TOWN CLERK & RFO: MRS STELLA NEWMAN, PSLCC

TELSCOMBE CIVIC CENTRE  
360 SOUTH COAST ROAD  
TELSCOMBE CLIFFS  
EAST SUSSEX  
BN10 7ES

TELEPHONE: (01273) 589777

10<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dawn Whittaker, Chief fire Officer & Chief Executive  
East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service HQ  
Church Lane  
Lewes  
BN7 2DZ

Dear Mrs Whittaker

Re: Planning for a Safer Future Consultation

I am writing to give you the views of our Council on the proposed draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020 – 2025 consultation.

We are strongly against the proposals for the Newhaven Fire Station on the following grounds.

We feel they will have a detrimental impact on this critical public service. The supposed more efficient use of resources and reducing costs will come at a cost of risking the lives of local people. The consultation admits that there will be a slower response time at weekends which is totally unacceptable and presents a danger to the public. The A259 South Coast Road is heavily congested and by implementing a retained service during weekends, this could impact on the response time for firefighters to attend the Fire Station.

The proposed changes to employment contracts are unfair to the firefighters who risk their lives by providing an invaluable service.

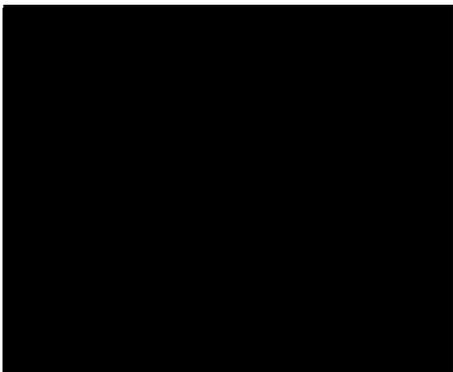
There is an increase in the population and a lot of local development which necessitates a retained crew to respond quickly to emergencies. Newhaven ferry port requires specifically trained local firefighters in water fires on hand.

We are extremely concerned that it is not the right time to proceed with a consultation. No one knows what the shape of the future will be post this pandemic and we request that the consultation be suspended until it is clear what resources the fire service will need.

I finish by reiterating the Council's objections to the proposals and ask that you take these into consideration. Please can you acknowledge receipt of this letter.

Yours faithfully

Stella Newman  
Town Clerk & RFO  
Telscombe Town Council



Dear Councillor Dowling

I am writing to you as a member of the fire Authority to discuss the IRMP that ESFRS are aiming to implement , I am a serving full time Firefighter at Crowborough Fire Station [REDACTED] , I hope to point out the negative impact of its suggestions on the service and the communities they serve and to share how it will personally affect me and my colleagues.

When HMICFRS inspected the service they found a number of issues that required improvement including the requirement for an new IRMP , one of the things we are doing well as stated in the report is “ ESFRS are good at responding to fires and other emergencies” if the IRMP is voted through then I’m afraid even the this will be negatively affected.

Speaking as someone who works the current day crewed system I can say that it currently works well and provides good cover for the community and some resilience to support incidents on neighbouring stations grounds , if the IRMP is implemented I am certain this will not be the case , by taking away the full time element on day manned stations at night and weekends there is a huge emphasis on on-call ( retained staff ) to provide cover, Historical data proves that the recruitment and retention of on-call staff has always been an issue ( locally and nationally ) , It is not a robust enough system to guarantee an appliance 24hrs a day , 7 days a week, indeed we know here at Crowborough and have data available to show that without Wholetime crews there would

have been no fire appliance available for many days and nights to deal with any incidents that arose.

Furthermore at weekends having no fulltime crew on station will massively increase any attendance times for incidents , how this can be seen as an improvement is beyond me , in an emergency such as a fire or RTC seconds count.

With slower attendance times of up to 30 minutes being suggested for the likes of Stations in Wadhurst and Mayfield and the removal of a an appliance from Crowborough , it looks as if a service that was deemed good will be anything but , in fact it leaves the north of the county looking very under-resourced and far less capable of responding to the communities it is supposed to be protecting.

On a personal level it will have a huge impact , If it is implemented I may of course have to leave Crowborough fire station ( along with 4 or 5 others deemed not required ) , If I remain I shall be forced to work less family friendly hours spending more time on station , I shall of course receive less pay as I will not be required to be on call or live in the area ( as currently required, currently I receive an allowance for doing so )all of this could have potentially devastating and unsettling affect's on myself and family potentially forcing us into leaving the town I have served and called home for a long period of time.

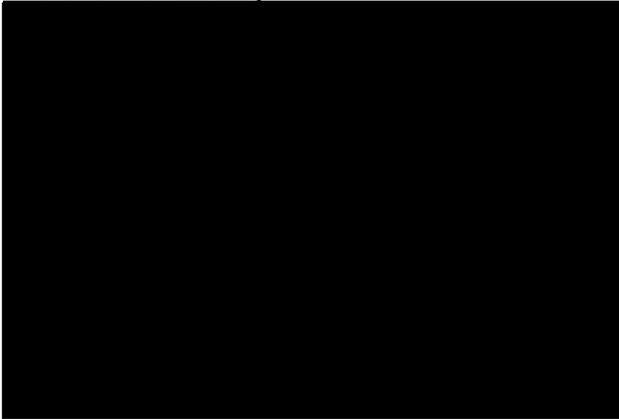
In my mind this IRMP is a step in the wrong direction it is hugely reliant on proven unreliable work systems and if implemented I strongly believe the community will be less well served and at more risk from harm , There are alternatives that could be considered that would still have large cost savings without detriment to the ability to respond efficiently to incidents.

As an overriding note to all of this I feel it is also almost incomprehensible to be undertaking this during a pandemic , at a time when keyworkers are being asked to help out in new and evolving ways

and with no clear end in sight to the situation , ESFRS and the Fire Authority are pushing ahead with this causing even more stress to a workforce concerned about there own and families safety , it can be postponed and reviewed in exceptional circumstances and should be until we are through this crisis and fully understand its ramifications going forward.

I look forward to hearing your response.

Yours Faithfully





**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**

**COUNCILLOR STEVE BELL CBE  
Leader of the Conservative Group**

Room G84  
Hove Town Hall  
Norton Road  
Hove BN3 3BQ

9 June 2020

Cllr Roy Galley  
Chairman - East Sussex Fire Service  
Fairplace Farm  
Chelwood Gate Road  
Nutley  
East Sussex TN22 3HE

Dear Cllr Galley,

**RE: 'Planning for a Safer future Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-25'  
consultation**

As Leader of the Conservative Group of Councillors at Brighton and Hove City Council I am writing to advise you of a motion that was put forward and passed at our Group meeting yesterday in relation to the above consultation proposal.

Our Group noted that the above IRMP would involve the loss of 5 frontline firefighters in the City of Brighton & Hove.

Following a full discussion of the matter with involvement from all 13 Group members the following motion was passed by the Conservative Group:

**To inform our two representatives on East Sussex Fire Authority – Cllr Carol Theobald and Cllr Garry Peltzer-Dunn – that we as a Group are against the loss, through deployment, redundancy or otherwise, of firefighters on the front line in Brighton & Hove.**

I would appreciate a response to this letter, which I can share with our Group at our next meeting on 15 June 2020.

Yours sincerely,

**COUNCILLOR STEVE BELL CBE  
Leader of the Conservative Group**

cc Conservative Group at Brighton & Hove City Council.



8<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Cllr Galley and Chief Fire Officer Dawn Whittaker

**Re: Planning for a Safer Future Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025 Consultation**

I am writing on behalf of Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council to express their strong objection to the proposals being made in your Planning for a Safer Future consultation.

We have serious concerns over the information in the consultation document and the accompanying documentation. The figures relating to callouts are already 2 years out of date and do not include the figures for all callouts just for incidents and therefore do not give the true picture.

The firemen at Heathfield Fire Station have attended a number of large fires over the last year including the Claremont Hotel in Eastbourne, the Ashdown Forest fire in May this year and recently a fire at Isenhurst which we understand was attended by firefighters from Heathfield, Wadhurst, Uckfield and Seaford. At all of these fires there would have been a number of appliances in attendance and at the Ashdown Forest fire 6 appliances and 4 Land Rovers were on site. By proposing to reduce the number of vehicles within East Sussex this would have a serious impact should there be a major fire and fire stations would not be able to provide the cover for those stations attending the fire.

By reducing the number of vehicles and staff at local fire stations it will create further delays in the response time for attending incidents. In Heathfield we are already below the target for the attendance standard and for critical incidents within daytime attendance standard only 85.3% is achieved. Whilst we understand the delays caused by having an on-call system at Heathfield, we will be impacted by changes to other areas such as Uckfield where it is planning to move it to an on-call crew at weekends during the day. If Uckfield needed to cover our station or attend a fire in our area you are further increasing the response time. By reducing the number of fire engines in rural areas they are less likely to be able to cover other stations that are already on a call and won't be able to respond to so many call-outs. We would be especially impacted by the proposals that are being made for Battle, Crowborough and Uckfield fire stations, however any reduction in engines can ultimately affect the whole of East Sussex.

In your document you advise that proposals are centred on public and firefighter safety however we cannot see how this can be the case, when due to the cutbacks you are proposing, that people's lives will be put at a greater risk.

Of the 4 Commitments you made in the document we would like to raise discrepancies over three of these:

- Delivering high performing services – you have admitted in the document that it will take slightly longer to get to an incident, surely this will result in the service not performing as well;
- Have a safe and valued workforce – it is difficult to see how the workforce feel valued with the cuts that are being proposed. You also state that you commit to ensuring that your workforce is provided with the right equipment, surely by reducing the number of vehicles you are reducing the amount of equipment available to them.
- Make effective use of our resources – we can't see how your productivity can be improved when the number of vehicles and staff are being reduced and some stations are being changed to i.e. be on-call at weekends.

In other places in the document you mention about wanting to reduce the risk, the likelihood and the consequence for all those who may be affected by an incident, again we cannot see how this can be done by reducing the number of vehicles and staff. We do however applaud your efforts in wanting to educate people in order to prevent fires occurring.

In the document it acknowledges the increase in population due to an increased number of dwellings, a large number of which will be in the Wealden area, putting more pressure on our firefighters. Wealden is also recognised as having a high number of RTAs which unfortunately will only increase with more housing, again putting more pressure on our firefighters.

It is extremely disappointing that this consultation came out during the Coronavirus pandemic when a number of people are in lockdown and public meetings cannot be held. During this time ESFRS personnel have had extra pressure put on them due to the increased tasks they have needed to perform during the pandemic.

Although the moving of the Call Centre is not part of the consultation it is mentioned by ESFRS in their documentation. Whilst we understand the cost savings in moving the Call Centre so that it is shared with other counties, we are concerned that you then lose the local knowledge which is imperative for locating incidents and could further delay the time in attending an incident.

The Parish Council is disappointed that you don't give a definition of how long you anticipate 'slightly longer' to get to a fire would take. You also mention about a 'negligible impact', again there is no definition of what this would be.

Heathfield Fire Station is a core station and we are in a rural area which creates challenges that firefighters in a city would not come across. Although the population is smaller we are spaced out over a large area and our residents lives are as important as those in a densely populated city. We therefore feel that we shouldn't suffer from cuts that would adversely impact on our residents.

The Parish Council feel that the consultation ignores the impact of the proposals being put forward and the risk of life that is increased to both members of the public and firefighters by these cuts. We ask that you withdraw the cuts that you are proposing to ensure that there won't be any increased delay in attending incidents, or a reduction in available vehicles especially in rural areas.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter to the Clerk at [clerk@hwpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@hwpc.org.uk)

Yours sincerely

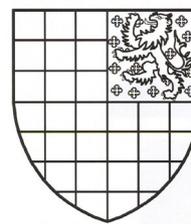
Helen Johnson

Clerk to Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council

Town Hall  
High Street  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 2QS

☎ 01273 471469 Fax: 01273 480919

✉ [townclerk@lewes-tc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@lewes-tc.gov.uk)  
🌐 [www.lewes-tc.gov.uk](http://www.lewes-tc.gov.uk)



**LEWES  
TOWN  
COUNCIL**

Rt Hon James Brokenshire, MP  
Minister of State for Security  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

*by email to [james.brokenshire.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:james.brokenshire.mp@parliament.uk)*

19<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Mr Brokenshire,

### **Proposed cuts to services – East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service**

I write on behalf of Lewes Town Council, following its consideration of proposals arising from the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) exercise conducted by East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.

Council has formally resolved to request that you halt the cuts in the central government grant to East Sussex Fire and Rescue Services (ESFRS). Reduction in this grant means ESFRS are facing an annual total loss of 7.5% in direct funding. This has resulted in ESFRS having to save over £12 million in the period 2020-25 compared with their current five-year budget.

This reduction in the direct grant, alongside a lack of secure ongoing funding, has deeply compromised the Fire Authority in its ability to effectively plan for the future; at the same time as the Authority is also facing a need to move resources to meet identified risks as required by HMICFRS. Government funding in only one-off payments does nothing to address the medium-term funding risk and uncertainty to the Fire Authority and its provision of emergency services in Lewes and more widely across East Sussex. The Council is particularly concerned at the proposed loss of one fire tender and six firefighters in Lewes town, and that the proposal to replace full-time positions with part-time, on-call staff is unlikely to meet the needs of the town and surrounding area. Councillors are dismayed that there is no consideration given to either the increase in size of Lewes Town, or to the prospect of increasing effects of climate change.

Maria Caulfield (Cons), MP for Lewes, is opposed to these cuts. She has publicly promised constituents that she will approach you and will lobby to obtain additional funding on behalf of ESFRS and perhaps a restoration of the grant to current levels. Elected Councillors wish to add their voices to the demand that funding is restored and that cuts to the central grant to ESFRS are reversed.

We understand that the IRMP is a legal requirement for Fire Authorities and that you, as Minister of State for Security, required Fire Authorities to continue with their IRMP consultations despite the Coronavirus outbreak. In your letter to Fire Authorities of 23<sup>rd</sup> April, you state that while authorities could delay the publication of their consultations, this would not protect them from the Secretary of State making an intervention against an FRA who failed to have due regard for the framework. This has left our FRA in a position where they have had to pursue the consultation in the middle of an emergency, which has caused concern and consternation among local residents and councillors.

Finally, given that our town and District are to be substantially impacted by the Government's cuts in the central grant, Councillors ask for assurances from you that not only will you review the restoration of the level of grant to ESFRS, but also that you will rule out any further cuts to our essential fire and rescue services.

Yours sincerely



Steve Brigden  
Town Clerk

**Policy Advice Team**

Bucks Horn Oak  
Nr Farnham  
Hampshire GU10 4LS

Tel 0300 067 4445

Mobile 07884 235 688

[rob.gazzard@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:rob.gazzard@forestrycommission.gov.uk)

Chief Fire Officer Dawn Whittaker  
East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service  
Headquarters  
Church Lane  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 2DZ

[dawn.whittaker@esfrs.org](mailto:dawn.whittaker@esfrs.org)

[Consult@esfrs.org](mailto:Consult@esfrs.org)

20<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Dawn

**FORESTRY COMMISSIONS RESPONSE TO FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES  
INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION**

**SUMMARY**

Forestry Commission is responding in request for views on the East Sussex FRS Integrated Risk Management Plan consultation. This is made on behalf of South East & London Area Team, Forest Services and East and East England Forest District, Forestry England.

**BACKGROUND**

Forestry Commission regulates and incentivise both public and private woodlands using legislation such as the Forestry Act and Forestry Environmental Impact Assessment (1999) regulations and has a number of agencies to achieve its goals via Forest Services. Forestry Commission is England's largest landowner, with the nation's forests managed the agency Forestry England and its Forest Districts. Forest Research is an

agency focus on a wide aspect of forestry, covering social, economic and environment including climate change.

Whilst there are number of wildfires occur in forestry, the greatest area burnt is in open areas such as lowland heath, grassland and arable habitats. However the adjacency of open areas to forestry means that we take a landscape view of wildfire risk.

Forestry Commission is the only organisation to have actions to adapt to wildfire in the governments National Adaptation Plan, published in July 2018. In light of this we commissioned Prof. Andrew Moffat to review the IRMPs of Fire and Rescue Services in the South East of England, an area highlighted in the government's Climate Change Risk Assessment to see the largest increase in wildfire risk, to look at present mitigation and adaptation measures to wildfire against the risk of climate change.

The review built upon the work of Julia McMorrow of University of Manchester on how wildfire quantitatively addressed wildfire in Community Risk Registers and IRMPs at the national level. Prof Moffat's review looked at how our local emergency planning qualitatively addresses wildfire risk, to understand how wildfire adaptation and contingency planning was being undertaken, how effective it was implemented in strategic documents and to provide recommendations for the future. The points raised by Prof Moffat were also raised in two Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology publications in 2019, the first on 'Climate Change and Wildfire in the UK' and 'Evaluation of UK Natural Hazards'.

## **FRS DUTIES IN RESPECT OF WILDFIRE**

### **Wildfire leads for local level**

As the Home Office are the Lead Government Organisation (LGO) for severe wildfire as defined in the National Risk Assessment, therefore Fire and Rescue Services lead at the local level.

Relevant legislation and guidance in respect of wildfire; prevention, assessment, planning and advice, fire safety and fire response as well as mitigation and adaptation to climate change:

- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 for wildfire
- IRMP Guidance for Wildfire
- Civil Contingency Act 2004
- Climate Change Act 2008
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

## **SUGGESTED OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Definition of wildfire used by Fire and Rescue Services**

The definition used by National Operational Guidance Programme (NOGP) provides the following challenges:

- Two of the five criteria cannot be measured using the Incident Recording System, thus there is a risk of under reporting of wildfire incidents.
- Failure to record smaller wildfire incidents, such as ignitions, will have a significant impact on masking trends, especially risking underestimation the impacts of future extreme weather linked to climate change.

Forestry Commission's analysis of wildfires points out in 2010 /11 to 2011/12 the impact of dry and warm springs<sup>1</sup>. It is highly likely there is large increase of number, area burnt and duration due to the prolonged dry and hot spring and summers, heat waves and low rainfall. This illustrates the episodic cycle of wildfire incidents in-between years of increased rainfall and cold, which increase vegetation fuel loading.

As the Forestry Commission also uses Scottish Government's definition of wildfire (Wildfire Operations Guidance), the basis of the NOGP definition, we would therefore suggest a clear definition between smaller and larger wildfire incidents could be used to address the problem.

This is used successfully in the Forestry Commission's statistical analysis of wildfire incident in England using Fire and Rescue Service's data.

The benefits of this include:

- That the Incident Recording System will provide all the data required and thus ensure there is no risk of under reporting of incidents attended by Fire and Rescue Services.
- Ensure the fire and land management sector use the same definition providing clarity to local community, business and environment at the local and national level, especially when working on evidence for Community Risk Registers and IRMPs.
- We can better assess the trends of wildfire incidents as we experience more extreme weather, to improve our mitigation and adaptation planning to climate change.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/forestry-commission-england-wildfire-statistics-for-england-2009-10-to-2016-17>

- Improve emergency planning to incidents such as the Swinley Forest Fire in 2011, Royal Berkshire FRS largest recorded incident since Windsor Castle Fire, which started from one of four fires which would be excluded by the criteria currently used by Hampshire and IOW FRS.

### **Partnership working at a landscape scale level**

Given that the areas most affected by wildfires are on open habitats, such as lowland heath, grasslands and arable, we would encourage East Sussex FRS to work with the following partners:

- Natural England, the regulator for open habitats in England.
- National Park Authorities, as wildfires are predicted to increase by 30 to 50% by 2080 in National Parks.
- Other large landowners such as National Trust, Ministry of Defence etc.
- Land representative organisations such as National Farmers' Union, Countryside and Built Landowner Association and environmental Non-Government Organisations.
- A focus on prevention in existing groups, such as South East England Wildfire Group.

### **Requested outputs from IRMP**

Within the IRMP or its supporting document, and as part of Fire and Rescue Service statutory duties for fire safety and to 'assess, plan and advise', we would like to see the following information for general public, landowners, Local Planning Authorities and National Parks (both as Local Planning Authorities) and forestry and environmental regulators:

- Clear list and/or map/s of wildfire risk in the Fire and Rescue Service area, to provide evidence base to help target increasing building wildfire resilience today and in the future (by 2040, 2060 and 2080 linked to government climate change adaptation planning).
- How FRS engage on wildfire mitigation and adaptation with land owners in terms of government land management incentives, such as Countryside Stewardship and regulation, such as Forestry Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for deforestation.

- How land management regulators will be effectively engaged in Community Risk Registers to ensure short, medium and long-term mitigation and adaptation to wildfire will be achieved, including how improve wildfire risk analysis.
- Advice, assessment and planning on building wildfire resilience, such as providing advice to land managers on wildfire risk and future impact on climate change.
- FRS policy on wildfire mitigation and adaptation and how this is reported in terms of the Climate Change Act.
- How wildfire risk should be addressed by Local Planning Authority Local Plans and development applications in terms of relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Improving the interoperability between Fire and Rescue Services and land management organisations who work at the landscape scale.

Mindful of Prof Andrew Moffat's review we suggest the need for a consistent format with other Fire and Rescue Services, using a national approach to set standards across the land management and fire sectors. This will be critical for landowners who have property across adjacent county borders as well as national land management agency's.

Yours sincerely

Rob Gazzard  
Advisor, Technical Guidance, Contingency Planning and Wildfire  
Forestry Commission



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

26 May 2020

Dear Fire Authority Member,

We are writing regarding the latest plans East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020 –2025 which is currently being consulted on across the county. After discussions with the Chief Fire Officer, local firefighters and residents we have concluded that it is not the right time to proceed with such a major restructure of the local service.

We are not satisfied with the urgency of this review and believe that while fire fighters have taken on the extra duties during the COVID crisis that it is unfair them, as key workers, to be having these structure changes force on them.

We are also particularly concerned about the cuts and loss in service by 50% capacity in Lewes and Newhaven which help support the east of Brighton, with regards to the move from full-time to ‘retained’ firefighting on the weekends. We are also concerned that the figures for demand are based on historic cases which have since be superseded by more recent, higher callout figures which are not being taken into consideration.

No one knows what the future shape of local government, including fire and police services, will look like after this pandemic and so we think it is premature also to be making determinations that may need to change again in 12 months’ time.

We are happy to continue the discussion about any changes in a cross-party way but believe that these changes should not be taking place now.

As such we would call on you all to vote against the proposal and place a moratorium on any wholesale changes until we better understand the impact of COVID on East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service as well as the wider community.

Yours Sincerely,

Lloyd Russell Moyle MP  
Brighton, Kemptown and Peacehaven  
Labour and Cooperative Party

[lloyd.russellmoyle.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:lloyd.russellmoyle.mp@parliament.uk)

*Fire Stations: Roedean*

Maria Caulfield MP  
Lewes  
Conservative Party

[maria.caulfield.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:maria.caulfield.mp@parliament.uk)

*Lewes, Newhaven, Seaford and Barcombe*



# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices, Civic Centre  
Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 1AE

Tel: (01825) 762774 Fax: (01825) 765757

e-mail: [townclerk@uckfieldtc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@uckfieldtc.gov.uk)

[www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk](http://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk)

**Town Clerk – Holly Goring**

East Sussex Fire Authority

5<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear East Sussex Fire Authority,

I write on behalf of Uckfield Town Council in my capacity as Town Clerk, in response to the public consultation document "Planning for a Safer Future."

Uckfield Town Council considered the contents of the draft document at their meeting of General Purposes Committee on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020. After much discussion, they RESOLVED to provide the following response:

*"Uckfield Town Council urgently and forcefully calls upon the East Sussex Fire Authority, to immediately drop all and any proposed amendments to the Fire Service in our county. This council believes that the proposed cuts will put the town and its villages at risk and in danger. The council wholeheartedly disagrees with the cuts and will push back at East Sussex County Council on the proposal. And to our best endeavours fight to keep the high standards and first rate fire service that the people of Uckfield deserve."*

*As a result of passing this proposal, Uckfield Town Council will,*

- (i) Demand that any public consultation be suspended until it can be given proper consideration (post Covid-19);*
- (ii) Ensure that consideration is given to the new large-scale housing developments and subsequent population increase in this area in the next 5-10 years;*
- (iii) Demand a comprehensive risk assessment of the impact of the cuts to all South East fire and rescue services, and in dealing with capacity for East Sussex;*
- (iv) Ask for modelling of common fire risks in Wealden such as bush fires on the Ashdown Forest and the effects to capacity on Uckfield's Fire station;*
- (v) Demand a full explanation from East Sussex Fire Authority on the proposed cuts."*

One of our Town Councillors also wished to raise a number of additional questions which I hope you will consider, in particular the lack of detail with regard to some of the statistics and information shared within the document. In a number of places, the content appears vague:

- What are group 1,2,3 stations? Where is this set out in the document?
- Page 18 – you briefly reference forest fires. This needs to be elaborated on further to reflect the impact of climate change on weather now and in future years;
- Page 35 – you reference ‘refining how you allocate your resources to protection activity’ – do you not do this already?
- Page 40 – you reference the increase in appliances to 18 at the start of the day, but don’t advise us what the existing figure is now? Is it the 15 above? Not clear.
- Page 41 – you reference a much reduced financial reward, how big is the reduction?
- Page 42 – you state that response times may take longer from these stations - how much longer?
- Page 43 – reduce six posts (33 to 27) – are these redundancies?
- How often are both engines on call out in Uckfield across the year?

We would be grateful for a response to our questions and for the consultation to be halted based on the points made in this letter.

Yours sincerely



Holly Goring  
Town Clerk



Mark O'Brien

East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service

Headquarters

Church Lane, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2DZ

Telephone: 0303 999 1000

E-mail: enquiries@esfrs.org

Web: www.esfrs.org

In the case of emergency please dial 999

2043 4139

Our Ref: consult@esfrs.org

21. June 2020

Dear Householder,

We are writing to you to explain a series of proposals for East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and to invite you to take part in our public consultation.

Improving public safety and reducing the number and severity of incidents is at the heart of everything we do.

In our "**Planning for a Safer Future – Integrated Risk Management Plan**" we have identified the many and varied risks across our service area - past, present and future. We have then planned to deliver a fire and rescue service that reduces or mitigates those risks in the most effective way.

It has become clear that we need to make some changes and redistribute our resources so that they are in the right place, at the right time to deal with emergencies and help prevent them in the first place through engagement and regulation.

This five year plan sets out what we intend to do to meet the level of risk and demand we have identified.

Our proposals will mean improved emergency cover:

- 99% of high-risk dwellings - up from 93%
- 92% of all households – up from 80%
- 92% of our population – up from 75%

In order to make these improvements, we want to make some changes to the way we run our fire and rescue service. The changes will enable us to reallocate our resources more effectively against the risk profile and response standards.

#### We will....

- Keep all our 24 community fire stations open and operational
- Introduce a new "operational resilience plan" which aims to increase the minimum number of fire engines available at the start of the day from 15 in our current policies to 18
- Have a total of 27 fire engines and 3 high-reach appliances (aerial ladder platforms) by 2025 if all proposals go ahead – this includes increasing our response provision in Hastings from 2 to 3 fire engines, and replacing one "combined rescue platform" in Eastbourne with two separate vehicles
- Always mobilise the nearest, quickest available crew, fire engines and other resources to an incident
- Invest in prevention work, such as home safety visits and educational programmes
- Invest in protection work, such as business fire safety and high rise safety
- Proactively target areas where the risk of incidents is highest
- Offer enhanced contracts to our on call (part-time) firefighters so we better match their availability to when we most need them

There have been some claims about the proposals which the Service believe do not present all the facts accurately, and so we would urge you to read the background information for yourself so that you can give us your views.

No decisions have been made on the proposals set out in Planning for a Safer Future.

The best way for you to get your voice heard is to go online and take part in the consultation at [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture) or to call 0800 3247 005.

The Fire Authority meets in September to review the findings of the consultation, and to discuss and agree the next steps.

Yours sincerely,



Mark O'Brien  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your letter. Having carefully studied the proposals I have already completed the online consultation form. However, I feel that it is appropriate to express my views more personally. In doing so, I sincerely hope that this consultation is not a means to fool the public into believing that the proposed reorganisation/cuts are to be the topic of discussion, rather than as a means to ram through a done deal, dictated to you by Central/Local Government.

My particular concerns relate to the proposed reduction in status and availability at the Cowborough station. You make reference to the retention of all community fire stations, but you seem hesitant to emphasise the effective down-grading of several locations, at the expense of beefing up others - a case of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

As if I need reminding you, Cowborough is the largest inland town in Kent Sussex, it regularly supports colleagues in Kent (Canterbury - since they closed Roothall), it is seeing exponential housing growth, we are the effective custodians of Ashdown Forest, and we have the A26 trunk road, a favourite haunt of boy racers and the scene of several serious accidents in recent years. Whilst we may be - in relevant terms - classified as an affluent area, I cannot square the notion that we should be asked to foot the bill for other locations, simply because you have been asked to curb your budget in order to suit political chicanery.

By all means linked with staff role page 575 can demonstrate some positive benefit but please do not leave us reliant on Canterbury or Uckfield, where the time delay could make the difference between life or death.



**East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service**  
 Headquarters  
 Church Lane, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2DZ  
 Telephone: 0303 999 1000  
 E-mail: [enquiries@esfrs.org](mailto:enquiries@esfrs.org)  
 Web: [www.esfrs.org](http://www.esfrs.org)  
 In the case of emergency please dial 999

2020 1 008



Our Ref: [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org)

May 2020

Dear Householder,

**Planning for a Safer Future**

East Sussex Fire Authority is consulting on its five year plan and would like your help in planning for the future so we can make the right decisions.

We want to make sure we put our resources in the right place, at the right time to deal with emergencies and help prevent them in the first place.

Our proposals include:

- Crewing – we've looked at the shift patterns worked by our firefighters
- Fire engines – we've looked at the type and number of fire engines we have
- Expanding the building safety and prevention work we do in communities
- Reducing 999 calls – we've looked at how we can engage with the community and with businesses
- Non-emergency calls – we've looked at whether we should still go to some kinds of calls, such as bird rescues, where no human life is at risk

*Very Ambiguous*

You can find out more and give us your views at [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture)

*Difficulty accessing your Web site.*

Paper copies can be requested by emailing [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org) or writing to:

Planning for a Safer Future  
 East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service HQ  
 Church Lane  
 Lewes  
 BN7 2DZ

*Do NOT agree to any cuts in the Fire Service in Battle or Area's. New Houses being built all over Battle we need our fire service. Not thought out very well!*

The survey is open for eight weeks from 24 April 2020. The findings of the consultation will be considered at a Fire Authority meeting in September.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us via [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org) or by calling 0303 999 1000.

Yours sincerely,

Mark O'Brien  
 Deputy Chief Fire Officer



2021 1816

**East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service**  
Headquarters  
Church Lane, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2DZ  
Telephone: 0303 999 1000  
E-mail: [enquiries@esfrs.org](mailto:enquiries@esfrs.org)  
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In the case of emergency please dial 999

Our Ref: [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org)

May 2020



NT

10

Dear Householder,

### Planning for a Safer Future

East Sussex Fire Authority is consulting on its five year plan and would like your help in planning for the future so we can make the right decisions.

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You can find out more and give us your views at [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture)

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If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us via [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org) or by calling 0303 999 1000.

Yours sincerely,

Mark O'Brien  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Sorry Virus has made me  
Cynical

If you're a Royal or a Coleb  
or big house  hooray  
we'll hoses the  
firefighters

If you a pleb - get yourse ~~hose~~  
pipe connected + a few buckets  
water, we'll be there eventually  
if you're house has burnt down

call us to say not needed.

p.s. if your parrot has fled up a  
nearby tree, you're on your own  
your house is gone but rescue  
your own Parrot

XXX

15th May 2020

Dear Mr O'Brien,  
Thank you for your interesting letter  
of MAY 2020.

For many years I lived opposite the  
Fire Station in South Road, Wickham, so I  
could always see how busy the staff were with  
various challenges on a daily basis.

My neighbour used to visit them  
OFTEN because she regularly lost her handbag,  
her keys and her sense of direction. Always  
they helped her.

Many of us have watched while your  
men pulled a dog out of the drain or a cat  
from a tree. What would animal lovers  
do without you.

I saw your men negotiate a large horse  
out of a sliver ditch. It took all afternoon. I  
saw them save a sheep with baby lamb from  
the river. They have captured many potholed  
deers from traps.

Then there are the BIRDS, all of  
which are in decline, with several on the "RED  
ALERT LIST." The R.S.P.B. does not seem to thank  
you enough in their regular magazine "NATURE'S  
HOME" for all the work you do saving  
them from being trapped on poles, roofs, aerials.  
If you do not save them - who will?

Your people attend many traffic

2.

accidents and when my friend fell off his bike and knocked himself out — Fire and Rescue was first on the scene.

If, in the future, the Fire & Rescue Service decides not to rescue any more animals and birds, then there will be many sad times. We will lose many birds.

Please send me a paper-copy of your title page: "Planning for a Safer Future."

Many thanks,  
All good luck,  
Sincerely.

[Redacted signature]

Could you tell me if we moved to the flexible crewing system on wholetime stations as per the IRMP proposal, as there will be in effect no watches and just a station leader, what would happen to the current Watch Managers would they be demoted back down to Crew Manager and pay protected, or would they be moved into other Watch Manager roles within the service??

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

---

IRMP briefing – Forest Row 1/6/2020

[REDACTED]

Issues for feeding back

- There was a significant difference between the number of calls used in the station profile when compared against the records that were kept on station. Acknowledgment that data cleansing has taken place however this was not felt to have accounted for the difference. Without having all the data available it was not possible to know which calls had been removed from the data and therefore why.
- What is the rationale in removing the second nearest 4x4 to Ashdown Forest? Access to large parts of the forest is only possible with the 4x4s and getting the resources there quickly will ultimately reduce the total resources needed to extinguish a wildfire.
- Global climate change is making natural disasters of flooding and wildfires more frequent and more severe. These proposals do not address these emerging risks.
- Many on-call staff feel that they are providing a service to their local community. Frequent standbys for prolonged periods at other locations not only removes the provision from the local area but impacts significantly on home life. Many on-call are likely to leave the service if the majority of activity that they are asked to provide are standbys. There was a prediction that the proposals would lead to this situation occurring.
- How will Seaford be able to crew the HVP, an off-road vehicle and their pump? Wadhurst would be a better location for the off-road vehicle and be readily available for incidents on Ashdown Forest.
- If second appliances are removed, minimum crewing should be 5 not 4 to allow for the safe implementation of many core activities such as pitching the 12m ladder, stage 1 BA, and RTC persons trapped incidents.

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[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Chris, Mark Matthews and I have just spent the morning with one of the Watch's at Crowborough discussing the Operational Response Review proposals.

The Watch provided a very informative presentation – attached – and from discussions with the Team, could I please ask for any background information that you may have on the following 3 points, which have been raised as questions from the Crew.

## 1 – Call figures

The Service has presented Crowborough’s risk profile detailing that between April 2013 & March 2018 there have been 1,505 mobilisations to Incidents by a Crowborough appliance. From the work that the local teams have undertaken, they have produced the following statistics which vary significantly from those produced by the Service.

*Could you please confirm if the Service figures include:*

1. *cross border working*
2. *Standbys*
3. *Specialist Water Rescue calls*
4. *Animal Rescue Calls*
5. *Specialist Land rover calls*

There is disparity of 1000 calls which is of obvious significance to the team here and we would therefore welcome your advice on how the statistics are calculated.

### **PUBLISHED FIGURES –**

#### **Crowborough Station Risk profile**

83P1 is mobilised, on average, 290 times per year and 68 % to its own station area.

83P4 is mobilised, on average, 54 times per year and 73% to its own station area.

Between April 2013 & March 2018 there have been 1,505 mobilisations to Incidents by a Crowborough appliance.

### **LOCALLY RECORDED FIGURES**

#### **Station 83 Call numbers (from Station logs)**

2013	424 Total calls
2014	443 Total calls <b>Real average 431</b>
2015	377 Total calls
2016	385 Total calls
2017	441 Total calls
2018	435 Total calls

**Total number 2,505**

(2019 470 Total calls)

## 2 – Performance impact

Chris, please could you give some clarity around the figures listed in the table below? We are unclear as to how the On Station response improves by 0.04% as a DO Station bearing in mind the turn out times are not improved during the daytime. *Please could you advise how these figures are calculated?*

	On-station response	On-call response
All 6 DC stations as Day-Only	0.40%	0.20%
Battle as DO station	0.01%	0.00%
Bexhill as DO Station	-0.08%	0.39%
Crowborough as DO Station	0.04%	-0.09%
Lewes as DO Station	0.04%	-0.03%
Newhaven as DO Station	-0.24%	0.16%
Uckfield as DO Station	0.07%	-0.19%

[Redacted]

With kindest regards and thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Boss

As the IRMP process moved into Stage four on Thursday, we were hoping to arrange a meeting with yourselves to discuss the proposals of the IRMP.

We have all seen the You Tube presentations, that are available to the general public but it would be good to speak to someone, from the ORR Team.

We were hoping that now the process has been given CFA approval for consultation, we could be told of any plans that you have on the table. Again we have all seen the generic plans but now that we are at this stage, it would be good to have a bit more detail.

Obviously, in these current times, it would need to be carried out "virtually".

Thanks

Regards

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Good Afternoon

As per the proposals in East Sussex IRMP, I understand that The Ridge Fire Station will be day crewed Monday to Friday, then be covered by on call firefighters in the evenings and weekends.

(1) Could you tell me how and why the risk in The Ridges fire ground changes on weekend days and evenings, to enable ESFRS to increase the response time by covering this period using on call firefighters??

(2) I also understand there is a whole time 2nd appliance going into Hastings Bohemia Road. This is excellent as I understand the risk in this area has been discovered to be greater following this IRMP and annual assessment of risk.

(3) Due to the 4i mobilising system picking nearest and quickest fire appliances, won't this 2nd wholetime fire appliance from Bohemia Road pick up all The Ridges fire calls first??

(4) Won't this leave a greater risk at Bohemia Road as the calls for The Ridge take away that 2nd fire appliance for Bohemia Road??

(5) How Bohemia Road will jump crew the aerial appliance when their 2nd appliance is out??

(6) And finally what happens if both fire appliances for Bohemia Road are attending incidents who covers the aerial capability at this station?? (This question would also apply to Eastbourne if they jump crew their aerial)

Kind Regards

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Greetings,

I'd like to know the total average number of two pump incidents in Bexhill, battle and Hastings areas over the last few years please.

With my experience from working in Fire control I would estimate that the proposed 2<sup>nd</sup> appliance for Hastings Bohemia road will form part of the PDA for all two pump calls into these areas and beyond should P4s be removed.

I would also hazard a guess that at night two appliances from Bohemia Road would be mobilised to the Ridge fireground ahead of the Ridge fire station should the proposal for The Ridge to move to a daycrewed model. Any one pump calls in the Eastern group that leave a station requiring a standby move will also inevitably mean 76P2/P4 would be moved.

Has any modelling been done to predict the total number of mobilisations predicted for station 76?

My concern is that as much as on paper an additional pump in that area is a good thing, coupled with the removal of surrounding pumps it will be extensively used to the point where the proposed dual crewed 76A1 will frequently be unable to mobilise, or at best be waiting for one of the Hastings pumps to return to station to crew. There is also the likelihood that the two Hastings pumps are mobilised as a standard Two pump PDA, an incident commander requires an ALP and despite one sitting in Hastings would have to wait for one to come from elsewhere.

I know other services dual crew ALPs but most, if not all of the stations that I'm aware that use this model have RDS resilience at the same station to backfill appliances and at least drive, or even crew the ALP.

Has the service calculated the potential attendance times of an ALP in the Hastings area should 76A1 not be able to attend.

I look forward to your response,

Thanks and kind regards,

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Hello All

Now we are in the public consultation period is there any chance that anybody in a management role could explain to us what the actual proposals are for the Day crewed duty system.

This would include proposals on how the on-call firefighters would be deployed.

We have no meat on the bones to the vague proposals put forward to the fire authority.

How will your proposals work, we cannot see how you can make it work with no On-call availability now.

We wait to hear from you as a station

Hi,

Please could you provide answers for the following questions regarding the IRMP?:

1. The IRMP states the new proposed fire engine for Bohemia Road will be available for 24/7 response, how is this possible under the shared crewing model? Is it not only available when the alp is not at an incident?
2. Will this new fire engine be quicker to The Ridge fire station at night than the day crewed staff there? If so, will that mean more calls for that appliance and even less availability of the alp there?
3. How will cover at The Ridge be maintained at night when there are members of the duty watch off sick?
4. Fires in the open: How will we cope with the increased number and likelihood of fires in the open like forest fires with less appliances and 4x4's? Crowborough could currently mobilise 2 appliances and a 4x4 to a fire on Ashdown Forest yet if these proposals go through they could only mobilise 1 of these appliances and the next nearest 4x4 is also proposed to be removed?
5. Can you explain how the orr plans to reduce standby moves? If the second appliances are removed from DC stations, as soon as the remaining appliance from these stations, or the station special(s), go out for the pre determined time a standby appliance will be required. This must vastly increase required standby moves and because the DC stations will only be one appliance these 6 stations will no longer be useable for standby moves because they would automatically need backfilling? At the moment, providing the second appliance is available at these stations, the first appliance can fulfil standby moves but without these second appliances this resilience will be taken away.
6. Proposal 1 includes 6 RDS stations be allowed a longer turn out time for resilience purposes. Could this principle be applied to all current rds stations/appliances?
7. How do you calculate the proposals to be a total net loss of 5 fire engines?
8. How many fire engines does Wadhurst currently have? The IRMP says it is classified as a two fire engine station yet CFO said it has only one fire engine?

9. How does the service propose to have no RDS redundancies? For example, Crowborough has 14 RDS firefighters, if there was only 1 appliance there and the remaining 6/7 DC WT staff all also took RDS contracts that would be 20/21 firefighters for one appliance?
10. When will the service release the details of proposal 7 option A? How can staff consult on this proposal without knowing the full details of which type of flexible rostering is being proposed?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

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Hi Consult

Please could you take the time to answer the below questions that have been requested by Blue Watch Eastbourne following their IRMP Managers Update which took place this afternoon.

1. How has the change to the flexible rostering duty system been assessed to be 'more a family friendly work pattern'?
2. To what extent has the impact of flexible rostering on dual contract staff been considered?
3. How will flexible rostering not have a negative impact on teamwork and crew familiarity when crews will rotate on such a frequent basis, working with different people constantly?

Many thanks.

Kind regards

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Good Afternoon,

Could I ask if there is a criteria on who specifically will be liberated from posts at the proposed stations if that is the direction it IRMP goes, for example if someone at a proposed station is already qualified within the mentioned areas of training/protection will they be more likely given notice that they are to be liberated and reassigned to the training or protection teams.

Alternatively if not is there a budget for the cost of retraining those liberated and if that is the case will there be a minimum time frame they have to hold that post?

Kind Regards

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### *Questions and Point raised during IRMP Input:*

- \*The IRMP Presentation contains significant inaccuracies and inconsistencies which are misleading
  - \*Why is the IRMP going ahead with a Public Consultation during a period of lockdown with no public meetings allowed to go ahead for the foreseeable future? This will lead to a very small level of engagement with public and a total lack of opportunity for questions and challenges to be heard and answered.
  - \* Does the call analysis that the process is based on take into account how frequently ESFRS go across borders into WSFRS, SFRS, and KFRS?
  - \* The process is based on “projected budgets” but uses 18 month old data and so does not take into account the extra work that is being undertaken supporting SECAMB. This area of work is also part of a National discussion so is likely to continue in some form, therefore should have been captured in the calls analysis.
  - \* IRMP based on “Projected budgets” but additional work-streams being negotiated on not included in forecasts.
  - \*The slide titled **“Our Five Year Plan – outcomes”** Eastbourne listed as having a dedicated Ariel Appliance and in fact this promoted as a “bonus” of the proposals. It is not a **“dedicated”** appliance if it is not primary crewed. If one pump is already committed to a different incident then the ALP would be either unavailable due to crewing or deployed without a dedicated support pump from the same station.
  - \* On the slide titled **“Changes to Crewing on day-crewed stations”**. Claim of 14 Daytime Appliances Available. Only Monday – Friday due to changes to duty system. Evening Cover of 8 appliances is again misleading. Drops to 6 straight away in the event of Ariel’s being required due to jump crewing.
  - \* The “Very low impact” statements are again misleading and incorrect due to above.
  - \* The slide titled **“Removal of second appliances”** The data used to justify the removal of 2<sup>nd</sup> Pumps at Day Crewed stations is again misleading. If the appliance is on the run then it avoids the need to mobilise standby pumps from WT stations which reduces costs and erosion of Fire Cover in the City.
  - \* The proposed changes to Crewing Models don’t leave enough FF’s for our own task analysis. Fire Service task Analysis states that for a single occupancy domestic house fire with one casualty needing rescue via internal stairs, 11 Firefighters are required as a minimum. The different Crewing Model options that were discussed during the presentation for the jump crewing of ariel appliances mean that you will either get:
    - \* 4x ff’s on an appliance + 2x ff’s on 2<sup>nd</sup> appliance, this assumes there are sufficient drivers in order to driver 2 x appliances + the ALP.
    - \* 4x ff’s on an appliance + 2x ff’s in the station van, this is hazardous as the station van is unable to proceed on blue lights and will therefore be more likely to try and “catch up” en-route increasing the likelihood of an accident. Both of the above Crewing models lead to 6x Firefighters in attendance at a domestic house fire. This is obviously less than our own task analysis. With the additional resources coming from further afield due to the removal of many 2<sup>nd</sup> appliances, this in turn will place even more moral pressure on OIC’s to rapid deploy in the early stages of an incident.
  - \* The slide titled **“Previous IRMP Decisions”** Lift Incidents, We would challenge the claim that a third of all lift incidents involve no persons, who is calling us in that case? ESFRS is 6<sup>th</sup> in the Country for High Buildings therefore large demand for lift assistance. How does ESFRS compare Nationally with buildings with lifts in?
  - \* Also on the slide titled **“Previous IRMP Decisions”** The Ridge change of duty system. Evening and Weekends the Ridge is covered by retained crews. This adds a predicted 5 mins to response + attendance time. Dynamic mobilising would therefore mobilise from Bohemia Road to large areas of The Ridges Fireground which would have an impact on Ariel cover in Hastings. This does not appear to have been considered?
  - \* Where are the Risk Assessments on how the changes to Duty Systems and Crewing Models impact FF Safety?
  - \* With such significant changes being proposed, why has there not been an Officer and Green book review to reflect changes?
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-

Gd Morning

I've been stopped several times in the streets of Hove & Brighton and asked the following. Please can you provide some guidance, as I wouldn't want to be accused of giving the whole story

Why are certain tweets being blanked out or deleted on the various East Sussex tweeter feeds? (I'm unable to answer)

Several people have asked this question. How much longer is longer for a fire engine to arrive- if I dial 999 in an emergency how long are you going to take? And they got no answer or were told to read the IRMP (which doesn't give a time )

You (i.e the fire service put out information the other week, that certain parties weren't telling the whole story.) Who is this and what have they said that's not factual or correct ?

Why does your IRMP/ Plan not make sense –its written in such a way that both a lawyer and baker have said they don't understand what certain parts mean and I was asked separately ? and they've also both asked How long is longer? With no reply

I was also asked how many fire engines where in the city? And when I asked where they lived in the event of incident and they said a block of flats, so when I told them we send 6 fire engines as PDA to a block of flats (they asked what PDA meant, so I told them ) and they were shocked that a city as Big as Brighton & Hove only had 4 fire engines but needs 6 for a block of flats and the figures don't add up- so perhaps you could tell me how I answer that .

I also explain that we send 3 fire engines to a confirmed house fire and 2 to a car crash and they said the numbers didn't again add up.( so how am I meant to answer this) They were concerned as it was the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Grenfell Towers.

I also got asked about the big fire in Lancing / & the hotel In Eastbourne the other day and asked if we went, So people in B'ton and Hove are aware of the news.

One person said they saw Sky news and the Mp's from B'ton on TV talking about the cuts, but no- where in the letter they received or anything they've read talks about cuts- but it was clearly mentioned on the TV, and in the House of Commons.

One person was told to go away and read the IRMP- he told me he's got 2 degrees, one in English & one in engineering and it didn't make sense to them.

So how are staff meant to answer these questions honestly ?

I look forward to hearing from you

Regards

██████

Good morning

Could I please ask the following:

- From the presentation, there appears to be a heavy reliance on retained crews to fill the gaps with evenings and weekends. Working on station, I am aware that current recruitment of RDS can be challenging. What would the financial impact be on the service for recruitment and training of the additional RDS crews. Does the service have capacity in terms of staff and premises for the training of the additional crews needed? If not, what would the additional financial implications be for providing?

Thank you very much, with very best wishes

[REDACTED]

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Hi

I work at Lewes there is not enough retained personnel to guarantee a pump at night or weekends. This is why the second pump is hardly ever on the run. They have just one driver and no J.O's, so until that changes the new system cannot work. It would take quite some time to recruit and train at least a couple more drivers and at least a couple of J.O, to be able to do the new system. Will the Service press ahead or wait until sufficient crew are available. Management must be aware of this, what time scale do they think they can make the new system work.

Regards

[REDACTED]

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Good Afternoon,

In the IRMP You are proposing to have 18 fire engines available at the start of each shift before demand.

Can you guarantee these 18 fire engines will remain available all day unless they are on a call and will not be taken off the run due to lack of crewing??

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The following questions were raised during the briefing, can they please be included in the FAQ if not already covered:

- Have local councils/authorities been consulted about future housing developments, proposed changes to built environments, infrastructure etc.
- How many hours will the new Day only contracts be and how does this compare to the current DC.
- Will those moving from DC to Day only contracts be financially impacted and if so how.
- If crewing is being reduced at affected DC stations what number of personnel will they be reduced to.
- What is the purpose of the crewing pool.
- The figure quoted for the crewing pool is 8 – this seems very low, how was this figure arrived at.
- Is the proposal to replace the Aerial appliances with one standard model still being considered or will a crew still need to accompany an aerial if it moves to another station.

Thanks

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]  
hoping to consult with [REDACTED] Hove this evening and I know they will ask me on Group crewing models , under this option is there a decision on how many JO's would be based at the single pump station in the City? There is a thought process that there would be a reduction across watches from 6 to 5 at the single stations under this proposals, would the reduction in watch establishment be a firefighter or a Junior officer Level?

Sorry I know it's in the weeds but these are the kind of concerns that are being raised?  
Secondly when do we expect the changes to the shift options to take place if the agreement is to move forward with a or b?

Are you able to share the proposed timings over the next five years for the DC stations to move to DODS if agreed ?

Does the Ridge going daycrewed mean that under 41 the station ground at 75 would in fact mean that 76 appliances would be called to respond to any calls , thus leaving 75 to only attend 3 pump calls in in the Hastings Area or provide the standby as a Pump that is available under the cluster Cover?

All the best guys and thank you so much for all your support?

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]  
Many thanks for getting back to me. I have a few further queries following on from your response so hopefully these can be answered as well, I will number these according to the number of my original question where appropriate:

1. My question related to the wording in the IRMP for the new appliance at Bohemia Road. How can the new appliance be claimed to be available 24/7 if it doesn't have a dedicated crew? I appreciate the policy on how it will be crewed is yet to be written but if the crew for the appliance are committed to a call on an alternative appliance how will the new appliance remain available?
2. What is the predicted time it would take an appliance from Bohemia Road to attend a call at The Ridge Fire Station at night? What is the turnout time for a retained appliance at night? If the appliance from Bohemia Road will get to The Ridge fire station quicker than the appliance from The Ridge could turn out then the appliance from Bohemia Road will be quicker to all calls that The Ridge would attend at night. This would also have a detrimental effect on the availability of the ALP at Bohemia Road.
7. The IRMP states that Wadhurst, Seaford and Heathfield are currently classed as two fire engine stations. The IRMP proposes to change this so those stations will be classed as one fire engine stations. This is a reduction of one fire engine at each of the 3 stations so increases the total reduction to 10. Why are these 3 fire engines not included in the reduction figures released by ESFRS?

Swift Water Rescue – What is the services plan for response concerning incidents involving swift water rescues? As far as I can see, all other specialisms and associated appliances are mentioned within the IRMP but the SWR team isn't mentioned? Is it being removed? Is it being moved to an alternative station while keeping the same capabilities? Is it being moved to an alternative station while increasing the teams capabilities? Is it being moved to an alternative station while reducing the teams capabilities? Why isn't it mentioned in the IRMP?

Crowborough is a rapidly growing town with many new houses currently under construction and in the planning phase, there will be a minimum of 938 new houses built by 2023/24 which is double the amount of the last 9 years combined. Can you explain how these new houses won't automatically increase the risk in this area?

Kind regards

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██████████

As I'm sure your fully aware the Landrover at Crowborough is being taken away for repairs, the disappointing decision has been made to take the landrover from Wadhurst and place into Crowborough. Firstly I think it is the wrong decision to do so, the Landrover at the Ridge would be a more sensible option as it is switched crewed by a wholetime crew and would be less available, both Heathfield and Wadhurst have response times of around 25 mins into Hastings, not that matters as there are no response times for specials which I have been reminded of many times in responses from previous emails. The second point is that if we are in a position with only 4 landrovers across the Service we would be in a position of only having 3 now, again this has highlighted the importance of having 5 landrovers. Could this be forwarded on to Consult for consideration.

Kind regards

██████████

██████████

Been reading ORR (sorry) got a couple of questions below;

- Whilst you breakdown housing type in our area, is there a National bench mark, so we can see how we compare to the national data sets with regards to building type and population density?
- Is there any National comparisons available with regards to building height i.e. number of high-rise dwellings?

I did some of this work a couple of decades ago after the Palmeria Avenue Fire and we had some of the highest HMO (buildings converted to flats) densities in Europe, even greater than London at that time.

Obviously these questions are following the datasets made available through the NFCC Protection Board, which line us up with Metropolitan Services rather than our Family Group 2, this goes some way to explaining our higher than average AFAs, Lift Rescues and being coastal animal rescues.

Many thanks

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██████████ sorry one more question, there is an absence of any information around officer attendance at incidents, surely this is a key part of our response to emergency incidents (including specialisms and specialist response), is there a reason for the absence of any data?

Many thanks

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Hello

Question 1

Will On Call staff be utilised to crew specials such as the Water Carrier throughout the weekdays?

Question 2

Will the service maintain current employment of On Call Staff to be available during the day to crew mixed crew pumps anywhere in the county?

Many thanks

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████████████████████  
██

Issues for feeding back

- Special appliances at on-call stations rely on trained personnel from that station. If that special appliance is then deployed, that station then goes off the run.
  - Will there ever be a point where on-call will be used for resilience pool at other on-call or day only duty stations?
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Dear Consult

I would like to raise the issue of the Landrover being removed from Wadhurst. I have looked through the “The Plan” that is available on the ESFRS website which the public are asked to read before taking part in the survey.

There is no mention of the removal of the Landrover from Wadhurst in The Plan, the survey also has no reference or question relating to this either.

The only place I could find any referral to the Landrover at Wadhurst is that it is removed from the map and not listed on the specials.

There is no information on the Landrover removal in the short videos on Proposal 3 & 5, again there is no information when referred to page 46 & 50 of the IRMP Document

How can there be an informed/consulted decision on this important issue of an appliance being removed from the front line when it is not clear to see and appears to be covered over.

What are the deciding factors regarding the removal of this special, and why have they not been communicated in the consultation.

Regards

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Hi,

Quick question, I understand the survey on the IRMP closes on 19/6. I know people who have only just received a letter from ESFRS. Am I right in understanding the public can continue to write in with their views to this mailbox after the 19/6? There is obviously a large amount of data for people to digest and think about.

Thanks,





# WADHURST FIRE STATION

# IRMP/ ORR RESPONSE

- Part 1 – Land Rover
- Part 2 – Maxi cab policy
- Part 3 – CAFs 1.7 Foam

# LAND ROVER

- 78MI – set to be removed from service

# CURRENT 4X4 VEHICLES

- Crowborough
- Heathfield
- The Ridge (Shared crewed)
- Seaford
- Wadhurst

## PROPOSED 4X4 VEHICLES

- Crowborough (Shared Crewed)
- Heathfield
- The Ridge (Shared crewed)
- Seaford

# STATIONS WITH TRAINED STAFF FOR OFF-ROAD DRIVING

- Crowborough - Wholetime numbers to be halved
- Heathfield
- The Ridge - Wholetime numbers to halved
- Seaford
- Wadhurst - For now

# WILDFIRE PDA

- 5 x Fire engines
  - 2 x Land Rovers
  - 1 x Water Bowser + support pump
  - 1 x CSU
  - 2 x Level 2
  - 1 x Level 3
- 
- Where will resources come from under new IRMP?

EAST SUSSEX

WEST SUSSEX

SURREY

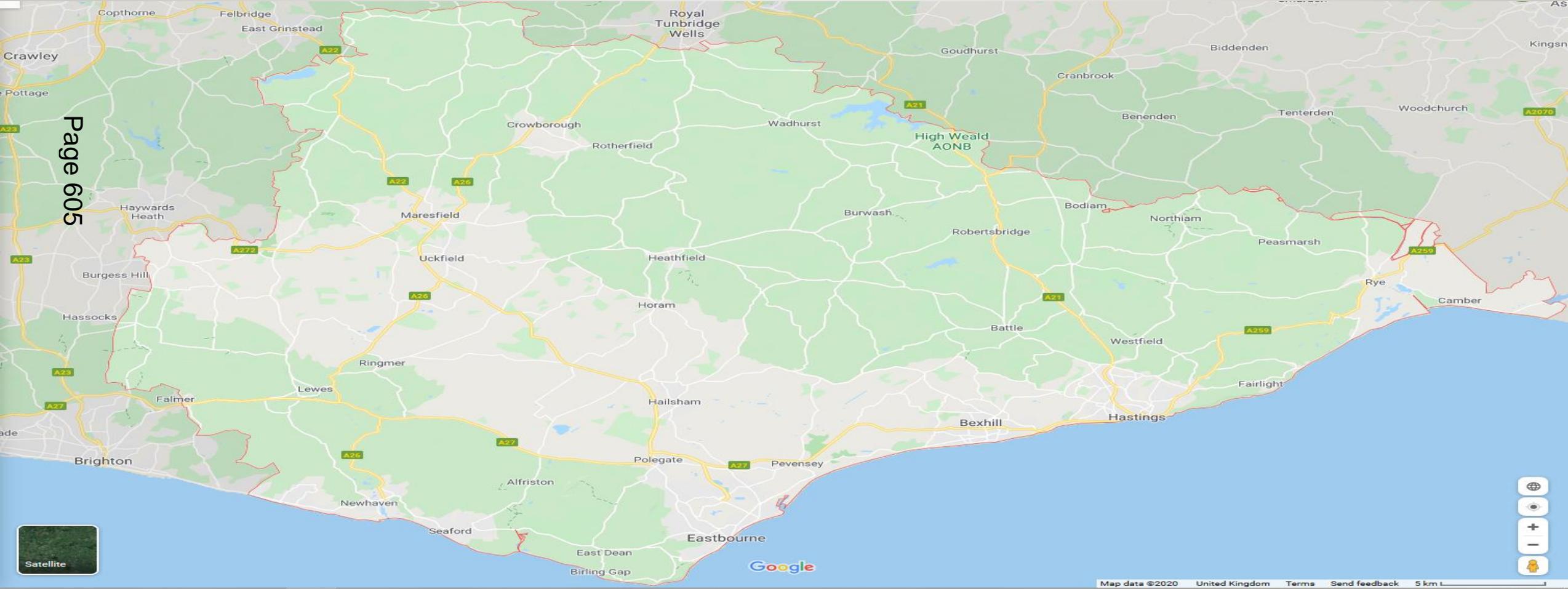
- East Sussex size - 1,792 Km<sup>2</sup> - Land Rovers = 5, proposed drop to 4!
- West Sussex – 1,991 km<sup>2</sup> – Off road vehicles = 10 x 4x4, 1 x 6x6 – Total 11
- Surrey - 1,663 Km<sup>2</sup> – Off road vehicles = 10 x 4x4 fire fighting – 16 x Land Rovers MRV = 26 in total

# WADHURST LAND ROVER RIGHT PLACE?

- Wadhurst fire station sits close to the A21, A26 and A22.
- This means Wadhurst can support incidents in its area, Ashdown Forest, Hastings, Eastbourne and Brighton.
- 4i Maps Wadhurst incorrectly out of Wadhurst onto these road, so it does not always send the quickest Land Rover crew and negatively effects Wadhurst

# WADHURST LAND ROVER RIGHT PLACE?

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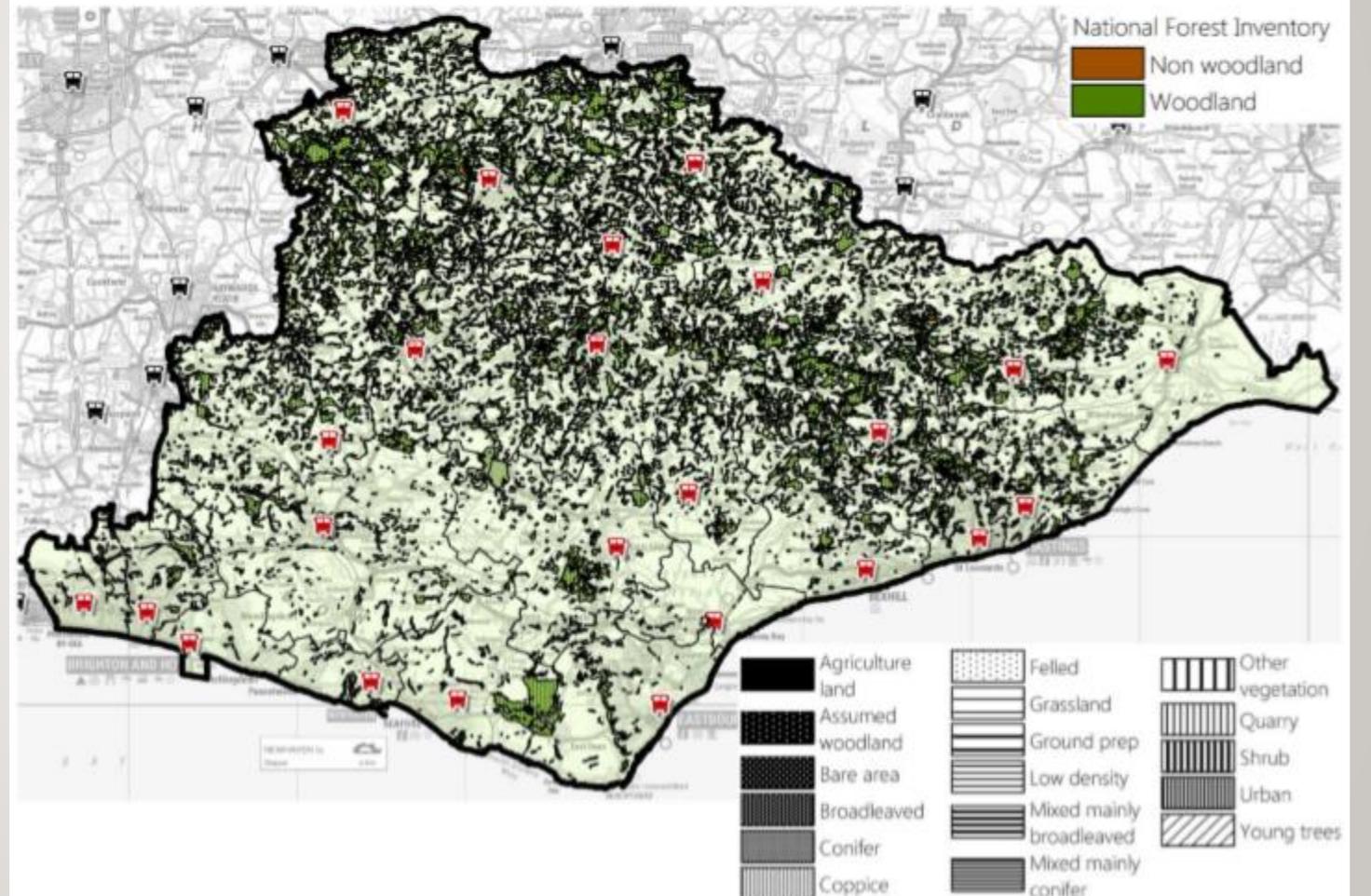
Page 605



# WADHURST LAND ROVER RIGHT PLACE?

East Sussex and the South Downs contains vast areas of land that would be at risk of wild fire, including: woodland (The Weald, Ashdown Forest), farmland, grassland, dry valleys and chalk downlands. Many of these areas are of special conservation and scientific importance. It can be seen from the map just how wooded the service area is, particularly to the north and east of the station area, with the south and east been given to the chalk downlands within the South Downs National Park.

National Forest Inventory by Type



# WADHURST LAND ROVER RIGHT PLACE?



# WADHURST LAND ROVER

- ESFRS IRMP Sates a 90% reduction in calls outs for 78MI. Stats end in 2017/18
  - \*18/19 = 125% increase in mobilisations
  - \*19/20 = 50% increase in mobilisations
  - \*\*20/21 = Already achieved same amount of calls
- 
- \* compared to 2017/18
  - \*Year starts April 1st

# CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS

- Wildfires larger than 25 hectares. 2011 – 2017 = less than 100. In 2018 there were 75, and in 2019 there were 137!
- 2019 - Had the most wildfires ever recorded in the UK
- 2020 – Sunniest Spring on record, driest May on record

## **Fireproofing the future**

So what does this mean? There's no need to panic – yet. [Guillermo Rein](#) is Professor of Fire Science at Imperial College London. “The UK doesn't really have a wildfire problem, it has wildfire issues,” he tells National Geographic. “Nothing compared to the Mediterranean, California, Australia or Indonesia.” But this is a situation that could change – with the stresses of global warming fanning the flames. Milder and wetter winters will boost plant growth, while summer heatwaves will dry out potential fuel, making it more flammable.

“Wildfires are moving north,” Rein adds. “[Northern France](#), Germany, Netherlands and Scandinavia are all seeing them. In a matter of years the UK will be ill prepared to handle wildfires. It must consider what it might need in the future, and learn from neighbours like France, Spain and Portugal.”

# WILDFIRE INCIDENTS

- Currently Wadhurst has an experienced wild fire / forest fire fighting team
- We have worked extensively with Crowborough and Heathfield on the forest and the forest rangers
- We have the skill set on station to continue further training and support surround stations with training or on incidents, resulting in incidents being dealt with quickly and effectively

## OTHER INCIDENTS

- Wadhurst Land Rover has been used for incidents in the Snow, assisting Kent fire and rescue on a car fire. Wadhurst Land Rover was the only vehicle that could get to the incident, assisted by the appliance
- Assisting the ambulance in the snow
- Flooding

## OTHER INCIDENTS

- The introduction of the new Mercedes Sprinter 4x4 vehicle gives the service an opportunity to re think the role of the 4x4 vehicle at Wadhurst
- Primarily still an off road fire fighting vehicle
- Potential to carry evac pro + and basket stretchers to assist incidents in the north of the county i.e. rescues of people off road, this can help keep vital resources like ALPs / TRUs in their base locations.
- Continue to assist incidents in the Snow and adverse weather i.e flooding

# MAXI CAB POLICY

- Due to be removed from service, resulting in Wadhurst being downgraded from a two appliance status to a one appliance status

## TWO VEHICLE RESPONSE FROM WADHURST

- If Wadhurst keeps a second vehicle in the form of a Mercedes sprinter, then we would still have the facility to respond in the same way to two pump calls in Wadhurst. We would be able to crew 78P5 first leading to a faster response. Then we could use the Mercedes sprinter to drive the remaining crew to the incident. This would be in the same way we use the Land Rover to drive the remaining crew to an incident now under the maxi cab policy.

# KEEPING A TWO VEHICLE RESPONSE

- Remote location at Wadhurst
- Speeds up 78P5 response time
- More fire fighters quicker on scene to RTC/ House fires in Wadhurst
- Improves fire fighter safety
- Improves public safety as we are able to do more in a quicker time, instead of having to wait for a second appliance to attend Wadhurst.

## CAFS 1.7

- Due to be removed from Wadhurst

## CAFS 1.7

- Wadhurst fire ground under the new IRMP will be the only station ground not bordered by either a Tier 1 or 2 station. It is also not bordered by a CAFs 1.7 appliance.
- Removal of CAFs from Wadhurst leaves a large gap in the north of the county
- It means contrary to the previous foam strategy, you will not have one of the two attending appliances having foam onboard in the Wadhurst area
- With Wadhurst being Tier 3 and used for standbys and reliefs more often, you will have the facility to replace a foam appliance with a foam appliance when making standby moves around the county, if Wadhurst keeps foam

## SUMMARY

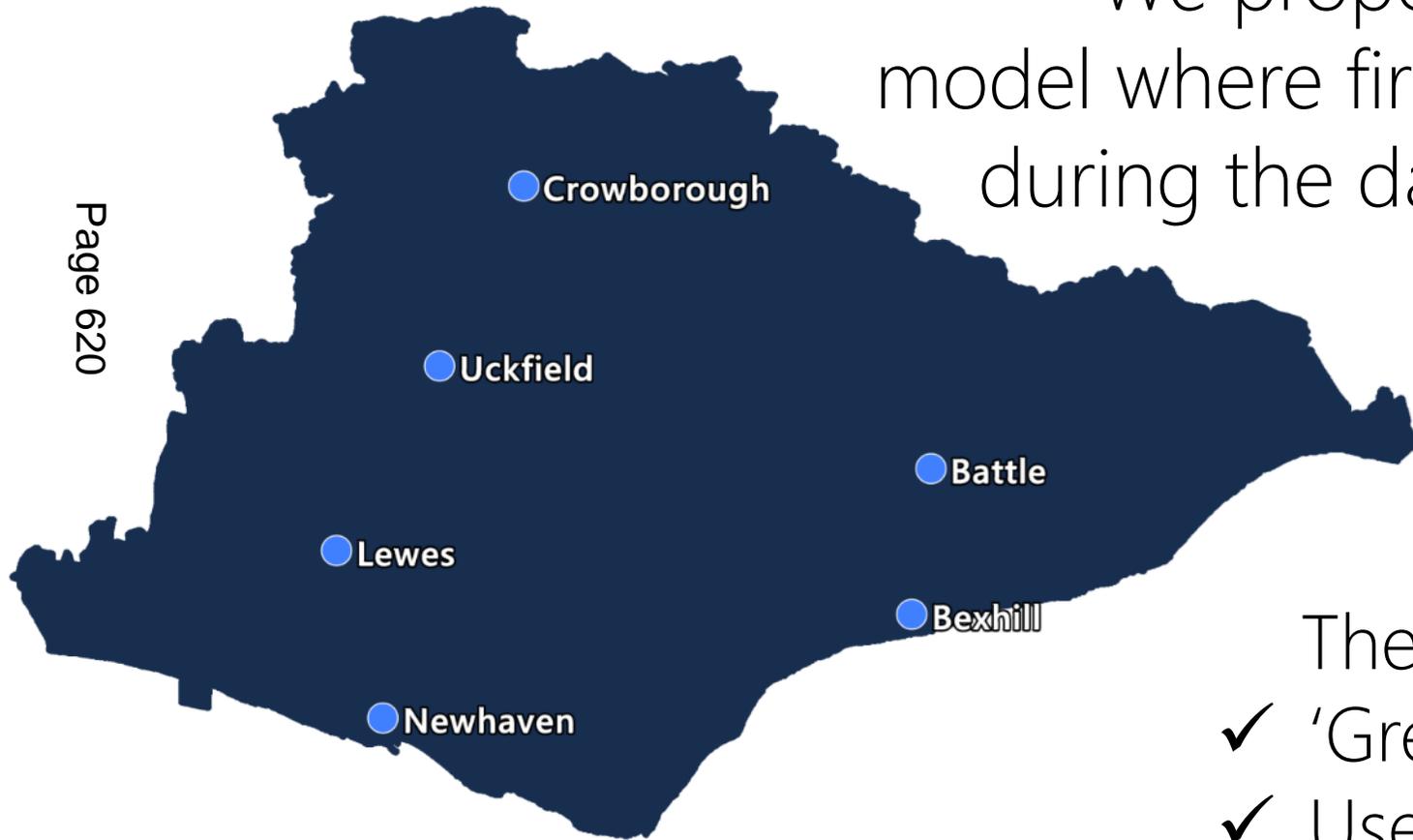
- Wadhurst Land Rover is in the right place to serve Wadhurst and the rest of the county
- It calls are increasing, not decreasing
- Wadhurst already has the infrastructure in place i.e. two bays
- Climate change will put more pressure on ESFRS
- Keeping a two vehicle response at Wadhurst improves public and fire firefighter safety in Wadhurst
- Keeping CAFs 1.7 improves fire fighter and public safety and allows the service to have a wider range of options when deploying 78P5 as a standby or relief pump

# Crowborough Fire Station IRMP Briefing – Presentation / concerns

# Changes to crewing on day-crewed stations

We want to change how we crew our 6 day-crewed stations:

We propose to introduce a **'Day Only'** model where firefighters would be on-station during the daytime Mon-Fri, but on-call in the evening and weekends.



Page 620

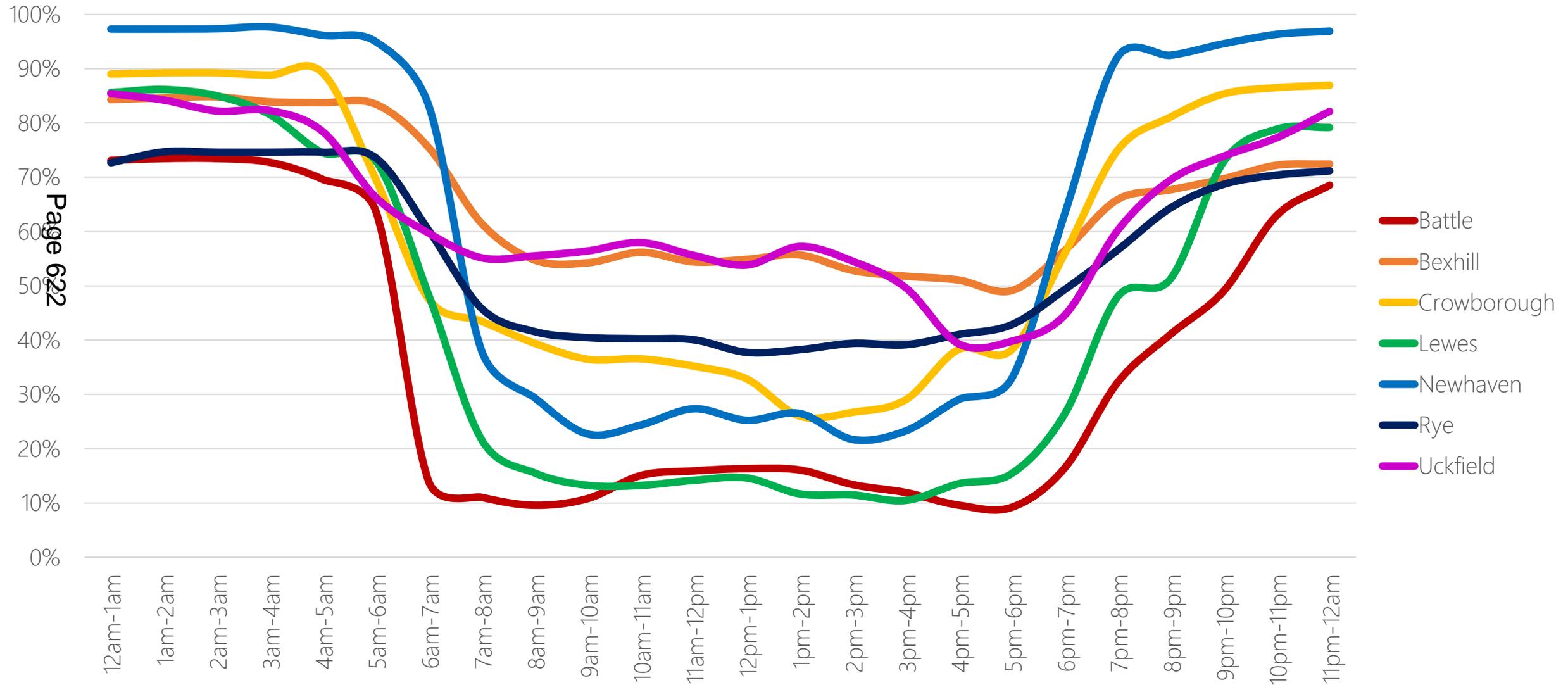
- The Day Only Duty System is:
- ✓ 'Grey Book' compliant (42hr week)
  - ✓ Used across UK FRSs
  - ✓ Staff not required to live in area.

# Changes to crewing on day-crewed stations

- Day only duty system.
- RDS to provide 83P1 evenings and weekends.
- Introduce new contracts for RDS, improve availability.

# Appliance availability 2017/18

## % availability by hour of day (weekday)

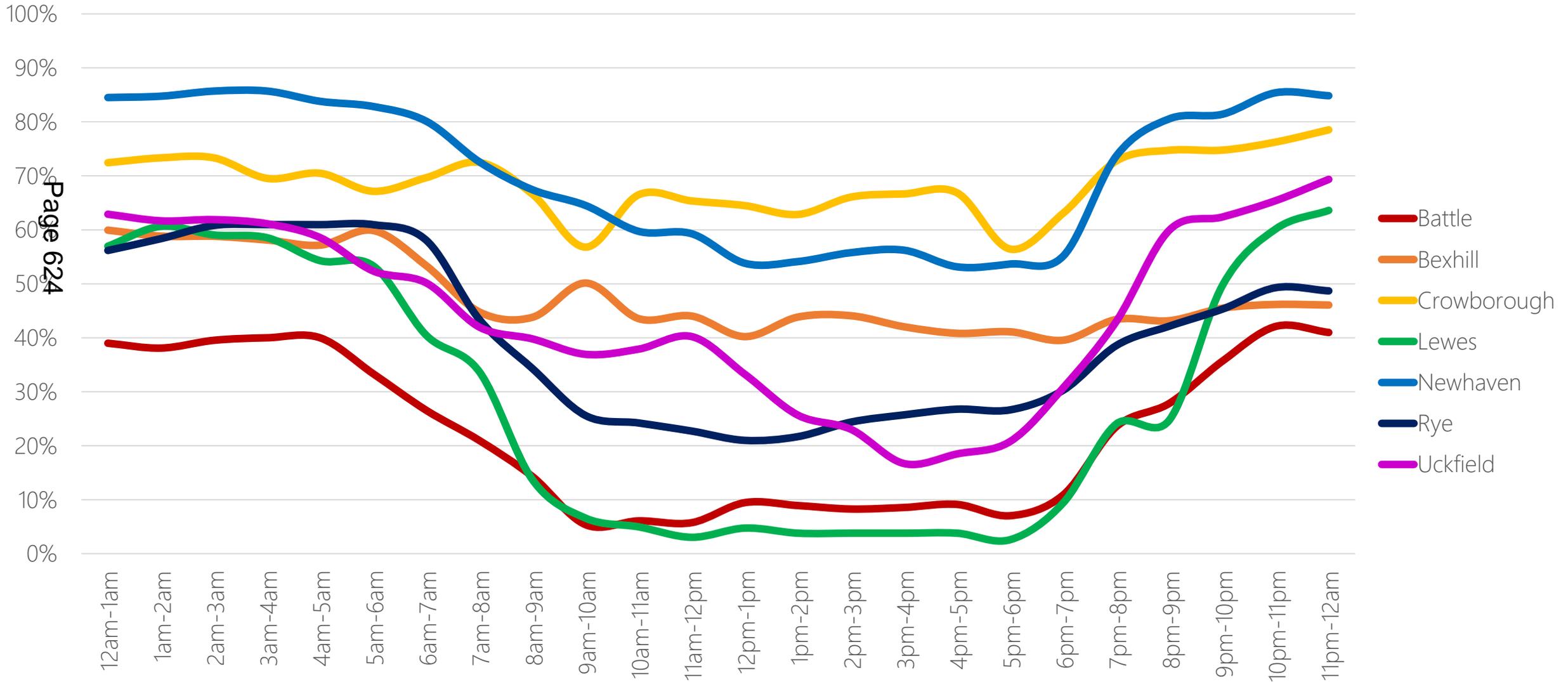


# Changes to crewing on day-crewed stations

- **Evening availability to provide one appliance in Crowborough with no Wholetime Staff**
- The figures given are percentages of the time one appliance would be available during the evening in the given year.
- 
- **2016**    **18%**            on = 66 nights    off = 300 nights
- **2017**    **12%**            on = 44 nights    off = 321 nights
- **2018**    **8.7%**            on = 32 nights    off = 333 nights
- **2019**    **1.37%**            on = 5 nights     off = 360 nights
- **2020**    **2.48%**    (for the first four months of the year).    On = 3 nights    off = 118 nights

# Appliance availability 2017/18

## % availability by hour of day (weekend)



# Changes to crewing on day-crewed stations

- **Weekend availability to provide one appliance in Crowborough with no Wholetime Staff**

- The figures given are percentages of the time one appliance would be available at the weekend in the given year.

- 
- **2016**      **56%**      on = 58 days      off = 46 days
- **2017**      **20%**      on = 21 days      off = 84 days
- **2018**      **13.6%**      on = 14 days      off = 89 days
- **2019**      **0.96%**      on = 1 day      off = 103 days
- **2020**      **8.82%** (for the first four months of the year)      on = 3 days      off = 31 days

# Changes to crewing on day-crewed stations

## Crowborough Station Risk profile

- 83P1 is mobilised, on average, 290 times per year and 68 % to its own station area.
- 83P4 is mobilised, on average, 54 times per year and 73% to its own station area.
- Between April 2013 & March 2018 there have been **1,505** mobilisations to Incidents by a Crowborough appliance.

# Changes to crewing on day-crewed stations

## Station 83 Call numbers (from Station logs)

2013	424 Total calls	
2014	443 Total calls	<b>Real average 431</b>
2015	377 Total calls	
2016	385 Total calls	
2017	441 Total calls	
2018	435 Total calls	
<b>Total number</b>	<b>2,505</b>	
(2019	470 Total calls)	

# Weekend statistics

## 5 years data (2013/18) – Crowborough DC to DO weekend impact

FJE83P1 mobilised								
Hour	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total
12am-1am	2	4	4	5	8	3	6	32
1am-2am	3	2	0	2	3	2	8	20
2am-3am	4	2	5	1	6	4	4	26
3am-4am	3	5	1	2	5	4	6	26
4am-5am	4	3	2	3	4	1	1	18
5am-6am	6	4	4	3	1	3	0	21
6am-7am	6	4	7	4	2	2	4	29
7am-8am	9	5	4	8	3	6	5	40
8am-9am	10	10	13	13	14	8	4	72
9am-10am	9	10	18	19	13	9	10	88
10am-11am	12	12	11	10	15	10	11	81
11am-12pm	10	9	10	16	10	11	12	78
12pm-1pm	9	17	8	8	13	12	13	80
1pm-2pm	14	16	13	9	12	15	18	97
2pm-3pm	14	14	7	16	7	15	19	92
3pm-4pm	13	11	12	10	13	11	12	82
4pm-5pm	13	20	20	9	13	13	22	110
5pm-6pm	12	12	17	16	21	15	9	102
6pm-7pm	8	21	12	15	12	13	15	96
7pm-8pm	13	13	12	12	9	10	5	74
8pm-9pm	11	10	8	9	5	8	7	58
9pm-10pm	5	5	8	7	5	7	5	42
10pm-11pm	6	2	8	4	4	9	11	44
11pm-12am	6	4	7	5	6	9	4	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>1,449</b>

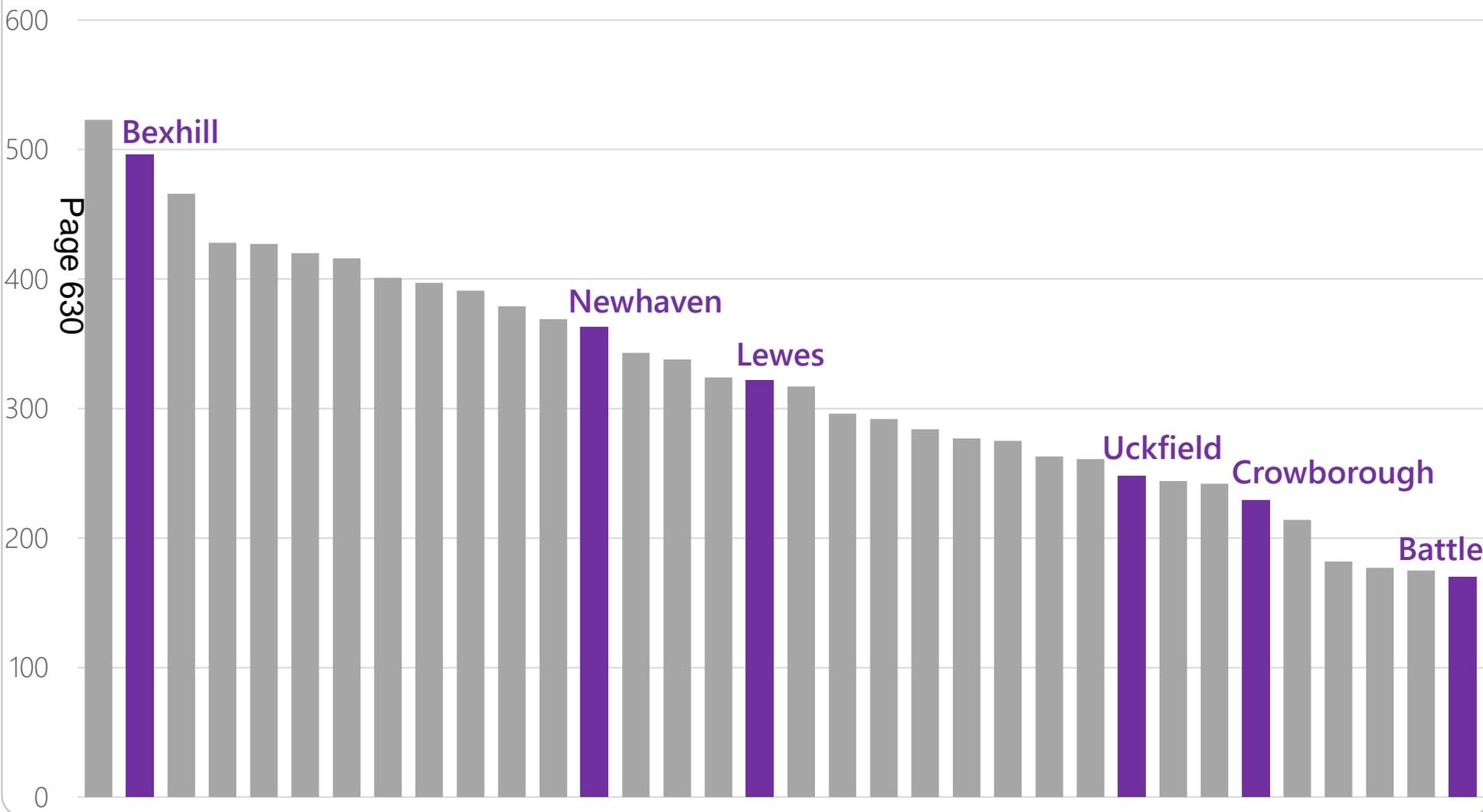
Station area incident occurred in:	Fire		Special Service		False Alarm	Total
	Critical	Non-critical	Critical	Non-critical		
Barcombe	0	1	0	0	0	1
Crowborough	2	43	13	28	64	150
Forest Row	0	6	3	0	5	14
Hailsham	0	0	1	0	0	1
Heathfield	0	0	0	1	0	1
Mayfield	0	10	1	7	7	25
Uckfield	0	6	0	4	6	16
Wadhurst	0	7	0	2	11	20
Outside ESFRS	0	0	0	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>230</b>



# Comparisons with FG2 day-crewed appliance activity

## Incidents attended by day-crewed appliances

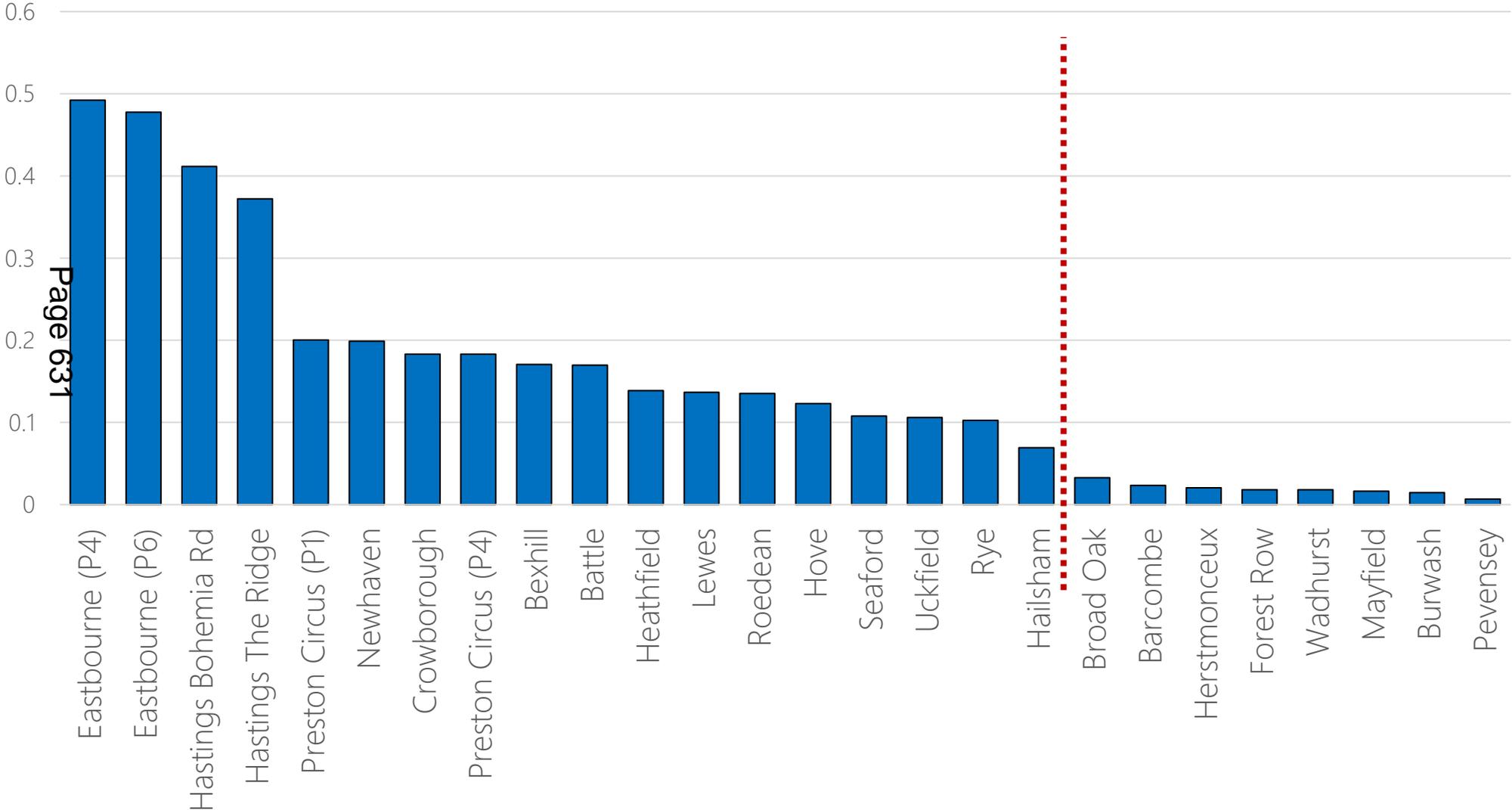
9 months (April 2018 - Dec 2018)



- Large variation in activity.
- Battle sitting as the quietest day-crewed station, Bexhill one of the busiest.
- Median number of attendances is 320 incidents; Lewes is the closest, having attended 322 incidents.

# Which/why 18 appliances

## Community risk impact of each fire station's removal



Risk impact from 19<sup>th</sup> appliance drops by >50%

# Performance impact

Performance impact compared with base case

- Negligible impact on attendance standards (less than .5% increase in performance)

- Offset against other review areas

Page 632

	On-station response	On-call response
All 6 DC stations as Day-Only	0.40%	0.20%
Battle as DO station	0.01%	0.00%
Bexhill as DO Station	-0.08%	0.39%
Crowborough as DO Station	0.04%	-0.09%
Lewes as DO Station	0.04%	-0.03%
Newhaven as DO Station	-0.24%	0.16%
Uckfield as DO Station	0.07%	-0.19%

# Changes to crewing on day-crewed stations

- Increased attendance times evenings and weekends(15mins) further increased at Stn 83 due to location of Wholetime personnel.
- Difficult to recruit RDS, 5 min attendance time has been stretched, extra road risk.
- No guaranteed evening, weekend cover, heavy reliance on contracts, recruitment.
- RDS work group Transient.
- North of the county, unique area, very Isolated.
- Large area covered- Mayfield, Forest Row, Wadhurst, Heathfield.
- Special appliance availability evenings /weekends, Training.

# Changes to crewing on day-crewed stations

## **Crowborough Station Risk profile**

“There is no major large scale developments allocated in area”.

### **Wealden planning figures for Crowborough.**

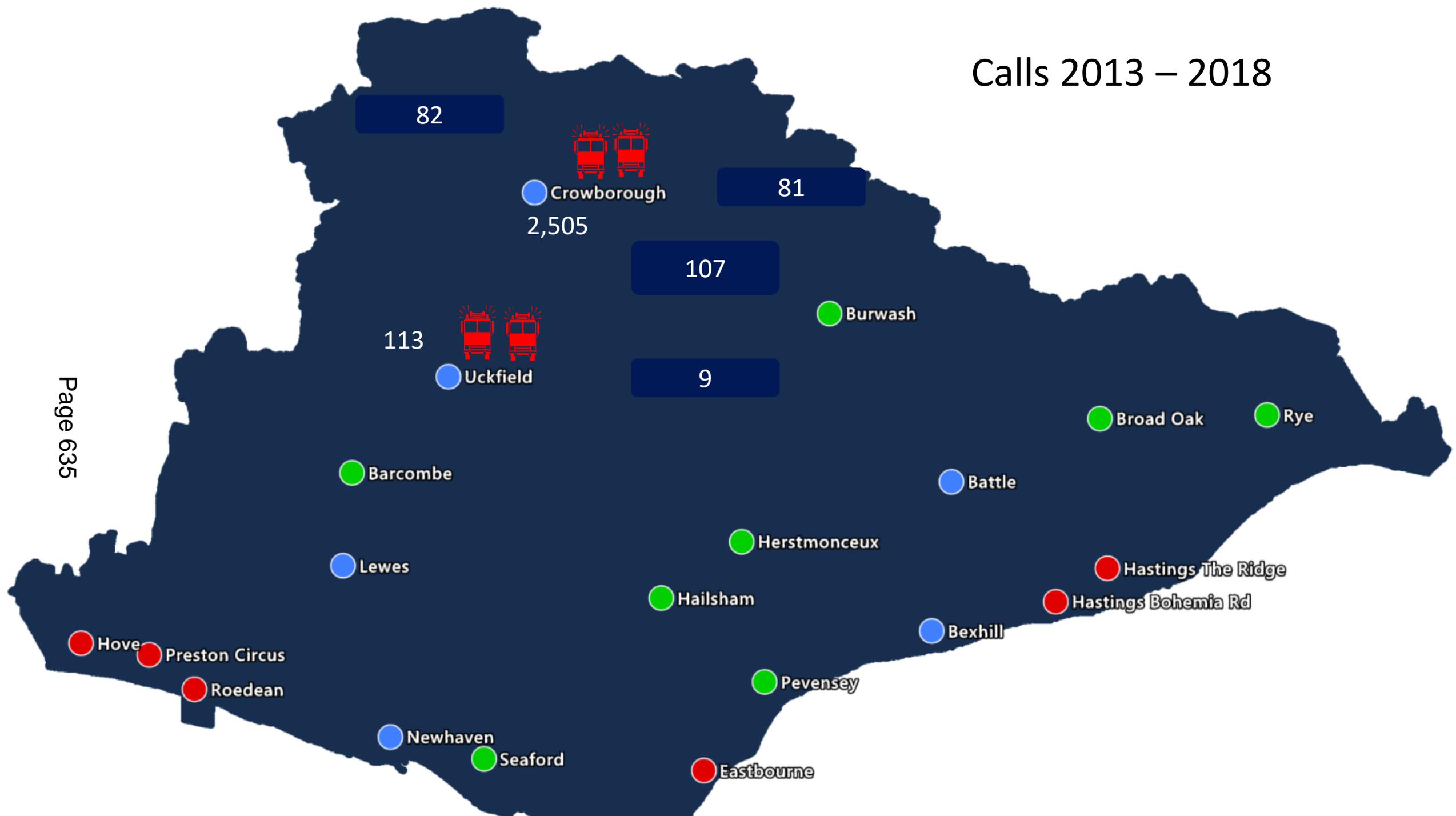
- 450 in last nine years.
- 938 in next three years, may increase.

### **Cllr Peter Bucklitsch**

“Due to the disastrous collapse of the Wealden Local Plan a further 2000 or more people will reside in Crowborough, which would bring the population close to that of Tunbridge Wells”.

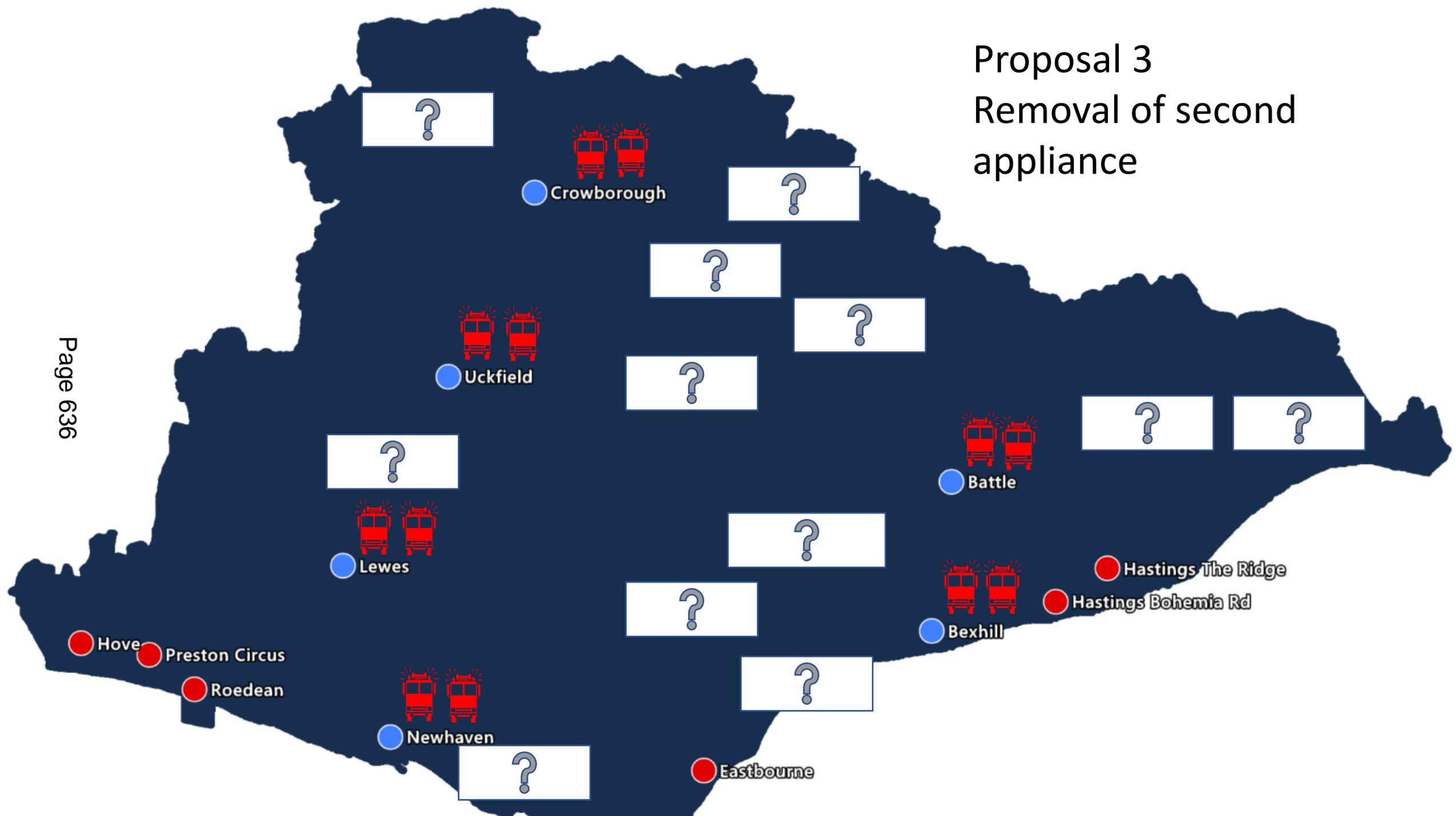
# Calls 2013 – 2018

Page 635



# Proposal 3 Removal of second appliance

Page 636



# Removal of second appliance

- Station Risk profile states 2017/18 83P4 Mobilised 54 times.
- 2020 83P1 mobilised to 195 calls, 85 other Stn ground, 43%.
- 31.76% 83P4 available with RDS, 31.76% with WT & RDS. 36.47% not available.
- Surrounded by group 3 Stations, Kent to North.
- Proportionally twice as many RTC's in area than ESFRS average.
- Long wait for second appliance, decision making, experience, training.
- Unlike coastal Stations no wholetime support nearby, Uckfield?
- With turnout times increasing this is severely reducing the ability to provide public with definitive care within the golden hour.
- Persons reported, prevent rapid escalation, commit Ba teams ?

# IRMP 2020 - 2025

## People

- 6 Wholetime posts. Sufficient savings, redundancies ?
- Flexible Crewing pool, training, prevention and protection ?
  - Demotivated staff.
- Impact on individuals and families. Anxiety- Financial- Pension.
- Day crewed more part of community, passionate, committed 96hrs
- Less effective service for residents of Crowborough.

## IRMP Meeting – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2020

1. Why are we only using data up to the end of 2018?

- Government Stats show ESFRS at 7% increase in 2019. 87 at 12% increase.
- Future Proofing – calls increasing.

2. Where is the computer modelling to show how long 'slightly longer' looks like with regard to waiting for a 2<sup>nd</sup> appliance attendance, from the nearest surrounding stations, at any area of our station ground?

Why hasn't this been done?

Local traffic infrastructure will have significant impact on attendance at critical times of day, i.e. Bridge, one way system, rush hour, dual carriageway at The Drove, etc.

3. Local RDS/On Call ff's do not always make attendance to station within 5 mins. What are ESFRS planning to do to significantly improve this?

- Historic hiring of personnel outside of 5 min turnout.
- Physical traffic/parking problems for reasons listed above.

4. RDS/On call recruitment has historically been a difficult issue, why do you think you can find the on call personnel that we have been looking for, for the last 25 years?

- Current flexibility is one of biggest pluses for being RDS.
- Takes 2 years to become fully competent. Then longer for JO/Driver/Specialisms

5. Station Risk profile will dramatically alter during the term of this IRMP. Why is our ability to respond locally being halved?

- Industrial/Commercial expansion.
- Port Expansion
- Significant Housing Developments

6. By your own statistics, Stn 87 is 'bucking the trend', i.e. greater call volume, densest conurbation outside B&H and Hastings, some of highest risk demographic. How are you justifying a pump removal and reducing weekend cover?

- 54% Households are average to V.High risk demographic.

7. Slide 5 on SRP states 'Low residential Growth of 102 dwellings'. There are significantly more developments being planned and built already, where did you get the figure from?

- Further Augustfields developments, 90+, 300+ Court Farm Road, 300+ at Parker Pen, 100+ at Quarry.

8. If a WT (whole Time) person takes an On call contract, will they be expected to fulfil all WT hours on station if they have been out on their ON call contract during the night previous?
  - Currently WT DC ( day Crewed) get time for time after midnight.
  - ESFRS criticised by HMI for numbers of WT – RDS staff.
  - Supposed greater consideration given to staff health and welfare, how?
9. IRMP statistics show Newhaven's busy daytime period is a Saturday. Why then is weekend daytime cover being removed?
  - Statistics from Jan 2019 to date, show an even greater increase in call volumes during weekend daytime hours, @30% of all calls.
10. On call document states that you will still need On call staff during weekday daytimes. Why?
11. If proposals go ahead, will mobilising the Control Unit or the Operational Support Unit during on call hours, mean 87P1 goes off the run?
12. Pool of floating firefighters. Where will they be based? Kit? Transportation? Hours? Contracts? Pay enhancement?
13. Which other FRS' have you modelled your proposals on, i.e. Day Manning, On-call, Floating Pool?
14. Where will all the people being axed from DC stations go? What if they aren't need in the pool? What if not suited to BS?
15. What is the scheduled plan of rollout for the changes of DC to DM?
16. Will On call staff be expected to be outposted to maintain cover if pool firefighters all committed?

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) have called a public consultation on their proposals to implement changes to the service. The proposals and the consultation response form can be found online. It closes on the 19th June.

Changes to service provision in Lewes will be considerable and therefore I propose that a statement from Lewes Town Council is appropriate.

Background:

Risk Profile of Lewes Fire Station:

Incidents have increased by 0.3% since 2009 – only other areas to increase are neighbouring station areas – Newhaven & Seaford.

- There are 324 incidents per year within Lewes station area; 3<sup>rd</sup> busiest day-crewed area.
- Spike in fire incidents in November (bonfire celebrations).
- 57% of incidents during the day.
- 7% of incidents outside attendance standards isochrones.
- Proportionally more fires and RTCs in area and fewer False Alarms compared to ESFRS. Twice the proportion of non-residential fires.
- 27 critical life-risk incidents per year.
- 8.4% incidents have life risk, higher than ESFRS average (5.2%).
- 65% critical incidents during day.
- Lewes area one of highest for numbers of injuries and rescues.
- Attendance times, on average, slightly slower than other day-crewed station areas.
- 4 minute delay between 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> appliance – 2 minutes quicker than other day-crewed areas for RTC incidents.

The impacts of the changes to Lewes are mainly contained within Proposals 1, 2, 3 and 6.

Current situation:

Lewes is a “core station” served by a Day Crew.

This means that there are always 2 vehicles available (when one is sent out to an incident, a second is brought in from a nearby “non-core station” to maintain “core cover”)

A Day Crew: 2 watches of six firefighters work 42 hours/week to provide on-site cover from 08.30-18:30 Monday to Friday and the second group of firefighters (who

all live within 5 minutes of the station) are on call throughout the nights and at weekends.

### **Proposal 1**

#### Operational Resilience Plan

“Increase core engines available at start of day from 15 to 18.” ( across east Sussex) However, this is achieved just by making three existing “non-core” stations into “core” stations (where an engine from a different station is brought in if the first engine is unavailable).

Overall, the ORP looks like a better arrangement, as it seems to increase cover. However, it does this by spreading the service more thinly over most of the area covered:

Changes to the service will mean that Lewes station will be down-graded to a “non-core” station which means that an incident in Seaford will take away a vehicle, leaving Lewes with a diminished capacity.

### **Proposal 2**

#### Changes to Day Crewed Stations

Changes to staffing will reduce the firefighting complement to 6 experienced full timers backed up by a “flexible crewing pool”.

### **Proposal 3**

#### Second Fire Engines

Lewes would lose its second fire engine

### **Proposal 6**

#### Demand Management

Three strands of service will be removed.

1. Response to Automatic Fire Alarms
- 2 Lift Rescue
3. Removal of trapped birds

Motion:

I propose that the following statement is sent immediately, and arrives with ESFRS before the consultation closes.

Lewes Town Council has considered the implications for changes to service provision from ESFRS to the residents and firefighters who live in the town.

The implications to Lewes are contained within proposals 123 and 6.

### **Proposal 1**

#### Operational Resilience Plan

Changes to the service will mean that Lewes station will go from 2 appliances to 1. It is not known how many “on-call” staff will be needed to guarantee 100% availability of one appliance. Without a full complement of staff, full cover cannot be guaranteed.

This also means that an incident somewhere else will take away that engine, leaving Lewes without capacity. We cannot accept that this is in the interests of Lewes residents.

### **Proposal 2**

#### Changes to Day Crewed Stations

The loss to Lewes of 6 wholetime jobs of fully trained firefighters cannot be balanced by replacing them with “on-call “staff:

- The crew that provides evening, night and weekend cover are entirely different to the permanent crew, so will have limited experience operating the engine and equipment.
- Recruiting these on-call / retained firefighters is extremely challenging, particularly in a reasonably prosperous town such as Lewes:
  - o The salary offered (£11k-13k/annum) would not be enough to attract people to do this as their only job
  - o Therefore, they will have other work commitments which could affect their availability
  - o Turnover of these staff is very high; most take it as a last resort but accept other, permanent jobs (inside or outside the service) if they become available

- The turnover is a particular problem as training firefighters in all of the necessary disciplines generally takes about 2 years (so if staff turnover more often than that there is never a fully-qualified crew)
  - Being all on call all evenings, nights and weekends is a very family- and friends-unfriendly arrangement (e.g. never being able to go to the pub or have a drink in the evening or at weekends) which few people would accept for the salary on offer
- By necessity, the on-call crew (who will have other jobs) will be very much a scratch crew with availability dictated by other work commitments; therefore assembling a crew with all of the right skills to crew an engine properly (driver, breathing-apparatus specialist, junior officer, etc) will be extremely complex with a high risk that not all staff will be properly skilled (risking their lives and the lives of people caught in the fire)
  - The crew will also have limited experience of working together and will not know each other's strengths and capabilities well, reducing the efficiency of the response and increasing the risk to residents/employees and firefighters
  - There would be less emergency/contingency cover available when there are multiple calls (e.g. when the Technical Response unit is out (currently the other permanent firefighters can be called on when necessary as they do not have other jobs).

**(Currently, Lewes has only managed to recruit and retain 3.5 'units' of retained staff (a 'unit' is someone on call 120 hours/week); 12 would be required to cover the loss of the second watch.)**

The replacement of trained full time firefighters with "flexible crewing pool" will increase stress and risk to them as the strength of working in established teams will be compromised.

We cannot agree that this change is in the interests either of the residents of the town, nor the firefighters resident here.

### **Proposal 3**

#### Second Fire Engines

For bigger incidents in Lewes , two engines are deployed as a matter of course. This provides additional equipment / resilience and flexibility, which would be lost if this proposal were implemented.

If a second engine was needed, it would need to be called from another station (assuming one is available) which would very significantly increase call-out times (increasing the risk to Lewes residents, businesses and fire fighters).

On the other side, if there was an incident elsewhere in East Sussex, Lewes would be far less likely to be able to provide an additional engine for fear of leaving the town unprotected.

A recent wildfire in Ashdown Forest required 8 engines in attendance. If this number of second engines are removed, that would leave some fire stations (including some "core" stations) without any engine available in the event of a local fire.

## **Proposal 6**

### Demand Management

Stop call out to Automatic Fire Alarms

1. Risk of fire spreading in high-density / old commercial areas in Lewes. Although 96% no fire, in 4% there is a fire and this could spread rapidly in dense areas such as Lewes. Increased risk of loss of life, especially in the flats above many of the town centre commercial properties.

Lift rescue stopped

2. Limited impact, but questionable whether this will make a great deal of difference as unlikely that the lift maintenance teams will respond within an acceptable timescale.

Stop rescuing trapped birds

3. Much greater risk of the public / others trying to rescue trapped or dying animals and birds themselves, putting themselves at considerable risk.

Council tax contributions to the Fire Service are not reducing. The cuts are being proposed because of reductions / uncertainty in Government Grants. We therefore are firmly of the opinion that central Government must provide assurances that Fire Service grants will not be reduced, so that the Fire Service can make proper plans for the future without the need to make these dangerous cuts to front-line services.

Furthermore, -West Sussex FRS implemented similar changes 4-5 years ago. Their most recent inspection report rated it as one of the worst Fire Services in the country (inadequate in its protection of the public and looking after its staff; and requiring improvement in the way that it keeps people safe and secure and the way it uses its resources). It now requires £34m of investment to address the many failings identified by the inspection. Trying to make similar savings in East Sussex would therefore have a high risk of actually costing more in the medium term.

According to ESFRS risk profile for Lewes, incidences have increased 0.3% since 2009, and Lewes itself is rated as the 3rd busiest day crewed area within East Sussex. There are proportionally more fires and RTCs and twice the number of non-residential fires compared to figures within East Sussex.

Steve Oakman, Lewes firefighter, said "Figures covering January 2018 to May 2020 showed that if the proposal to change the current shift system was in place then,

the first appliance at Lewes would be available for response by “on-call” staff for less than 10% of the time”

Add to this the increasing potential for consequences of climate chaos: flooding and wildfires, and the increase in the size of the town both in residential and business property, it is very clear that reducing capacity of the service provided to the town is compromises safety to our residents and to the firefighters who live here and we cannot accept it.

# Wadhurst Parish Council

The Pavilion, Sparrow's Green Recreation Ground, South View Road, Wadhurst, East Sussex  
TN5 6TW

Email: [clerk@wadhurst-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@wadhurst-pc.gov.uk) Telephone: 07375 062428

19 June 2020

FAO: Cllr Roy Galley, Chair, East Sussex Fire Authority  
Dawn Whittaker, Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive for East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

Dear Cllr Galley and Ms Whittaker,

## RE: Wadhurst Parish council oppose cuts to Wadhurst Fire Station Appliances and Personnel

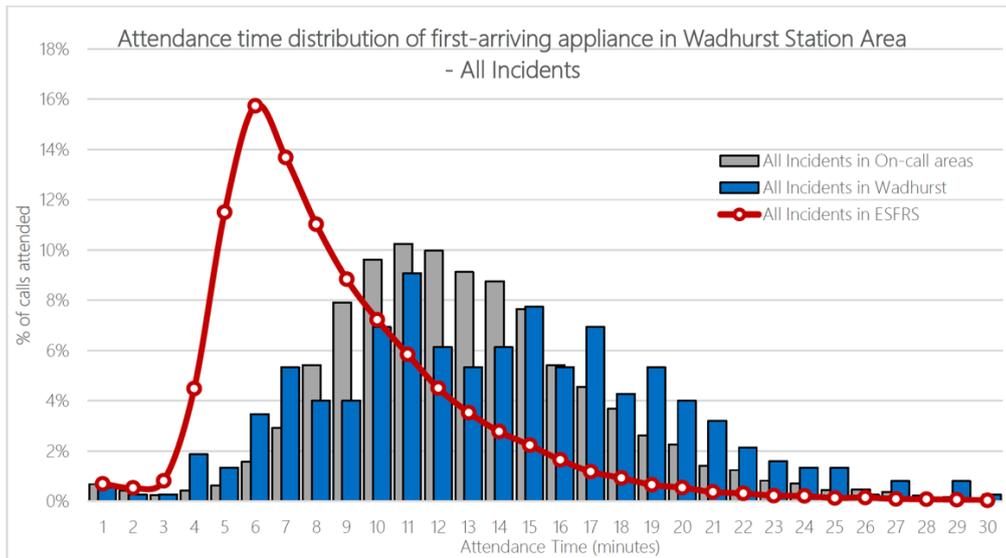
Wadhurst Parish council voted at a full council meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> June to strongly oppose the cuts to Wadhurst Fire Station proposed in the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Integrated risk management plan 2020-2025 consultation document.

The proposals envisage cutting our fire station from a two-appliance status to a one-appliance status by cutting the firefighting Land rover and reducing our "on call" firefighters from eighteen to twelve.

This will mean a reduction in Wadhurst from two appliances and eleven fire fighters attending to just one appliance and five fire fighters attending. This already on top of a reduction from the thirteen firefighters and two appliances available in 2017.

So, in three years the Wadhurst service will have been cut from two appliances and thirteen firefighters attending to one appliance and five firefighters attending; this is a huge reduction and puts lives at risk.

The main aim of the Fire service is to save lives and, in this regard, the time taken to attend a call-out matters significantly. Minutes matter. Wadhurst's attendance times **are already longer** than ESFRS averages (both for full time manned stations and on-call stations) and these attendance times can only be made longer by the proposed changes.



Even allowing for its rural nature, and comparing against the national averages for 'significantly rural fire services', Wadhurst's response times are also **already much longer**. (The natural averages are 8m 52 seconds (fires ) and 10m59seconds (Road Vehicles) (*source ESFRS*))

Wadhurst can therefore ill-afford to lose further personnel and appliances making these response times even longer.

Wadhurst has a higher proportion of elderly and a higher proportion of children than the ESFRS area average. It is rural and in places accessibility is difficult.

# Wadhurst Parish Council

The Pavilion, Sparrow's Green Recreation Ground, South View Road, Wadhurst, East Sussex  
TN5 6TW

Email: [clerk@wadhurst-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@wadhurst-pc.gov.uk) Telephone: 07375 062428

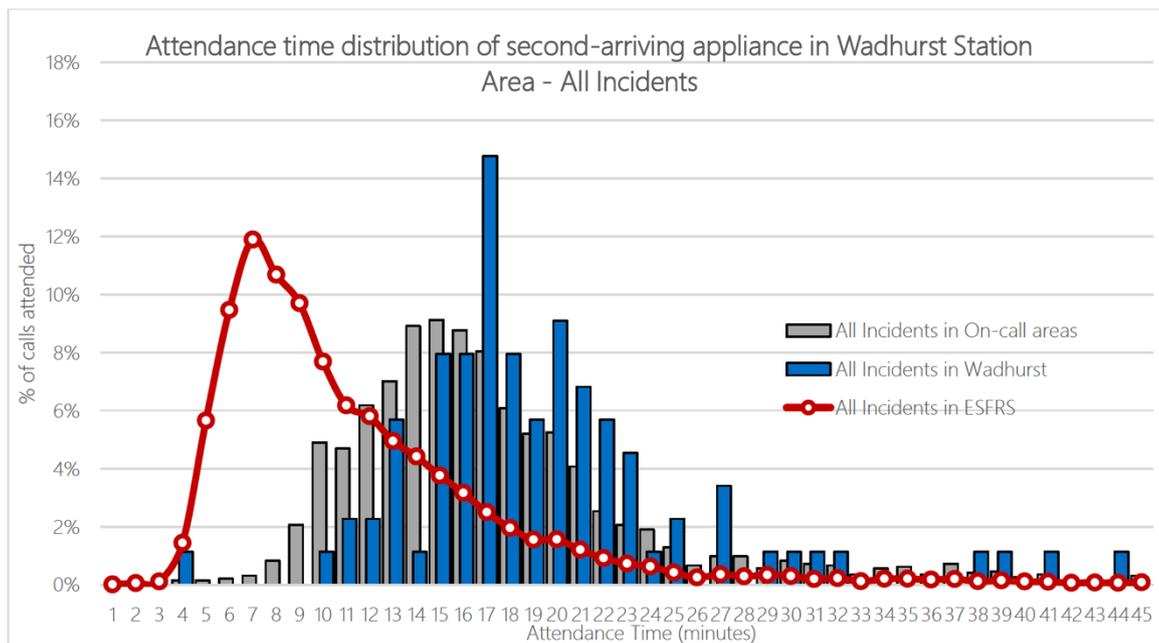
Wadhurst has a hospital, five schools, three nursing homes and numerous assisted living premises. These will all be detrimentally affected by the inability to quickly turn out two appliances.

It is our understanding that, due to operational procedures, a second appliance will need to be at the scene of any fire before fire crews can enter the building in Breathing Apparatus (BA). ESFRS figures and fire-ground experience show that second appliance arrival times, in the Wadhurst area, are, on average, around **17 minutes** but can be much longer. This is TOO late and this is the situation at present, any cuts will only serve to exacerbate this problem.

Wadhurst sits on the border of Kent and East Sussex relying on over-the-border cooperation from Kent. ESFRS and Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) operate different BA procedures, the two services cannot work side by side in BA. The pre-determined attendance for a house fire in Frant would involve an appliance from Tunbridge Wells and one from Wadhurst plus one more ESFRS appliance. In this instance no BA commitment can be made until the **THIRD** appliance arrives. The same situation exists in other parts of Wadhurst Fire station's area such as Ticehurst ( Priory Hospital).

If the existing Land Rover (second appliance) is removed from Wadhurst it effectively removes Wadhurst firefighters ability to carry out their primary duty of saving lives from fire; no human being can survive in a fire for this amount of time. Minutes matter and lives will be put at risk.

Wadhurst already has the third highest number of fire related injuries (out of twenty-four comparison "on call" areas) and these proposed cuts will only increase fire related injury risk.



Wadhurst fire station also covers the largest inland body of water in south-east England which is used for leisure activities and is largely inaccessible by road. The loss of the fire-fighting Land Rover will lead to a lack of off-road capability and make accessing Bewl Water, rural properties and forest fires more difficult in what is a largely rural location.

The fire brigade in Wadhurst is made up of retained fire fighters. Retained fire fighters are notoriously difficult to recruit due, in part, to the limited amount of time they have in which to report to the fire station when called for duty and the willingness of employers prepared to lose staff at a moment's notice so that they can attend an emergency call-out.

# Wadhurst Parish Council

The Pavilion, Sparrow's Green Recreation Ground, South View Road, Wadhurst, East Sussex  
TN5 6TW

Email: [clerk@wadhurst-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@wadhurst-pc.gov.uk) Telephone: 07375 062428

This has led to difficulties in recruitment that will not be helped by the further reduction in watch strength and may further reduce appliance availability which is already down to 51% (see below: source: Wadhurst Station Risk profile)

FJE78P5's availability has decreased significantly in the 9 year period, its almost available as half as much in 2017/18 as it was in 2009/10 – a decrease of 47%.

## Appliance Availability

Callsign	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
FJE78P5	97.7	96.0	95.6	87.4	85.6	75.8	79.6	61.9	51.5

In addition, the timing of the consultation, during the coronavirus pandemic, is the wrong time for this process, as peoples' focus is rightly elsewhere, and not enough time has been allowed for communities to respond to proposals that will have a huge impact upon them. Such proposals should be subject to maximum community engagement and scrutiny. It is also not the right time for a restructuring of an emergency service.

It is also a disappointing way to treat frontline services personnel at this time, given the extra demands that have been placed upon them during the pandemic.

In conclusion, we strongly oppose these cuts to our fire service in Wadhurst. It is clear they will increase the risk to lives in Wadhurst and so we request that the proposals to cut the firefighting Land Rover and the number of fire-fighters are dropped.

Yours sincerely



Amanda Barlow

Clerk

Wadhurst Parish Council

Cc: [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org)



16<sup>th</sup> June 2020

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service,  
Headquarters,  
Church Lane,  
Lewes,  
East Sussex  
BN7 2DZ

Dear Cllr Galley and Chief Fire Officer Dawn Whittaker,

### **PLANNING FOR A SAFER FUTURE CONSULATION - RESPONSE**

At its meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> May the Rotherfield Parish Council resolved that we write to you to say that the Council is very worried about the proposals suggested in the recent consultation document for the fire and rescue service in Crowborough.

The Council is vehemently opposed both to the changes proposed to staff contracts and the removal of the second fire engine from Crowborough Fire Station, because it believes that they will result in an increase in response times for incidents in Rotherfield and, therefore, increase the risk of serious injury, death and damage to property.

The proposed changes do not allow sufficiently for the fact that a large number of new houses are likely to be built in Crowborough, Uckfield and their surrounding areas, which means that this is not the time to reduce the amount of cover available in those towns.

Your document notes that the number of fatalities on Wealden roads is high. The Council is aware that the A26 has a poor record when it comes to road traffic incidents. This, together with the increasing amount of forest fires on the Ashdown Forest should be taken into account when looking at the proposed changes to the service provided for Crowborough and its surrounding villages.

The proposals include the increased employment of retained fire fighters on whom weekend and evening call outs will be totally dependent. Retained firefighters are notoriously difficult to recruit due, in part, to the maximum amount of time required to report to the fire station for duty and the willingness of employers to lose staff at a moment's notice.

Rotherfield is on the extremity of East Sussex and its road access is poor. The loss of the second fire engine at Crowborough and the proposed changes to the crewing model will affect the time taken to attend an emergency in Rotherfield.

Yours sincerely,



Trevor Thorpe

Trevor Thorpe  
Clerk to Rotherfield Parish Council



Pett Parish Council  
Island Cottage  
Swan Street  
Wittersham  
Kent  
TN30 7PH

17<sup>st</sup> June 2020

Councillor Roy Galley  
Chairman, East Sussex Fire Authority  
East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters  
Church Lane  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 2DZ

Dear Councillor Galley

***Proposed Changes to East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service***

Further to your invitation to complete your "East Sussex Fire Authority – Planning for a Safer Future Consultation", Pett Parish Council have discussed how to reply and feel that the document fails to address questions specific to our rural location.

Pett & Pett Level are situated equidistant between the fire stations of Rye and The Ridge in Hastings. It is our understanding that should an incident occur within our Parish, it would be The Ridge fire station that would be responsible for the first action to attend, with Bohemia Road Hastings and Rye providing additional cover.

As things stand at present, The Ridge is fully manned 24 hours a day with additional cover provided by retained firefighters, Bohemia Road is also fully manned and has a specialist crew required to operate the aerial platform and Rye fire station is a wholly retain firefighter station with two fire appliances.

It is our understanding that the proposal you are seeking consultation on would:

- reduce the manning at The Ridge so that it was only manned by full-time firefighters during the day and wholly manned by retained firefighters at night;
- halve the number of fire appliances and associated retained firefighters at Rye fire station;
- completely remove the specialist aerial platform crew at Bohemia Road;
- reduce the number of fire appliances across the county by 10 and reduce the number of both full time and retained firefighters by 30 and 60 respectively.

Bearing your proposals in mind, please **Page 651** provide full explanations to the following questions:

1. What is the reason for these cuts?
2. Your document says that as a result of your plans, it "may" take slightly longer for the fire service to attend emergencies. How much is "slightly longer"? How do you quantify the potential loss of life that may be caused by this "slightly longer" period? Are the members of the East Sussex Fire Authority prepared to be held both morally and maybe fiscally responsible for the potential loss of life resulting from these changes?
3. Although this does not directly affect this Parish, with the Aerial Ladder Platform at Bohemia Road remaining, but no longer being primary crewed, how can there be a guaranteed availability for response?
4. What is the reason for cutting the emergency response side of the Fire Service to invest in additional protective duties? Surely these additional protective duties can be obtained without losing frontline firefighters?
5. With its proximity to a chemical facility, airport, nuclear power station and other industrial facilities, how can downgrading Rye fire station from two fire appliances to one be considered as any other than a retrograde step?
6. Please can you explain how moving the cover at The Ridge fire station from 24/7 immediate response to day cover immediate response only and "on call" cover at night is improving the service?

We look forward to receiving the full explanations to our questions so that we, as elected representatives of the people of Pett & Pett Level, can pass them on to the residents of our Parish.

Yours sincerely,



Dr David Penfold  
Chairman, Pett Parish Council

cc.

Clr Galley by email <cllr.roy.galley@eastsussex.gov.uk>

Members of East Sussex Fire Authority by email

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# Templated Responses



There were 152 responses received via the following webpage:

<https://actionnetwork.org/letters/say-no-to-cuts-in-our-fire-rescue-service-in-east-sussex>

This page was sponsored by Lewes District Green Party and Wealden Green Party and allowed anyone to send a pre-prepared, templated response that 'addresses all the proposed cuts to the fire service in detail'. Although there was the capability for each response to be amended or changed, the responses were identical, save for a few which included some comments in the 'other comments' section and which has been picked up by Opinion Research Service's analytical report.

The 'blurb' on the above webpage highlighted the 'main points' of the draft IRMP but only focussed on certain proposals and therefore did not give a balanced overview of the proposals.

ESFRS sought advice from The Consultation Institute regarding the best way in which to record these responses. Their guidance was:

*With regards to how they are recorded, different bodies have differing opinions but the Institute's view is that each submission has to be assumed as an individual response but that the nature of the submission and seeming templated response (with no evidence that information has been read) should also be recorded and discussed in the final report.*

A copy of the templated response is below:

### **Consultation response: Planning for a Safer Future**

To whom it may concern:

Please find below my responses to the consultation questions regarding your "Planning for a Safer Future" proposals.

1. To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?

Strongly disagree. I support the proposals to increase the number of 'immediate response' engines. But this must not be achieved by reducing the total number of 'resilience' fire engines as this would significantly increase risk across the whole of East Sussex.

2. Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?

Strongly disagree. On-call fire fighters are extremely hard to recruit, retain and train; relying on this unproven model to provide all evening and weekend cover is dangerous. And having all evening and weekend cover provided by a scratch crew who do not work and train together all the time would present an unacceptable risk to households, businesses and fire fighters.

3. Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, if the crewing change is agreed by ESFRS, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?

I strongly disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only', and therefore do not support either of the alternative options proposed.

4. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?

Strongly disagree. Removing second fire engines from seven fire stations will significantly increase call-out times, increase the risk that fire engines are not available to attend an incident, and unacceptably increase the risk to households, businesses and firefighters.

5. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three "maxi-cab" stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations?

Strongly disagree. Removing the "maxi cab" capability from Seaford and the other stations will reduce the effectiveness of the response, increase the time required to respond to larger incidents and increase the likelihood that fire engines will need to be called in from nearby fire stations, leaving them without cover.

6. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?

No opinion.

7. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises?

Strongly disagree. In the dense commercial areas at the centre of Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford (where buildings are often constructed of timber, other business next door, and often flats above) the quicker response from responding to AFAs is critical in avoiding loss of life and the spread of the fire to other businesses.

8. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance?

No opinion.

9. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?

Strongly disagree. If the animals/birds are not rescued by ESFRS there will be a much greater risk of the public / others trying to rescue trapped or dying animals and birds themselves without suitable equipment, putting themselves at considerable risk.

10. Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)?

Strongly disagree. Replacing permanent fire fighters with 'flexible' or 'scratch' crews increases risk unacceptably for the reasons given in response to Proposal 2, above.

11. Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements at the 5 ESFRS fire stations listed above, if the crewing arrangements are changed, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?

I strongly disagree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements, and therefore do not support either of the alternative options proposed.

12. To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?

Tend to agree. More building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety. But these must not come at the expense of front-line services.

13. Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?

The cuts are being proposed because of reductions / uncertainty in Government Grants. Central Government must provide assurances that Fire Service grants will not be reduced, so that the Fire Service can make proper plans for the future without the need to make these dangerous cuts to front-line services.

The policy of cutting front-line services has been shown to be a mistake by the Covid-19 crisis and the inability of the NHS to respond adequately; these proposals must therefore be reconsidered in the light of Covid-19.

14. To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?

Agree. ESFRS offers value for money currently. However, if implemented, these proposals would make such severe cuts in services that ESFRS would no longer offer value for money.

15. In what ways do you think that ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future?

ESFRS should be properly funded by central government.

16. To what extent do you agree/disagree that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate?

Tend to agree.

17. If you have any further comments you would like to make about any of the proposals in the consultation, please write below.



# Trade Union responses





19<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Mark O'Brien DCFO  
ESFRS HQ  
Malling House  
Church lane  
Lewes

## FOA Response to ESFRS IRMP Proposals

Dear Mark

I am writing to you on behalf of FOA to provide a consultation response on the current ESFRS IRMP proposals. As always FOA will seek to support a way forward in a positive and constructive manner, and to ensure that our members are fully engaged in consultation. There appears to be understated communication within the proposals these being the proportionality of balance across areas that are financially driven, demand driven or risk driven.

It is clear that the Service wishes to re-allocate resources to match risk and demand for Prevention, Protection and Response activities which is seen as a considered and sensible approach that is broadly supported. FOA do however seek assurances from ESFRS that any efficiency savings that are realised as part of these proposals are completely reinvested into the Service and these are recorded and communicated in a transparent format for all stakeholder to be reassured.

Although the broad principle is supported you will understand there are some areas of concern from our members that we would wish to raise at this early juncture.

The approach to data gathering to identify trends and station risk profiling is sound and shows a promising and welcome approach to the planning of resources. That said, there is significant cause for concern across our membership, that being we believe ESFRS has seen a marked change to demand in the last 18 months. For example, Newhaven Fire Station has been identified via the IRMP process to have an average of 333 incidents per year. In 2019, Newhaven were mobilised on 712 occasions (this does however include stand-by at other stations) and has already exceeded 300 calls this year. Whilst we understand the research that has been carried out utilised 9 years of data, it did in fact stop in 2018 and FOA would recommend the use of the latest and most recent call data to be included and taken into consideration for future planning.

The seven areas of change.

The ambition of the Operational Resilience Plan for 18 immediate response appliances to be available is clearly directly linked to the changes to the current Day-Crewed stations and the future robustness of cover provided by On-Call Firefighters. FOA concern is that we would wish to see the Service demonstrate robustness, recruitment strategy and retention strategy of the On-Call duty system, before any Day Crew station could be considered to move towards a Day-Only Duty System.

The changes to the Day Crew stations and removal of the second appliances also raises cause for concern. Although there are some recognisable benefits of a Day Only Duty System (DODS), the fact that a firefighter will not be required to live in the area and it may

be more family friendly which in turn may encourage recruitment of under-represented groups in our communities, the impact on firefighter safety and operational response to reasonably foreseeable incidents could well outweigh the benefits of DODS. In particular the impact of routine planned crewing 4 firefighters on an appliance and the dynamic pressures associated by these restrictions raise concerns to the adoption of more frequent rapid deployment procedures and therefore reduced safe systems of work for life threatening calls, this whilst waiting for a second appliance to arrive from further afield are likely to be critical to the proposals.

It is the considered view of FOA that the proposed DODS will impact on the availability of specialist appliances at nights and weekends. In particular those requiring enhanced level of training and qualification such as the Technical Rescue unit and the Rope Rescue unit as, in our collective experience as officers in this Service, it is highly unlikely the On-Call colleagues will have the availability and capacity with primary employment demands as well as their secondary FRS contractual demands to train and provide these current response services. Although it can be said that assurance is there with Kent FRS having a USAR team and West Sussex FRS having Technical Rescue, ESFRS cannot base its own IRMP on other Services provision. This would then see a reduction in ESFRS specialist response and weaken our Service provision. This might be acceptable if a wider tripartite agreement were made to combine the collective resources and specialist provision across West Sussex, Surrey and East Sussex.

Currently there are 14 Wholetime appliances available, 6 second appliances on Day Crewed stations and 12 On Call stations of which four (Rye, Hailsham, Heathfield & Seaford) are clearly critical for Response Services. Surely if the Services' management of On-Call contracts, recruitment and retention processes were more robust, which in turn would provide adequate cover on the current Day Crew Stations alone, sufficient cover will be available. Therefore the reason to change the Day Crew duty system or remove the second appliances is questionable and the focus would be to improve the recruitment of on call staff which has been long proven as a more efficient system

The changes to the resources in Hastings has been a long standing issue and subject to previous review and clearly needs addressing to reduce the risk in the area. The previous attempt to move the wholetime appliance from the Ridge to Bohemia Road was not supported despite the risk data providing the evidence, it was in fact not favourable and took significant political support to influence the outcome rather than being a purely operational matter.

It is difficult to understand why your proposal support the reduction to a Day crewed model which would not only be unique across the service under the changes proposed to DODS, it would be unique and reliant on wholetime staff only and no on call which is not a proven system within ESFRS and may have a detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of the firefighters at that single location without additional support. It would suggest that your decision behind this proposal is based on the rationale of financial savings to release posts rather than focus on creating a safe and workable solution for Hastings. Perhaps there is potential to review the wider Hastings/Rother area to provide a more balanced response model. We also see a potential concern with the 4i dynamic mobilising system that will in essence be mobilising the Bohemia Road appliances away from the risk areas to support calls in the north and western regions of the town during the evenings when DC staff would be at home. We would like to see further analysis and information that has led to you proposing this stand-alone system.

The provision of Aerial Appliances is currently adequate and the proposal to dual crew appliances and aerials at Hastings and Eastbourne is a difficult one. It is appreciated that many Services have moved to this model, however that may be due to the demographical

and geographical locations of other resources in which ESFRS faces challenges. It is the professional opinion of many past Chief Officers in this Service that the crewing of the aerial appliances should remain dedicated and that should not be ignored.

The reversal of previous IRMP decisions in relation to smaller appliances is supported, however a review of different types of appliances, in particular on day crew stations may well be a step forward to address the station risk profiles.

The proposed changes to the shift system should be supported if efficiencies are identified that are directly reinvested into Prevention and Protection services as long as crewing and training are fully supported. There are reservations around the proposal of a 'crewing pool' due to training, inclusivity, welfare provision and lone working, as you would expect FOA would request a full risk and equality impact assessment of the proposal.

This IRMP is a massive undertaking and FOA recognise the hard work that has been completed by those managers involved, however the consultation process has been hindered by current circumstances and has made consultation difficult at best. FOA do not feel that this has enabled constructive debate and alternative proposals to be put forward. A delay or an improved engagement process that involved those who have been instrumental in the design and development of the proposals would be more helpful for all stakeholders to be advised, informed and engaged with so that the Service could reach a satisfactory outcome via a meaningful consultation process and a final set of refined plans the FOA could whole heartedly seek to support.

In conclusion, the new principles of design around the ORR within the IRMP process is supported however some of the current proposals remain underdeveloped or fully understood to enable agreement.

FOA suggest the following:

1. Provide an effective engagement process to collectively seek stakeholder alternative solutions to the difficulties facing East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.
2. Produce an IRMP that looks at Response Services which are focussed on individual station and area specific aligned to the station risk profile as opposed to a blanket approach of removing second appliances.
3. Improve On-Call availability by better contract, recruitment and retention management to assure the future viability of on call system to enable change proposals
4. Ensure any efficiencies identified are reinvested and show a transparent, auditable transfer of resources into Prevention, Protection and Response services, if financial savings are required, then the Service wide expenditure review should be undertaken. This would include the exploration of resilient and robust collaborative working arrangements with other Blue light Services, partners and agencies, seeking to secure funding for such arrangements to allow an 'invest to save' approach for the Service.

I look forward to our next consultation meeting to discuss these matters further.

Yours Faithfully

Tony McCord



## Fire & Rescue Services Association (FRSA) Response

Dear Fire Authority and SLT,

Please see the fire Rescue Services Association (FRSA) Response to the IRMP 2020-2025

FRSA is open to change and improvement and will work with the service to find better ways of working but while ESFRS has separate meeting for Consultation and Negotiation with Unions (FBU) it is hard to believe ESFRS is being open and honest with all members of its staff.

There are a number of areas in which ESFRS have failed their On-call firefighters.

There has been a lack of recruitment from the community of East Sussex Brighton & Hove to wholetime and On-call positions, which has forced on-call firefighters to leave the service and join other services.

ESFRS has chosen to use Fixed term contracts to fill Wholetime shortfalls, which has had a devastating effect on On-call stations and appliances and, again, has forced On-call firefighters to leave the service. It has also had a devastating effect on firefighters carrying out fixed term contracts, as they have been used and then dropped when not needed. Again, this has caused a number of them to leave the service.

ESFRS has chosen to use migration during recruitment, which has also reduced On-call firefighters, as a large number leave the On-call once wholetime.

ESFRS has chosen to allow firefighters to move to day-crewed stations in their final year, which has resulted in On-call firefighters leaving the service, as a consequence of these firefighters taking spaces.

ESFRS has chosen to remove the 6th seat on fire appliances, which has made On-call firefighters leave.

Your service has, for too long, been held hostage by the FBU (Fire Brigade Union) and managers need to manage without fear of the FBU.

Your service has let wholetime firefighters take up On-call contracts and also take up Watch Manger & Crew Manager positions at these station without any processes. This has caused On-call firefighter to leave.

### Proposal 1

Operational Resilience Plan

You want Introduce new contractual arrangements for on-call firefighters to enhance their availability

What are these new contracts? No one knows.

We have been told the service is looking at Humberside FRS and Surrey FRS. How can you say this when you don't even know what the contracts look like? Just paying someone more money does not mean they can cover the hours needed. The hours required have been a problem for years and years, because On-call firefighters have to work and spend time with their family during the hours you want them to be available. Even in large numbers, it cannot be achieved. This has been proven over a number of years.

### Proposal 2 Day-crewed Stations

We are proposing to change staff contracts

FRSA is against the change to Day-crewed stations.

- On-call firefighters cannot crew appliances nights and weekends alone.
- On-call firefighters cannot safely be trained on all appliances on these stations, as proven in the Home Office report.
- Longer response times to any resident or business at weekends and some hours during the week is a backward step in serving our community.
- Due to the lack of people wanting to join the on-call service, a number of stations have increased the areas in which On-call staff can live, so the statement that, "Firefighters will live within 5 mins..." is not correct.
- Having wholtime firefighters at Day-crewed stations 24/7 is essential for ensuring all appliances have the correctly trained and available staff when required, when other On-call stations bordering their area are not available.
- "...May take slightly longer in a fire or any emergency..." is utterly unacceptable.

### Proposal 3

#### Remove Second Fire engines & Maxi-Cabs

Due to the reasons we have stated in our these 2nd fire engines have not been available.

Maxi Cabs have not been Maxi cabs for years,

### Proposal 4

#### Hastings

We do not agree with these proposed changes.

You already have two fire engines in Hastings (Ridge & Hastings), 24/7, with an aerial ladder platform 24/7. We do not see the need to change it.

Making the Ridge Day-crewed in line with other Day-crewed stations does not make sense, as you have already said you want to change them?????

By changing the Ridge too day-crewed it will decrease the support to other stations and its own community

### Proposal 5

#### Aerial ladder Platforms

A dedicated crew must be maintained as outside London we have the most risk regarding high rise building and the increase in NHS and other incidents where the platform is needed is increasing. If it proved its needed in Brighton and you want to keep it the same way as now. Then why not Hastings and Eastbourne.

#### Crowborough

In the Proposals swift water rescue has been removed from Crowborough. while we think the water rescue team could be removed from Crowborough but a requirement of Swift water rescue trained staff should be maintain at this station due to the risks to staff while carrying out animal rescue in or around water.

We also believe that a swift water rescue team should still be available in East Sussex B&H due to the future flooding risks and firefighter safety if your asking staff to work in water you need to be able to rescue them if needed and we feel it would be best based at Lewes & Battle on the proposed TRU & RRV

### Battle

In the proposals we also see that the Rope Rescue Vehicle from Battle has been removed. The rope rescue team is one team based over two stations NOT two teams. While we agree the team could reduce too one 4x4 vehicle we do not agree to the rope rescue team reducing to half a team as it has been proven time and time again rope rescue must be based over two stations Battle & Bexhill. If the 4x4 is to go the rope rescue equipment needs to be on the proposed RRV at battle. This is due the increased number of NHS incidents where rope rescue and TRU/RRV has be needed together.

### Wadhurst

4X4 Vehicle has been removed in the proposals. I'm sure we don't have to remind you of resent incidents on the Forrest this vehicle is needed at Wadhurst.

## **Proposal 6**

### Demand Management

- Automatic fire alarms
- Lift rescues
- Birds in netting

These incidents should be attended as you never know when these incidents can become life risks. But ESFRS should start charging like other fire services

## **Proposal 7**

### Changes to Crewing Model

Whatever the crewing Wholetime firefighters need to be available 24/7 at all Shift Stations and Day-Crewed Stations.

We strongly disagree with wholetime weekday daytime only at day crewed stations for the reasons above.

The fire Rescue Services Association committee  
East Sussex B&H





Joseph Weir Regional Secretary  
South East Region  
Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire,  
Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey, West Sussex.  
5 Ruskin Road, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 5HA  
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05 May 2020

Dear Cllr Dowling

### **Proposed Fire and Rescue Service Cuts: Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) East Sussex**

I write in relation to the current East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) that you are being asked to consider.

The proposals contained within the IRMP will, if approved, result in:

- A cut of 10 fire engines across East Sussex
- A cut to crews for aerial ladder capability
- A cut of up to 30 Wholetime firefighter posts and up to 60 Retained firefighter posts
- The downgrading of The Ridge Fire Station in Hastings
- A reduced response from Bexhill, Battle, Newhaven, Uckfield, Crowborough and Lewes
- The removal of the Swift Water Rescue Team with no immediate replacement
- Changing the response to automatic fire alarm calls

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) are calling for an immediate halt to the proposed cuts to East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) or at the very least a moratorium on the proposed cuts which would consequentially require a suspension of the current IRMP. The call for a halt to the cuts to ESFRS has become more urgent in light of the current Covid-19 crisis.

The Covid-19 crisis has proven beyond any doubt something that all those working within the fire and rescue service, either on the front line or politically, have always known which is the value of the emergency services at a time of local and national crisis.

As I am sure you are aware firefighters have stepped forward to support and supplement the government's national response to Covid-19 by undertaking additional Covid-19 related specific duties, these extra duties are undertaken in addition to a firefighter's day to day roles and responsibilities.

Nationally, and locally, firefighters are undertaking a whole host of extra work including:

- Ambulance Service assistance: Ambulance Driving and Patient/Ambulance personnel support



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- Vulnerable persons – delivery of essential items
- COVID-19 – Mass casualty (Movement of bodies)
- Face Fitting for masks to be used by NHS and clinical care staff working with Covid-19 patients
- Delivery of PPE and other medical supplies to NHS and care facilities
- Assisting in taking samples for Covid-19 antigen testing
- Driving ambulance transport not on blue-lights to outpatient appointments or to receive urgent care
- Driver instruction by FRS driver trainers: training for non-FRS personnel to drive ambulances
- The assembly of single use face shields for the NHS and care work front line staff
- Packing/Repacking food supplies for vulnerable people
- Known or suspected Covid-19 Patients: transfer to and from Nightingale hospitals under emergency response (blue light) or through non-emergency patient transfer (not on blue lights)
- Non-Covid-19 Patients: Transfer to and from Nightingale hospitals under emergency response (blue light) or through non-emergency patient transfer (not on blue lights) – this includes recovering and recuperating patients no longer infected with Covid 19.

It simply cannot be the case that firefighters are rewarded for their dedication, commitment and desire to help their local communities, when stepping forward and voluntarily undertaking the additional responsibilities above in response to the national call for Covid-19 assistance, to be thanked for this with cuts to their jobs and by cuts to the ESFRS emergency response provision.

In addition, there is near-universal acknowledgement (formal or informal) that preparedness for pandemic human disease and other risk identified on the national risk register since 2008 in the fire service and in other parts of the public sector has been less than sufficient. It would therefore not be logical to introduce reductions in fire service cover before any non-pressurised assessment of the gaps in capability are undertaken.

There are also further additional workloads arising post-Grenfell coupled with a backlog of that work resulting from the lockdown.

At this point nobody knows the long-term effects or consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic or indeed the government's future emergency response planning proposals, therefore any decision resulting in cuts to ESFRS should be halted.



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In summary, it cannot be denied that the Covid-19 crisis will significantly change future national and local emergency response planning. Until the crisis is over it would be unwise to make any decision in relation to the reduction of the current fire cover provision to the communities of East Sussex.

The Fire Brigades Union strongly urge you to support our call for an immediate halt to any further cuts or at the very least support our call for a moratorium on cuts until the national picture on funding (post Covid-19) becomes clearer.

I hope that you are able to discuss this letter with your political and fire service colleagues. If you require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

*JW*



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# The Fire Brigades Union response to *'Planning for a Safer Future' - Public Consultation*

## **1. Forward**

This is the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) response to the public consultation exercise titled 'Planning for a Safer Future', that commenced on 24th April 2020.

It must not be assumed by East Sussex Fire Authority (ESFA) to form part of the consultation and negotiation rights set out in *The Pay and Conditions Agreement 2003 and The National Joint Council for local authority fire and rescue services - Scheme of Conditions of Service Sixth Edition (updated 2009)*, known commonly as '*The Grey Book*'.

East Sussex Fire Authority has embarked on public consultation. Public consultation has been tested in law, which has established fundamental propositions which are known as the '*Gunning Principles*'. The '*Gunning Principles*' are the founding legal principles applicable to public consultation in the UK. They were first laid down in 1985 by Mr Stephen Sedley QC and have stood the test of time in successive court judgements, making them applicable to all public consultations that take place in the UK.

The FBU are of the opinion that ESFA consultation process fails these principles due to the following facts;

- The reasons for the proposals are not true. The proposals state they are '*centered on public and firefighter safety which aim to deliver our service in a more flexible and efficient way*'. The true reason for the proposals



however is cost driven. ESFA state '***we have modelled a range of scenarios and these suggest that we may need to make new savings of between £0.7m and £3.6m by 2024/25***'. This cost driven IRMP is further evidenced by statements such as '***The changes can be made over the next five years without the need for compulsory redundancies, because of natural turnover and retirements.***' This makes it clear that there is an intention to reduce the number of firefighters across the County.

- Those being consulted with are not supplied with sufficient explanation regarding the consequences of the proposals to allow intelligent consideration and response. Statements such as '***We may take slightly longer to attend on evenings and weekends***' and '***this proposal will therefore have a negligible impact***' does not give suitable detail for members of the public to make an informed decision or allow intelligent consideration.

Not only have ESFA failed to satisfy the above principles, they have also taken the decision to publicly consult on proposals during the Covid-19 health crisis. The report dated 23rd April 2020 titled Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020 – 2025 stated '***It is the view of the Chief Fire Officer that, notwithstanding the current situation, public and stakeholder consultation should continue.***'

The FBU are fully aware that there is a legal requirement to have in place a suitable and sufficient IRMP, however the FBU do not hold the opinion that this legal requirement forces the ESFA to conduct the public consultation during the Covid-19 pandemic. The FBU believes it is vital that important service decisions which have public and firefighter safety implications are open to proper public scrutiny. It is not appropriate for ESFA, as recommended by the Chief Fire Officer, to push through the process without the opportunity for maximum engagement and external scrutiny.

On the 23rd April 2020, the Secretary of State, Rt Hn James Brokenshire MP, wrote to all Chief Fire Officers, FRA Chairs as well as the National Fire Chiefs Council stating that '***we wanted to make clear that, if a service's annual assurance statement and/or IRMP are due to be prepared and published in the coming months, we***



*understand there may be a delay in the publication during the current circumstances*'. (See Appendix A)

The statement by the Secretary of State appears to draw into question the narrative that ESFA must consult during the Covid-19 pandemic. Senior Officers and Fire Authority members have often quoted the false narrative stating to the public '***duties set out in the national framework for the FRA have NOT been revoked nationally due to the current crisis and that the current IRMP cannot be extended nor reviewed.***'

Due to the evidence presented above it would appear there are suitable grounds to challenge the legality and legitimacy of the public consultation process.

## **2. FBU Response to IRMP Proposals**

### **Proposal 1 - Operational Response Review**

The FBU support a proposal to work to increase the number of appliances that are guaranteed to be available. However, the proposal states that '***our new Operational Resilience Plan (ORP) will plan for: 18 immediate-response fire engines***' this is misleading for the public. Only an appliance crewed by on-duty wholetime firefighters guarantees an immediate response. Alerting on-call firefighters is not deemed as an immediate response, ESFRS current modelling attributes a 5 minute delay to an on-call response when modelled against on-duty wholetime response. The immediate response under the proposal therefore remains the same under this proposal during weekdays, but it reduces significantly at weekends. Currently, all day-crewed stations are crewed at the weekend with wholetime firefighters, the IRMP proposes to remove this cover at the weekends and replace it with firefighters who are on-call, and therefore on a 5 minute delay for response.

Improving appliance availability must seek to improve availability no matter the time or day of the week. The data produced by ESFRS does not support a reduction in cover



or an increase to response times at night time and over the weekend. ESFRS data demonstrates that the day of the week has little bearing on the number of incidents occurring in these station areas – Thursdays are quietest with 237 incidents, and Saturdays are busiest with 256 incidents; Sundays 240; Mondays and Fridays 243; and Tuesdays and Wednesdays 249. The data proves that incidents are on average marginally more frequent on the weekend at 248. This does not support the proposal to reduce fire cover and increase response times at the weekend. This is further emphasised when looking at the data on critical incidents by day of the week in these areas – over the year, day crewed stations attended 17 critical incidents per day on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. This drops slightly to 15 on Fridays and 16 on Saturdays, before increasing to 20 critical incidents on Sundays. So incidents are likely to be more frequent on the weekend, and proportionally more of those incidents are likely to be critical in nature. Unfortunately, the Operational Response Review (ORR) findings report that over the last 3 years there have been an increase in the number of critical incidents per year, and that the proportion of incidents per year that have been critical has been rising for the last 5 years. Overall, 53% of critical incidents occurred within whole-time shift areas, 26% in day-crewed station areas and 21% in on-call station areas. A further indicator that reducing cover and increasing response times in the evenings and weekends in day crewed areas will present more risk to the public.

The data also shows that the number of incidents attended actually tends to increase throughout the day, peaking between 5pm and 8pm. It is also noticeable that ESFRS attend a similar number of incidents around 10am in the morning and around 10pm at night. These patterns have remained consistent over the period examined for the data set (2009/10 to 2017/18). It is also significant to note that over the nine years of data used, there was a greater reduction of incidents during the daytime compared to the night time. This suggests that as an organisation we do not have a proven or successful strategy for reducing incidents at night and that we will continue to receive a similar, or higher (as incidents overall are increasing), number of calls at night time.



### **FBU Recommendations on Proposal 1**

- **Support work to increase appliance availability.**
- **Improving appliance availability must seek to improve availability no matter the time or day of the week.**

### **Proposal 2 - Changes to Day Crewed Stations**

As evidenced as part of the response to Proposal 1 (above) changing the crewing model for day crewed stations to a day only Monday to Friday model will significantly impact public safety at the weekends and evenings.

As detailed in Proposal 1 response, the data produced by ESFRS does not support a reduction in cover or an increase to response times at night time and over the weekend. ESFRS data demonstrates that the day of the week has little bearing on the number of incidents occurring in these station areas.

The FBU have also concluded due to available modelling that appliances located at Brighton, Hove, Roedean, Eastbourne and Hastings are already travelling further to incidents at night than in the past, which in turn reduces fire cover available in our highest risk areas. Day crewed primary appliances are also travelling further to incidents in the daytime. If these this proposal is introduced the impact on shift stations at the weekend will be very significant. Not only will these appliances start travelling into day crewed areas as there will be no immediate response from station, modelling shows these shift appliances will also provide more cover to the neighbouring on-call areas currently being picked up by the day crewed stations.

This will have significant impacts on not only the day crewed and on-call station communities, but also the highest risk areas in the Towns and Cities.



### **FBU Recommendations on Proposal 2**

- **Reject proposals 2A and 2B due to negative impact on fire cover at weekends and evenings.**
- **Maintain Day Crewed duty system as supported by ESFRS own data.**

### **Proposal 3 - Change the Number of Fire Stations that have Two Appliances**

This proposal seeks to impact; Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield; along with the three “maxi-cab” stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst. The three ‘maxi-cab’ stations currently have two appliance status and were due to have second appliances reinstated once the ‘maxi-cab’ appliances reached end of life. This is evidenced in SLT minutes from 2018. (See appendix B).

ESFRS state that the public would still have a 24/7 response from these stations but it would mean that, if a second fire engine was required at an incident, it would come from a different fire station. This will have a negative impact on both public and firefighter safety. For firefighters work to agreed safe systems of work that require a certain number of firefighters to be in attendance at an incident before they can make rescues or extinguish fire.

A single occupancy dwelling fire with a casualty in need of rescue requires a minimum of 10 firefighters to enable a safe system of work to be implemented. The numbers of firefighters required are calculated through a ‘task analysis’ of roles. (See appendix C).

Removing the second appliances from these stations would severely hamper firefighters ability to make rescues, extinguish fires and save lives at the most life critical incidents.

The data suggests that availability of some of the second appliances at these stations is low. What the data fails to show are the historic reasons why, therefore only giving part of the picture. Successive Senior Management teams within ESFRS have failed to recruit and retain on-call firefighters, they have also taken policy decisions that have been detrimental to on-call availability such over utilisation of fixed term contracts and



failing to run wholetime recruitment processes. But rather choosing to run far cheaper migration/transfer process from on-call to wholetime duty systems. These decisions have severely impacted on-call availability at these stations and across the Service. It is these decisions that have led to the low availability. The low availability is a product of poor and inadequate planning at a Senior Management level. The historic decisions need to be reviewed rather than appliances removed.

These stations often provide resilience when larger incidents occur, they also provide resilience to the busier Towns and City when the primary appliance is mobilised into those areas. For example a high rise incident requires a minimum of 6 fire appliances and an aerial appliance in the initial stages to enable a safe system of work. These resources are mobilised from surrounding areas, as stations within Hastings and the City (majority of high-rise risk) do not have enough fire appliances to deal with high-rise incidents. Removing these second appliances would then leave the local communities without any fire cover for potentially, long periods of time.

Government Risk Data from a post Grenfell project shows that ESFRS has the highest number of buildings over 18m in the South of England outside of London.

East Sussex has approximately 358 buildings over 18m and ranks 5th highest in England for numbers of buildings of this type. East Sussex risk profile from buildings over 18m is more akin to a metropolitan service. This has been reflected in the recent funding grant of £510,235.71 made up of funding from Fire Protection Board Funding and Protection Uplift Funding. (See appendix D).

### **FBU Recommendations on Proposal 3**

- **Seek to review and address historic policy decision and planning failures.**
- **Seek to recruit and retain on-call firefighters to improve availability at these stations.**
- **Cease use of fixed term contracts to fill gaps in wholetime deficiencies.**
- **Commit to running external wholetime recruitment processes.**
- **Use funding to improve building safety and protecting in the built environment across the County for the life cycle of the proposed IRMP.**



#### **Proposal 4 - Changes to Hastings Fire Stations**

This proposal states that ESFRS are proposing to change the way we crew stations in Hastings and introduce an additional fire engine – The FBU consider this a false narrative, as the statement and information provided does not suitably inform those being consulted as to the negative impacts to the community.

Both Bohemia Road and The Ridge Community Fire Stations currently each have one fire engine on an immediate 24-hour response. Bohemia Road also has one Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) available 24-hours a day on immediate response that serves the whole of East Sussex and beyond.

ESFRS data shows that **Hastings as an area has the highest number of life risk fire incidents in the County**. Incident data also shows the ALP at Bohemia Road is the most utilised ALP in East Sussex. Hastings, as a town has the highest child poverty rate in the South East\* and in 2018 Government data showed that it has the eighth highest rate (per 100,000 of population) of deaths relating to drugs in England and Wales. Hastings now outranks the City of Brighton & Hove as the drug death capital of East Sussex. As evidenced above, Hastings is a high risk area due to the high levels of vulnerability of residents and social deprivation, any reduction in fire cover in the opinion of the FBU will cost lives.

#### ***ESFRS state they want to:***

- ***Introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge in Hastings, which would maintain a 24/7 response through a different crewing arrangement.***
- ***Introduce a second (additional) fire engine at Bohemia Road which will also provide an immediate 24/7 response***
- ***Change the crewing of the “aerial ladder platform” (high-reach vehicle) at Bohemia Road to a shared crewing model.***

The introduction of a day-crewed system at The Ridge Fire Station will result in a reduced response at night (between the hours of 1830-0830). This reduced/delayed (ESFRS mobilising system attributes a five minute delay for day crewed response



between 18.30-08.30) will impact those who live in the north and eastern areas of the town and the more rural areas that The Ridge Fire Station currently responds to (Guestling, Fairlight, Pett, Icklesham as examples). At present, The Ridge also provides a vital immediate response 24 hours a day to other neighbouring Fire Stations – Bohemia Road, Broad Oak and Rye.

Broad Oak and Rye are 'On-Call' stations which therefore are not immediate response, but have a 5 minute mobilisation delay attributed to them.

With the Ridge being available for immediate response 24 hours a day mitigates the impact of the on-call response in those rural areas and ensures suitable speed and weight of resources to enable implementation of safe systems of work for life critical incidents. (See appendix C for task analysis for required numbers of firefighters for single occupancy dwelling fire with a casualty in need of rescue).

The FBU supports the proposed addition of a second fire appliance at Bohemia Road Fire Station. This proposal is supported by the risk data of the area.

This proposal is **NOT** supported by the FBU should it be at the detriment of a primary crewed, immediately available Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP).

The shared crewing model does **NOT** guarantee the availability of the ALP.

The proposal seeks to share crew the ALP with the second appliance at Bohemia Road, should that second appliance be committed to an operational incident, the ALP will be unavailable for operational response. This is due to the fact that the shared crewing model requires firefighters to crew **EITHER** the second fire engine **OR** the Aerial Ladder Platform.

The FBU has carried out research into the impacts of the shared crewing proposal. The FBU can confirm the following;



- ***ESFRS have confirmed that the proposed second appliance at Bohemia Road (76P2) would form part of the predetermined attendance (PDA) for all two pump calls in the surrounding areas - Hastings, St Leonards, Ore, Battle, Bexhill.***
- ***ESFRS mobilising system 4i mobilises on the nearest and quickest concept – the proposed two appliances at Bohemia Road (76P1, 76P2) would therefore likely be mobilised to areas at night that The Ridge Fire Station would have historically covered. It is also likely, that the s***
- ***The proposed second fire engine at Bohemia Road (76P2) would be utilised to cover deficiencies at other stations (standby moves) to maintain the 18 appliances proposed by ESFRS in the IRMP.***
- ***Modelling for the proposed second appliance at Bohemia Road shows that it is predicted to attend over 300 more incidents. This would see incidents attended increase from approximately 1300 to 1600 per annum, an increase of about 23%.***

It is clearly apparent that the proposal of having a second appliance that is 'shared crewed' with the Aerial Ladder Platform will have a very significant negative impact for the residents in Hastings and neighbouring Towns and villages. A second fire appliance at Bohemia Road on a shared crewing model would result in a severe lack of availability of the ALP. This would result in a very dangerous game of luck for residents as to whether or not the ALP would be available to rescue them should they be in need.

The ALP at Hastings does not only serve the Town of Hastings, but also provides aerial cover to the whole of the east of the County. The nearest second primary crewed Aerial Ladder Platform is at Preston Circus Fire Station in Brighton.

The FBU believe, that without a primary crewed immediate response Aerial Ladder Platform available at Hastings – several recent high-profile incidents would have had a very different outcome.



As previously stated in this response, East Sussex has more high-rise properties than anywhere else in the South of England outside of London. The risk profile of East Sussex evidences the requirement for a primary crewed ALP at Hastings.

The Aerial Ladder platform is not only vital in fire scenarios. Due to the increased demand on the Fire and Rescue Service to provide assistance to the ambulance service, where extrication is required in tall buildings and high-rise properties, the ALP has recently (within last 12 months) been added to the predetermined attendance for all 'assistance to paramedic calls' where a casualty is located above the ground floor and who is in need of removal to hospital. The ALP enables a safe system of work to be put in place that protects both the casualty and also firefighters carrying out the extrication. Prior to the addition of the ALP to the predetermined attendance to 'assistant to paramedic' calls ESFRS reported a large increase in injuries to firefighters undertaking this new work. These injuries have now reduced due to the utilisation of the ALP.

UK Fire Services that have historically 'share crewed' ALP's have learnt the lessons from the Grenfell disaster 3 years ago and are seeking to reverse the 'shared crewed' model in favour of 'primary crewing' ALP's.

#### **FBU Recommendations on Proposal 4**

- **Additional second appliance at Bohemia Road would be supported if Aerial Ladder Platform remains 'Primary Crewed'**
- **Commit to Primary Crewing ALP at Bohemia Road**



## **Proposal 5 – Changes to providing and crewing specialist vehicles including aerial appliances**

### **Proposal 5 -Aerial Appliance Response**

The FBU do not support the proposed shared crewing model for Aerial Ladder Platforms. The shared crewing model does **NOT** guarantee the availability of an ALP.

The reality of shared crewing of ALP's is that the crew are not available to crew the appliance if they are committed to an operational incident. They would not be available to crew the ALP if they are undertaking community safety work such as prevention and protection work due to them crewing the fire appliance to undertake such work. This is due to the fact that the shared crewing model requires firefighters to crew **EITHER** the second fire engine **OR** the Aerial Ladder Platform.

The FBU has carried out research into the impacts of the shared crewing proposal in relation to shared crewing the ALP in the Hastings area. The FBU can confirm the following;

- ESFRS have confirmed that the proposed second appliance at Bohemia Road (76P2) would form part of the predetermined attendance (PDA) for all two pump calls in the surrounding areas - Hastings, St Leonards, Ore, Battle, Bexhill.
- ESFRS mobilising system 4i mobilises on the nearest and quickest concept – the proposed two appliances at Bohemia Road (76P1, 76P2) would therefore likely be mobilised to areas at night that The Ridge Fire Station, the second Fire engines at both Bexhill and Battle Fire Stations would have historically covered.
- The proposed second fire engine at Bohemia Road (76P2) would be utilised to cover deficiencies at other stations (standby moves) to maintain the 18 appliances proposed by ESFRS in the IRMP.
- Modelling for the proposed second appliance at Bohemia Road shows that it is predicted to attend over 300 more incidents. This would see incidents attended increase from 1300 to 1600 per annum, an increase of about 23%.



It is clearly apparent that the proposal of having a second appliance that is 'shared crewed' with the Aerial Ladder Platform will have a very significant negative impact for the residents in Hastings and neighbouring Towns and villages. A second fire appliance at Bohemia Road on a shared crewing model would result in a severe lack of availability of the ALP.

Shared crewing of ALP's results in the public being at the mercy of luck as to whether or not the ALP would be available to rescue them should they be in need.

The ALP's provide aerial cover to the whole of the County.

The FBU believes that without a primary crewed immediate response Aerial Ladder Platforms then several high-profile incidents would have had a very different outcome in recent years.

As previously stated in this response, East Sussex has more high-rise properties than anywhere else in the South of England outside of London. The risk profile of East Sussex evidences the requirement for a primary crewed ALP at Hastings.

The Aerial Ladder platform is not only vital in fire scenarios. Due to the increased demand on the Fire and Rescue Service to provide assistance to the ambulance service, where extrication is required in tall buildings and high-rise properties, the ALP has recently (within last 12 months) been added to the predetermined attendance for all '**assistance to paramedic calls**' where a casualty is located above the ground floor and who is in need of removal to hospital. The ALP enables a safe system of work to be put in place that protects both the casualty and also firefighters carrying out the extrication. Prior to the addition of the ALP to the predetermined attendance to 'assistant to paramedic' calls ESFRS reported a large increase in injuries to firefighters undertaking this new work. These injuries have now reduced due to the utilisation of the ALP.

UK Fire Services that have historically 'share crewed' ALP's have learnt the lessons from the Grenfell disaster 3 years ago and are seeking to reverse the 'shared crewed' model in favour of 'primary crewing' ALP's.



## **FBU Recommendations on Proposal 5 - Aerial Appliances**

- **Maintain Primary Crewed Aerial Ladder Platforms for public and firefighter safety.**

### **Proposal 5 - Specialist Vehicle Response**

The FBU are concerned that ESFRS have chosen to consult the public on specialist vehicles including location, numbers and type of both vehicles and teams without suitably assessing all the impacts that may occur from changes to such vehicles and crews.

The IRMP states '***We will use our risk profile within this five-year period to identify the most appropriate equipment and vehicle(s) we need to address the risk.***'

The above statement clearly shows a lack of planning prior to the consultation process and is requesting the public give opinion in the lack of any data or planning assumptions. The Service failed to make any recommendations or back up the proposal with incident data. The public are unable to make an informed decision in relation to location, numbers and type of vehicles and teams.

The FBU are of the opinion that this proposal should not be part of the IRMP. ESFRS have stated that '***more work needs to be done in relations to specialist vehicles and teams***'.

The FBU are however deeply concerned, that despite not informing the public, that the current 4x4 provision within East Sussex shall be reduced from having 5 off road vehicles to having 4 off road vehicles. Wadhurst Fire Station under this proposal shall cease to have a 4x4 off road capability.

East Sussex have Rope Rescue capabilities and swift water capabilities. However, the future of these teams, vehicles and equipment are not addressed in the proposals. The FBU does note worryingly that the Swift Water Team no longer appears to be part of ESFRS's capabilities in the future. The data that has been referenced to support the narrative that ESFRS does not require a swift water response due to the very low



mobilisation of the team. The data referenced by the report does sit at odd with the data held locally at Crowborough. All mobilisations are logged and recorded for the Swift Water Team. That data shows that the team have been mobilised **114 times** during the period referenced in Operational Response Review. This data clearly shows a need for the Swift Water Team both as a local and national asset.

### **FBU Recommendations on Proposal 5 - Specialist Appliances**

- **Carry out further assessment of impacts on the community before any changes to specialist appliances are suggested.**
- **Seek to address disparity regarding data in the ORR and local data, in relation to specialist appliances.**
- **Maintain 4x4 capability at Wadhurst.**
- **Maintain Swift Water capability within East Sussex.**

### **Proposal 6 - Previous IRMP Decisions**

#### **Proposal 6 (1) - Smaller Fire Appliances**

The FBU long held the opinion that the decision to seek to introduce smaller fire appliances was not backed by evidence. That such an introduction would negatively impact the Services ability to respond and safely deal with emergencies.

The FBU welcome the proposal to reverse or not to continue with this planned introduction. Also, welcomed is the proposal not to move forward with a move to a 3 tier approach to Fire Appliances.

### **FBU Recommendations on Proposal 6 - Smaller Fire Appliances**

- **Support proposal to no longer proceed with introduction of smaller Fire Appliances**



### **Proposal 6 (2) - Demand Management**

The proposal makes the statement that '***We are aiming to manage demand for our services in three operational areas to reduce the number of unnecessary mobilisations which impact on our other work, businesses and commerce. These changes will release capacity into prevention, protection and training.***'

The FBU are of the opinion that the Service have not suitably addressed the risks or the impacts when looking to whether to continue to attend calls relating to Automatic Fire Alarm Activations, Persons Stuck/Trapped in Lifts and Trapped Birds.

The Service appears to ignore the fact that at every attendance, irrespective of incident type or whether an attendance at an Automatic Fire Alarm activation turns out to be a false alarm, there is an opportunity for the Service and its firefighters to interact with the community they serve. ESFRS should be making every contact with the public count. Every time an appliance is mobilised it has the potential to also deliver a fire safety message, to review Site Specific Risk Information for the premises or carry out other fire safety work.

Therefore, we do not view these incident types as a burden on resources but rather as opportunities to carry out engagement work, use equipment in an operational environment, enhance knowledge of the built environment and improve both firefighter and public safety.

### **Proposal 6 (3) - Trapped Birds**

The FBU are of the opinion that should the Service seek to cease attending incidents relating to trapped birds then members of the public or our partner agencies shall put themselves at greater risk by trying to free trapped birds without suitable equipment. These calls could then often become more critical with persons in need of rescue. The Service data shows that these incident types are low in call numbers, but by ceasing to attend the impact to wildlife, public and partner agencies would be severe.



### **FBU Recommendation - Trapped Birds**

- **Continue to attend incidents involving trapped birds.**
- **Utilise these mobilisations to undertake engagement work with responsible persons, partner agencies and public.**
- **Utilise these mobilisations to carry out reviews of SSRI's and carry out community safety work.**
- **Utilise these mobilisations post incident as familiarisation/training to further enhance firefighter knowledge and safety in the built environment.**

### **Proposal 6 (4) - Automatic Fire Alarm Activations**

The FBU do not support the current weight of attendance to Automatic Fire Alarm activations, when the policy was originally brought in by ESFRS the FBU challenged the decision and we continue to not support the decision. For clarity, the FBU are of the opinion that the full PDA (predetermined attendance) should be sent to alarm activations for the potential incident type ie fire.

The FBU obviously supports work that seeks to work with premises to reduce false alarms, however when an emergency response is mobilised then it should be the full incident PDA to enable a safe system of work to be put in place.

### **FBU Recommendation - Automatic Fire Alarm Activations**

- **Continue to attend all Automatic Fire Alarm Activations.**
- **Seek to work with premises which have a high number of activations through engagement work.**
- **Seek to send incident predetermined attendance for incident type ie fire rather than reduce it for AFA activations.**
- **Utilise these mobilisations to undertake engagement work with responsible persons, carry out reviews of SSRI data.**
- **Utilise these mobilisations post incident as familiarisation/training to further enhance firefighter knowledge and safety in the built environment.**



### **Proposal 6 (5) - Lift Releases**

The FBU are of the opinion that the current policy of responding to lift incidents should continue. The current task analysis also appears suitable as there are currently no technological solutions that would allow numbers to be reduced. However, we do acknowledge that work can be done to potentially reduce the numbers of these incident types. That work should include working with premises that have a high number of incidents relating to their lift equipment. However, not attending is not a suitable or safe option.

### **FBU Recommendation - Lift Releases**

- **Continue to attend lift releases.**
- **Utilise these mobilisations to undertake engagement work with responsible persons, carry out reviews of SSRI data.**
- **Utilise these mobilisations post incident as familiarisation/training to further enhance firefighter knowledge and safety in the built environment.**

### **Proposal 7 - Changes to 24/7 Traditional 4 Watch Shift Duty System**

The FBU do not support proposals that seek to introduce a flexible or self-rostering duty system at the 5 wholetime shift fire stations.

The FBU do not agree the proposals shall improve training, reliance on overtime or be deemed as more family friendly than the current shift pattern.

The FBU having consulted with our membership and sectional representatives can state that our members see this proposal as negatively impacting their work life balance. The Women's Section and LGBT+ Section state our members believe that having a regular shift pattern, where leave days are regular and in a progressive manner is more family-friendly than a work pattern where shifts are organised six weeks in advance in a flexible/self-rostering pattern.



A higher proportion of women than men have child care and caring responsibilities. LGBT+ carers can in particular find it difficult to organise culturally appropriate respite care. This proposal would more negatively impact women and LGBT+ carers.

This proposal seeks to remove the Watch based structure at Wholetime Shift Stations. The watch based system is not only more family friendly for those working it, it also provides a far safer team approach at emergency situations. Research into critical incident management and working within emergency situations clearly shows that the team approach whereby those members of the team work and train regularly with each other creates a far safer environment. Creates a quicker and safer decision making process which improves public and firefighter safety. Removing this watch based system would negatively impact both public and firefighter safety. It removes the ability for those in command at the initial stages of an emergency incident to be suitably cognisant of the abilities, strengths and weakness of those they are commanding. That leads to poor decision making, slower decision making, risk aversion and therefore worse outcomes for casualties.

The FBU have been working closely with ESFRS management to enhance training on station and are pleased with the work thus far. All this work has been predicated on the team/watch training model, as it provides the safest and most efficient training mechanism for imparting and retaining knowledge and skills.

The FBU have witnessed the introduction of similar 'self-rostering' duty systems with little success in a few brigades. The FBU has also seen a rise in the use of overtime to maintain operational availability of appliances in Services where these duty systems have been introduced.

Local disputes have arisen out of these changes as they have proven very unpopular with the FBU and their members due to the negative impacts.

Proposal 7B seeks to reduce the number of firefighters in the City, this will lead to more travel between stations increasing the overtime budget. It will also likely need more overtime shifts to be worked by firefighters to ensure appliance availability across the City. This will have a knock on negative impact on Service budgets. This proposal



would reduce the budget in relation to base wages, but increase the overtime budget negating any savings made.

### **FBU Recommendations on Proposal 7**

- **Reject Proposal 7A to ensure current 2,2,4 watch based system across all 24/7 shift stations**
- **Reject Proposal 7B and maintain current establishment strength across the City fire stations.**

### **3. FBU Statement on Equality and Inclusion of IRMP Process and Proposals**

The IRMP Consultation document opens with a statement regarding the service's equality and inclusion commitment. ESFRS ***'strives to achieve equality of access, equality of impact and equality of outcome for the services we provide'*** and that ***this is achieved by staff carrying out 'people impact assessments.'*** The FBU are concerned that the Impact Assessment identifies a potential negative impact under disability and gender. The FBU would expect that the proposals would at the very least have a neutral impact or better still a positive impact especially given the HMICFRS Inspection Report published in December 2019 which found that ***'East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement in promoting the right values and culture'***; that ***'the service requires improvement in ensuring fairness and promoting diversity'***; and that ***'the service needs to ensure activities aimed at diversifying the workforce are effective.'***

The FBU are disappointed that ESFA have chosen to consult on proposals that seek to have a negative impact under disability and gender (staff and public). ESFA own impact assessment has found that the proposals shall have a negative bearing on disabled persons (staff and public), carers of disabled persons, those with neuro-diverse conditions, and female primary carers. Therefore, the FBU would expect ESFA to review any such proposals prior to voting in September 2020 to ensure the impacts are positive for both staff and public.

The HMICFRS Report also found that ***'the extent to which the service looks after its people requires improvement.'*** Given that the people / equality impact



assessment has identified that these IRMP proposals will negatively impact disabled persons, carers of disabled persons and female primary carers, the FBU recommend ESFA apply the '**family test**' to any proposed changes. The test ensures that policy makers recognise and make explicit the potential impacts on family relationships in the process of developing and agreeing new policy. The government states that policy makers should think about family impacts in a similar way to how they consider impacts on equality as required by the Public Sector Equality Duty, considering impacts at each stage of the process.

Prior to approving any changes in shift or duty pattern, the Fire Authority should apply the '**family test**' to the proposed change. The FBU considers, having consulted with our membership, the Women's Section and LGBT+ Section, that having a regular shift pattern, rather than a flexible or self-rostering shift pattern, is more family-friendly.

Any proposal to change duty systems to a flexible or self-rostering style pattern would introduce uncertainty for firefighters around work patterns and work commitments. It is already challenging for operational staff to make child care arrangements due to working both day and night shifts. The same applies to carers. If firefighters are only able to plan with certainty six weeks ahead these challenges would certainly increase. A higher proportion of women than men have child care and caring responsibilities. LGBT+ carers can in particular find it difficult to organise culturally appropriate respite care. The proposed changes to duty systems would potentially compound these issues further.

The HMICFRS stated that "***the service has a workforce planning group, but no workforce plan'. It needs to develop one so that it is clear about its long-term workforce needs.***" Under the Fire & Rescue National Framework for England it is clear that a priority for fire and rescue authorities is to develop and maintain a workforce that is diverse. A fire service should '***continuously improve the diversity of the workforce to ensure it represents the community it serves.***' The requirement to diversify the workforce should form part of the workforce plan when it is developed.



The IRMP Consultation declares that ESFRS has reviewed diversity within our workforce and that we want our workforce to be more reflective of society at all levels in the organisation. The Service acknowledges that having a range of perspectives, cultures and experiences brings a greater understanding to our organisation, which contributes to decision making. ESFRS accepts that we know our workforce does not reflect the communities that we serve in terms of diversity and gender.

These facts are reiterated in the HMICFRS report published in December 2019 which highlighted that whilst 50.9% of the population in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove are female, only 5.6% of ESFRS firefighters are women; and whilst 6.4% of the county's population (11% in Brighton & Hove) identifies as black, Asian and minority ethnic, only 3.3% of ESFRS firefighters identify as BAME. It was disappointing that the HMICFRS did not examine the numbers of firefighters identifying as LGBT+ (a point that has been raised with the Inspectorate). What we do know is that Brighton & Hove has the largest proportion of LGBT+ residents in the UK with around 10% of the population identifying as LGBT+. Yet despite this sizeable population, we know from our service network that only around 3.2 % of ESFRS firefighters identify as LGBT+.

The FBU represents firefighters across all duty systems and ranks, including those who identify as female and LGBT+. Fire Authority members should not seek to introduce duty patterns that will be less attractive to under-represented groups.



### **Closing statement**

Please be assured, our intention as the East Sussex FBU Brigade Officials has always been clear.

We are proactive and supportive in our approach to maintaining positive dialogue with ESFRS. The FBU have been in regular formal consultation with the service since the start of the IRMP and during the public consultation process and will continue to do so.

The FBU have expressed vehemently our desire to work with the service to find alternative proposals that satisfy the concerns raised by our members and the public in whom we all serve.

Whilst we consider the current proposals to not suitably mitigate the risks posed by fire and other emergencies to the public, firefighters and business owners in East Sussex, the FBU have welcomed the Services recent commitment to address our concerns and we await to hear back formally.

Brigade Secretary - Eliot Parry

Brigade Chair - Simon Herbert

Brigade Organiser - Jake Kaye

Ends.



Roy Wilsher, Chair, National Fire Chiefs Council

Cllr Ian Stephens, Chair, Fire Services Management Committee

CC: All Chief Fire Officers

FRA Chairs and PFCCs

BY EMAIL ONLY

23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

### **FURTHER SUPPORT TO FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES DURING COVID-19**

I am writing further to my recent letter supporting the work that is being done nationally to tackle Covid 19 and to outline a number of ways in which Government is seeking to further support local services in this challenging period.

First, I wanted to introduce Lord Stephen Greenhalgh, who has been appointed recently as a joint Minister of State with responsibility for Fire in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Home Office. We are both delighted that our responsibilities cover the fire service. This essential and much-loved public service has a proud record in keeping people of this country safe, never more so than during the current Covid-19 emergency.

We are grateful to all those working in the fire and rescue sector to ensure that essential functions are maintained and that the sector can support partner agencies as we tackle the crisis at hand. We welcome the agreement which NFCC has reached with employers and unions to allow firefighters to provide support to the ambulance service, to coroners and to the vulnerable, and we want to thank fire fighters and staff for their incredible service and the often challenging roles they are stepping up to volunteer for. Our officials are working closely with the National Fire Chiefs Council to ensure that services have everything they need to carry out their critical role and to keep people safe.

We have also asked our officials to identify those areas where we can temporarily reduce burdens on fire and rescue services and fire and rescue authorities, so you are all able to focus on the issue at hand. We have listened carefully to the issues that have been raised, and this letter sets out the measures on which we are currently working.

Requirements regarding FRA meetings

We have worked with MHCLG and legislated so that the requirement for Annual Council meetings, including those for FRAs, to take place has been removed – and that, while essential council meetings should continue, these are able to take place remotely for a temporary period.

### National framework, annual assurance statements and IRMPs

Whilst FRAs must continue to have due regard to the National Framework, we appreciate that fire and rescue services need to focus on maintaining essential services and supporting the wider COVID-19 effort. For this reason, we wanted to make clear that, if a service's annual assurance statement and/or IRMP are due to be prepared and published in the coming months, we understand there may be a delay in the publication during the current circumstances, however any risk could be mitigated by taking such action as you are able to during this period. We should be clear, however, that this does not mean that the Secretary of State would not take intervention action against an FRA for failing to have due regard to the framework during this period.

The Secretary of State is also due to make the biennial report to Parliament in July on the extent to which FRAs are acting in accordance with the national framework. Previously, when preparing this report, we have contacted all FRAs asking for confirmation of compliance. We are confident that we will not need to do that this time, providing that all FRAs have published their previous annual statements of assurance, IRMPs and financial plans, and it is clear that they have been agreed by the FRA or the elected responsible member.

### Personal Protective Equipment

We are working closely with the National Fire Chiefs' Council to ensure that Fire and Rescue Services have the PPE they need to carry out their duties. The NFCC has done excellent work in this regard, has a supply chain in place and is monitoring stocks nationally to ensure that supplies are distributed where they are needed. We will continue to work extremely closely to ensure services receive the equipment they need, when they need it, in order to carry out their jobs safely.

### Testing

Our top priority for testing is patients in hospital, to inform their clinical diagnosis, followed by NHS and social care workers having to self-isolate because either they, or a member of their household, have symptoms. We now have the capacity to give every person in these categories a test who needs one. As a next step, we now have the capacity to start to test other frontline workers in England who are having to self-isolate because either they, or a member of their household, have symptoms. This includes firefighters. Like with NHS and social care workers, we want to find out if they have the virus – and, if they don't, they might be able to return to their important work.

### Retired firefighters

Firefighter pensions and policy officials are continuing to work closely with HM Treasury officials and the National Fire Chiefs Council to build a case for re-engaging retired firefighters in England. The measures being considered would

enable the re-employment of retired key workers to maintain an effective emergency response alongside the work agreed to contribute to the government's key priorities.

#### On-call fire fighters

We have worked with HMRC and they have now issued new guidance to employers and employees to ensure retained staff are not ruled ineligible for the COVID-19 loss of earnings benefit due to their secondary on-call firefighter contract of employment. The FRS is playing a critical role during this unprecedented time and all staff should be able to access the Government support available.

#### Driver licencing

We have worked with DfT to relax the requirement to provide a medical report as part of the renewal of driver licences. The temporary relaxation will now ensure that those who are fit to drive can continue their crucial role, and services can continue keep fire appliances on the road.

This work is moving at pace and our officials will provide an update when we have clarity on any outstanding issues. We would ask you to let our officials know, working through the NFCC, should other similar issues arise.

**Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP**

**Security Minister**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Brokenshire', written in a cursive style.

**RT HON JAMES BROKESHIRE  
MINISTER OF STATE FOR SECURITY**

**NON CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**  
**MINUTES OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM HELD ON 18 OCTOBER 2018**

**Present:** Dawn Whittaker, Chief Fire Officer  
 Mark O'Brien, Deputy Chief Fire Officer  
 Mark Andrews, Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
 Mark Matthews, Assistant Director of Safer Communities  
 Duncan Savage, Assistant Director of Resources/Treasurer  
 Liz Ridley, Assistant Director of Planning & Improvement  
 Hannah Scott-Youldon, Assistant Director of Training & Assurance  
 Richard Fowler, Assistant Director of Operational Support & Resilience  
 Elizabeth Curtis, Communications & Marketing Manager  
 Sue Stanton, Personal Assistant

**Apologies:** Angela Packebusch, HR Manager

		<b>Action</b>
<b>200/18</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the Meeting held 18 October 2018</b></p> <p>The non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2018 were approved as an accurate record following a few minor amendments.</p>	
<b>201/18</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p><u>167/18 Brexit Implications</u> ACFO had recently circulated a briefing document which he felt would be a helpful reference for future SLT visits. The document works on plans for a no-deal Brexit and the SRF implications of this locally. ESFRS plans were also being progressed and ACFO would provide further updates accordingly.</p> <p><u>186/18 E-recruitment</u> ADoT&amp;A advised that further work would need to take place which would be centred on the process not the system. It was anticipated that this would be scoped out by the end of March then brought back to SLT, with full implementation and a budget update, early in the following financial year 2019/20. The same process would be applied for the appraisals system.</p>	<b>ADoT&amp;A Mar 19</b>
<b>202/18</b>	<p><b>Action Points from Matrix</b></p> <p><u>198/17a Maritime Team (MIRG)</u> ADoOSR noted that the outstanding issue with regards to the training option had yet to be resolved, so advised that more time was required before further recommendations were brought back to SLT. CFO requested that ADoOSR follow this up with Paul Evans and reflect the outcome into the report.</p> <p><u>10/18 Provision of Safer Business Training</u> ACFO and ADoR/T had held a productive meeting with James Harris, ESCC regarding economic development and were currently awaiting a response on the suggested way forward. It was noted that Business Safety had recruited 3 FTC Co-ordinators and ACFO commented on the latest delivery statistics noting that it had gathered a positive momentum and was content on how this is being delivered in the meantime. The Business Strategy would be brought back to SLT in due course. Action complete.</p> <p><u>117/18 Collaboration Framework</u> ADoT&amp;A confirmed that a draft document had been shared with SLT for their comments, noting that a second case study would be included before it was finalised and brought back to the next</p>	<b>ADoOSR Nov 18</b>

	<p>meeting for SLT to consider ahead it being taken to the Fire Authority meeting on 6 December 2018.</p> <p><u>182/18 Review of Fleet and Equipment Capital Scheme</u> A further revised report had been brought to SLT following Ops Committee and would be discussed in more detail under agenda item 14. Action complete.</p>	<p><b>ADoT&amp;A</b> <b>Nov 18</b></p>
<p><b>203/18</b></p>	<p><b>Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring 2018/19</b></p> <p>ADoR/T reported on issues arising from the monitoring of the 2018/19 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme as at 30 September 2018.</p> <p>At this half way stage in the financial year this report is on an exception basis and addresses those areas where there are clear issues or risks. The Revenue Budget is projected to overspend by £577,000 and there are significant risks in addition to this. The primary cause of the forecast overspend is an overspend of £599,000 (3.3%) on the Safer Communities budget as a result of operating above the agreed establishment in order to cover long term absences. SLT met to consider the options open to it to manage this overspend, some of those options are discussed in this report.</p> <p>The report also identifies a number of potential risks which may impact on the budget position. The primary risk is the uncertainty about the cost of the SCC project and the impact of the decision by West Sussex CC to serve notice on the joint service prior to the end of the Section 16 Agreement under which this Authority provides mobilisation services. Initial provision against this risk has been made by drawing down £625,000 from General Balances and use of the Corporate Contingency.</p> <p>The overall Capital Programme is projected to be £13,000 over budget, whilst the current year's Capital Programme is projected to underspend by £87,000.</p> <p>ADoR/T focused on the current overspend areas and provided an overview so that SLT could take a view on these risk areas. CMM queried the advertising figures, which would be picked up within the Communication and Consultation Strategy. The main areas of non-pay spend and vacancy management were discussed. CFO reminded SLT that overarching principle decisions needed to be made, rather than focussing on the detail, noting that the messaging was very important.</p> <p>SLT identified a number of options to be explored to manage the forecast revenue overspend and agreed the following actions:</p> <p><b>Non Pay Spend – Corporate</b> The high level impact analysis showed that the main elements of planned spend was supporting key business objectives. In other areas, underspends were already offsetting overspends. SLT agreed to put in place restrictions on attendance at conferences for all staff and Members and agreed to remind managers to ensure that all spend was appropriate and limited to non-essential spend where possible.</p> <p><b>Non Pay Spend – Safer Communities</b> A separate analysis has identified opportunities to deliver managed underspend on a range of non-pay areas without material impact on service delivery and a target of £50,000 has been agreed.</p> <p><b>Vacancy Management</b> – HR has been asked to analyse the current level of vacancies and consider whether a system could be put in place.</p>	<p><b>CMM</b> <b>Nov 18</b></p>

	<p><b>Management of the Operational Establishment</b> – measures should be put in place alongside the implementation of the Service Delivery Review to accelerate the reduction in number of FTC’s in Safer Communities. Further work is required to assess the potential reduction in spend, but an initial target of £50,000 was agreed.</p> <p><b>Bringing forward future savings</b> - £80,000 of savings have been identified to fund changes to the HR structure in 2019/20 but these are currently offsetting overspends elsewhere in the services budget.</p> <p><b>Reserves</b> – Given that c £100,000 of the budget pressure results from a higher than budgeted Grey Book pay award, it is recommended that this amount is drawn down from General Balances. This currently stands at £2.517m</p> <p><b>Capital Expenditure funded from the Revenue Account (CERA)</b> – There are a number of options available to the Authority to fund the planned spend. The reduction over this and the next financial year of £1,025,000 in capital expenditure will provide the flexibility to reduce the planned CERA without impacting on the use of reserve. This flexibility could be used to address the projected Revenue Budget overspend, should other measures not be sufficient.</p> <p><b>Summary</b> – to reduce the projected Revenue Budget overspend of £577,000. The financial impact of these agreed actions is estimated to be £250,000. SLT will continue to proactively review the budget position <b>with the aim of achieving a balanced position at year end.</b></p> <p>SLT agreed the variation to the Capital Programme as listed above, by reducing the overall budget in 2018/19 by £2,029,000 and increasing the budget for 2019/20 by £1,004,000, and noted the risks to and the projected Revenue Budget overspend.</p> <p>SLT also noted the action proposed to manage the overspend, the risks to and the projected underspend in the current year’s Capital Programme, use of reserves, shortfall in savings taken in 2018/19, and the current year investments, and options being considered to manage the forecast overspend.</p>	
204/18	<p><b>Call Over</b></p> <p>The following reports were not called over, and therefore all recommendations contained within them were agreed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provision of Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer &amp; Legal Services</li> </ul>	
205/18	<p><b>PPE – Call off Contract</b></p> <p>ADoR/T sought approval for the future scale of issue of PPE and to sign a Call off Contract with Bristol Uniforms Ltd for the provision of PPE commencing 28 November 2019 and for SLT to endorse the preferred option 2 of PPE to be supplied to East Sussex Operational Staff within the Framework Contract.</p> <p>ACFO advised that this had been taken to Ops Committee on 27 September 2018, where it had been agreed to take option 2, noting that further analysis was needed regarding the allocation of PPE. Contaminations management was also proposed at the Health Safety Wellbeing Committee on 17 October</p>	

	<p>2018 and Workplace Safety Reps, which was also unanimously supported.</p> <p>SLT agreed to sign the Call off Contract with Bristol Uniforms for the preferred option of PPE to be provided to Operational Staff and endorsed the selected option and agreed that the saving of £90,000 (on the current position) in the 2020/21 budget be built into the MTFP.</p>	<p><b>ADoR/T Nov 18</b></p>
206/18	<p><b>Installation of vehicle-based camera systems to coincide with the telemetry roll out</b></p> <p>This report proposes the introduction of a vehicle-based camera systems to the East Sussex FRS Fleet by way of a 360 degree system across the heavy fleet and a forward and a rear facing camera to the light fleet. This is in line with the ITF Collaboration Programme work.</p> <p>ESFRS currently has no vehicle-based camera systems fitted to its operational fleet other than a one camera system which is fitted to the driver training vehicle for training purposes. This proposal will see vehicle-based CCTV cameras fitted to all of the ESFRS fleet completed during the rollout of vehicle-based telemetry.</p> <p>This paper introduces the ITF Business Case which ESFRS has had full involvement in. ESFRS has acted as the technical lead on behalf of 3F, working directly with the ITF Programme Manager throughout this vehicle-based camera process.</p> <p>ADoR/T highlighted the need to consider the application of IT Security Policies and that we currently do not have the ability to manage large volumes of digital images. There was potential for further reductions in the estimated insurance cost as a result of implementing CCTV which was being clarified. There was also a potential cost from telent for roll out/ongoing support.</p> <p>SLT agreed to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the installation of new vehicle-based camera systems.</li> <li>2. the proposal for ITF to fund the full camera cost, including parts and labour, from a proportion of the Fire Transformation Grant.</li> <li>3. fit 360 degree cameras to the heavy fleet, with forward and rear facing cameras to the light fleet, including specials and all cars</li> <li>4. the asset transfer of supplied goods from the Emergency Services Collaboration Project (ESCP) to East Sussex Fire Authority.</li> <li>5. that ADoR/T would review the potential savings from the Fleet Insurance Cover based on the camera installation specification.</li> </ol>	
207/18	<p><b>Water Rescue Strategy</b></p> <p>ADoOSR informed SLT of proposals to amend the current provision of water rescue equipment on appliances across the Service area; and to consider options for the future provision of Swift Water Rescue capability.</p> <p>ACFO provided an introduction noting that this report incorporated the principle decisions, which had already been taken to the Ops Committee. Of</p>	

the 3 separate reports taken to that meeting, Swift Water Rescue and Water Response had been brought to SLT for further discussion. The report set out community risk and previous water rescue incidents and the current level of provision and training. SLT considered the various proposals and supported the retention of a SWR Team and the proposal for it to be re-located at Lewes. It was accepted that it was important to ensure an adequate level of capability was maintained at Crowborough because of animal rescue, but not SWR.

On behalf of the FBU Reps, ACFO wished to share their comments with SLT, which had been raised at the recent Ops Committee.

1. Timings around Ops Review and IRMP – SLT’s view was that where there is a clear business view, this would not be delayed as this decision could stand alone.
2. Availability of Lewes – SLT have committed to look at this detail and would consider options around availability.
3. Was 5-years’ worth of data a sufficient timeframe to base the information on - SLT had considered future developments of housing and North Street Quarter and clarified that 3-years of data is considered robust in terms of decisions.
4. Have ESFRS considered the Environmental Agency with regards to risks/floods - SLT confirmed that this formed part of National Risk Register and would be considered within the Business Continuity Plan through an SRF multi-agency approach to flooding risk, but this supported a move to Lewes.
5. Has the general approach to methodology to risk been discussed at Workplace Safety Reps – The management of risk had been based on historic data in the past, but ESFRS were now looking at Inland Water Risk Guidance supported by ROSPA. Also, general workplace risk considerations are not the same as the overarching risk profile considerations required for strategic disposition of resources.

SLT discussed the reporting and analysis of full attendance at water, mud and flooding incidents beyond those incidents current mobilised to, which demonstrated that the current module 2 had adequately dealt with those incidents and could be enhanced further to DEFRA equipment and capability. ACFO indicated that it was an important discussion with some challenging decisions, as we were in essence currently over provisioned, but overall, this solution would improve the water safety cover across the county. SLT agreed in principle that the Ops Committee would take a further look at the impacts and implementation.

SLT discussed the wider Water Response at Level 2 across the service, noting the importance of clear language and communications. SLT considered the specific stations and incidents over the county and considered reducing training for water awareness from module 2 to module 1 in some areas to match risk profile.

SLT agreed that some water rescue equipment be withdrawn from some stations.

SLT agreed that in the future, staff on those stations be trained to Module 1 of the DEFRA Flood Rescue Module standards.

SLT agreed that the Swift Water Rescue capability is transferred to Lewes in the future.

SLT approved that the 70P4 appliance at Rye be additionally equipped with

	two 3m rescue paths, but noted that this would be dealt with at Ops Committee.	
<b>208/18</b>	<p><b>Provision of Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer and Legal Services</b></p> <p>SLT considered the arrangements for the provision of legal services and MO support from 1 April 2019.</p> <p>The legal services agreement between East Sussex Fire Authority and Brighton &amp; Hove City Council (B&amp;HCC) expires on 31 March 2019. As the Fire Authority is responsible for the appointment of the Monitoring &amp; Deputy Monitoring Officer, this paper outlines the current position, and recommends a course of action which suits business need and secures best value.</p> <p>SLT noted the recommendations proposed to the Fire Authority as detailed within the report.</p>	
<b>209/18</b>	<p><b>Corporate Risk Register Review Quarter 2 2018/19</b></p> <p>ADoR/T reported on the latest quarterly review of Corporate Risk.</p> <p>This report discusses the provisional Quarter 2 position and gives SLT the opportunity to debate the risk register before a report is submitted to Panel. It was agreed by the Scrutiny and Audit Panel to use the new Corporate Risk Report created at the Risk workshop in May 2018.</p> <p>DCFO queried the Mitigations and Actions in Appendix B and requested further clarity, clearer wording and the inclusion of implementation dates. It was agreed that a general update on all the wording would be made, and SLT would send through any specific comments by the following day, so that a revised version could be taken to the Scrutiny &amp; Audit Panel on 1 November 2018.</p> <p>SLT reviewed and noted the Risk Management Mitigation Plans, subject to these amendments and updates.</p>	
<b>210/18</b>	<p><b>Future Design of Fire Appliances</b></p> <p>ADoOSR outlined proposed changes to our fleet strategy, specifically to the size, design and distribution of fire appliances in the future, ensuring that they are fit for purpose, whilst providing an economic and efficient solution to address risk.</p> <p>Following a further review, ADOSR has now completed research and provided further clarity to the original proposals and proposed Service-wide strategy for the deployment of different fire appliances. These further proposals are inextricably linked to the size, design and distribution of fire appliances and must therefore be considered in parallel.</p> <p>CFO reminded SLT of the need for principle decisions to explore new fleet, not to make any pre-determination of location. ADOSR recommended that SLT commit to a 3-tier approach at this stage but that the process of where to allocate vehicles could be dealt with at Ops Committee and in line with the Operational Cover Review. There was a discussion over maxi-cab appliances regarding their expected replacement and future location.</p>	

	<p>On behalf of the FBU Reps, ACFO again wished to share their comments with SLT, which had been raised at the recent Ops Committee. The main concern was why ESFRS were not considering this as part of IRMP, when this is a long term strategy, and were not making decisions about particular locations. Fleet Strategy is mentioned within the IRMP Strategy (p.19) and has also been discussed in SLT workplace visits in 2018. Also, SLT must ensure the future Fleet Strategy is deliverable as part of wider capital strategy.</p> <p>SLT approved the recommendations that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A three-tier approach be adopted to fire appliance design.</li> <li>2. The proposed distribution of new appliances be taken to Ops Committee after the Fire Cover Review.</li> <li>3. Specification and equipment fit consultations for MRPs (12 tonne GLM<sup>1</sup>) would be carried out.</li> <li>4. Smaller water tenders (8 tonne GLM) be specified in place of the current P4 appliances and that one such appliance should be built to test the concept for ESFRS.</li> <li>5. The Maxicab vehicle at Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst be provided with a standard ERP appliance when existing maxicab appliances become due for replacement as the current approach was not operating as originally intended. It was SLT's preferred option for this rather than to extend its life.</li> <li>6. Subject to recommendation 5 above being agreed, maxicab appliances at Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst are removed at end of life, an additional new Water Tender appliance be provided as a second pump to accompany new ERPs.</li> <li>7. The 91P4 and 93P4 appliances be fully upgraded to ERP status.</li> <li>8. The service life of all ERPs, MRPs and new smaller Water Tenders to be kept under review by the Engineering Services Department.</li> <li>9. The distribution of pumping appliances (ERPs) carrying 1:7 foam systems with Class A, Class B or Class B-AR foam concentrate would have an impact onto Estates. It was agreed that this operational decision could be made at Ops Committee.</li> <li>10. All older foam making equipment should be decommissioned and removed from service. It was agreed that this operational decision could be made at Ops Committee.</li> </ol>	
211/18	<p><b>Efficiency Strategy Update</b></p> <p>ADoR/T advised on the progress in developing the Authority's Efficiency Strategy and on the delivery of the Efficiency Plan agreed with the Home Office.</p> <p>This report provides a progress summary against all of the activities identified within the scope of the Efficiency Strategy and the financial implications including potential efficiencies where those are clear. Good progress is being made but the work is still at a relatively early stage and this is reflected in the level of efficiencies identified so far. Further work is required to identify and deliver a greater return on investment and specifically an increase in the level of cashable efficiencies delivered.</p>	

	<p>As the MTFP indicates, we need to be in a position to react to the new funding position for 2020/21 and have in place as a minimum sufficient cashable savings to balance the budget that year and in the subsequent three years.</p> <p>Work on a new IRMP will commence in the autumn of 2018 and that this will include an operational response review. This will assess the level of resource required to meet changing risk in the communities we serve.</p> <p>ADoR/T provided a financial overview and summary which excluded FireWatch as SLT had commissioned further work on benefits realisation. The progress update would be revised ahead of the Panel meeting on 1 November 2018.</p> <p>SLT recommended the progress update on the Authority's published Efficiency Plan and noted the progress on delivering the Efficiency Strategy.</p>	
212/18	<p><b>Programme Management Office Update</b></p> <p>ADoP&amp;I provided an update to SLT about the PMO function and implementation and outlined the action needed by ADs to mitigate against risks as noted in the summary.</p> <p>This report provides an overview of the key products delivered in the last month by the PMO as well as the planned deliverables and the current key risks to delivery. SLT noted this progress and acknowledged its role in mitigating against risks 2, 3.</p> <p>ADoP&amp;I outlined the current issues within Section 4 which included recruitment, reporting, project roles and responsibilities, skill and Project Management capability. CFO also shared her thoughts, and CMM also gave the suggestion of peer to peer support.</p> <p>SLT considered the progress made by the PMO while acknowledging the limitations (of resource, skill in the organisation, etc.) and the risks to project management delivery and PMO effective operation.</p> <p>SLT approved taking an active role in mitigating against risk 2 and 3 and support the PMO via comms and active management.</p>	
213/18	<p><b>Diversity by Design Proposal</b></p> <p>CFO provided a verbal update on this proposal, following further conversations with Simon Fanshawe. These proposals underpinned our People Strategy and CFO suggested consideration of a new model for recruitment and retentions in a specific area of our organisation.</p> <p>There was a discussion around professional services, regarding how to make these jobs more attractive to potential future candidates. ADoT&amp;A/ADoSC and ADoR/T agreed to meet with Simon in order to have an initial discussion around this proposal. ADoT&amp;A would also engage the I&amp;D Manager for Inclusion purposes as appropriate. Consideration would also be made to funding and procurement with the expected outcome planned for the New Year. CFO would send an introductory email to Simon Fanshawe.</p>	<p><b>CFO Nov 18</b></p>

214/18	<p><b>Corporate Plan Progress Monitoring Quarter 2 2018/19</b></p> <p>The Corporate Plan progress monitoring report has been developed to demonstrate progress against the Service's Corporate Plan 2018/19. This report contains information on the progress made on the key actions up to the end of Quarter 2 2018/19.</p> <p>There are currently 51 agreed actions being undertaken to progress the Service's Corporate Plan. The 2018/19 Q2 monitoring report indicates that 44 of the actions are on track, 7 are not on target.</p> <p>This report would also be discussed with Cllr Galley at the Chairman's Briefing on 30 October 2018. DCFO made a few minor comments over progress and consistency throughout the report. ADoP&amp;I offered support for those wishing to review and update their profile areas.</p> <p>SLT reviewed the Corporate Plan 2018/19 Quarter 2 monitoring report and identified where further information/clarification on progress was required before it is presented at Scrutiny &amp; Audit Panel on 1 November 2018.</p>	
215/18	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><u>Councillor Stuart Earl</u> CFO had received a notification that Cllr Stuart Earl had sadly passed away earlier this morning following a short illness. CFO offered our condolences to his family and Rother District Council accordingly.</p> <p><u>Lewes Fire Station</u> CFO provided a brief update following the recent meeting with Estates and colleagues from Lewes District Council regarding the current plans for the North Street Quarter development and Lewes Fire Station. Further proposals were being progressed and another meeting would be arranged shortly.</p> <p><u>NFCC Prevention, Protection &amp; Health Conference 2018</u> CFO had attended day 1 and ACFO had attended day 2 of the recent event in Birmingham and key messages were shared accordingly. ESFRS were fully supporting this national work.</p> <p><u>CFA Conference 2018</u> DCFO attended with the Chairman and Vice-Chair. Cllr John Barnes has put himself forward to join the Chair group on funding.</p> <p><u>Jane Thomas Away Day</u> ADoT&amp;A asked SLT for their comments and thoughts since they had last met with Jane and whether SLT wished to hold an away day in the New Year.</p> <p><u>SEACAMB</u> ADoOSR provided a short update and confirmed that Matt England now wished for ESFRS to support and respond to falls. It was noted that there would need to be an MoU, and clinical governance and consultation put in place.</p>	
216/18	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting will be held on 15 November 2018</p>	

### Equipment

Main Pump x 2, BA Entry Control Board complete, Breathing Apparatus x 6, Hose lines x 2, Standpipe key and Bar, Hose 70mm as required Hydrant to Pump, Hose - pump to incident and controlled branch x 2, Incident Ground Radio comms x 4, Spare BA Cylinders x 4, Breaking in gear, PPV, Appliance lighting and handlamps, Small gear and Turning Over Tools, Resuscitator and First Aid equipment.

## 6. Fires in Buildings

### Multi Occupancy (Low Rise): Fire Scenario B

Firefighting and initial entry on ground floor. Fire confined to flat/unit of origin. Signs and indicators of flashover/backdraught.

#### Sequence of Tasks and Activities

1	Initial information gathering	1 x IC
2	Incident ground liaison & dynamic risk assessment	1 x IC
3	Crew briefing	1 x IC
4	Incident command	1 x IC
5	Assess rear of property	1 x FF
6	Provision of hose reel	2 x FF
7	Identify hydrant and provide water from hydrant to pump	1 x FF
8	Provision of 45mm hose and controlled branch	2 x FF
9	Gaining entry to premises with breaking in gear	1 x FF
10	Silence alarm	1 x FF
11	External ventilation of property	1 x FF
12	Provision of hose reel to ventilation area	1 x FF
13	Isolation of services	1 x FF
14	Provision of lighting	1 x FF
15	Pump operation, high/low pressure tank supply & command support	1 x FF
16	BA Entry Control	1 x FF
17	Firefighting, 2 Firefighters hose line, BA	2 x FF
18	Firefighting, 2 Firefighters, 45mm hose line with controlled branch as covering jet for internal team. BA	2 x FF
19	Cover ventilation outlet with hose reel	1 x FF
20	Position PPV	2 x FF
21	Ventilation of premises. Fire compartment. 2BA	2 x FF
22	Damping down & turning over. 2 hose reels, 2BA	2 x FF
23	Replenish water	1 x FF
24	Incident ground servicing BA	4 x FF
25	Make up of equipment	4 x FF
26	Fire report/investigation details	1 x IC
27	Debrief	All
28	Post Fire Community Fire Safety Activity	3 x FF
	Shaded area indicates simultaneous actions these are safety critical requirements.	1 x IC 7 x FF

### Equipment

Main Pump, BA Entry Control Board complete, Breathing Apparatus x 4, Hose reel x 2, Standpipe key and Bar, Hose 70mm as required Hydrant to Pump, Hose 45mm pump to incident and controlled branch, Incident Ground Radio comms x 2, Spare BA Cylinders x 4, Breaking in gear, PPV, Lighting and Portable Lighting, Small gear and Turning over tools.



To all Fire and Rescue Authority  
Chairs and Police, Fire and Crime  
Commissioners

2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF  
[www.gov.uk/home-office](http://www.gov.uk/home-office)

29<sup>th</sup> April 2020

I am writing to provide you with further information on the £20 million grant funding that will be made available to support protection work. Of this, £4m will be provided to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and £16m directly to fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) in 2020/21 to drive improvement in fire and rescue services (FRSs) across the country.

This is an unprecedented surge in protection funding and should enable FRSs to have the technical expertise required to fulfil this function and ensure fire protection officers have the skills they need. This funding is from two grants: (i) £10 million Fire Protection Board funding from MHCLG focused on ensuring fire safety in high-rise residential buildings over 18m and (ii) £10 million Protection Uplift funding from the Home Office to bolster work targeting other higher risk buildings.

On high-rise residential buildings, the NFCC established the Fire Protection Board last summer, initially to facilitate a building risk review exercise to ensure that the interim measures in place in ACM-clad high-rise residential buildings awaiting remediation are appropriate and allow for safe continued occupation. I am delighted that this work has been completed, with all buildings either having been visited and deemed safe, remediation having taken place, or, in a minority of cases, continual monitoring being put in place by the local FRS with building owners to manage and maintain the interim measures, and continually assess the risks.

This work is now expanding to all high-rise residential buildings over 18 metres and to support this, the Government will provide £6 million of funding to local FRAs. The funding allocations will be based upon the number of high-rise residential buildings over 18 metres within each FRA area, and used to deliver the wider building risk review programme. To ensure its benefit, each FRA (with the exception of the Isle of Wight and the Isles of Scilly FRAs) will receive a minimum of £60,000, which is roughly equivalent to the costs associated with one inspection officer. The allocations are available in the accompanying Fire Protection Board Grant table. With the focus on high-rise residential buildings over 18 metres, the Government is keen that other high-risk buildings receive appropriate attention. To support FRSs in

their protection work ensuring the safety of other high-risk buildings, a further £10m will be distributed among FRAs in England. Allocations for this funding have been determined by the number of high-risk buildings within each FRA area. The funding is to be used to support the improvement in protection work and its delivery in line with locally agreed integrated risk management plans and risk-based inspection programmes. The allocations are available in the accompanying Protection Uplift Grant table.

The two FRAs not receiving the funds directly, Isle of Wight and Isles of Scilly, will still be able to access additional funding where required for protection work. Owing to the collaborative working relationship already in place between the Hampshire and Isle of Wight FRAs ahead of the formal merging in April 2021, the funds to be allocated to the latter will be provided to the former to reduce administrative burdens in delivering the money. The calculations for each fund would provide the Isles of Scilly FRA with minimal funding, the distribution of which would result in a disproportionate level of administration. The Isles of Scilly FRA will therefore be able to access funding through Cornwall FRA.

Home Office officials will be in touch in due course to formally confirm funding through a grant agreement.



**Lord Greenhalgh**  
**Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities at**  
**Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and Home Office**

## Distribution to FRAs of Fire Protection Board and Protection Uplift funding

FRA	Fire Protection Board Funding (£6m)	Protection Uplift Funding (£10m)	Total
Avon	£166,137.93	£368,894.14	£535,032.07
Bedfordshire	£60,000.00	£101,452.34	£161,452.34
Berkshire	£60,000.00	£64,898.52	£124,898.52
Buckinghamshire	£60,000.00	£123,549.85	£183,549.85
Cambridgeshire	£60,000.00	£114,617.91	£174,617.91
Cheshire	£60,000.00	£117,457.54	£177,457.54
Cleveland	£60,000.00	£41,716.79	£101,716.79
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	£60,000.00	£56,792.66	£116,792.66
Cumbria	£60,000.00	£79,199.94	£139,199.94
Derbyshire	£60,000.00	£72,849.49	£132,849.49
Devon & Somerset	£60,000.00	£256,909.34	£316,909.34
Dorset & Wiltshire	£109,835.37	£228,926.05	£338,761.42
Durham	£60,000.00	£49,254.72	£109,254.72
East Sussex	£195,810.90	£314,424.81	£510,235.71
Essex	£104,889.87	£212,714.32	£317,604.19
Gloucestershire	£60,000.00	£79,819.50	£139,819.50
Greater London	£2,316,286.98	£3,201,608.78	£5,517,895.76
Greater Manchester	£251,733.03	£164,956.86	£416,689.89
Hampshire & Isle of Wight	£125,052.28	£271,468.91	£396,521.19
Hereford and Worcester	£60,000.00	£121,639.55	£181,639.55
Hertfordshire	£60,000.00	£101,245.82	£161,245.82
Humberside	£60,000.00	£114,824.43	£174,824.43
Kent	£60,000.00	£382,008.08	£442,008.08
Lancashire	£60,000.00	£250,300.74	£310,300.74
Leicestershire	£60,000.00	£221,439.74	£281,439.74
Lincolnshire	£60,000.00	£91,436.18	£151,436.18
Merseyside	£135,323.69	£388,873.83	£524,198.52
Norfolk	£60,000.00	£142,962.61	£202,962.62
North Yorkshire	£60,000.00	£256,238.15	£316,238.15
Northamptonshire	£60,000.00	£61,852.37	£121,852.37
Northumberland	£60,000.00	£21,529.58	£81,529.58
Nottinghamshire	£60,000.00	£92,004.10	£152,004.10
Oxfordshire	£60,000.00	£272,036.84	£332,036.84
Shropshire	£60,000.00	£40,735.82	£100,735.82
South Yorkshire	£126,193.54	£184,782.66	£310,976.20
Staffordshire	£60,000.00	£55,760.06	£115,760.06
Suffolk	£60,000.00	£79,406.46	£139,406.46
Surrey	£60,000.00	£157,160.78	£217,160.78
Tyne and Wear	£145,975.52	£156,592.85	£302,568.37
Warwickshire	£60,000.00	£128,454.67	£188,454.67
West Midlands	£263,906.56	£309,519.99	£573,426.55
West Sussex	£60,000.00	£111,571.76	£171,571.76
West Yorkshire	£198,854.28	£336,109.28	£534,963.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>£5,999,999.95</b>	<b>£9,999,999.82</b>	<b>£15,999,999.77</b>



# Post-consultation responses



Dear Sir/Madam,

I'm hoping that you can be persuaded to keep Crowborough Fire Station just as it is with full staff and equipment.

Some years ago I had a fire in my kitchen caused by a chip pan. The local crew were here in minutes and tackled the blaze as well as comforting me. I haven't cooked chips since.

Apart from that, I'm worried about a greater threat. Due to climate change forest fires are on the increase. I've worried for some time about a fire engulfing the Ashdown Forest and if the flames could reach my house. Due to a prevailing South Westerly wind the sparks could reach here and all the surrounding properties which have mature trees in their gardens. I think you should think very seriously about the devastation that could be caused.

Yours sincerely,

██████████

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I think it is outrageous that you are cutting back the Service; I have concerns regarding increased times getting to fires as I have had two in the past. I have concerns regarding a prompt attendance to car accidents. There are many car accidents and house fires in Mark Cross and surrounding areas and I do not agree to the cuts for Wadhurst Station.

I have no internet access.

██████████

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Good afternoon

With apologies for the late submission of our comments. Battle Town Council would like to express its strong objection to the changes proposed for Battle Fire Station.

Kind regards  
Clerk to Battle Town Council

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Dear East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service

I am writing to you as a Crowborough resident with my concerns regarding the proposed cuts to equipment and FireFighter numbers at our Crowborough Fire Station. I have been a resident in Crowborough since 1964 and for the past 30 years resided alongside three dedicated Firefighters.

I have grave concerns regarding the loss of one fire engine together with a 50% reduction in full time Firefighters. Taking into account the rapidly growing population of Crowborough with new estates springing up and continual in filling - narrow roads and even narrower access to properties - these cuts must be detrimental to Crowborough and the neighbouring villages.

Our Firefighters not only tackle buildings/house fires, but attend the fires on The Ashdown Forest, as well as attending and rescuing people trapped in vehicles bearing in mind the numerous accidents on the Tunbridge Wells to Uckfield main A26 arterial road as well as on the narrow country lanes in the Crowborough environs. Should cuts also be made to Uckfield Fire Station this will have a further detrimental affect to the safety of the people and properties of both towns.

The reduction in evenings and weekend fire cover at our Fire Station at the weekends before 9am and after 5pm, will only be part time cover from staff living outside Crowborough and will surely cost lives.

I, along with other residents, am grateful for the support of our Crowborough Firefighters in attending our properties, accessing safety problems and fitting approved fire alarms and feel the contribution we make to East Sussex County Council is, at the present time, well spent.

I appreciate the difficulties in balancing budgets but feel that should these cuts be made the result will be detrimental to the people of Crowborough and surrounding district.

I sincerely request careful consideration to these concerns be considered when decisions are finally made.  
Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

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Thank you for inviting me to look at your proposals.  
I think they should be adopted.

[REDACTED]

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I would like to thank you for all you do for the community, I 'm 95 and unable to take part in any meetings or consultations.

[REDACTED]

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In response to letter received. "Absolutely everything we (ESFRS) have proposed is fine by me"

[REDACTED]

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Hello

I received your letter a little over a week ago and have today gone to your website to complete the survey only to find that it closed on Friday. I also see that it was opened in April, so I am very surprised that your letter was sent so long after this allowing just a short window of time to both study the proposals and complete the survey.

In the circumstances, I would appreciate your comments and also an extension to the deadline so that I may complete the survey.

Thank you.

Regards

[REDACTED]

**Second email sent:**

I am having to forward my email below as I received a very dismissive auto response to this. I am sure you are familiar with this.

I look forward to hearing from you.

**Further reply:**

Dear Chris

Thank you so much for your email and for giving me an opportunity to let you know my views. Looking at each proposal in turn my comments are as follows:

1. Strongly agree
2. Strongly agree with a) looking the best to me
3. Strongly agree with both a) and b)
4. Strongly agree
5. Strongly agree with a) b) and c)
6. Strongly agree and I favour option a)
7. Strongly agree
8. Yes I would be willing to pay more than 3% provided it is not too much above this
9. I think that ESFRS appear to offer value for money and I am impressed that all of the proposals are geared to saving money without any detrimental effect on the service, and in some cases an actual improvement
10. Strongly agree

I hope you will find my comments helpful.

Thanks again.

Kind Regards

██████████

20/6/20

DEPUTY C F O  
E.S.X FIRE + RESCUE SERVICE  
LEWES

Sir,

Congratulations on the well thought out proposals for the future of the Service.

I doubt if the general public will be able to improve on your thoughts.

One not mentioned problem. Finance. Do you think you will be able to carry through your proposals in total? That brings doubts to my mind.

May I ask you to prepare estimated full costs in time for the September Meeting, which providing I am still not confined to barack I should like to attend.

HUW MERRIMAN MP  
(Bexhill and Battle)



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Mark O'Brien  
East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service  
HQ Church Lane  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 2DZ

Our Ref: HM16210  
26 June 2020

Dear Deputy Chief Fire Officer O'Brien,

**Re: Planning for a Safer Future - Consultation on Fire Authority's Future Plans**

Thank you for providing the opportunity to respond to the above consultation. I apologise for my late reply; it has taken some time to collate concerns from constituents, local firefighters, a local FBU representative amongst my other work priorities.

I very much welcomed the meeting we had at the start of the consultation process in which you set out the background to the consultation and explained the recommendations the IRMP contains.

My first concern about this consultation is with regards to its timing. Whilst I note your reasons for not wishing to delay the consultation i.e. the pressing need for an up to date IRMP for ESRFS, I do think that the pandemic situation should have led to a pause in process for two key reasons:

1. The ability for the public and stakeholders to fully consider and respond to the proposals within your timescales
2. The role of the ESRFS has been expanded during COVID-19 to cope with the national emergency

With regards to point 1 above, I know that my workload and that of my small team has quadrupled during COVID-19. It has therefore been challenging for me to study the proposals and seek further information about the impact of them from interested parties. It is especially important that I was able to do so as 3 of the fire stations and staff impacted by the review are within my constituency of Bexhill and Battle – Bexhill, Battle and Heathfield. I am sure that many other stakeholders would have had faced

similar challenges so I am not confident that the consultation will result in the number or quality of responses it would have received under normal circumstances.

With regards to point 2 above, I know that ESFA has regularly examined ESFRS to ensure that it efficiently and effectively meets its responsibilities in responding to incidents and it has continued to expand its work on education and prevention. More recently ESFRS has played an active and critical role in the response to COVID-19. This has presented the service with a unique opportunity to examine whether any of its recent COVID-related work is likely to lead to new responsibilities or work which the service would like to continue and will therefore need resourcing. My view is that it would be that sensible to pause and reflect on the changes this may bring and incorporate the outcome in the IRMP. On this point, the new proposals which will lead to the cut of 30 wholtime firefighters. If we experience another national crisis like COVID-19 would ESFRS have the staffing capacity to support the Local Resilience Forum as it has done so this year under the new proposals? What resilience against unanticipated events have you built in to the new IRMP?

The safety of my constituents is paramount to me, as I know it is to ESFA. I am therefore concerned about the proposal to reduce the number of fire engines at Bexhill Fire Station from two to one and to change the crewing model from 'day crewed' from 08.30 to 18.30 7 days per week to 5 days per week leaving the weekends and evenings 'on-call' I understand that ESFRS data does not demonstrate that there are less incidents on weekends, in fact, Saturdays are the busiest days according to ESFRS data. The consultation document states that on evenings and weekends "it may take slightly longer to get to you." Could you please quantify "slightly longer" in minutes so we are clear what the delay in response time would be for my constituents?

My concern is based on the demographic profile of Bexhill which has a high proportion of vulnerable residents unable to self-rescue: 9% of the population is aged 80-89 and 3% aged over 90. There are more retired people in Bexhill, 24% of the population compared to the average of 15% in the rest of the ESFRS area and the general health is poorer (likely to be related to age).

Local firefighters inform me that whilst Bexhill station attended 519 incidents in 2017/18, this figure does not include the incidents the station has attended in neighbouring towns and villages or the number of standby moves to support another fire station. Bexhill Fire Station's own records show that they were actually mobilised 949 times in 2019. Whilst I fully agree with the IRMP's proposal to increase the number of fire engines at Hastings Bohemia Road in order to better manage the higher risks identified in the town, I am not currently convinced that removing an engine from Bexhill is the best option.

This brings me to a further concern regarding the proposed resourcing of Hastings Bohemia Road Fire Station. I understand that the crewing model for Hastings Bohemia Road, allows for one fire engine and one Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) to attend a local incident. Additional fire engine support for a major incident is currently provided by neighbouring stations, often Bexhill. However, the IRMP proposal to locate two fire engines at Hastings fire station retains the current crewing numbers. I believe this will mean that if two fire engines are required to attend an incident, the ALP could not also be crewed. The next nearest ALP would have to be sent from Brighton. The reason



this is a concern is because East Sussex ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in the country for high rise residential buildings over 18 metres, with 358 buildings. Following Grenfell, other fire and rescue services in England with a high proportion of high-rise properties are primary crewing Aerial Ladder platforms rather than share crewing them as the IRMP proposes. I know ESFRS has received additional government funding totalling £510,235.71. This was announced on 29 April by a letter to MPs from Lord Greenhalgh, Minister for State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities at Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and Home Office. This was formed of two grants aimed at ensuring fire safety in high rise buildings over 18m. I would be grateful for your comments on how these grants will be utilised to protect my residents, many of who are elderly, who live in high-rise buildings and who could not self-rescue.

I understand that the IRMP proposals will require a renegotiation of contract for on-call (RDS) fire fighters at Heathfield, Seaford, Hailsham and Rye fire stations as their terms and conditions will need to change in order to meet the proposed crewing models. Currently Heathfield is considered to be a two-engine station as they have a maxi-cab fire engine which can take additional crew members. I note from our meeting that you want to re-classify the maxi-cab vehicles as one fire engine. This would mean that in the future Heathfield fire station will be considered to have one fire engine and therefore a reduction in cover. In order to balance this your proposals for a new shared crewing model will increase the fire engines available from 15 -18. Could you please provide further detail on how this will benefit the residents of Heathfield and the surrounding villages. Also, as this proposal relies on new contract for on-call fire fighters, could you please advise whether you anticipate any difficulties in the negotiation process and whether there have been any formal or informal discussions with RDS staff or the FBU on this matter? I am aware from my visits to the fire stations in my constituency that recruiting retained fire-fighters is challenging. Therefore, do you anticipate that the new contracts will attract more people to this role? If not, is there a risk that you will not have enough staff to fill the posts and provide the cover that is needed?

I would welcome your comments on the issues I have raised. I have also enclosed a petition from some of my constituents who are concerned about the proposals which was delivered to my office.

Yours sincerely,

Huw Merriman  
Member of Parliament for Bexhill and Battle



# East Sussex Fire Authority

## Planning for a Safer Future (IRMP 2020-2025)

### Report of Consultation Findings



Opinion Research Services

August 2020

# East Sussex Fire Authority

## Planning for a Safer Future (IRMP 2020-2025)

### Report of Consultation Findings



## Opinion Research Services

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This project was carried out in compliance with ISO 20252:2012

As with all our studies, findings from this report are subject to Opinion Research Services' Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract

Any press release or publication of the findings of this report requires the advance approval of ORS: such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misrepresentation

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# Contents

<b>1. Summary of Findings</b>	<b>7</b>
Background and commission	7
Nature of consultation and accountability	7
Key findings	8
Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan	8
Proposal 2: Changes to day-crewed fire stations	9
Proposal 3: Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines	11
Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings	13
Proposal 5a: Changes to the provision and crewing of aerial appliances	14
Proposal 5b: Changes to the provision and crewing of other specialist appliances	14
Proposal 6: Demand management	15
Proposal 7: Changes to the four-watch duty system	17
Other issues: Building and home inspections	19
Other issues: Finances and investment	20
Other issues: ESFRS' purpose and commitments	22
Other issues: Hearing about the consultation	23
Other issues: Equalities impacts	23
<b>2. Consultation Overview</b>	<b>24</b>
Background and commission	24
The Consultation Process	25
Commission	25
Methodology	25
Quantitative Engagement	25
Open questionnaire	25
Telephone Residents' Survey	26
Interpretation of the data	27
Qualitative Engagement	28
Online public focus groups/depth interviews	28
Attendance and Representation	28
Stakeholder webinar	29
Submissions	29
Nature of consultation	29
Interpreting the outcomes	29
The report	30
A note on Covid-19	30
<b>3. Open Consultation Questionnaire</b>	<b>31</b>
Introduction	31
Duplicate and Co-ordinated Responses	31

Profile Tables .....	31
Interpretation of the data.....	33
Individual responses to the consultation questionnaire: main findings .....	33
Proposal 1: Operational Response Review (ORR) .....	33
Proposal 2: Changes to day-crewed fire stations .....	35
Proposal 3: Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines.....	37
Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings.....	39
Proposal 6: Demand Management.....	41
Proposal 7: Changes to the four-watch duty system .....	44
Other issues: Building and home inspections.....	47
Other issues: Finances and investment.....	48
Other issues: ESFRS' purpose and commitments.....	55
Other issues: Hearing about the consultation.....	56
Any other comments .....	57
Equalities impacts.....	61
Organisations in the consultation questionnaire .....	62
Proposal 1: Operational Response Review (ORR) .....	62
Proposal 2: Changes to day-crewed fire stations .....	62
Proposal 3: Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines.....	62
Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings.....	63
Proposal 6: Demand management.....	63
Proposal 7: Changes to the four-watch duty system .....	63
Other issues: Building and home inspections.....	63
Other issues: Finances and investment.....	63
Other issues: ESFRS' purpose and commitments.....	63
Text comments made by organisations.....	64
<b>4. Telephone Residents' Survey.....</b>	<b>65</b>
Introduction .....	65
Respondent profile .....	65
Main Findings.....	67
Proposal 1: Operational Response Review (ORR) .....	67
Proposal 2: Changes to day-crewed fire stations .....	68
Proposal 3: Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines.....	70
Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings.....	71
Proposal 6: Demand Management.....	73
Proposal 7: Changes to the four-watch duty system .....	75
Other issues: Building and home inspections.....	77
Other issues: Finances and investment.....	78
Further comments.....	81
<b>5. Focus Groups and Stakeholder Webinar.....</b>	<b>82</b>
Introduction.....	82

Main findings .....	82
Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan (ORP).....	82
Proposal 2: Changes to day-crewed duty stations .....	87
Proposal 3: Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines.....	94
Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings.....	99
Proposal 6: Demand Management.....	102
Proposal 7: Changes to the four-watch duty system .....	111
Other issues: Building and home inspections.....	115
Other issues: Finances and Investment.....	117
Other issues: General .....	121
<b>6. Submissions .....</b>	<b>125</b>
Introduction .....	125
Summary tables of themes from written submissions.....	126
Views on the Planning for a Safer Future proposals .....	127
Views on ESFRS and resourcing more generally.....	131
Views on the consultation process.....	132
Summaries of detailed and/or ‘representative’ submissions.....	132
Standardised submissions .....	132
Additional comments .....	133
Petition .....	134
<b>List of Tables .....</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>List of Figures .....</b>	<b>137</b>

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# 1. Summary of Findings

## Background and commission

- 1.1 East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) is required to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) to describe how it will keep its residents, and those who work or travel through its area, safe over the coming years. The plan - called Planning for a Safer Future (IRMP 2020-25) - describes the main risks to East Sussex and Brighton & Hove's communities and how ESFRS plans to use its resources efficiently to reduce those risks.
- 1.2 In order to understand views on the proposals included in the IRMP, a formal consultation was undertaken by the East Sussex Fire Authority (ESFA) between 24<sup>th</sup> April and 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020. ESFRS commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS) to undertake a programme of key consultation activities and to report respondents' views, gathered through an open consultation questionnaire, a telephone residents' survey, six online focus groups and seven depth interviews with members of the public and a stakeholder webinar. Moreover, ESFRS received submissions via email, letter and telephone from residents, staff, organisations and stakeholders, the themes from which were categorised and by ESFRS staff - and have been tabulated and summarised by ORS in this report.
- 1.3 In total:
  - 836 questionnaire responses were received;
  - 620 telephone surveys were completed;
  - 40 residents attended the focus groups or undertook a depth interview;
  - 38 stakeholders attended the webinar; and
  - 360 unique submissions, 152 standardised submissions<sup>1</sup> and one petition were received.
- 1.4 It should be noted here that the two quantitative strands of the consultation differ in methodology. The self-completion consultation questionnaire is intentionally made widely available for anyone with an interest in the ESFRS' proposals and therefore tends to attract participation from those with particularly strong views. The interviewer-administered telephone (residents') survey, on the other hand, is intended to target a broad cross-section of the general public to obtain results that are representative of residents of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. Therefore, the two strands cannot simply be amalgamated, but rather ought to be considered side-by-side in these contexts.

## Nature of consultation and accountability

- 1.5 The key good practice requirements for consultation programmes are that they should: be conducted at a formative stage, before decisions are taken; allow sufficient time for people to participate and respond; provide the public and stakeholders with enough background information to allow them to consider the

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<sup>1</sup>This was essentially a pre-populated questionnaire response.

issues and any proposals intelligently and critically; and be properly taken into consideration before decisions are finally taken. The consultation reported here meets all these requirements.

- 1.6 Accountability means that public authorities should give an account of their plans and take into account people's views. They should conduct fair and accessible engagement whilst reporting the outcomes openly and considering them fully.
- 1.7 This does not mean that the majority views should automatically decide public policy; and the popularity or unpopularity of draft proposals should not displace professional and political judgement about what is the right or best decision in the circumstances. The levels of, and reasons for, public support or opposition are very important, but are considerations to be taken into account, not as factors that necessarily determine authorities' decisions. Above all, public bodies have to consider the relevance and cogency of the arguments put forward during public engagement processes, not just counting the number of people.

## Key findings

- 1.8 The following sections summarise the main consultation findings. However, readers are referred to the detailed chapters that follow for a full account of people's views.

### Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan

***ESFRS plans to increase the number of immediate response (or 'core') fire engines available at the start of the day from 15 to 18***

#### Open consultation questionnaire

- 1.9 Overall, more than two thirds (71%) of respondents to the consultation questionnaire agreed with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day, whilst around 1 in 5 (21%) disagreed, and less than 1 in 10 (8%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

#### Residents' Survey

- 1.10 The vast majority (93%) of residents agreed with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has at the start of the day from 15 to 18. Less than 1 in 20 (3%) disagreed, with also less than 1 in 20 (4%) neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

#### Public focus groups/depth interviews

- 1.11 When polled<sup>2</sup>, 24 of the 40 public focus group attendees and depth interviewees strongly agreed with the proposed ORP, 14 tended to agree and two neither agreed nor disagreed. No-one opposed the Plan.

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<sup>2</sup>A series of 'polls' were run during the sessions and due to the interdependencies between Proposals 1 and 2 (that is, the former cannot be achieved without implementing the latter), participants were asked to cast their 'votes' after being given the background information on both, rather than take them in isolation. This ensured they were fully informed that increasing the number of 'core' fire engines available at the start of each day would only be possible by making changes elsewhere in the Service.

- 1.12 In discussion, the ORP was considered on its own merit and generally supported as a means of increasing the number of fire engines guaranteed to be available at the start of each day, of improving coverage across the city and county, and of introducing a necessary degree of flexibility to the Service overall through the introduction of resilience appliances. People were also pleased to see the commitment of on-call firefighters being better recognised and “valued” through salaried contracts, which they also suggested would aid both recruitment and retention in light of reduced incidents and thus (under the current system) reduced pay.
- 1.13 Despite the general positivity about the ORP, there were concerns around: potential on-call recruitment difficulties and whether the proposed salaried contracts would be sufficiently attractive to overcome these; the potentially detrimental impact of the more ad-hoc ‘flexible crewing pool’ on team cohesion; and whether the delayed turn-out time for the resilience appliances will work in practice given the reductions being made in some areas of the Service.

### Stakeholder webinar

- 1.14 Of the 17 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 11 agreed with the proposal, two disagreed and two neither agreed nor disagreed. There were also two ‘don’t knows’.
- 1.15 In discussion, a number of clarification questions were asked around the specifics of the ORP, particularly in relation to the recruitment of on-call staff (and the reasons why it might be problematic), the proposed new on-call contracts, and attendance times.
- 1.16 The main issues raised in relation to this proposal were around: how a “guaranteed service” can be provided in view of the difficulties involved in recruiting and retaining on-call staff; whether the proposed new on-call contract will be as effective as ESFRS hopes; service-wide resilience in the event of a large and/or protracted incident and to ensure adequate cover for ‘non-core’ stations; and ensuring team cohesion within the flexible crewing team.

### Submissions

- 1.17 The ORR was supported in some submissions as an attempt to improve county-wide FRS coverage, but opposed in others as disingenuous. Indeed, it was said that the promise of 18 immediate response fire engines at the start of each day under is “misleading” as only 14 will be crewed by on-station firefighters responding to an incident within a minute. The remaining would be either be available on a five-minute turnout or share/jump crewed with an aerial ladder platform and so potentially unavailable.

### Proposal 2: Changes to day-crewed fire stations

***ESFRS is proposing to change to ‘day-only’ crewing at its current ‘day-crewed’ fire stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield***

### Open consultation questionnaire

- 1.18 Overall, around a quarter (24%) of respondents agreed with the proposal to change the crewing system from ‘day-crewed’ to ‘day-only’ at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, whilst 7 in 10 (70%) disagreed and just over 1 in 20 (6%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

## Residents' Survey

- 1.19 Overall, three fifths (60%) of residents agreed with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, whilst 3 in 10 (30%) disagreed, and 1 in 10 (10%) neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 1.20 Residents living in Rother were significantly less likely to agree with changing the crewing system, compared to the average.

## Public focus groups/depth interviews

- 1.21 Eight of the 40 public focus group attendees and depth interviewees strongly agreed with Proposal 2, and a further 24 tended to agree. Four neither agreed nor disagreed, three tended to disagree and there was one 'don't know'.
- 1.22 There was widespread agreement that the proposed crewing change is acceptable to facilitate the coverage improvements identified in Proposal 1 – the transfer of resources to prevention and protection and the 'flexible crewing pool' in particular. It was also said, though, that this proposal will be difficult to 'sell' to the wider public if taken in isolation without understanding its potential benefits.
- 1.23 As for concerns, longer response times were an inevitable worry for many, and several sought clarification on what exactly 'slightly longer' means in this context and about the exact implications of additional minutes on fire spread. Other worries were around: the loss of experienced full-time firefighters from local areas to the 'flexible crewing pool'; the potential for difficulties as a result of separating day- and night-time crews; and the impact of population growth on future incident numbers.
- 1.24 In terms of the impact on staff and staffing, there was some debate as to whether the proposed change would be beneficial or detrimental. A few people considered the day-only system to be a marked improvement on day-crewing inasmuch as the latter appears over-burdensome in terms of hours worked, whereas others foresaw some "push-back" from existing day-crew firefighters who might be reluctant or unable to change from a system they are familiar with and have built their lives around – particularly considering they would eventually lose a significant proportion of their income (£6,000) through no longer being eligible for a housing allowance.
- 1.25 Furthermore, there was disagreement as to whether day-only staffing would be better for recruitment purposes: some felt it would assist in attracting a more diverse workforce to the full-time Service (mothers of school-age children for example), whereas others worried that on-call recruitment may be more difficult if asking for evening and weekend cover only.
- 1.26 Finally, the importance of regularly monitoring the impact of any change such as this was stressed.

## Stakeholder webinar

- 1.27 Of the 19 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, five agreed with the proposal, 10 disagreed (seven strongly) and there were four 'don't knows'.
- 1.28 In their questions and comments, several stakeholders referred to both proposals 2 and 3 together. For example, there was significant concern about the proposed change to crewing arrangements at, and the loss of the second fire engine from Crowborough Fire Station – primarily due to its location at the extremity of the county, its proximity to Ashdown Forest and the A26, and the town's significant population and development increases.

- 1.29 With specific regard to changing crewing systems from day-crewed to day-only, a few stakeholders sought clarification as to exactly what ‘slightly longer’ response times will entail, as well as why they are justifiable during the daytime on weekends. There was also some concern about low on-call firefighter numbers and availability; and the loss of full-time firefighter posts locally.

### Submissions

- 1.30 There was significant opposition to this proposal in the submissions. The most common reasons for rejecting the proposed change from day-crewed to day-only duty systems at the six relevant fire stations were: the prospect of longer response times during the evening, overnight and on weekends; the difficulties likely to be involved in recruiting sufficient on-call staff to cover those periods; and the possible impact on wholetime shift stations if having to travel into day-crewed areas (and indeed to the on-call areas currently covered by day-crewed stations) when there is no immediate response available. It was also said that the current day-crewed stations house most of ESFRS’ special vehicles, and that it will be difficult to ensure on-call firefighters’ competencies on all of them due to their availability and capacity.

***ESFRS proposes the following two options for change:***

***Option A (6 staff with 8.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 33 posts)***

***Option B (7 staff with 10.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 27 posts)<sup>3</sup>***

### Open consultation questionnaire

- 1.31 The vast majority (91%) of respondents, overall, preferred Option B (seven staff with 10.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 27 posts), whilst less than 1 in 10 (9%) respondents preferred Option A (6 staff with 8.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 33 posts).

### Proposal 3: Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines

***ESFRS is proposing to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations, and re-classify the three “maxi-cab” stations at Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations<sup>4</sup>***

### Open consultation questionnaire

- 1.32 Overall, just under 1 in 5 respondents (19%) agreed with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations, whilst more than three quarters (77%) disagreed with the proposal, and 4% neither agreed nor disagreed.

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<sup>3</sup>Please note that due to time constraints, these options were not discussed in the telephone residents’ survey or at any of the deliberative events (the focus groups and webinar).

<sup>4</sup>Please note that due to time constraints, the latter proposal was not discussed in the telephone residents’ survey or at any of the deliberative events (the focus groups and webinar).

- 1.33 Over a quarter of respondents (28%) agreed with the proposal to re-classify the three “maxi-cab” stations at Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations, whilst just under three fifths (58%) disagreed with the proposal, and more than 1 in 8 (14%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

### Residents’ Survey

- 1.34 Overall, just less than a third (27%) of residents agreed with the proposal to remove the second fire engine from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations, whilst three fifths (60%) disagreed, and around 1 in 10 (11%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

### Public focus groups/depth interviews

- 1.35 29 of the 40 public focus group participants and depth interviewees agreed with removing the second fire engines from the seven affected stations: 14 strongly agreed and 15 tended to agree. Six people neither agreed nor disagreed, four tended to disagree and one strongly disagreed.
- 1.36 The proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations was supported by a majority of participants across all six focus groups as a sensible redistribution of under-used resources. In particular, people were seemingly convinced by the statistics around critical incidents, low appliance availability and the fact that currently, 74% of incidents in these areas are dealt with by one fire engine (though there was a minority view that the latter figure is unacceptably low).
- 1.37 This is not to say, though, that there were no concerns or anxieties, for there were several – most notably in relation to second engine response times, particularly to the more rural areas served by the seven affected stations. Indeed, this was the main reason why some people opposed this proposal. The other main concern was a potential lack of resilience as a result of removing the seven fire engines, both in terms of attendance at incidents and for stand-by moves to cover ‘gaps’ across the area.
- 1.38 Other worries were that: it will be difficult to reintroduce the “*capital equipment*” once it has been disposed of, even in the event of rising incidents; increased use of back-up appliances from other areas could mean a lack of local knowledge among those attending incidents; and that future demographic changes may not have been sufficiently considered.

### Stakeholder webinar

- 1.39 Of the 19 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, only one agreed with the proposal, two neither agreed nor disagreed and 14 disagreed (12 strongly). There were a further two ‘don’t knows’.
- 1.40 Some of the issues raised in relation to Proposal 3 have been reported above for the reasons explained, but there was some worry about the loss of second appliances in isolation. Longer second engine response times from neighbouring stations were a concern, as was the fact the second engines under threat themselves provide back up to other areas (Crowborough to Forest Row for example).
- 1.41 While it was recognised that 74% of incidents in the affected areas are dealt with by one fire engine, this was considered too low a figure to justify removing resources that are required over a quarter of the time. It was also again suggested that the figures being used to justify the proposal are “*out of date*” – and that they may be somewhat misleading if they relate to incidents as opposed to mobilisations.

## Submissions

- 1.42 There was significant opposition to this proposal in the submissions, largely on the grounds that the second appliances offer significant county-wide resilience and allow swift safe systems of work at serious incidents. It was said that whenever these resources are available, residents in their areas get a faster two pump attendance and fire cover within five minutes if the primary appliance is unavailable. Furthermore, ESFRS is not required to make standby moves, thus maintaining cover on other station grounds that would otherwise be negatively impacted.

### Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings

***ESFRS is proposing to change the way it crews its stations in Hastings, and to introduce an additional fire engine to the town***

#### Open consultation questionnaire

- 1.43 Overall, around half (49%) of respondents agreed that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road, whilst around 1 in 3 (31%) respondents disagreed, and 1 in 5 (20%) neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 1.44 Just over half (52%) of respondents living Hastings agreed with the proposal, whilst a third (33%) disagreed, and 15% neither agreed nor disagreed.

#### Residents' Survey

- 1.45 Overall, nearly 9 in 10 (87%) residents agreed that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road. Around 1 in 20 (6%) disagreed, with the same proportion (6%) neither agreeing nor disagreeing.
- 1.46 Around one eighth (13%) of residents in Hastings disagreed with the proposal, which is significantly more than the overall average.

#### Public focus groups/depth interviews

- 1.47 Over 8 in 10 (33) of the 40 public focus group participants strongly agreed with the proposed changes at Hastings. A further five tended to agree, one neither agreed nor disagreed and one tended to disagree.
- 1.48 In discussion, it was clear that there was very little disagreement with this proposal: the vast majority of participants considered it something of a "no-brainer" in ensuring the right resources are in the right place. People were also reassured that both Hastings stations would continue to support each other and that, overall, the town would be adequately (some felt better) resourced.
- 1.49 There was some negative opinion in the Hastings and Rother groups, mainly around cover for areas to the east of Hastings (out towards Rye) during the evening and on weekends. With regard to Rye itself, it was said that the proposed removal of the second fire engine from the area would mean The Ridge having to travel there more frequently, which again led to concern about longer response times outside daytime hours.

#### Stakeholder webinar

- 1.50 Of the 17 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, seven agreed with the proposal, two neither agreed nor disagreed and 2 disagreed (1 strongly). There were a further six 'don't knows'.

## Submissions

- <sup>1.51</sup> The proposals for Hastings were mentioned 38 times in the submissions, with 21 respondents opposing the proposed crewing change at The Ridge (from wholetime to day-crewed) again on the general grounds of longer response times meaning greater risk to life – and more specifically as the station covers Hastings Old Town with its many listed buildings and “back to back” layout. The potential for longer response times was an issue not only for respondents from Hastings itself, but also for those from the more rural areas out towards Rye to which The Ridge responds currently.

## Proposal 5a: Changes to the provision and crewing of aerial appliances<sup>5</sup>

### Submissions

- <sup>1.52</sup> Many staff members and the representative bodies objected to the proposals for Aerial Ladder Appliances (ALPs), particularly that those at Eastbourne and Hastings would, in future, be share crewed with a fire engine at those stations. Their primary objection was that the use of either vehicle would put the other out of action, resulting either in potentially unsafe practices at high-rise incidents (if the fire engine is out and the ALP is unavailable) or delays at incidents requiring a standard appliance (if the ALP is out and the fire engine is unavailable). In light of this, many demands for ALPs to be single crewed were made.
- <sup>1.53</sup> In this context, there was particular concern around share crewing the Hastings ALP with the proposed second appliance at Bohemia Road in light of the fact the latter would likely be more frequently mobilised on evenings and weekends if The Ridge becomes a day-crewed station (thus incapacitating the ALP).

## Proposal 5b: Changes to the provision and crewing of other specialist appliances

### Submissions

- <sup>1.54</sup> There was worry among some respondents about losing 4x4 off-road vehicles from service, particularly that at Wadhurst Fire Station. Its removal was considered unacceptable, primarily due to the wildfire risk posed by Ashdown Forest and the rurality of the area and its difficult terrain. The retention of the swift water rescue team in light of climate change and more frequent flooding events was also strongly advocated in several submissions.

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<sup>5</sup>Proposals 5a and 5b were not formally consulted on as they relate to internal operational matters and therefore there were no resulting questions. However, they were frequently referenced in the submissions.

## Proposal 6: Demand management

***ESFRS is aiming to manage demand for its services in three low-risk areas (automatic fire alarms, lift rescues and trapped birds) to reduce the impact on its other work***

### Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)

#### Open consultation questionnaire

- 1.55 Overall, over 2 in 5 (43%) respondents agreed that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises, whilst 2 in 5 (46%) respondents disagreed, and around 1 in 10 (11%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

#### Public focus groups/depth interviews

- 1.56 29 of the 40 members of the public strongly agreed with ESFRS' proposals in relation to AFA activations. A further seven tended to agree, two neither agreed nor disagreed and two tended to disagree.
- 1.57 Most participants recognised (some through first-hand experience) that AFA activations are a significant drain on ESFRS' resources and so supported the proposal not to automatically attend those in low-risk commercial premises.
- 1.58 There was, though, some associated worry about non-attendance at activations outside "office hours" when there may be no-one around to make a confirmation call, and about the 4% of calls that turn out to be actual fires. Moreover, reassurance was sought that 'person risk' would be fully considered at locations such as nightclubs and shops with residential accommodation attached – and that the importance of 'heritage risk' would be recognised.

#### Stakeholder webinar

- 1.59 Of the 21 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 12 agreed with the proposal and seven disagreed. There were a further two 'don't knows'.
- 1.60 Despite the majority agreement, there were concerns around: the 4% of "real incidents"; fire spread in dense commercial/residential areas; and how operators of commercial premises will be informed about any change in procedure.

### Lift rescues

#### Open consultation questionnaire

- 1.61 Overall, just over 2 in 5 (42%) respondents agreed that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners time to resolve the issue in the first instance, whilst just less than half (48%) disagreed, and less than 1 in 10 (9%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

#### Public focus groups/depth interviews

- 1.62 33 members of the public agreed with ESFRS delaying responses to lift releases in certain circumstances, 24 strongly. Two people neither agreed nor disagreed, three tended to disagree and two strongly disagreed.
- 1.63 Those in agreement with the proposal considered it wholly appropriate that building owners/managers should attempt to resolve issues with broken lifts themselves in the first instance, instead of immediately

defaulting to FRS response. There was also a feeling that implementing a delayed response policy may encourage better equipment maintenance on the part of those responsible for it.

- 1.64 Those who disagreed or had worries about the proposed change were primarily concerned about the wellbeing of those trapped in lifts, even if they are not vulnerable or in significant distress. As such, they sought clarification around exactly how delayed the response would be given contractors are not often on-scene very quickly – and that some owners/managers apparently do not have any procedures in place at all.
- 1.65 Whatever is ultimately decided, it was considered imperative that any changes are widely communicated so that people know what to do and who to contact in the event of becoming trapped in a lift – and to ensure that building owners/managers can make alternative (or improved) arrangements if necessary.

#### Stakeholder webinar

- 1.66 Of the 20 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 10 agreed with the proposal, one neither agreed nor disagreed and seven disagreed. There were a further two ‘don’t knows’.

#### Trapped birds

##### Open consultation questionnaire

- 1.67 Overall, exactly half (50%) of respondents agreed with the proposal that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting, whilst just under 2 in 5 (39%) disagreed, and around 1 in 10 (11%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

##### Public focus groups/depth interviews

- 1.68 34 of the 40 public participants agreed with the proposal (24 strongly), two neither agreed nor disagreed and four disagreed.
- 1.69 There was strong agreement that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting: several participants commented that this should not be its responsibility, but rather that of animal rescue charities.
- 1.70 Some, though, caveated their agreement, stating that their support was conditional on animal rescue charities having the capacity to take sole responsibility for bird rescues. If they do not, then a delayed response approach such as that proposed for lift rescues was suggested – or at least some training and/or investment to increase other organisations’ ability to deal with such incidents. Indeed, those who disagreed with this proposal did so on the grounds that animal rescue charities almost certainly do not have the resources or capacity to respond to calls to trapped birds that would ordinarily have attracted an ESFRS response, particularly since the advent of the Covid-19 crisis.
- 1.71 Informing the public about what they should do in the event of finding a trapped bird was also considered essential if a policy change is implemented.

#### Stakeholder webinar

- 1.72 Of the 20 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 14 agreed with the proposal (eight strongly), two neither agreed nor disagreed and three disagreed. There were a further one ‘don’t know’.
- 1.73 Although there was a high degree of support for this proposal, there was some worry that members of the public or wildlife organisations may attempt risky bird rescues themselves in lieu of FRS attendance.

## Residents' Survey<sup>6</sup>

- 1.74 Overall, more than two thirds (69%) of residents agreed that ESFRS should stop attending to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises, delay responding to releasing people from lifts if the people are not vulnerable or in distress and no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting. Around one fifth (21%) of residents disagreed that ESFRS should stop attending these types of calls, whilst 1 in 10 (10%) neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 1.75 Residents living in Brighton & Hove were significantly more likely to agree that the ESFRS should stop attending certain calls in order to release capacity, compared to the average.

## Submissions

- 1.76 While there was some support for ESFRS no longer routinely attending AFA activations and incidents involving trapped birds and delaying its response to lift rescues in the submissions – many staff members, representative bodies and other stakeholders advocated a continuance of current policy. Their main reasoning was that: it can never be known at the outset whether an AFA activation is an actual fire and fire spread in dense commercial areas can be swift; confinement in a lift can be traumatic and so a swift response should be seen as a humanitarian gesture; and knowing the FRS will not be attending to a trapped bird might result in members of the public and animal charities putting themselves in danger while attempting a rescue.
- 1.77 It was also often said that these types of incidents enable firefighters to familiarise themselves with their built environments and interact with businesses, organisations and communities – and that bird rescues in particular are a positive means of real-life training with the ALP outside the 'emergency' environment.

## Proposal 7: Changes to the four-watch duty system

***ESFRS is proposing to make changes to the duty system at five of the six fire stations that are currently crewed on the traditional 4-watch system***

## Open consultation questionnaire

- 1.78 Overall, less than a third (29%) of respondents agreed with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at Preston Circus and Roedean (both in Brighton), Bohemia Road (in Hastings), Eastbourne and Hove. Just under half (48%) of respondents disagreed with the proposal, while more than 1 in 5 (23%) neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 1.79 Of the respondents from Brighton & Hove, less than a third (29%) agreed with the proposal, while almost two thirds (65%) disagreed, and around 1 in 20 (6%) neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 1.80 Of the respondents from Eastbourne, over half (56%) agreed with the proposal, while less than a third (31%) disagreed, and around 1 in 8 (13%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

## Residents' Survey

- 1.81 Overall, just under two thirds (64%) of residents agreed with the proposal for ESFRS to look at ways to change its 24/7 crewing arrangements, whilst more than 1 in 5 (23%) disagreed, and around 1 in 8 (13%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

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<sup>6</sup>Residents were asked about the three areas of demand management as part of one question.

### Public focus groups/depth interviews

- 1.82 Members of the public were asked whether, in principle, they agreed or disagreed with ESFRS reviewing crewing changes at five of its wholetime shift fire stations. 18 strongly agreed, 14 tended to agree and eight neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 1.83 For several participants, this proposal represents an internal matter on which that felt they could not, or indeed should not, comment. Others did venture an opinion however, with some suggesting that the current system seems somewhat outdated and inefficient (both financially and in terms of firefighters being able to work to the best of their ability by the end of their last night shift). As such, they supported at least a review of the system to look at more flexible alternatives.
- 1.84 If the decision is taken to make changes to the four-watch duty system, it was considered imperative that ESFRS fully engage its staff in the process at all stages – and that the Service continuously monitors the effectiveness or otherwise of any new arrangements.

### Stakeholder webinar

- 1.85 Of the 21 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, eight agreed with the proposal, four neither agreed nor disagreed and five strongly disagreed. There were a further four ‘don’t knows’.

***If the crewing arrangements are changed, ESFRS has offered two options:***

***Option A - a “Flexible rostering Duty System” at all five fire stations***

***Option B - a “Group Crewing System” at the three city stations<sup>7</sup>***

### Open consultation questionnaire

- 1.86 Just under 3 in 5 (57%) respondents preferred Option A, a ‘Flexible Rostering Duty System’ at all five fire stations, whilst just over 2 in 5 (43%) preferred Option B – a ‘Group Crewing System’ at the three city stations.

### Public focus groups/depth interviews

- 1.87 There was some disagreement as to the benefits or otherwise of a flexible duty system to firefighters themselves. Some felt that being able to plan shifts between themselves could result in a better work-life balance for staff, and that offering more flexibility may be what is required to attract a more diverse workforce to ESFRS. Others, though, could foresee difficulties in implementing changes to a system that has been in place for a long time – and which wholetime firefighters have based their lives around in terms of, for example, childcare and possible secondary employment.
- 1.88 There were also some worries around the mechanics of the flexible crewing system in particular: a few people suggested that without strong management it could lead to unfairness if the more desirable shifts are ‘cherry-picked’ by more senior or forthright staff members. Moreover, a loss of crew cohesion as a result of no longer operating a watch-based system was a concern for one participant.

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<sup>7</sup>Please note that due to time constraints, these options were not discussed in the telephone residents’ survey.

## Submissions

- 1.89 Staff and representative bodies in particular criticised the proposed move away from the four-watch duty system toward a 'less family friendly' flexible rostering system, which they said would also result in the 'destruction' of the watch system that *"is the bedrock of the fire service and contributes enormously to our effectiveness"* (staff member).

## Other issues: Building and home inspections

***ESFRS is proposing to review its response models (as above) to release resources for more prevention and protection work, and to have capacity for more inspections and visits***

## Open consultation questionnaire

- 1.90 Overall, around 4 in 5 (79%) respondents agreed that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety, whilst around 1 in 10 (11%) respondents disagreed, and 1 in 10 (10%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

## Residents' Survey

- 1.91 Overall, around 9 in 10 (88%) residents agreed that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety, whilst 1 in 20 (5%) disagreed, and just less than 1 in 10 (8%) neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 1.92 Residents living in Rother were significantly less likely to agree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety, when compared to the districts and city overall.

## Public focus groups/depth interviews

- 1.93 All public participants agreed that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety – 36 strongly.
- 1.94 The old adage 'prevention is better than cure' was frequently raised across all discussions. Indeed, the overwhelming opinion was that it is better to prevent incidents before they occur to improve both public and firefighter safety and economic efficiency – and the Grenfell disaster was noted several times as a reason for more building inspections in particular.

## Stakeholder webinar

- 1.95 Of the 21 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 18 agreed, two neither agreed nor disagreed and one strongly disagreed that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety.
- 1.96 It would seem that only those with reservations around more building and home inspections commented at this juncture though, primarily suggesting that any increase in prevention and protection should not be made at the expense of front-line response.

## Submissions

- 1.97 Home and building inspections were supported as an important means of prevention and protection in the submissions, though there were some comments that they should not be increased at the expense of front-line response services.

## Other issues: Finances and investment

*ESFRS is considering options for future council tax rises in light of funding uncertainties beyond 2020/21*

## Open consultation questionnaire

- 1.98 More than 4 in 5 (83%) respondents would be willing to pay more in council tax for their local fire and rescue service (ESFRS) next year, whilst 17% would not be willing.

## Residents' Survey

- 1.99 Around 4 in 5 (81%) residents would be willing to pay more in council tax for their local fire and rescue service next year, whilst around 1 in 5 (21%) residents would not.
- 1.100 Residents living in Eastbourne were significantly more likely to be willing to pay more in council tax for their local fire and rescue service next year, when compared to the districts overall.

## Public focus groups/depth interviews

- 1.101 All but three public participants said they would be willing to pay more for ESFRS next year (one said they were not prepared to and there were two 'don't knows').
- 1.102 The few who objected to a rise did so on the grounds that they already pay a significant amount of council tax – and even a few of those who would be prepared and able to pay more acknowledged that others would not be. There was also concern that other local services would request similar precept rises, further increasing affordability.
- 1.103 Many participants across the spectrum of views felt strongly that more money should be forthcoming from central government – and several urged ESFRS and ESFA to lobby for this. It was, though, acknowledged that the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the public purse makes it highly unlikely that further funds will be available in the near future.

## Stakeholder webinar

- 1.104 Of the 19 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, eight agreed (seven strongly) that they would be willing to pay more in council tax for ESFRS next year, five neither agreed nor disagreed and two disagreed. There were four 'don't knows'.

***If you are willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire service next year, what level of increase would you accept?***

***Option A - an increase up to 3% depending on what the Government allows***

***Option B - an increase more than a 3%<sup>8</sup>***

#### Open consultation questionnaire

1.105 Of the respondents who would be willing to pay more in council tax for their local fire and rescue service next year, just over half (55%) preferred Option A (an increase of up to 3% depending on what the Government allows), whilst just under half (45%) preferred Option B (an increase of more than 3%).

#### Public focus groups/depth interviews

1.106 Among the 37 public participants who were prepared to bear an increase, opinion was almost equally split between those who would tolerate an up to 3% rise (18) and those who would tolerate an over 3% rise (19).

1.107 Those who supported a more than 3% rise typically commented that the weekly increase would be 'less than a cup of coffee' and considered it a more than reasonable price to pay for an "essential" public service.

1.108 Those who supported a less than 3% increase did so on the grounds of affordability, for themselves and for others – and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on people's finances was raised in the context of keeping increases to a minimum currently.

#### Stakeholder webinar

1.109 16 of the 19 stakeholders offered a view as to the level of increase they would be prepared to tolerate: five opted for an up to 3% rise; four for more than 3%; and there were seven 'don't knows'.

### ***The extent to which ESFRS offers value for money***

#### Open consultation questionnaire

1.110 Around three quarters (74%) of respondents agreed that ESFRS offers value for money, whilst less than 1 in 10 (7%) disagreed, and around 1 in 5 (19%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

#### Residents' Survey

1.111 Almost 9 in 10 (88%) residents agreed that ESFRS offers value for money, whilst only 2% disagreed, and 1 in 10 (10%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

1.112 Residents living in Wealden were significantly more likely than average to agree that ESFRS offers value for money, compared to overall.

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<sup>8</sup>Please note that due to time constraints, these options were not discussed in the telephone residents' survey.

## Stakeholder webinar

- 1.113 Of the 19 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 12 agreed (seven strongly) that ESFRS offers value for money, four neither agreed nor disagreed and one disagreed. There were two 'don't knows'.
- 1.114 In discussion, there were questions and comments around the level of "back-office" and other non-operational savings considered, and the need to lobby central government for more funding.

## Submissions

- 1.115 Those who commented in the submissions generally felt that ESFRS does currently provide value for money, but some said that perceptions might change in future if the Planning for a Safer Future proposals are implemented.

### *Ways ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future<sup>9</sup>*

#### Open consultation questionnaire

- 1.116 Overall, the most common suggestions respondents made for ways ESFRS can make savings were: focusing on preventative measures through education and home safety visits; reducing its management roles; and promoting voluntary work.

#### Other issues: ESFRS' purpose and commitments<sup>10</sup>

***ESFRS has a strong purpose and clear commitments to help make East Sussex safer by:***

***Delivering high performing services by using its resources to achieve the best level of safety for people and business.***

***Engaging with its communities by using its trusted reputation to deliver educational initiatives and campaigns.***

***Having a safe and valued workforce by ensuring the people of East Sussex are safe and are provided with the right equipment, training and skills.***

***Making effective use of its resources by ensuring all its resources are managed effectively, improving its productivity and seeking new sources of income and funding.***

#### Open consultation questionnaire

- 1.117 Overall, more than two thirds (69%) of respondents agreed that ESFRS' purpose and commitments are appropriate, whilst just over 1 in 8 (15%) respondents disagreed, and 16% neither agreed nor disagreed.

<sup>9</sup> Please note that due to time constraints, this was not discussed in the telephone residents' survey or at any of the deliberative events (the focus groups and webinar).

<sup>10</sup> Please note that due to time constraints, this was not discussed in the telephone residents' survey or at any of the deliberative events (the focus groups and webinar).

## Other issues: Hearing about the consultation<sup>11</sup>

### Open consultation questionnaire

<sup>1.118</sup>Overall, most respondents (44%) had heard about the consultation through social media. Around 1 in 6 (17%) heard about it via a letter from ESFRS. Slightly fewer (14%) found out through ESFRS staff, whilst around 1 in 8 (12%) heard via a local councillor or through the ESFRS website.

## Other issues: Equalities impacts<sup>12</sup>

### Open consultation questionnaire

<sup>1.119</sup>An occasional response to the consultation questionnaire touched upon equalities matters: for example, one respondent felt that rural communities, whose populations are generally older, were being treated unfairly compared to the towns. Another comment referenced the importance of considering school safety, with the implication that ESFRS might need to consider the potential impacts on younger people. One respondent also stated that ESFRS already provides “wonderful” support to elderly and vulnerable people, and therefore should not be “meddled with”.

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<sup>11</sup>As above.

<sup>12</sup>As above.

## 2. Consultation Overview

### Background and commission

- 2.1 East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) is required to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) to describe how it will keep its residents, and those who work or travel through its area, safe over the coming years. The plan - called Planning for a Safer Future (IRMP 2020-25) - describes the main risks to East the area's communities, and how ESFRS plans to use its resources efficiently to reduce those risks.
- 2.2 The IRMP includes several proposals that will change the way ESFRS provides its services. In order to understand views on these proposals, a formal consultation was undertaken by the East Sussex Fire Authority (ESFA) between 24<sup>th</sup> April and 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020. ESFRS commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS) to undertake a programme of key consultation activities and to report respondents' views, gathered through an open consultation questionnaire, a telephone residents' survey, six online focus groups and depth interviews with members of the public and a stakeholder webinar. The following proposals and issues were discussed<sup>13</sup> across the various strands:
- Proposal 1: increasing the number of immediate response fire engines available at the start of the day from 15 to 18;
  - Proposal 2: changing the six current 'day-crewed' fire stations (Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield) to a 'day-only duty system';
  - Proposal 3: removing the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations, and re-classifying the three "maxi-cab" stations at Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations;
  - Proposal 4: changing the way the two Hastings fire stations (Bohemia Road and The Ridge) are crewed, and introducing an additional fire engine to the town;
  - Proposal 6<sup>14</sup>: managing demand for services in three low-risk areas (automatic fire alarms, lift rescues and trapped birds) to reduce the impact on ESFRS' other work;
  - Proposal 7: making changes to the duty system at five of the six fire stations that are currently crewed on the traditional 4-watch system;
  - Building and home inspections: reviewing response models to release resources for more prevention and protection work, and to have capacity for more inspections and visits;
  - Finances and investment: examining options for council tax increases;
  - ESFRS' purpose and commitments;
  - Hearing about the consultation; and
  - Equalities impacts.

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<sup>13</sup>These proposals are outlined in more detail in the relevant chapters.

<sup>14</sup>Proposal 5 was not consulted on as it relates to internal operational matters and therefore there were no resulting questions.

## The Consultation Process

### Commission

### Methodology

- 2.3 The consultation period ran from 24<sup>th</sup> April to 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Key elements of the consultation were undertaken by ORS as an independent organisation - for example, designing the consultation questionnaire, telephone residents' survey and presentation material for the focus groups (in conjunction with ESFRS); recruiting and facilitating/undertaking six deliberative online focus groups and seven depth telephone interviews; facilitating a stakeholder webinar; and analysing and reporting all responses to these consultation elements.
- 2.4 The eight-week formal consultation period gave the public, staff and stakeholders sufficient time to participate, and through its consultation documents and website information, ESFRS sought to provide people with sufficient information to understand their proposals and to make informed judgements about them.

### Quantitative Engagement

- 2.5 A consultation document outlining the issues and proposals under consideration was produced by ESFRS. Using this as a basis, ORS and ESFRS designed two questionnaires tailored toward different groups of people: an open consultation questionnaire and a telephone survey. Each questionnaire included the same core questions, as well as sections inviting respondents to make further comments and demographic profiling questions.

### Open questionnaire

- 2.6 The open consultation questionnaire was available online and in paper format between 24<sup>th</sup> April to 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020. The survey was available to residents, representatives from business, public and voluntary organisations and employees of ESFRS. In total, 836 questionnaires were completed, 819 of which were submitted online and 17 on paper (through the post). Most responses (826) were from individuals, but 10 valid responses were received from the following organisations:

- Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Tourism
- Conservators of Ashdown Forest.
- Ewhurst Parish Council.
- Laughton Parish Council.
- Lewes Town Council.
- Newhaven Town Council.
- Transport Futures East Sussex (NGO)
- WE Clark and Son: Jewellers – Lewes Ltd and Uckfield Ltd
- Wealden Liberal Democrats
- Wightman and Parrish Ltd

- 2.7 It should be noted that while open questionnaires are important consultation routes that are accessible to almost everyone, they are not ‘surveys’ of the public. Whereas surveys require proper sampling of a given population, open questionnaires are distributed unsystematically or adventitiously, and are more likely to be completed by motivated people while also being subject to influence by local campaigns. As such, because the respondent profile (as outlined in the full report) is an imperfect reflection of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove populations, its results must be interpreted carefully. This does not mean that the open questionnaire findings should be discounted: they are analysed in detail in this report and must be taken into account as a demonstration of the strength of feeling of residents who were motivated to put forward their views.

## Telephone Residents’ Survey

- 2.8 The second form of quantitative engagement was the telephone survey, undertaken with residents aged 18 and over. The purpose of the survey was to achieve a representative profile of opinions across East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove using broadly the same core questions as in the open consultation questionnaire. A short summary of the proposals was included to be ‘read out’ within the survey for the benefit of respondents who had not had the opportunity to read the consultation document or to otherwise find out about the proposals.
- 2.9 ORS social research telephone unit staff undertook 620 structured telephone interviews over a period of nearly 5 weeks beginning on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020, using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (‘CATI’) technology. The survey was conducted using a quota-controlled sampling approach, to ensure a broadly representative sample of residents aged 18 or over across the FRS area.

### Weighting in the telephone residents’ survey

- 2.10 The telephone survey was designed to provide an estimate of the views one would obtain if it were possible to survey all residents in the relevant population (in this case, the five East Sussex districts plus the city of Brighton & Hove). However, this relies on achieving a sample that properly reflects the population. In practice, due to imperfections in the practical application of any survey and sometimes by the design of the sample, there are usually a number of inherent biases that need to be addressed and corrections that need to be made to the sample design.
- 2.11 For this survey a decision was made that the sample should be designed so that the target number of interviews for the 6 districts should be large enough to allow for a reasonably robust comparison of views (approx. 100 interviews in each).
- 2.12 Subsequently, the demographic characteristics of the respondents were compared with data for the whole adult (18+) population. Statistical weighting was applied in order to identify and correct any under (or over) representation of any particular demographic groups due to ‘response bias’. The statistical weighting was applied to the results using data from the 2011 census for the profile groups Working Status and Ethnic Group, and 2017 Population Estimates, for Gender, Age and District populations.
- 2.13 After taking account of the weighting process, one can be 95% confident that the telephone survey results (at overall level) will be within +/- 5 percentage points (depending on the exact sample sizes and opinion splits on particular questions).

The results in the consultation questionnaire remain unweighted as it is not a random sample survey of a given population. Consequently, they cannot normally be expected to be representative of the general

population, as they indicate the views of those who choose to respond, rather than acting as a statistically reliable guide to the general population's views.

## Interpretation of the data

- 2.14 Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' categories, or multiple answers. An asterisk (\*) in the profile tables denotes a figure that is less than 0.05.
- 2.15 Where differences between demographic groups have been highlighted as significant there is a 95% probability that the difference is significant and not due to chance. Differences that are not said to be 'significant' or 'statistically significant' are indicative only. When comparing results between demographic sub-groups, overall, only results which are significantly different are highlighted in the text.
- 2.16 The example comments shown throughout the report have been selected as being typical of those received in relation to each proposal.
- 2.17 Charts are used extensively in this report to make it as user friendly as possible. The charts show the proportions (percentages) of respondents making relevant responses. Where possible, the colours of the charts have been standardised with:
- Purple/yellow shades to represent neutral responses (neither positive nor negative)
  - Green shades to represent positive responses (E.g. agreement)
  - Red shades to represent negative responses (E.g. disagreement)
  - Grey shades to represent 'other' and/or 'don't know' responses
- 2.18 The numbers on charts are percentages indicating the proportions of residents or respondents who gave a particular response on a given question.
- 2.19 The number of valid responses recorded for each question (base size) are reported throughout in parentheses. As not all respondents answered every question, the valid responses vary between questions. 'Don't know' responses have been treated as invalid when calculating percentages.
- 2.20 In cases where the base size is less than 50, an unweighted count has been used to show the number of responses, rather than a percentage.

**Table 1: Breakdown of target interviews and achieved number of interviews by district (count and %)**

District	Target number of interviews	Achieved number of interviews		Population (18+)		Weighted sample
		Unweighted Count	%	Count	%	
Brighton and Hove		110	18			
Lewes		101	16			
Eastbourne		101	16			
Wealden		108	17			
Hastings		100	16			
Rother		100	16			
<b>Total</b>		<b>620</b>				

## Qualitative Engagement

### Online public focus groups/depth interviews

- 2.21 A programme of six deliberative online focus groups was undertaken with a diverse and broadly representative cross-section of residents across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. ORS worked in collaboration with ESFRS to prepare informative stimulus material for the groups before facilitating the discussions and preparing an independent report of findings.

### Attendance and Representation

- 2.22 The focus groups were designed to inform and ‘engage’ participants with the issues set out in the IRMP. This was done by using a ‘deliberative’ approach to encourage people to question and reflect on the proposals in detail. The meetings lasted for two hours and were attended as below in Table 2.

**Table 2: Focus groups (area, time and date and number of attendees)**

Area	Time and Date	Number of Attendees
Brighton & Hove	Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2020 6:15pm - 8:15pm	3 (+ 4 depth interviews)
Lewes	Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2020 6:15pm - 8:15pm	7
Eastbourne	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 6:15pm - 8:15pm	5 (+ 2 depth interviews)
Wealden	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 6:15pm - 8:15pm	6
Hastings	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 6:15pm - 8:15pm	5 (+1 depth interview)
Rother	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 6:15pm - 8:15pm	7
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>40</b>

- 2.23 The attendance target for the focus groups was around 6-8 people, which was evidently not achieved in some areas. In order to boost the numbers, ORS undertook a series of depth interviews (four in Brighton & Hove, two in Eastbourne and one in Hastings) using exactly the same discussion guide as at the focus groups. Overall, the 40 participants who took part represented a broad cross-section of residents from the local areas, and particular care was also taken to ensure that people were recruited from the areas most affected by the proposals.
- 2.24 Participants were recruited by random-digit telephone dialling from ORS’ Social Research Telephone Unit (working from home as per the Government guidelines). Once participants been initially contacted by phone, all participants were then written to - to confirm the invitation and the arrangements; and those who agreed to come then received telephone or written reminders shortly before each meeting. Such recruitment by telephone is an effective way of ensuring that the participants are independent and broadly representative of the wider community. As standard good practice, people were recompensed for their time and efforts in travelling and taking part.
- 2.25 Although, like all other forms of qualitative consultation, focus groups cannot be certified as statistically representative samples of public opinion, the meetings reported here gave diverse groups of people from

East Sussex and Brighton & Hove the opportunity to participate. Because the recruitment was inclusive and participants were diverse, we are satisfied that the outcomes of the meeting (as reported below) are broadly indicative of how informed opinion would incline based on similar discussions.

## Stakeholder webinar

- 2.26 48 ESFRS stakeholders registered for an online webinar between 2pm and 4pm on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020: 38 attended on the day, with some of those who were unable to do so submitting questions or comments via email following the event. Attendees included an MP and local councillors, representatives of partner organisations (such as local councils, Sussex Police, SECAMB and Southern Water) and other fire and rescue services, and representatives of other local organisations (such as the University of Brighton, Ashdown Forest Conservators, Brighton and Hove Speak Out, the Chinese Association and Optivo).
- 2.27 ORS gave a presentation outlining the IRMP proposals and participants were encouraged to ask questions for clarification, both in advance and throughout the meeting itself. They were also encouraged to give their views via the online chat and Q&A functions, as well as via online polls that were designed to gather a sense of the balance of opinion among attendees on the proposals.

## Submissions

- 2.28 In addition to the formal consultation elements outlined above, ESFRS received 360 unique submissions, 152 standardised submissions<sup>15</sup> and one petition via email, letter and telephone from residents, staff, organisations and stakeholders, the themes from which were categorised and by ESFRS staff - and have been tabulated and summarised by ORS in this report.

## Nature of consultation

- 2.29 Accountability means that public authorities should give an account of their plans and to take the public's into consideration. This should involve fair and accessible engagement whilst reporting the outcomes openly and considering them fully. This does not mean that the majority views should automatically decide policy; and that the popularity or unpopularity of draft proposals should not displace professional and political judgement about what is the correct decision in the circumstances. The levels of, and reasons for, public support or opposition are of high importance, but are as considerations to be taken into account, as opposed to factors that necessarily determine authorities' decisions.
- 2.30 Above all, public bodies have to consider the relevance and cogency of the arguments put forward during public engagement processes; and not only count the numbers of people. In this context, it was helpful that the consultation programme included both 'open' and deliberative elements, to allow many people to take part via the open questionnaire, and whilst promoting informed engagement through the deliberative focus groups and telephone survey.

## Interpreting the outcomes

- 2.31 Importantly, the different consultation methods cannot just be combined to yield a single point of view that reconciles everyone's differences. There are two main reasons why this is not possible. First, the engagement methods differ in type: they are qualitatively different, and their outcomes cannot be just aggregated into a

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<sup>15</sup>This was essentially a pre-populated questionnaire response.

single result. Second, different areas and sub-groups will inevitably have their own perspectives on the proposals, and that there is no formula in the consultation process that can reconcile everyone's differences in a single way.

- 2.32 It is also important to recognise that the outcomes of the consultation process will need to be considered alongside other available information and professional judgement. Whilst the process highlights aspects of this information that people consider to be important, appropriate emphasis should be placed on each element.
- 2.33 Furthermore, the level of response to any consultation questionnaire always depends on many factors, such as how widely it was publicised, and how strongly people feel about the proposals. In this sense there can be no single 'right' interpretation of all the consultation elements and other information in the decision-making process.

## The report

- 2.34 This report summarises the feedback on the Planning for a Safer Future consultation proposals. In order to differentiate verbatim quotations from other information, they are in indented italics within text boxes. ORS does not endorse any opinions, but seeks only to portray them accurately and clearly.
- 2.35 ORS is clear that its role is to analyse and explain the opinions and arguments of the many different interests participating in the consultation, but not to 'make a case' for any proposal. In this report, we seek to profile the opinions, views and arguments of those who have responded, but not to make any recommendations as to how the reported results should be used. Whilst this report brings together a wide range of evidence for ESFRS and ESFA to consider, decisions must be taken based on all the evidence available.

## A note on Covid-19

- 2.36 ESFRS recognises that undertaking a consultation during the Covid-19 pandemic may have felt challenging for some. However, this was fully considered by ESFA in taking its decision to do so, and additional funding was invested to ensure the programme of work was robust, comprehensive and meaningful.
- 2.37 ESFA has a legal requirement to produce an IRMP, and its current plan only covers 2017 to 2020. Essentially, a new plan is required now, and the Planning for the Future proposals reported here (if agreed by the Fire Authority in September) will form the basis of the new Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020 – 2025. Also, a recent external inspection report highlighted the need for ESFRS to balance risk and resources, and better demonstrate how the IRMP influences its prevention, protection and response activity.

Moreover, the Fire Authority was made aware that postponing the consultation would mean significant delay to the Service's ability to meet its potential future financial challenges. There is significant uncertainty around funding beyond 2020/21 since the Government is planning to review how much it spends on public services, particularly around how much of this goes to the fire and rescue service and how it is divided between each fire authority.

# 3. Open Consultation Questionnaire

## Introduction

- 3.1 The open consultation questionnaire (with an accompanying Consultation Document) was available online between 24<sup>th</sup> April and 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020, and as a hard copy that was available on request.
- 3.2 836 questionnaires were completed; 819 were submitted online and 17 on paper.
- 3.3 826 questionnaires were completed by personal respondents whilst 10 were completed by organisations.

## Duplicate and Co-ordinated Responses

- 3.4 It is important that engagement questionnaires are open and accessible to all, whilst being alert to the possibility of multiple completions (by the same people) distorting the analysis. Therefore, while making it easy to complete the questionnaire online, ORS monitors the IP addresses through which questionnaires are completed. A similar analysis of 'cookies' was also undertaken – where responses originated from users on the same computer using the same browser and the same credentials (e.g. user account).

## Profile Tables

- 3.5 The tables that appear without commentary below and on the following page show the unweighted profiles of the responses to the survey provided by personal respondents (please note that the figures may not always sum to 100% due to rounding).

**Table 2: Age – All Respondents**

Age	Number of respondents (Unweighted)	% of respondents (Unweighted)
Under 25	18	2
25-34	64	8
35-44	121	16
45-54	154	20
55-64	143	18
65-74	178	23
75-84	90	12
85+	8	1
Not Known	50	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3: Gender – All Respondents**

Gender	Number of respondents (Unweighted)	% of respondents (Unweighted)
Male	426	57
Female	325	43
Not Known	75	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4: Disability – All Respondents

Disability	Number of respondents (Unweighted)	% of respondents (Unweighted)
Disabled	87	12
Not disabled	665	88
Not Known	74	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5: Ethnic Group – All Respondents

Ethnic group	Number of respondents (Unweighted)	% of respondents (Unweighted)
White British	701	97
Not white British	20	3
Not Known	105	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6: Working for ESFRS – All Respondents

Do you work for East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service?	Number of respondents (Unweighted)	% of respondents (Unweighted)
Works for ESFRS	48	6
Doesn't work for ESFRS	711	94
Not Known	67	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 7: Districts– All Respondents

District	Number of respondents (Unweighted)	% of respondents (Unweighted)
Brighton and Hove	66	9
Eastbourne	40	6
Hastings	29	4
Lewes	205	29
Rother	72	10
Wealden	283	40
Elsewhere	12	2
Not Known	119	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 8: Respondent type– All respondents

Respondent type	Number of respondents (Unweighted)	% of respondents (Unweighted)
Personal	826	99
On behalf of an Organisation	10	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>100</b>

3.6 The following 10 organisations (including businesses) identified themselves as part of their responses to the questionnaire:

Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Tourism

Conservators of Ashdown Forest.

Ewhurst Parish Council.

Laughton Parish Council.

Lewes Town Council.

Newhaven Town Council.

Transport Futures East Sussex (NGO)

WE Clark and Son: Jewellers – Lewes Ltd and Uckfield Ltd

Wealden Liberal Democrats

Wightman and Parrish Ltd

3.7 Responses submitted on behalf of organisations can differ in nature to those submitted by individual members of the public if, for example, they represent the collective views of a number of different people or raise very specific issues. For this reason, ORS typically reports the consultation responses from organisations separately to those of individuals.

3.8 The main body of this chapter therefore focuses *only* on individual respondents' views; the views of organisations are covered in a separate section at the end of the chapter.

## Interpretation of the data

3.9 The numbers on charts are percentages indicating the proportions of respondents who gave a particular response on a given question.

3.10 The number of valid responses recorded for each question (base size) are reported throughout. As not all respondents answered every question, the number of valid responses varies between questions ('don't know' responses have been treated as invalid).

3.11 In cases where the base size is less than 50, an unweighted count has been used to describe the number of responses, rather than a percentage, in order to avoid a misleading interpretation.

## Individual responses to the consultation questionnaire: main findings<sup>16</sup>

### Proposal 1: Operational Response Review (ORR)

*ESFRS plans to improve its operational resilience by increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of each day from 15 to 18.*

<sup>16</sup>The preambles included in the questionnaire to describe the proposals have been included ahead of the questionnaire results.

The Service will plan for:

**18 immediate response fire engines** - these have the biggest impact when looking at community risk, population and density, overall activity, response to critical incidents etc.; and

**A further 6 fire engines for added resilience** - these will also respond to incidents, but will be allowed a longer amount of time to respond if needed. This will enable the Service to draw in additional firefighters (including on-call firefighters) to crew fire engines when required.

The data shows that this change would result in improvements to the number of people, households and incidents reached within ESFRS' attendance standards.

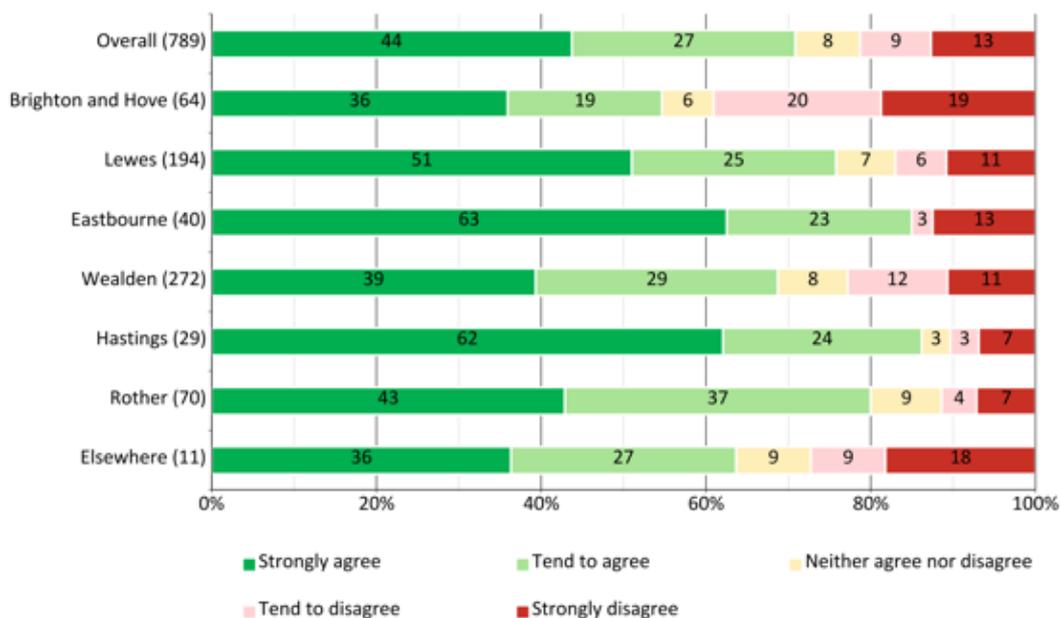
In order to support and assist the delivery of these new arrangements, ESFRS is proposing two new approaches:

A **'flexible crewing pool'**, made up of firefighters who will be posted to stations as needed to cover for staff absences, which will be resourced by further changes we are proposing to make; notably through the new duty system proposals (see proposals 2 and 7). This concept is widely used across the UK Fire and Rescue Service; and

New **salaried contracts for on-call firefighters** to improve their availability. On-call firefighters are currently paid a small retaining fee, but most of their pay comes from attending calls. These have reduced significantly in number, which has led to problems finding enough on-call staff to keep fire engines available to respond. The new contracts would offer a guaranteed monthly salary.

To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?

Figure 1: To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?



Base: (Number of respondents shown in brackets)

- 3.12 Figure 1 shows that, overall, more than two thirds (71%) of respondents to the consultation questionnaire agreed with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day, with more than 2 in 5 (44%) respondents strongly agreeing.
- 3.13 Four fifths or more of respondents living in Hastings (86%) Eastbourne (85%) and Rother (80%) agreed with the proposal, whilst around three quarters of respondents in Lewes (76%), and just over two thirds (69%) of respondents in Wealden agreed. Just over half (55%) of respondents in Brighton & Hove agreed with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines.
- 3.14 Overall, around 1 in 5 (21%) respondents disagreed with the proposal, whilst around 1 in 8 (13%) strongly disagreed. The district with the highest levels of disagreement with the proposal was Brighton and Hove (39%). More than 1 in 5 (23%) respondents living in Wealden disagreed, whilst over an eighth of respondents in Lewes (17%) and Eastbourne (15%) did so. Around one in ten respondents in Rother (11%) and Hastings (10%) disagreed with the proposal.
- 3.15 Of the 11 respondents to the proposal living outside East Sussex, seven agreed with the proposal, whilst three disagreed.

## Proposal 2: Changes to day-crewed fire stations

*ESFRS currently has six “day-crewed” fire stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield. On these stations, firefighters work a combination of “positive” and “standby” hours over a 24-hour period. Positive hours are worked on the fire station and standby hours are worked on-call from a location within five minutes of the station.*

*ESFRS proposes to introduce “**day-only**” crewing at these stations, whereby full-time firefighters would be on-station during the daytime Monday to Friday, with on-call firefighters providing cover during the evening and at weekends. The key difference between the existing system and the day-only system is that the latter does not require full-time staff to provide extra on-call cover during the evening and weekends. This cover is provided by existing and new on-call staff.*

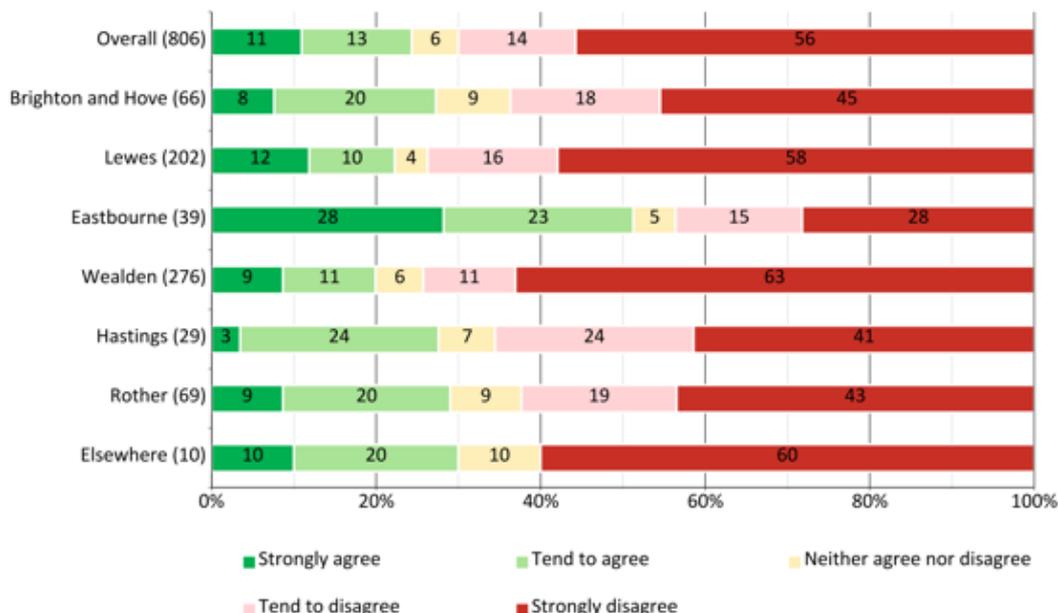
*Two alternative options to resource this duty system have been identified:*

**Option A** - one team of 6 staff guaranteeing the immediate availability of the fire engine for 8.5 hours of every weekday, with each firefighter working 5 days per week. This option results in a net reduction of 33 posts, providing the opportunity to reinvest staff into the “flexible crewing pool” (see Proposal 1), training and prevention and protection teams.

**Option B** - one team of 7 staff guaranteeing the immediate availability of the fire engine for 10.5 hours of every weekday, with each firefighter working 4 days per week. This option results in a net reduction of 27 posts, providing the opportunity (albeit reduced) to reinvest staff into the “flexible crewing pool” (see Proposal 1), training and prevention and protection teams.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?*

**Figure 2: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield?**

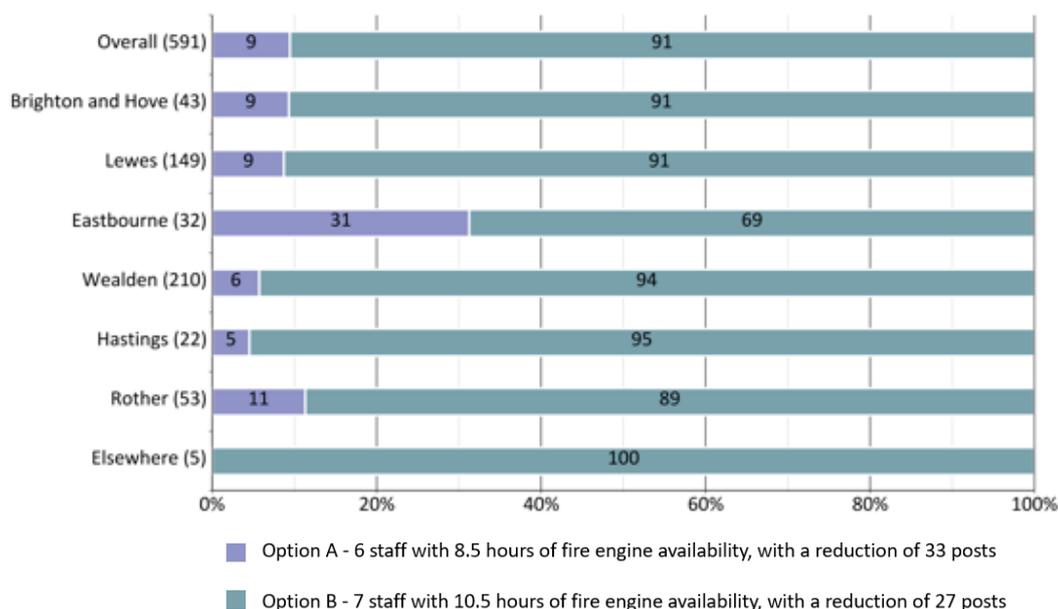


**Base: (Number of respondents shown in brackets)**

- 3.16 Figure 2 shows that, overall, around a quarter (24%) of respondents agreed with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield.
- 3.17 Around half (51%) of respondents in Eastbourne agreed with the proposal to change the crewing system, whilst over a quarter of respondents in Rother (29%), Hastings (28%), and Brighton and Hove agreed (27%). Around 1 in 5 respondents in Lewes (22%) and Wealden (20%) agreed.
- 3.18 Figure 2 also shows that, overall, around 7 in 10 respondents (70%) disagreed with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, with more than half (56%) of respondents strongly disagreeing.
- 3.19 Around three quarters of respondents in Lewes (74%) and Wealden (74%) disagreed with the proposal, whilst two thirds of respondents living in Hastings (66%), and just under two thirds (64%) living in Brighton & Hove did so. Around 3 in 5 (62%) respondents living in Rother disagreed, while less than half (44%) of respondents living in Eastbourne did so. Of the 10 respondents to the proposal who live outside East Sussex, three agreed with the proposal, whilst six disagreed.

*Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing system from ‘day-crewed’ to ‘day-only’ at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, if the crewing change is agreed by ESFRS, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?*

Figure 3: Which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?



Base: (Number of respondents shown in brackets)

- 3.20 Figure 3 shows that, whether or not respondents agreed with the proposal to change the crewing system, the vast majority (91%), overall, preferred Option B (seven staff with 10.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 27 posts), whilst less than 1 in 10 (9%) preferred Option A (six staff with 8.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 33 posts).
- 3.21 At least 9 in 10 respondents who live in Hastings (95%), Wealden (94%), Brighton & Hove (91%), and Lewes (91%) preferred Option B; and just under 9 in 10 (89%) respondents who live in Rother preferred Option B. More than two thirds (69%) of respondents living in Eastbourne preferred Option B (7 staff with 10.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 27 posts), as did all five of the respondents to this proposal living outside East Sussex.

### Proposal 3: Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines

*Nine of ESFRS' 24 fire stations have two fire engines, and a further three (in Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst) have a "maxi-cab" fire engine that have a larger cab size. The latter are also considered to be 2-fire engine stations.*

*Data shows that the second fire engines at day-crewed and on-call stations are not warranted: three-quarters of all calls in these fire station areas are dealt with by one fire engine.*

*ESFRS thus proposes to:*

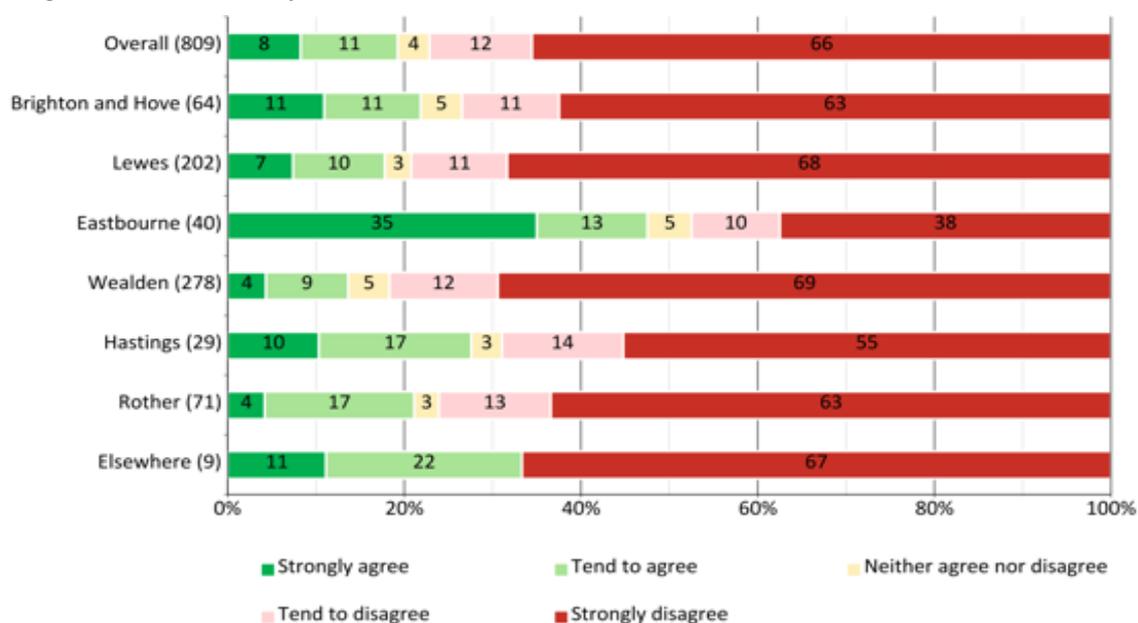
**Remove the second fire engines from the following stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield. On-call staff would be used to crew the remaining fire engines in the evenings, overnight and at weekends; and**

**Re-classify the three “maxi-cab” stations (Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst) as single fire engine stations.**

The public would still have a 24/7 response from these stations but if a second fire engine were required at an incident, it would come from a different fire station. However, this often happens already, particularly during the daytime when low on-call availability means these fire engines are only available between 10-50% of the time.

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?

Figure 4: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?

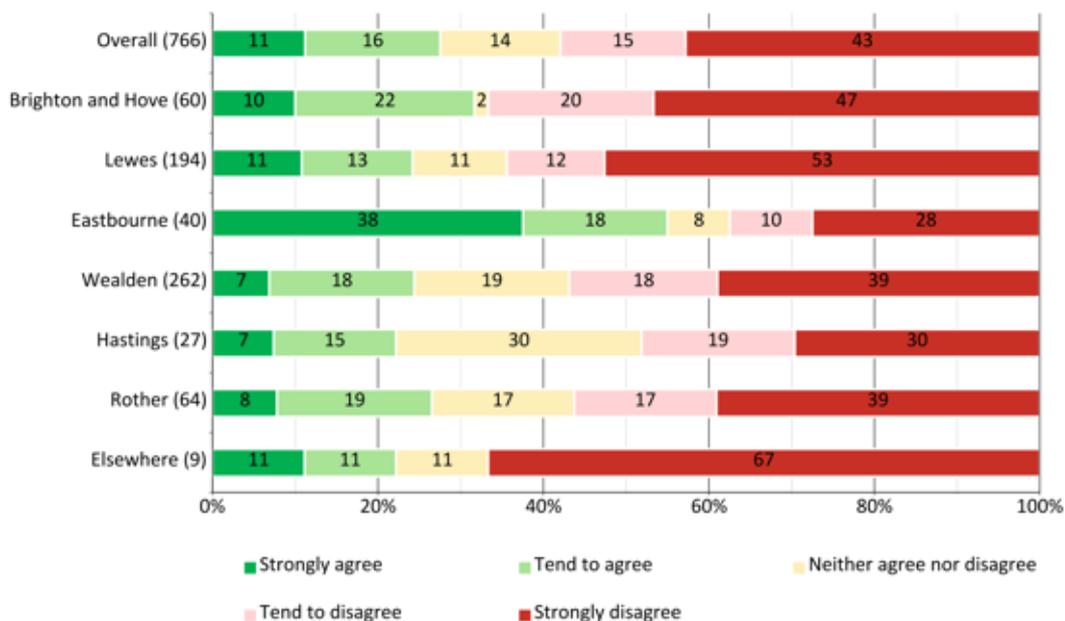


Base: (Number of respondents shown in brackets)

- 3.22 Figure 4 shows that, overall, just under 1 in 5 respondents (19%) agreed with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations.
- 3.23 Nearly half (48%) of respondents who live in Eastbourne agreed with the proposal, whilst over a quarter (28%) of respondents in Hastings agreed. Around 1 in 5 of respondents in Brighton & Hove (22%) and in Rother (21%) agreed with the change, as did just less than 1 in 5 (18%) respondents in Lewes and an eighth (14%) of respondents in Wealden.
- 3.24 Overall, more than three quarters (77%) of respondents disagreed with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations, whilst around two thirds (66%) of respondents strongly disagreed. Of the nine respondents living outside East Sussex, three agreed and six disagreed.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three “maxi-cab” stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst, as single fire engine stations?*

**Figure 5: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three “maxi-cab” stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst, as single fire engine stations?**



**Base: (Number of respondents shown in brackets)**

- 3.25 Figure 5 shows that, overall, over a quarter (28%) of respondents agreed with the proposal to re-classify the three “maxi-cab” stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations.
- 3.26 More than half (55%) of respondents living in Eastbourne agreed with the proposal, whilst around a third (32%) of respondents living in Brighton & Hove did so. More than a quarter (27%) of respondents living in Rother agreed with the proposal, as did just under a quarter of respondents living in Wealden (24%) and Lewes (24%). Around 1 in 5 (22%) respondents living in Hastings agreed with the proposal.
- 3.27 Overall, just under 3 in 5 (58%) respondents disagreed with the proposal to re-classify the three “maxi-cab” stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations. More than 2 in 5 (43%) strongly disagreed.
- 3.28 Around two thirds (67%) of respondents living in Brighton & Hove disagree with the proposal, whilst slightly less than two thirds (64%) of respondents living in Lewes disagreed. Less than 3 in 5 respondents (57%) in Wealden disagreed, as did a similar proportion in Rother (56%). Just under half (48%) of respondents in Hastings disagreed, whilst less than 2 in 5 respondents (38%) in Eastbourne did so.
- 3.29 Of the nine respondents living outside East Sussex, two agreed and six 6 disagreed.

### Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings

*Currently, both of Hastings’ fire stations (Bohemia Road and The Ridge) have one immediate response fire engine, which is available 24-hours a day.*

However, data shows that Bohemia Road has a significantly higher risk profile than The Ridge. For example, the Bohemia Road station has the second highest number of critical incidents across the ESFRS area, and has had the most life-risk fire incidents over the last 9 years. Moreover, The Ridge fire engine attends more incidents in Bohemia Road than it does in its own area.

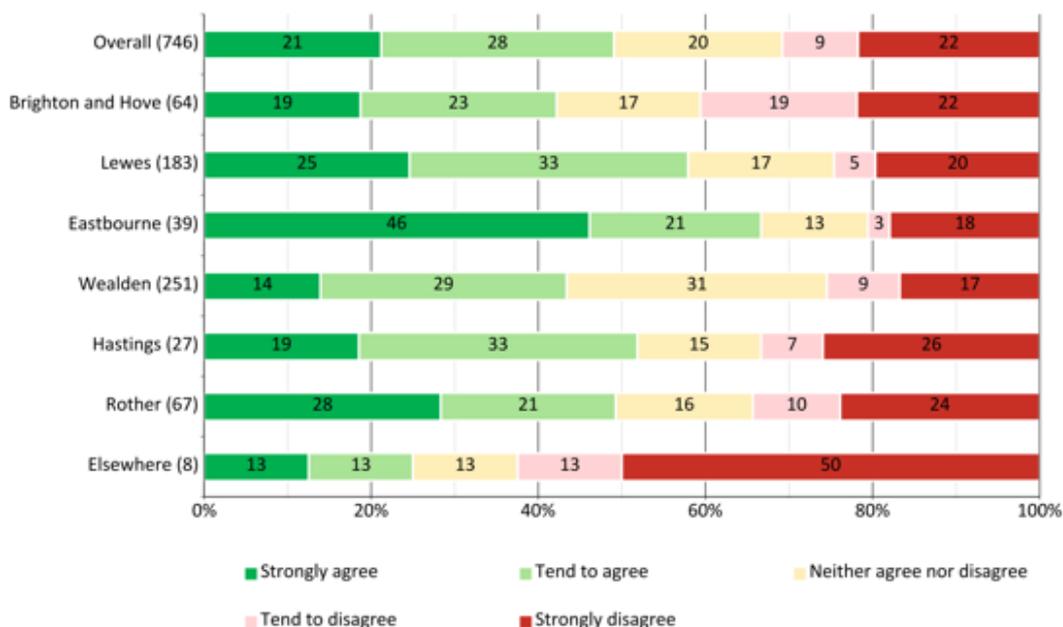
In light of this, the proposal aims to improve fire cover across both station areas and build more resilience in Hastings by:

**Introducing a day-crewed system at The Ridge**, whereby a fire engine would be immediately available during the day, and on-call during the evening and overnight; and

**Introducing a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road.**

To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?

Figure 6: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?



Base: (Number of respondents shown in brackets)

- 3.30 Figure 6 shows that, overall, around half (49%) of respondents agreed that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road, with around 1 in 5 (21%) strongly agreeing.
- 3.31 Around two thirds (67%) of respondents living in Eastbourne agreed with the proposal, whilst just under three fifths (58%) of respondents living in Lewes agreed. Around half of respondents in Hastings (52%) and Rother (49%) agreed, whilst around 2 in 5 respondents living in Wealden (43%), and in Brighton and Hove (42%) did so.
- 3.32 Overall, just under a third (31%) of respondents disagreed that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road, with more than 1 in 5 (22%) respondents strongly disagreeing.

3.33 Just over 2 in 5 (41%) respondents in Brighton & Hove disagreed with the proposal, whilst around one third of respondents in Rother (34%) and Hastings (33%) disagreed. A quarter of respondents (25%) in both Wealden and in Lewes disagreed, whilst around 1 in 5 (21%) respondents in Eastbourne did so.

3.34 Of the eight respondents living outside East Sussex, two agreed and 5 disagreed.

### Proposal 6: Demand Management<sup>17</sup>

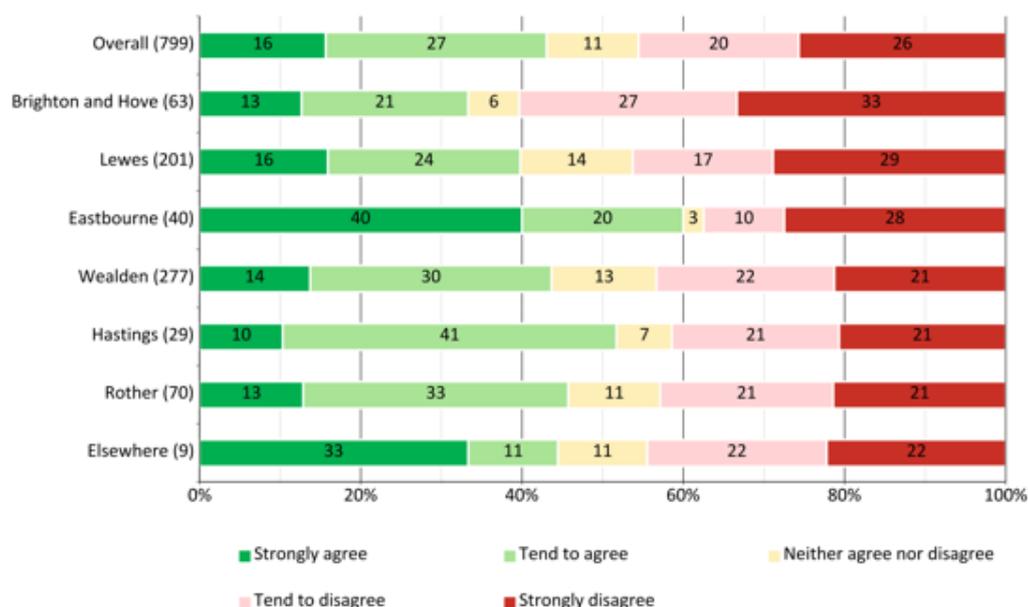
#### Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)

*ESFRS attends, on average, 9,200 incidents each year. Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) account for 34% of all these calls – and 96% of the calls initially categorised as AFAs turn out to be false alarms.*

*ESFRS proposes to **no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises.***

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises?*

**Figure 7: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises?**



**Base: (Number of respondents shown in brackets)**

3.35 Figure 7 shows that, overall, over 2 in 5 (43%) respondents agreed that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises. 1 in 6 (16%) respondents strongly agreed.

3.36 Eastbourne had the highest proportion (60%) of respondents who agreed with the proposal, and just over half of respondents (52%) in Hastings agreed. A slightly lower proportion of respondents in Rother (46%) and

<sup>17</sup>Proposal 5 was not consulted on as it relates to internal operational matters and therefore there were no resulting questions.

Wealden (44%) agree with the proposal; two in five (40%) respondents in Lewes agreed, whilst one third (33%) of respondents in Brighton & Hove agreed.

3.37 Overall, more than 2 in 5 (46%) respondents disagreed with the proposal that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises, whilst around a quarter (26%) of respondents strongly disagreed. Of the nine respondents living outside East Sussex, four agreed and four disagree.

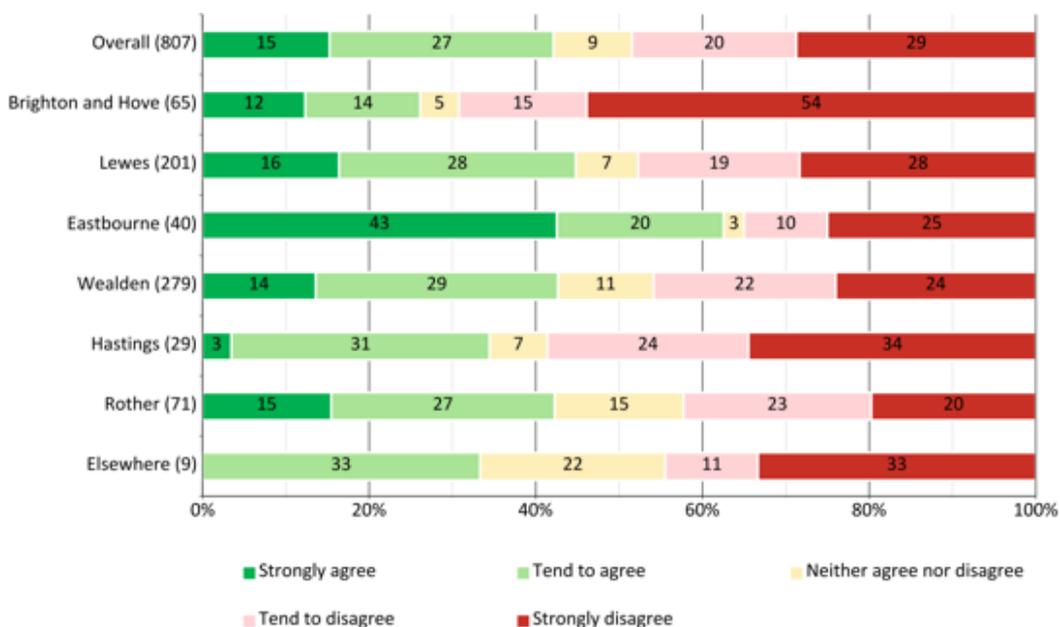
3.38 Three fifths (60%) of respondents in Brighton & Hove disagreed with the proposal and just less than half (46%) of respondents living in Lewes disagreed. Over 2 in 5 respondents in Wealden (43%), Rother (43%), and Hastings (41%), as well as 1 in 5 (38%) of respondents in Eastbourne disagreed with the proposal.

Lift rescues

*ESFRS is regularly called to release people from lifts that have malfunctioned. The Service wants to **engage with building owners** to ensure they are improving lift maintenance and have other arrangements in place to release people. It may also consider a delay in responding to some incidents where people are not vulnerable/in distress to give building owners time to resolve the issue.*

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance?*

Figure 8: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance?



Base: (Number of respondents shown in brackets)

3.39 Figure 8 shows that, overall, just over 2 in 5 (42%) respondents agreed that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners time to resolve the issue in the first instance. 15% strongly agreed.

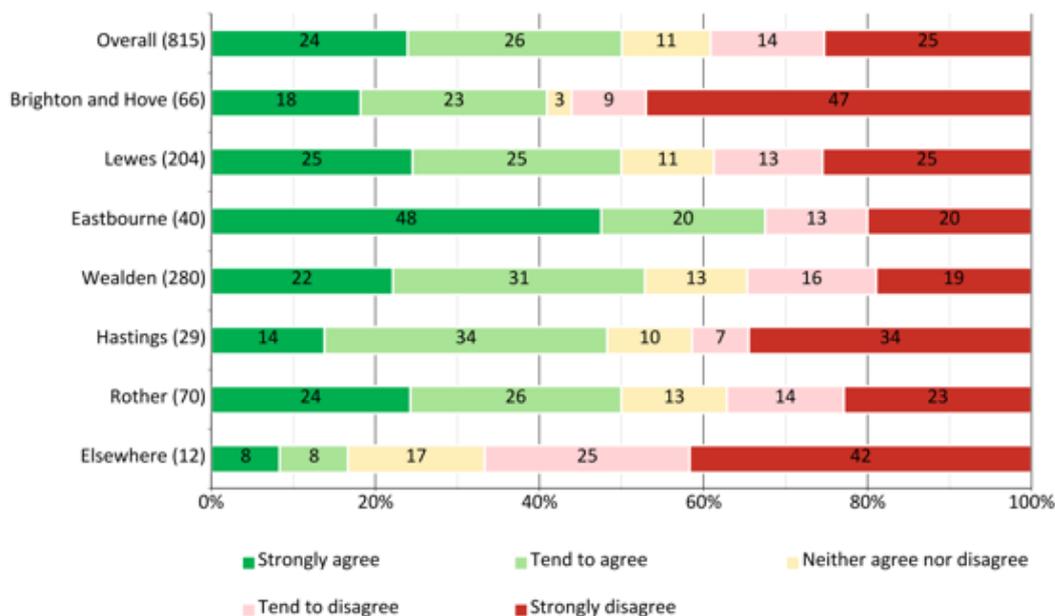
- 3.40 More than three fifths (63%) of respondents living in Eastbourne agreed with the proposal, whilst less than a half (45%) agreed in Lewes. Just over 2 in 5 respondents living in Wealden (43%) and Rother (42%) agreed, and around one third (34%) in Hastings and around a quarter (26%) in Brighton & Hove agreed.
- 3.41 Overall, just under half (48%) of respondents disagreed with the proposal that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners time to resolve the issue. More than a quarter (29%) of respondents strongly disagreed. Of the nine respondents living outside East Sussex, three agreed and four disagreed.
- 3.42 The highest level of disagreement with the proposals (69%) was in Brighton and Hove, followed by Hastings (59%). Less than half of respondents living in Lewes (48%) and in Wealden (46%) disagreed with the proposal, whilst just over 2 in 5 (42%) respondents from Rother disagreed. Just over a third (35%) of respondents in Eastbourne disagreed with the proposal.

### Trapped birds

*ESFRS works alongside animal charities to reduce the number of calls it gets about birds trapped in netting, though it still attends a small number of calls. These calls tie-up resources and restrict ESFRS' ability to attend incidents involving risk to human life, and it is often necessary to use specialist equipment, making this service disproportionately expensive. Therefore, the Service is proposing that it should **no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting.***

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?*

Figure 9: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?



Base: (Number of respondents shown in brackets)

- 3.43 Figure 9 shows that, overall, exactly half (50%) of respondents agreed with the proposal that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting: around a quarter (24%) strongly agreed.

- 3.44 Eastbourne had the highest levels of agreement with the proposal (68%), followed by just over half (53%) of respondents in Wealden, and exactly half (50%) of respondents in Lewes, and in Rother (50%). Just under half (48%) of respondents in Hastings agreed with the proposal, whilst around 2 in 5 (41%) respondents living in Brighton & Hove did so.
- 3.45 Overall, just under 2 in 5 (39%) respondents disagreed with the proposal that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting, whilst a quarter (25%) strongly disagreed.
- 3.46 The highest level of disagreement was found in Brighton and Hove (56%), followed Hastings (41%). Just under 2 in 5 (39%) of respondents living in Lewes disagreed with the proposal, with a similar level of disagreement (37%) in Rother. More than one third (35%) of respondents in Wealden agreed, and exactly one third (33%) of respondents in Eastbourne disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting. Of the 12 respondents who live outside East Sussex, two agreed and eight disagreed.

## Proposal 7: Changes to the four-watch duty system

*This proposal is about **changing the way ESFRS' stations at Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton) provide a 24/7 on-station response, through contractual and crewing arrangements of the firefighters who work at these stations.***

*The current full-time duty system requires a firefighter to work 2 day shifts, followed by 2 night shifts, followed by 4 days off. Although it has been in place for many years, there are now alternatives for delivering services in a more efficient way, without detriment to response levels.*

*Two options for change have been identified.*

### **Option A: a "Flexible Rostering Duty System" at all 5 fire stations**

*One team of firefighters plan their shifts between them a minimum of 6 weeks in advance, to ensure the fire engine(s) at their stations are always available.*

*This system would: improve the release of firefighters for training without affecting fire engine availability; reduce overtime and staff employed on fixed-term contracts; give the firefighters more flexibility and introduce a more family-friendly work pattern; result in a net reduction of 5 posts, which could be used for prevention, protection, training or resourcing the flexible crewing pool.*

### **Option B: a "Group Crewing Duty System" at Preston Circus, Hove and Roedean (the 3 City stations)**

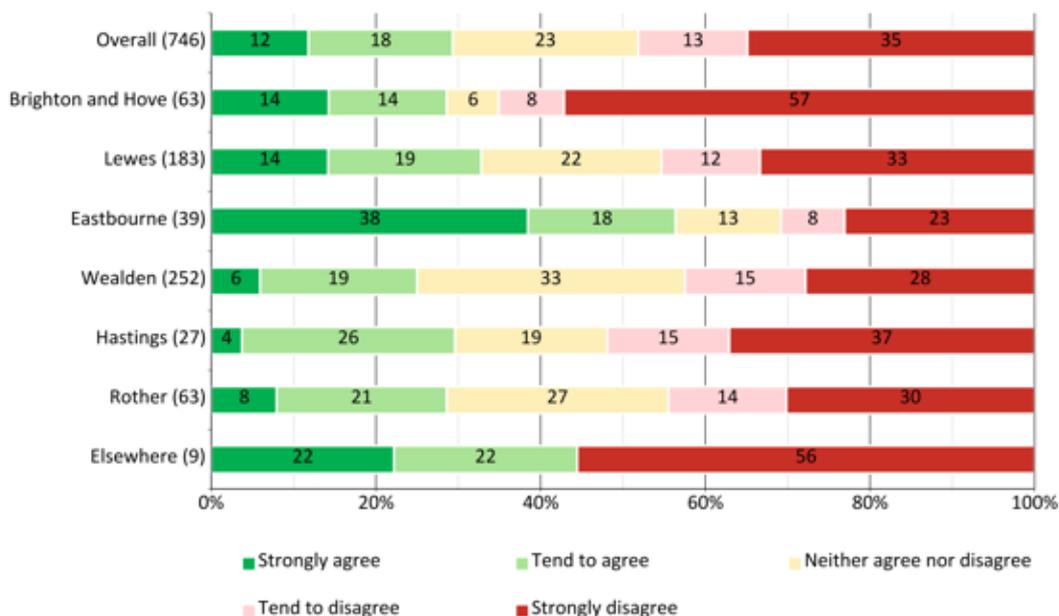
*"Group crewing" means that resources are used flexibly within a "group" of stations. Crews would continue to use the existing shift pattern (2 day shifts, 2 night shifts, 4 days off) – and depending on sickness or other absence levels, one or more stations would support the others in the "group".*

*This option would result in a net reduction of 4 posts, which could be used for prevention, protection, training, resourcing the flexible crewing pool or taken as savings.*

*Both options allow the Service to maintain its 24/7 immediate response and attendance standards.*

*Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)?*

**Figure 10: Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)?**

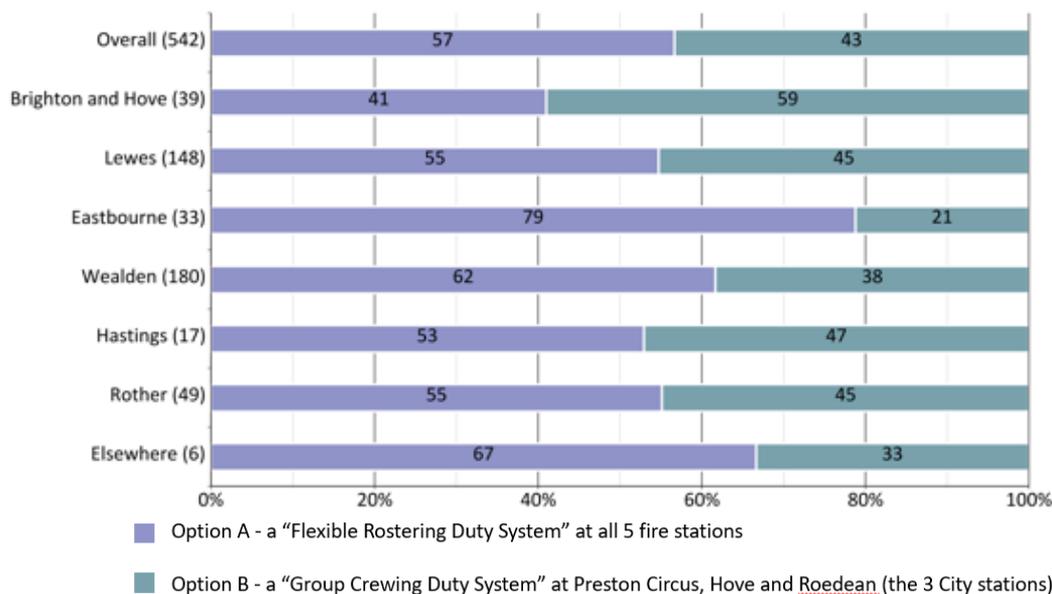


**Base: (Number of respondents shown in brackets)**

- 3.47 Figure 10 shows that, overall, less than a third (29%) of respondents agreed with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at Bohemia Road in Hastings, Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus in Brighton and Roedean (also in Brighton). Around 1 in 8 (12%) respondents strongly agreed.
- 3.48 The highest levels of agreement (56%) with the proposal can be found among respondents living in Eastbourne. A third (33%) of respondents living in Lewes agreed with the proposal, followed by 30% of respondents living in Hastings, with a similar proportion (29%) who agreed in both Brighton and Hove and in Rother. Exactly a quarter (25%) of respondents in Wealden agreed with the proposal.
- 3.49 Overall, just under half (48%) of respondents disagreed with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the stated stations, the majority of whom (35%) strongly disagreed.
- 3.50 Almost two thirds (65%) of respondents who live in Brighton and Hove disagreed with the proposal to change crewing arrangements, as did just over half (52%) of respondents in Hastings. Less than half of respondents who live in Lewes (45%) and Rother (44%) disagreed, whilst just over 2 in 5 (42%) of respondents in Wealden did so. Less than a third (31%) of respondents from Eastbourne disagreed to changing the crewing arrangements at the respective fire stations. Of the nine respondents who live outside East Sussex, four agreed and five disagreed.

*Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements at the 5 ESFRS fire stations listed above, if the crewing arrangements are changed, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?*

**Figure 11: Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements at the 5 ESFRS fire stations listed above, if the crewing arrangements are changed, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?**



**Base: (Number of respondents shown in brackets)**

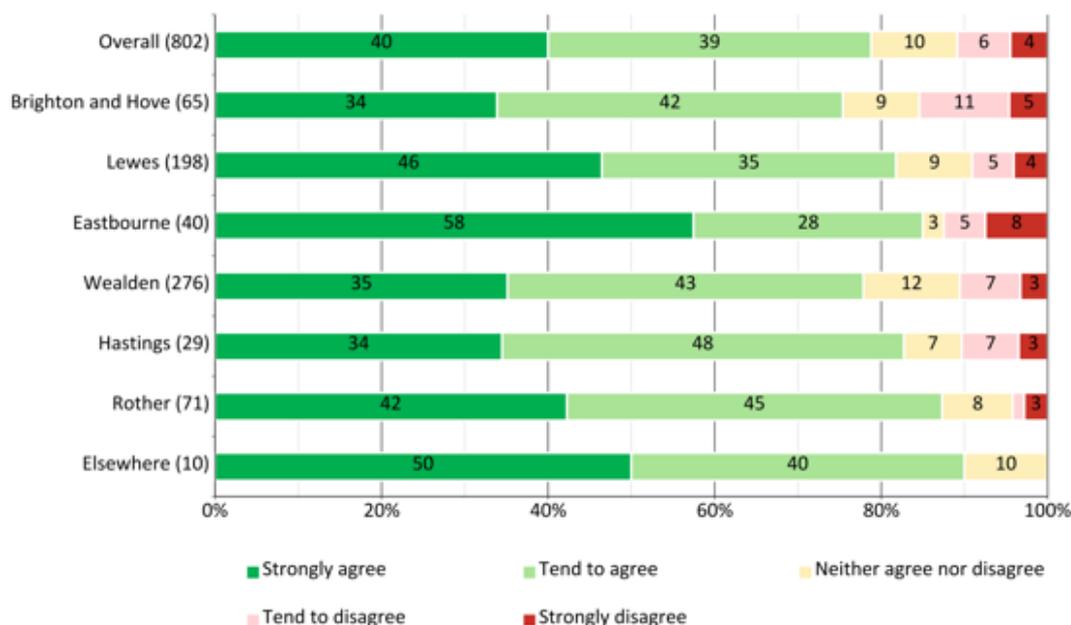
- 3.51 Figure 11 shows that, overall, just under 3 in 5 (57%) respondents would prefer Option A, a "Flexible Rostering Duty System" at all 5 fire stations., whilst just over 2 in 5 (43%) would prefer Option B – a "Group Crewing System" at the 3 city stations.
- 3.52 Preferences for each of the 2 options varies considerably between each district. In Eastbourne, almost 4 in 5 (79%) respondents would prefer Option A, followed by just over 3 in 5 (62%) respondents in Wealden. More than half (55%) of respondents in both Lewes and Rother preferred Option A, whilst around 2 in 5 (41%) respondents living in Brighton & Hove and nine out of the 17 respondents from Hastings did so.
- 3.53 Inversely, around 1 in 5 (21%) respondents in Eastbourne preferred Option B, and just under 2 in 5 (38%) respondents in Wealden preferred Option B. Less than half (45%) of respondents who live in Lewes and Rother preferred Option B, whilst around 3 in 5 (59%) respondents from Brighton & Hove did so. Of the 17 respondents who live in Hastings, eight said that they prefer Option B.
- 3.54 Of the six respondents living outside East Sussex, four preferred Option A, while two preferred Option B.

## Other issues: Building and home inspections

*One of the key areas of focus for ESFRS is to ensure buildings are safe and that fires are prevented. By reviewing its response models ESFRS will release resources to do more of this prevention and protection work, and to have capacity for more inspections and visits.*

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?*

**Figure 12: To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?**



**Base: (Number of respondents shown in brackets)**

- 3.55 Figure 12 shows that, overall, around 4 in 5 (79%) respondents agreed that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety. 2 in 5 (40%) respondents strongly agreed.
- 3.56 More than 4 in 5 respondents who live in Rother (87%), Eastbourne (85%), Hastings (83%) and Lewes (82%) agreed that more inspections and visits would help to reduce risk and offer the public assurance about fire safety. Just under 4 in 5 (78%) respondents in Wealden agreed, while exactly three quarters (75%) of respondents who live in Brighton and Hove agreed.
- 3.57 Overall, around 1 in 10 (11%) respondents disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety.
- 3.58 The district with highest proportion of respondents who disagreed with having more building and home inspections was Brighton & Hove (15%), followed by Eastbourne (13%) and Wealden (11%). One in ten (10%) respondents in Hastings disagreed, as did a similar proportion (9%) in Lewes. Less than 1 in 20 (4%) respondents in Rother disagreed with having more building and home inspections.
- 3.59 Of the 10 respondents who live outside East Sussex, 9 agreed, whilst one neither agreed nor disagreed.

## Other issues: Finances and investment

The average household in East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove currently pays £95.53 per year for their fire service — that is just £1.84 per week for a Band D property.

ESFRS’ revenue budget for 2020/21 is £39.7m and is funded from a government grant (8%), business rates (22%) and council tax (70%). Over 75% of our spending is on employees, and the vast majority of this is on our firefighters.

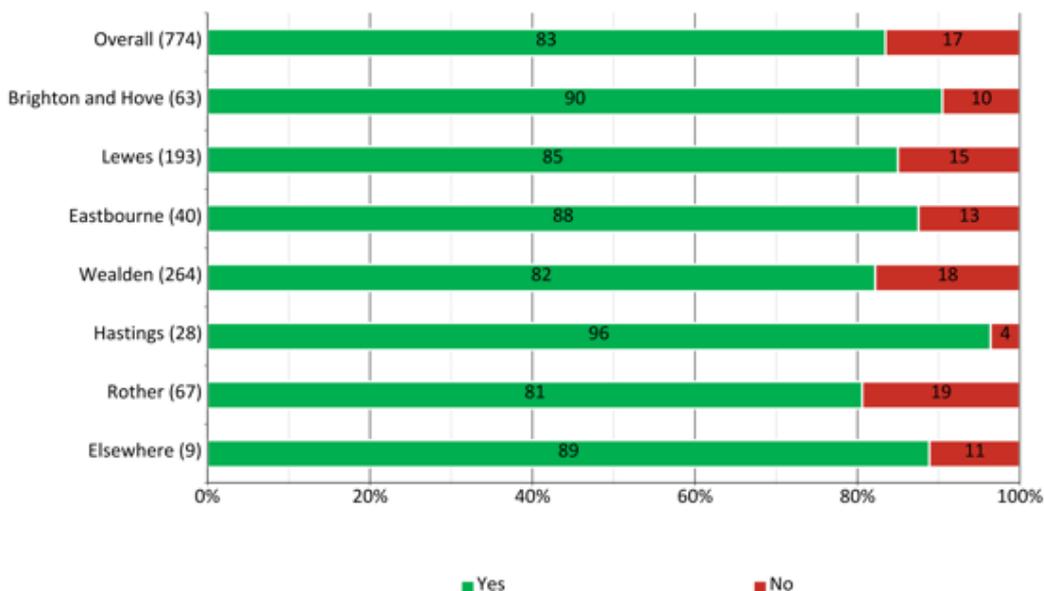
Due to significant uncertainty about ESFRS’ funding beyond 2020/21 (due to the Government planning to review how much it spends on public services) ESFRS have modelled a range of scenarios. These scenarios suggest that we may need to make new savings of between £0.7m and £3.5m by 2024/25 (in addition to savings of £9.8m made since 2010/11 and already planned for the period to 2024/25), in order to balance our budget.

ESFRS will also make further savings through its Efficiency Strategy, which will focus on a range of areas including: improving the way ESFRS procures goods and services; using investment in IT and estate to reduce running costs; reviewing all ESFRS’ support services; working in collaboration with other emergency services and public sector bodies where that can make its services more effective and efficient; and looking for new sources of funding, including different ways of delivering services, for example through a charity.

However, since 2010/11, ESFRS has also become much more dependent on the income it receives from council tax, and we have increased the amount we charge households by just under the maximum amount allowed by Government in each of the last four years (between 1.94% – 2.94%).

Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?

Figure 13: Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?

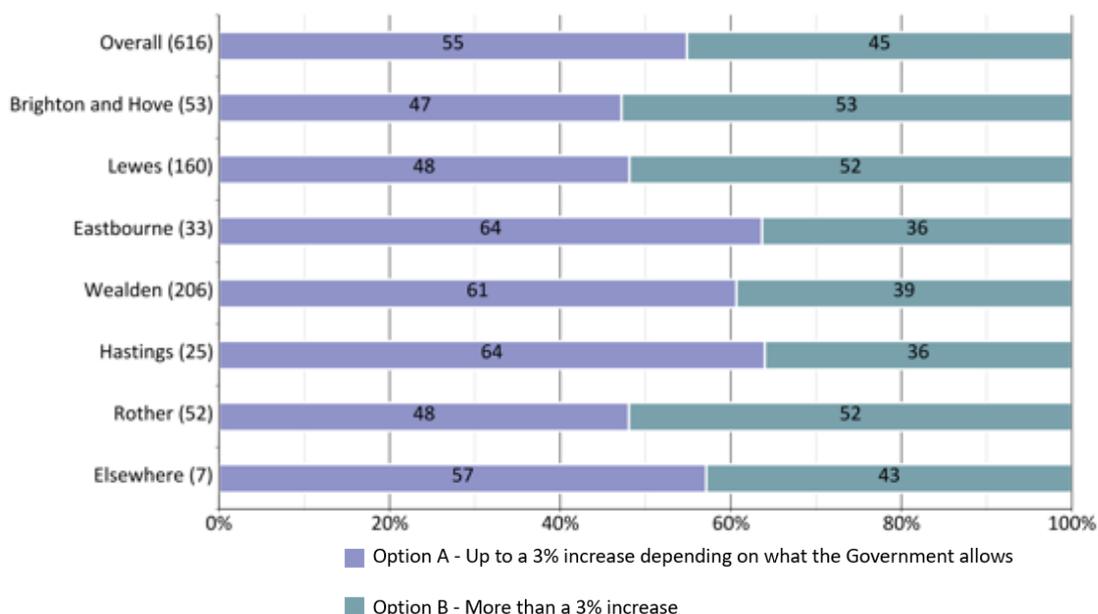


Base: (Number of respondents shown in brackets)

- 3.60 Figure 13 shows that, overall, more than 4 in 5 (83%) respondents would be willing to pay more in council tax for their local fire and rescue service (ESFRS) next year.
- 3.61 The district with the highest proportion (96%) of respondents who would be willing to pay more in council tax was Hastings, followed by Brighton and Hove, where 9 in 10 (90%) respondents would be willing to pay more. Just under 9 in 10 (88%) respondents in Eastbourne would be willing to pay more in council tax, as would more than 4 in 5 respondents living in Lewes (85%), Wealden (82%), and Rother (81%).
- 3.62 Inversely, less than 1 in 5 (17%) of respondents, overall, would not be willing to pay more in council tax to their local fire and rescue service next year.
- 3.63 Just under 1 in 5 respondents who live in Rother (19%) and Wealden (18%) would not be willing to pay more in council tax, whilst 15% of respondents who live in Lewes would not be, nor would 13% of respondents living in Eastbourne. Exactly 1 in 10 respondents who live in Brighton & Hove would be willing to pay, whilst just less than 1 in 20 (4%) respondents in Hastings would be.

*If you would be willing to pay more council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22), what level of increase would you accept?*

**Figure 14: If you would be willing to pay more council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22), what level of increase would you accept?**



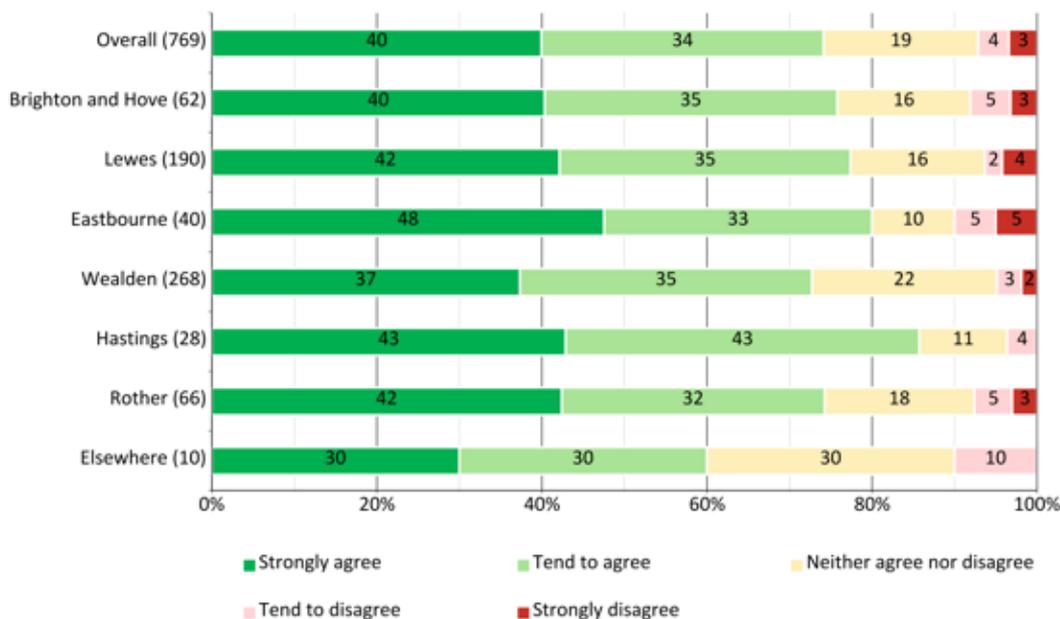
**Base: (Number of respondents willing to pay more in council tax shown in brackets)**

- 3.64 Figure 14 shows that, of the respondents who would be willing to pay more in council tax for their local fire and rescue service next year, overall, just over half (55%) preferred Option A (an increase up to 3% depending on what the Government allows), whilst just under half (45%) would preferred Option B (an increase of more than 3%).
- 3.65 Eastbourne and Hastings have the highest level of respondents who preferred Option A (both 64%), followed by Wealden (61%). Less than half (48%) of respondents in Lewes and in Rother preferred Option A, whilst a similar proportion of respondents living in Brighton and Hove (47%) did so.
- 3.66 Inversely, Brighton & Hove has the highest proportion (53%) of respondents who preferred Option B (more than a 3% increase), closely followed by Rother and Lewes (both 52%). Just under 2 in 5 (39%) of respondents

in Wealden preferred Option B, whilst over a third (36%) of respondents in Hastings, and in Eastbourne, would prefer Option B.

*To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?*

Figure 15: To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?

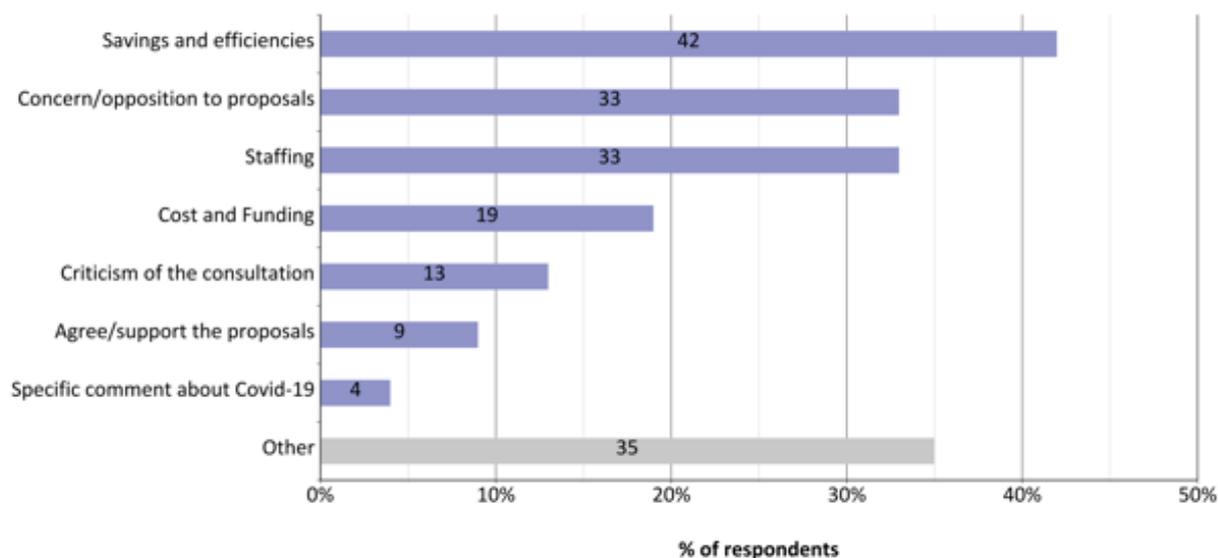


Base: (Number of respondents shown in brackets)

- 3.67 Figure 15 shows that, overall, around three quarters (74%) of respondents agreed that East Sussex Fire and Rescue service offers value for money. 2 in 5 (40%) strongly agreed.
- 3.68 More than 4 in 5 (86%) of respondents who live in Hastings agreed that ESFRS offers value for money, whilst exactly 4 in 5 (80%) of respondents who live in Eastbourne agreed. Around three quarters of respondents in the districts of Lewes (77%), Brighton and Hove (76%), Rother (74%), in Wealden (73%) agreed that ESFRS offers value for money.
- 3.69 Less than 1 in 10 (7%) respondents, overall, disagreed that ESFRS offers value for money.
- 3.70 Exactly 1 in 10 (10%) respondents who live in Eastbourne disagreed that ESFRS offers value for money, whilst less than 1 in 10 respondents in the districts of Rother (8%), Brighton and Hove (8%), and in Lewes (6%) disagreed. One in twenty respondents (5%) who live in Wealden disagreed whilst 4% in Hastings did so.

*In what ways do you think that ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future?*

Figure 16: In what ways do you think that ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future?



Base: (401 - Respondents who provided comments)

3.71 Figure 16 shows that, when respondents were asked about ways in which ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future, just over two fifths (42%) of respondents made comments that mentioned potential savings and efficiencies, for example:

General measures to reduce waste and inefficient practices, and to increase efficiency in general (15%);

Having more emphasis on prevention, education and providing information e.g. through safety talks and visits to homes and schools (9%);

Increasing or introducing charges, for example: charging the public generally for any inspections, training or consultancy provided (3%); and/or introducing charges for specific types of callouts or incidents e.g. repeated false alarms or calls resulting from negligence (7%), lift releases (4%) and wildlife inspections (2%);

More joined-up working with other agencies e.g. Police and health (5%) and with other Fire and Rescue Services (5%);

Making better use of technology e.g. improved IT systems, green energy and social media messaging (5%);

Better procurement processes e.g. to secure better-quality equipment (4%);

Involving firefighters in an increased range of tasks e.g. administrative work (3%);

Consideration of a merger with West Sussex FRS (2%);

Regular ongoing efficiency reviews e.g. on an annual basis (1%); and

Recovering costs from insurance companies after road accidents etc (1%).

*“Continue home safety visits and link with services that can spread the word. I work for a housing support services for over 65's [...] the home safety visits are a really useful tool and resource to tap in to”*

*“With regard to increasing efficiency, I believe that preventative measures are important, such as carrying out more building and home inspections, fitting fire alarms in all homes, and alerting and assuring residents on fire safety and ways of reducing risk, both face to face and through marketing campaigns”*

3.72 A third of respondents (33%) did not make suggestions about how to increase efficiency and savings as such, but rather expressed their wider concerns about the impact the proposals might have. Their comments typically covered:

General expressions of disagreement with the proposals (17%) or a view that services should remain as they are and/or be maintained at the current level (15%);

Concerns about increased risks and dangers resulting from crewing reductions (8%) and longer response times e.g. in remote areas (5%);

A view that the proposals should not be about money, or that the primary focus of the FRS should be on saving lives rather than increasing efficiencies (7%);

Concerns about population growth generally or particular areas with a high-density population (5%); and

There were various other, more specific concerns about a particular aspect of the proposals, raised by smaller proportions of respondents.

*“It’s difficult to see how any savings could be made without impacting on the service delivered, assuming these proposals happen”*

3.73 A third (33%) of respondents suggested making savings through changes to staffing, for example:

Generally reducing particular job roles (e.g. ‘management’) or ‘unnecessary’ staff numbers where possible (19%);

Reducing the number of higher earners in the FRS and/or reviewing their salaries (10%); and

Addressing the perception that there are currently ‘too many chiefs’ and not enough frontline staff (6%);

3.74 In addition, a number of respondents made generally positive comments about firefighters locally (6%). There were also some comments encouraging a greater use of volunteers.

*“Increase volunteer numbers especially that of fire awareness/prevention teams ... A new volunteer team for animal rescues similar to community first responders”*

*“Increase or decrease staffing levels dependent on actual need ascertained by incidents and accidents, population and likelihood”*

3.75 Around 1 in 5 (19%) of respondents mentioned specifically making savings relating to cost and/or funding. Many of them commented that the FRS should receive more funding, for example from central government, or that ESFRS should lobby for more funding (13%).

3.76 Smaller numbers commented on proposed changes to council tax: while a few were willing to pay more to support the FRS, others felt that council tax is already too high to justify any reduction in the service.

*“We should be lobbying central Government to make sure we have the funding we need to run the most effective service possible, without cutting corners and reducing staff and vehicles/equipment”*

*“Lobby the government, our MP and councillors to make changes to central government funding [...] The changes have to come from central government”*

- 3.77 Around 1 in 8 (13%) of the respondents who expressed a view on savings for the future, criticised the consultation, claiming for example: that more information is needed, that misleading or inaccurate statistics have been used, that the consultation is a veneer for a cost-cutting exercise, or that the timing should have been reconsidered in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

*“It is a disturbing that this is being chosen as the time to try to make cuts to their provision”*

*“Now is not the time to talk about making savings. It's smokescreen for just making more cuts to local amenities”*

- 3.78 Just under 1 in 10 (9%) of respondents generally agreed that the proposals will help with savings and efficiencies.

*“Certainly, by some of the proposals in this document. I think the current rostering system is outdated and inefficient, so would agree that needs to be modernised”*

*“I think ESFRS has done an excellent job in identifying ways of making savings and increasing efficiency in this consultation document”*

- 3.79 Of the ‘other’ comments that were made by just over a third (35%) of respondents, these include respondents not being confident enough to make additional suggestions, as well as simply expressing general doubt about the future finances of ESFRS:

*“This is difficult to gauge when I am not really conversant with the day to day operation of the fire service. I am dismayed at the pessimistic look at future finance and feel that the ESFRS should be working with other Fire Services to argue for a budget which does not force them into constant cost-cutting. Yes we want efficiency, but we also want our firefighters properly paid and working in tolerable conditions”*

- 3.80 The ‘other’ comments also included a range of suggestions made by fewer respondents, for example:

Selling Wadhurst Fire Station (which currently occupies a strategic development site for future community facilities and elderly/affordable housing) for a substantial profit, and re-siting the station in a different location e.g. Wadhurst refuse site;

Maintaining one large (for major incidents) and one small vehicle in lieu of having two fully equipped fire engines, or using smaller vehicles in general (e.g. as a first response);

Use of public fundraising events to engage with the public;

Providing training to local wildlife groups and offering them equipment so that they can safely respond to some incidents themselves;

- Addressing 'derelict' or 'redundant' stations such as that at Newhaven;
- Concentrating on the FRS's statutory role to reduce expenses incurred fulfilling specialist roles that aren't required;
- Better auditing of overtime claims e.g. to address concerns that firefighters are being paid at an enhanced rate to fulfil tasks that can be carried out more cheaply by support staff on lower pay;
- Use of on-call staff for prevention work and the extra crewing pool;
- Creating a charitable arm for ESFRS so the public can make donations to the service;
- Investing in the 'fire fighters of the future' by better engaging with and involving young people e.g. via a cadet service;
- Changing the rules that currently allow many fire officers to retire early on a full pension, when many are still capable of carrying out manual jobs;
- Focus on recruiting retained firefighters to become wholetime, to save on training and recruitment costs;
- Extend the current proposal on AFAs i.e. only respond to AFAs at the most high-risk domestic premises;
- Increase the council tax precept for higher risk areas and increase controls where possible e.g. for higher risk properties such as HMOs, of which there are many in Brighton (for example);
- Having in-house workshops for vehicles, and changing the turnover period for vehicles;
- Specific changes to staffing requirements e.g. removing the requirement for strategic managers to attend operational incidents and reducing pay accordingly; having a small group of specialists to act as 'gold commanders' at multi-agency events; having more distinct career paths so that those trained as fire safety officers cannot 'jump ship' into operational roles before the ESFRS has seen a return on its training investment;
- Eradicating 'expensive mistakes' such as the mobilising move to West Sussex;
- Consolidating stations that are close together and/or changing some stations to on-call only; and
- Using the planning system (e.g. Community Infrastructure Levy) to support the FRS by charging for new developments or changes of use.

## Other issues: ESFRS’ purpose and commitments

*ESFRS has a strong purpose and clear commitments to help make East Sussex safer by:*

**Delivering high performing services** by using its resources to achieve the best level of safety for people and business;

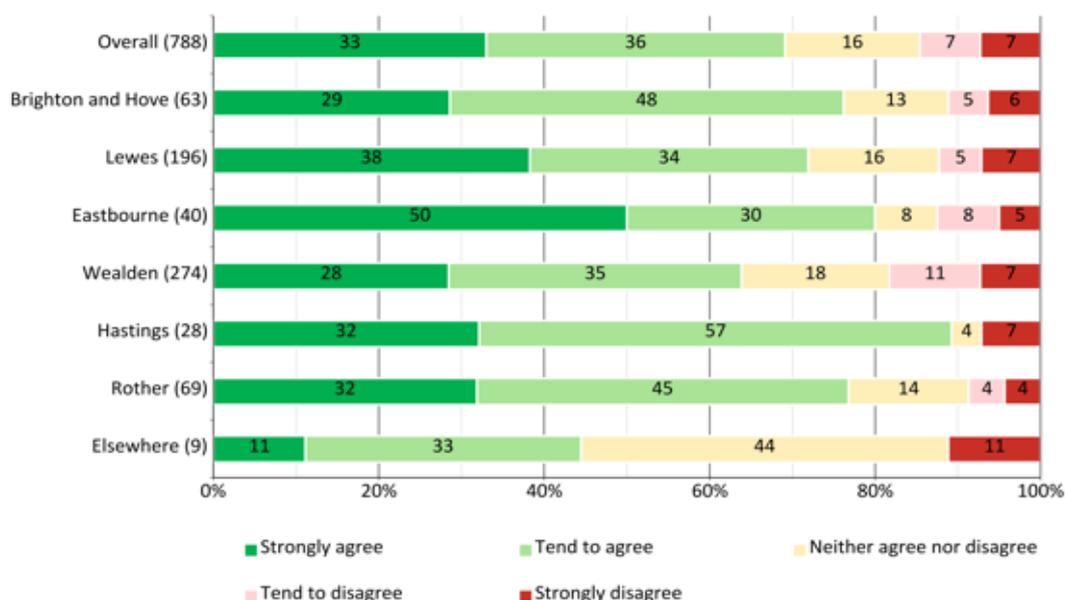
**Engaging with its communities** by using its trusted reputation to deliver educational initiatives and campaigns;

**Having a safe and valued workforce** by ensuring the people of East Sussex are safe and are provided with the right equipment, training and skills; and

**Making effective use of its resources** by ensuring all its resources are managed effectively, improving its productivity and seeking new sources of income and funding.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate?*

Figure 17: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate?



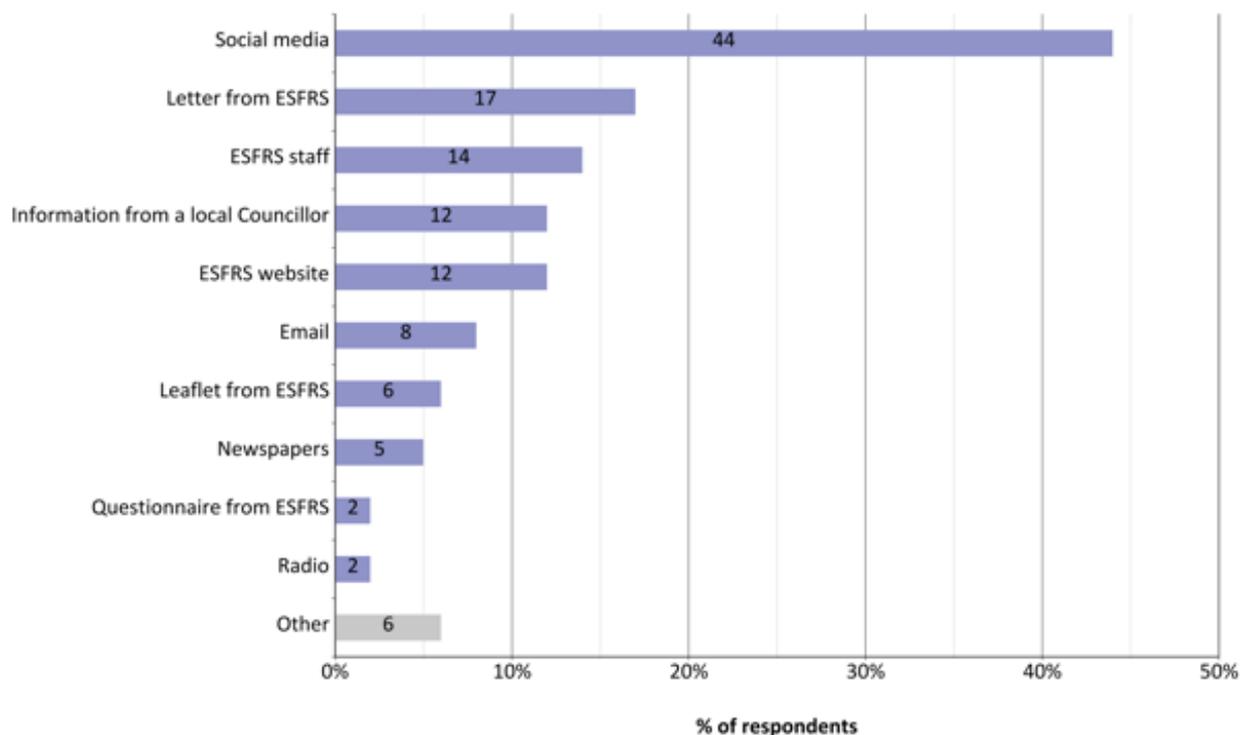
Base: (Number of respondents shown in brackets)

- 3.81 Figure 17 shows that, overall, more than two thirds (69%) of respondents agreed that ESFRS’ purpose and commitments are appropriate, whilst one third (33%) strongly agreed.
- 3.82 Hastings has the highest proportion of respondents who agreed (89%), followed by 4 in 5 (80%) respondents in Eastbourne. Just over three quarters of respondents in Rother (77%), and in Brighton and Hove (76%) agreed, whilst around 5 in 7 (72%) respondents in Lewes and just under two thirds (64%) of respondents in Wealden did so.
- 3.83 Overall, just over 1 in 8 (15%) respondents disagreed that ESFRS’ purpose and commitments are appropriate.
- 3.84 Wealden has the highest proportion of respondents who disagreed, followed by around 1 in 8 respondents in Eastbourne (13%), Lewes (12%), and Brighton & Hove (11%). Less than 1 in 10 respondents who live in Rother (9%), and Hastings (7%) disagreed. Of the nine respondents who live outside East Sussex, four agreed and 1 disagreed.

## Other issues: Hearing about the consultation

*How did you hear about this consultation?*

Figure 18: How did you hear about this consultation?

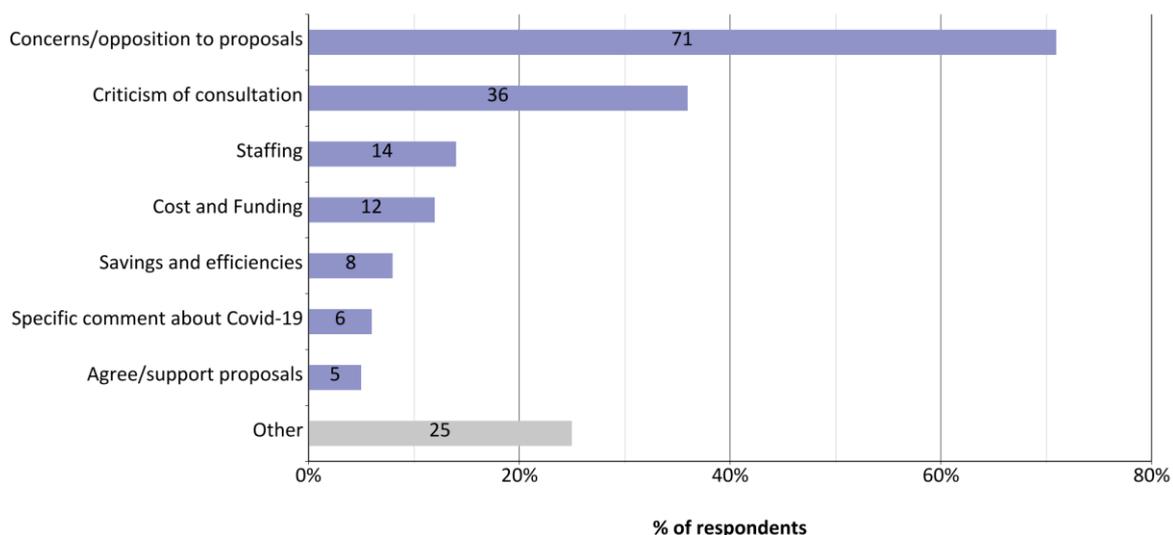


Base (812)

- <sup>3.85</sup> Figure 18 shows that, overall, most respondents (44%) heard about the consultation through social media. Around 1 in 6 (17%) respondents heard about it via a letter from ESFRS. Slightly fewer (14%) found out through ESFRS staff, whilst around 1 in 8 (12%) heard via a local councillor or through the ESFRS website.
- <sup>3.86</sup> Less than 1 in 10 found out via email (8%), or a leaflet from ESFRS (6%).
- <sup>3.87</sup> Around 1 in 20 (5%) respondents found out by reading the newspapers, whilst less than 1 in 20 found out because they had completed a questionnaire from ESFRS (2%) or had heard about it on the radio (2%).
- <sup>3.88</sup> Other ways respondents heard about the consultation were through a friend, a neighbour or a local shopkeeper.

## Any other comments

Figure 19: Further comments you would like to make about any of the proposals in the consultation



### Base (353 – Respondents who gave a further comment)

<sup>3.89</sup> In addition to the proposals, respondents were asked whether they had any further comments to make. Figure 19 shows that, of the respondents who made a further comment about the consultation, around 7 in 10 (71%) expressed concerns or opposition about the proposal, with their comments most frequently falling under the following themes:

General expressions of disagreement with the proposals (35%) or a view that services should remain as they are and/or be maintained at the current level (20%);

Concerns about increased risks and dangers to both firefighters and the public resulting from crewing reductions (26%);

Specific concerns about Proposal 3 (the removal of second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield) (21%);

Concerns about population growth, either generally or particular areas with a high-density population (16%);

Concerns about longer response times, particularly in remote or rural areas (10%);

Comments emphasising that fires can occur at any time, including night-time when people are more vulnerable, and/or that small fires can escalate quickly (9%);

Concerns about increased demands on the FRS in future as a result of more extreme weather events from climate change such as droughts causing more forest fires (8%); and

A view that the proposals should not be about money, or that the primary focus of the FRS should be on saving lives rather than increasing efficiencies (7%);

<sup>3.90</sup> Plus, there were various other, more specific concerns about a particular aspect of the proposals, raised by smaller proportions of respondents.

*“We live in a small village, some miles from any large town and thus vulnerable to any reduction in manpower and engines [...] the consequences of an extra 10 mins arrival time can be deadly”*

*“I think reducing the number of fire appliances available and number of firefighters in any capacity is asking for trouble, who knows what may happen in the future [...] I work in a GP surgery and I struggle to find risk assessors, to have one at each local fire station makes absolute sense”*

*“As a former senior fire officer, I am concerned to see proposals that reduce the level of fire cover which would result in first attending crews being put at greater risk. There is a minimum number of firefighters required to implement safe systems of work and this appears to have been overlooked. It is not good enough to state that IC's should carry out a DRA to determine if they have the requisite number of personnel to safely commit and effectively carry out a rescue, ignoring moral pressure”*

*“Having worked as a pre-hospital emergency care doctor in Heathfield, I strongly disagree with the plan to reduce from 2 to 1 vehicle at any station. 2 vehicles allows a rapid 1st vehicle response to provide safety at RTC's, lighting, risk of fire, stabilisation of vehicles tarpaulins etc then 2nd full crew to enable extrication. No analytical programme allows for the practical dangers of single vehicle availability at any town station. This review & proposals causes me great concern”*

*“As a port town with many industrial areas and a growing number of new dwellings being built in the Newhaven/Peacehaven area, we need the same level of staff, engines and working hours for adequate protection. Downgrading this station is going to be detrimental to an area that is expanding”*

- <sup>3.91</sup> More than a third (36%) of the respondents criticised the consultation itself, most frequently in terms of the timing of the consultation (i.e. in terms of the COVID-19 pandemic) (11%), wanting more information in order to give a fully informed view (8%) and concerns about the accuracy of statistics used in the consultation material (5%).

*“Information provided by ESFRS appears to be contradictory and lacks sufficient information and detail, making it difficult/near impossible to form an informed opinion”*

*“[I] need clearer explanation of what the flexible rota system would be for wholtime stations. Doesn't go into enough detail of how this would work in practice, in terms of Firefighters planning their own working pattern 6 weeks in advance”*

*“Strangely at a time of a Pandemic this[consultation] is still going ahead, whereas the Government has itself postponed many reviews due to the pandemic. This will surely be irrelevant or even obsolete once the impact of Covid-19 is understood”*

*“The consultation has taken place through a period of national lockdown during an unprecedented pandemic. Whilst I'm sure the Fire Service is fully cognisant of the potential impact, it will also need to remember to assess the proposals in light of this and assure itself that the proposals still stand”*

- 3.92 More than 1 in 18 (14%) commented specifically on staffing in relation to the consultation, mostly praising firefighters, but also with many suggesting a reduction in managers and non-frontline staff where feasible to achieve savings.

*“ESFRS currently provide an excellent service by a team of dedicated and committed knowledgeable staff whose objective is to prevent fire, protect life and property, an extremely valuable 24-hour service. I'm proud of the team at ESFRS nothing is too much trouble, extremely professional, cooperative, dedicated and helpful team all the time. Their community engagement is outstanding, their community care is excellent. The whole of ESFRS needs to be commended for their work”*

*“I think that everything you're doing is great in terms of overall progress for the county. I think it was super useful to attend the training last night and learn much more about the service and be a part of the wider consultation process. I feel really proud of the way this consultation has been handled and that they really do seem to have done in-depth statistical research and carefully planned the way to increase coverage, help make the service more flexible for the staff whilst keeping as many people employed as possible. Of course, there are inevitable cutbacks and negative changes, but these are often needed to facilitate the greater good”*

*“It's an incredible service that I deeply feel needs protection and more investment”*

- 3.93 A similar proportion (12%) expressed concerns about the cost and funding, and that ESFRS funding should be increased, with more investment needed from the UK government.

*“I'm concerned that the cuts you are having to make will unavoidably affect the service you are able to offer despite the remarkable efforts of crews. [...] pursue sources of additional funding more than efficiency”*

*“Apply pressures onto government requesting funding increases post-Coronavirus”*

- 3.94 Just under 1 in 10 (8%) of the respondents commented about savings and efficiencies, with respondents particularly expressing their agreement with better prevention, education, and information, relating to safety talks and visits to houses and schools.

*“I feel the fire department do an excellent job. I think the only way this can be improved would be if there was a mandatory fire and safety class given to everyone, which shows the importance and basics of how to deal with a fire – not just displays, but something the public and everyone takes part in and learns about”*

*“I am of the firm opinion that prevention is better than cure. This applies to precautions that can be taken in the home/business as well as statutory input into planning applications/building design. Instead of home visits, the ESFRS should consider holding public forums, for example, in Town Halls etc to get the message across. This has a twin benefit of building trust and confidence with the local community too”*

- 3.95 A small proportion (5%) of respondents made supportive comments about the proposals:

*“With less calls attended by the Fire Service year-on-year, vehicles are safer, building regs [are] stricter, and most homes [are] being fitted with smoke detection, these proposals do make sense”*

*“Ideally I would like to see funding increased, but given the political realities the proposals make sense”*

*“I support the proposals in principle and feel that they will provide a more efficient service”*

3.96 There were also a range of ‘other’ comments that covered a diverse range of issues, and therefore are difficult to summarise. However, many referenced particular localities e.g. in terms of

The age of towns (with older towns like Rye and Hastings said to be at higher risk due to having narrower streets and more timber framed buildings),

The accident rates on local roads (e.g. A26 and A259),

Demographic considerations such as population growth (e.g. due to housebuilding) and the proportion of elderly people living locally in towns like Bexhill; and

Other factors such as the presence of the harbour, incinerator and swing bridge at Newhaven.

3.97 In relation to raising council tax, one respondent was sceptical as they thought any increase would mainly benefit the bigger towns (e.g. Brighton and Hastings) and not their local area (Seaford).

3.98 A few suggestions were made; for example, one respondent was broadly supportive of the proposals, but felt some further thought might be given to how they could be implemented:

*“I support the proposals in principle and feel that they will provide a more efficient service, however I would urge the fire authority to consider slowing the introduction in day only and the removal of second appliances. The reason I request this is due to the difference of [the] impact from each individual station or appliance across the proposal, if a station such as Bexhill were to remain day crewed and keep the second appliance this would provide a lower impact on risk in that area”*

3.99 Another respondent (a retired architect) felt the fire service should have a clearer role in approving new developments. Another wondered if ESFRS had taken enough account of the risk from arson, feeling this was by nature difficult to account for in the FRS’s planning and statistical modelling.

3.100 One retired firefighter who responded recalled attending numerous AFAs which had turned out to be genuine emergencies (including one case of an elderly man on fire) and expressed serious misgivings about ESFRS reducing attendance at these kinds of incident.

3.101 There were some differing points of view in relation to proposed changes to the wholetime duty system:

*“The proposed changes to the wholetime duty system to a flexible rostering duty system is incredibly dangerous and absurd for a net release of just 5 posts. Dangerous because a watch who work together regularly will be a well-oiled, efficient and safer team on the fire ground”*

*“Changing WT duty system [is] seen as massively negative for firefighters & touted as not ‘family-friendly’. The reality is that many staff working the 2,2,4 system have second jobs, and the ‘family friendly’ bit is simply to disguise the fact that earnings from second jobs (which may be their main source of income) would clearly take a big hit... Current 2,2,4 too insular, stifles innovation and breeds all manner of ridiculousness”*

3.102 It was also suggested that ESFRS consult with and learn from the experiences of Kent Fire and Rescue Service before making any changes to the retained system:

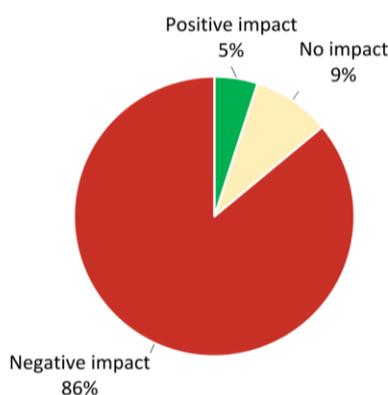
*“Kent altered their retained system to the model East Sussex are proposing, this change had a massive negative effect on retained availability county wide. This was due to a mass exodus of retained personnel, I strongly suggest that East Sussex consult fully with KFRS and fully examine their retained appliance availability. It certainly doesn't make comfortable reading”*

## Equalities impacts

*As public bodies, ESFRS have a duty to take into account the impact of their decisions on human rights, under the Human Rights Act 1998, and also on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation).*

*Are there any positive or negative impacts from ESFRS that you believe should be taken into account? If so, are you able to provide any supporting evidence and suggest any ways to reduce or remove any potential negative impact and increase any positive impact?*

**Figure 20: Are there any positive or negative impacts from ESFRS that you believe should be taken into account?**



**Base (129 – Respondents who gave a suggestion)**

3.103 When respondents were asked to offer any positive or negative impacts they believed should be taken into account, those who did simply used it as an opportunity to reiterate their views as previously expressed in other parts of the consultation. As a result, it is important to stress that the majority of the ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ impacts shown in Figure 20 generally did not refer explicitly to human rights or any area of equality, but more often reflected respondents’ general views about the proposals.

3.104 Nonetheless, the occasional response did touch more upon equalities matters: for example, one respondent felt that rural communities, whose populations are generally older, were being treated unfairly compared to the towns. Another comment referenced the importance of considering school safety, with the implication that ESFRS might need to consider the potential impacts on younger people. One respondent also stated that ESFRS already provides ‘wonderful’ support to elderly and vulnerable people, and therefore should not be ‘meddled with’.

<sup>3.105</sup>In addition, just under a tenth of those who commented did not feel the proposals would impact any particular groups.

## Organisations in the consultation questionnaire

<sup>3.106</sup>As outlined above, the response to the consultation included 10 questionnaires submitted on behalf of the following organisations:

Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Tourism  
 Conservators of Ashdown Forest  
 Ewhurst Parish Council  
 Laughton Parish Council  
 Lewes Town Council  
 Newhaven Town Council  
 Transport Futures East Sussex (NGO)  
 WE Clark and Son: Jewellers – Lewes Ltd and Uckfield Ltd  
 Wealden Liberal Democrats  
 Wightman and Parrish Ltd

<sup>3.107</sup>These responses are summarised below. Counts have been quoted rather than percentages due to the low number of submissions (i.e. 10 responses). Where the counts sum to fewer than 10, this is most likely due to the exclusion of ‘don’t know’ responses, or to reflect where a question may have been left unanswered.

### Proposal 1: Operational Response Review (ORR)

<sup>3.108</sup>Of the 10 organisations responding to the questionnaire, 7 agreed with the proposal for ESFRS to increase the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day (from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines). No organisations disagreed, although there were 2 who expressed a neutral view (i.e. who neither agreed nor disagreed).

### Proposal 2: Changes to day-crewed fire stations

<sup>3.109</sup>Only 1 organisation agreed with the proposal to change the crewing system from day-crewed to day-only at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield; however, 8 organisations disagreed. The remaining response was neutral.

<sup>3.110</sup>In the event of the crewing system being changed at these stations, none of the organisations expressed a preference for Option A, while 7 stated a preference for Option B.

### Proposal 3: Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines

<sup>3.111</sup>The proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield stations was not supported by any of the organisations who responded to the questionnaire, with all 10 organisations disagreeing.

<sup>3.112</sup>The proposal to re-classify the three “maxi-cab” stations (Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst) as single fire engine stations was agreed with by only 1 organisation, while 6 disagreed and 1 neither agreed nor disagreed.

## Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings

3.113 The proposal that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at the Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road was fairly widely supported by organisations: with 6 respondents agreeing and only 1 disagreeing with this suggestion, plus 1 who neither agreed nor disagreed.

## Proposal 6: Demand management

3.114 The organisations who responded were split on the issue of whether ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial properties: 3 agreed, 3 disagreed and the remaining 4 were neutral (i.e. neither agreed nor disagreed).

3.115 In terms of whether ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts, 5 organisations agreed while 2 disagreed. 3 organisations neither agreed nor disagreed.

3.116 The proposal that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting prompted another split in opinion: 4 organisations agreed, while 4 disagreed and 2 were neutral.

## Proposal 7: Changes to the four-watch duty system

3.117 The proposal to change crewing arrangements at Bohemia Road, Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus and Roedean was supported by 4 organisations, while 2 disagreed, and 3 stated that they either neither agreed nor disagreed.

3.118 There was no real consensus among the organisations as to what the most appropriate crewing arrangements should be at these stations (in the event of them being changed): 3 organisations preferred Option A while another 3 organisations preferred Option B (with the remaining 4 answering 'don't know').

## Other issues: Building and home inspections

3.119 The suggestion that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety was widely supported, with 8 organisations agreeing and none of them disagreeing (the remaining 2 organisations were neutral).

## Other issues: Finances and investment

3.120 In relation to council tax, 7 of the 10 organisations indicated they would support some form of increase to support the fire and rescue service, while 2 disagreed.

3.121 Of the 7 organisations who indicated they would support an increase, 3 would support an increase of up to 3% while 2 would support a larger increase of more than 3%.

3.122 When asked to provide a view on whether ESFRS provides value for money, 5 organisations agreed that it does, while a further 4 were neutral. None of the organisations disagreed.

## Other issues: ESFRS' purpose and commitments

3.123 Almost all of the organisations (9 out of 10) agreed that ESFRS's purpose and commitments are appropriate, with the remaining organisation stating that they neither agreed nor disagreed.

## Text comments made by organisations

- 3.124 Many of the comments submitted on behalf of organisations echoed points made by individual respondents. For example, some expressed concerns about one or more aspects of the proposals, or a view that current service levels need to be maintained in general.
- 3.125 In relation to how ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future, many of the suggestions were again similar to those made elsewhere, and included:
- Increased prevention and education work e.g. safety talks and home and school visits;
  - Improved use of technology;
  - More joined up working with other agencies e.g. the Police, health, etc;
  - Increasing or introducing charges for certain types of callouts or inspections;
  - General efficiencies in terms of staffing levels, streamlining management etc;
  - Consideration of a merger with West Sussex FRS.
- 3.126 In the context of joined-up working, one respondent suggested expanding the role of ESFRS to take on some aspects of the paramedic role, as well as merging fire and ambulance services from Bexhill and Hastings into one 'super centre'.
- 3.127 Another respondent suggested that ESFRS could improve its efficiency by adapting its first response to make better use of smaller, quicker vehicles based on 4x4s as opposed to traditional fire engines, on the basis that: *"sending eight crew and a thousand gallons of water to every incident is not cost effective nor the appropriate response to every incident"*.
- 3.128 One organisation was concerned about the proposal that ESFRS should stop responding to birds trapped in netting, on two specific grounds: firstly, that failure to attend bird and animal rescues would contravene the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and secondly, that it would increase the likelihood of accidents resulting from people trying to rescue the birds themselves.
- 3.129 Another organisation suggested that ESFRS support local authority proposals to install bus lanes and promote sustainable forms of transport, in order to reduce traffic congestion and improve emergency response times. Other comments included suggestions to give ESFRS greater input into planning applications and increasing the use of barbecue disposal bins.

# 4. Telephone Residents' Survey

## Introduction

- 4.1 The purpose of the telephone survey was to achieve a broadly representative sample of telephone interviews with residents of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove aged 16 and over. The survey was conducted using a quota sampling approach with targets set on the numbers of interviews required by age, gender, working status and district.
- 4.2 In total, ORS conducted 620 interviews with residents between 24<sup>th</sup> May and 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020, using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) methodology, with interviews conducted from ORS's social research call centre (interviewers were working from home as per the government guidelines). A short summary of the proposals was included to be 'read out' for each question within the survey, for the benefit of respondents who had not had the opportunity to read the consultation document or to otherwise find out about the proposals<sup>18</sup>.

## Respondent profile

- 4.3 The extent to which results can be generalised from a sample depends on how well the sample represents the population from which it is drawn, as different types of people may be more or less likely to take part. As previously mentioned, such 'response bias' is corrected by statistical weighting based on a comparison of the demographic characteristics of the respondents with data for the whole population.
- 4.4 In order to better understand how views differ between areas, equal numbers of interviews were targeted in each of the six districts; this was then taken into account in the weighting process, to give each district a proportional influence on the overall result relative to the size of its population. The remaining quotas (i.e. those for age, gender and working status) were designed to be representative of the overall population of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, based on the most recent available secondary data.
- 4.5 Once weighted, the survey results at an overall level are broadly representative of the overall population of the six districts of East Sussex, and they provide a statistically reliable guide to opinions on the proposals to within around +/- 5 percentage points at the overall level (depending on the exact sample sizes and opinion splits on particular questions).
- 4.6 Tables on the following page show the weighted and unweighted profiles of respondents to the survey.

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<sup>18</sup>These summaries have been included in this chapter ahead of the survey results.

**Table 9: Telephone survey responses by area (unweighted and weighted)**

District	Total responses (Unweighted)	% of respondents (Unweighted)	% of respondents (weighted valid)
Brighton and Hove	110	18	35
Lewes	101	16	12
Eastbourne	101	16	12
Wealden	108	17	19
Hastings	100	16	11
Rother	100	16	12
<b>Total</b>	620	100	100

**Table 10: Telephone survey responses by age (unweighted and weighted)**

Age	Number of respondents (unweighted count)	% of respondents (unweighted valid)	% of respondents (weighted valid)
16-24	69	11	14
25-34	106	17	15
35-54	168	27	30
55-64	106	17	16
65-74	105	17	13
75+	66	11	12
<b>Total</b>	620	100	100

**Table 11: Telephone survey responses by gender (unweighted and weighted)**

Gender	Number of respondents (unweighted count)	% of respondents (unweighted valid)	% of respondents (weighted valid)
Male	283	46	48
Female	337	54	52
<b>Total</b>	620	100	100

**Table 12: Telephone responses by working status (unweighted and weighted)**

Working status	Number of respondents (unweighted count)	% of respondents (unweighted valid)	% of respondents (weighted valid)
Working	354	57	58
Retired	166	27	27
Otherwise not working	100	16	15
<b>Total</b>	620	100	100

**Table 13: Telephone responses by ethnicity (unweighted and weighted)**

Ethnic group	Number of respondents (unweighted count)	% of respondents (unweighted valid)	% of respondents (weighted valid)
White British	563	94	88
Not white British	35	6	12
Not Known	22	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 14: Telephone responses by disability (unweighted and weighted)**

Disability	Number of respondents (unweighted count)	% of respondents (unweighted valid)	% of respondents (weighted valid)
Yes	88	14	14
No	522	86	86
Not Known	10	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

## Main Findings

### Proposal 1: Operational Response Review (ORR)

*For proposal 1, ESFRS – East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service – plans to improve its resilience by:*

***Increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of each day from 15 to 18*** – these are fire engines that are immediately available 24/7; and

***Providing a further 6 fire engines*** for added resilience, though these may not be immediately available.

*The data shows that this change would increase the number of incidents reached within ESFRS' attendance standards.*

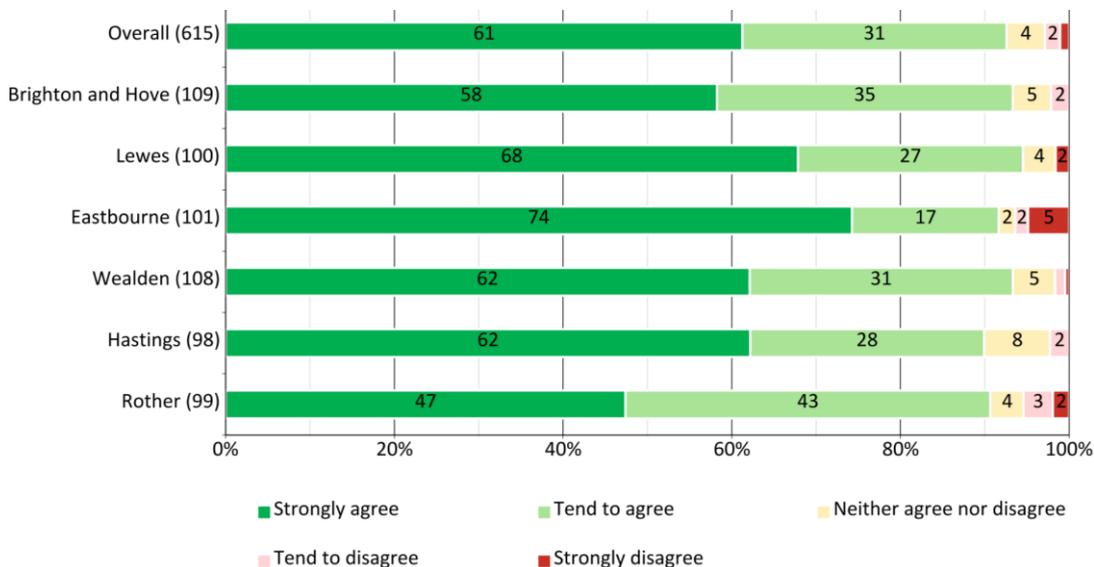
*To support these new arrangements, the Fire Service is proposing two new approaches:*

*1. A 'flexible crewing pool', which is made up of firefighters who will be posted to stations as needed, in order to cover for staff absences; and*

*2. A guaranteed monthly salary for on-call firefighters to improve their availability – they are currently paid a small retaining fee, but most of their pay comes from attending calls. These have reduced a lot, which has led to problems finding enough people to keep fire engines available.*

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?*

**Figure 21 :To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?**



**Base: (Number shown in brackets)**

- 4.7 Figure 21 shows that, overall, the vast majority (93%) of residents agreed with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has at the start of the day from 15 to 18. Around three fifths (61%) strongly agreed.
- 4.8 In all districts, the vast majority of residents were in favour of increasing the number of fire engines available at the start of each day. The highest proportion of residents in agreement was in Lewes (95%), followed by Brighton & Hove and Wealden (both 93%). There were similar proportions of agreement in Eastbourne (92%), Rother (91%) and Hastings (90%).
- 4.9 Overall, less than 1 in 20 (3%) residents disagreed with increasing the number of immediate fire engines.
- 4.10 In Eastbourne, around 1 in 20 (6%) residents disagreed with the proposal, as did a similar proportion in Rother (5%). Only 1 in every 50 (2%) residents in Brighton & Hove, Lewes, Wealden, and Hastings disagreed with the proposal.
- 4.11 There were no significant differences in levels of agreement nor disagreement in any district for this proposal.

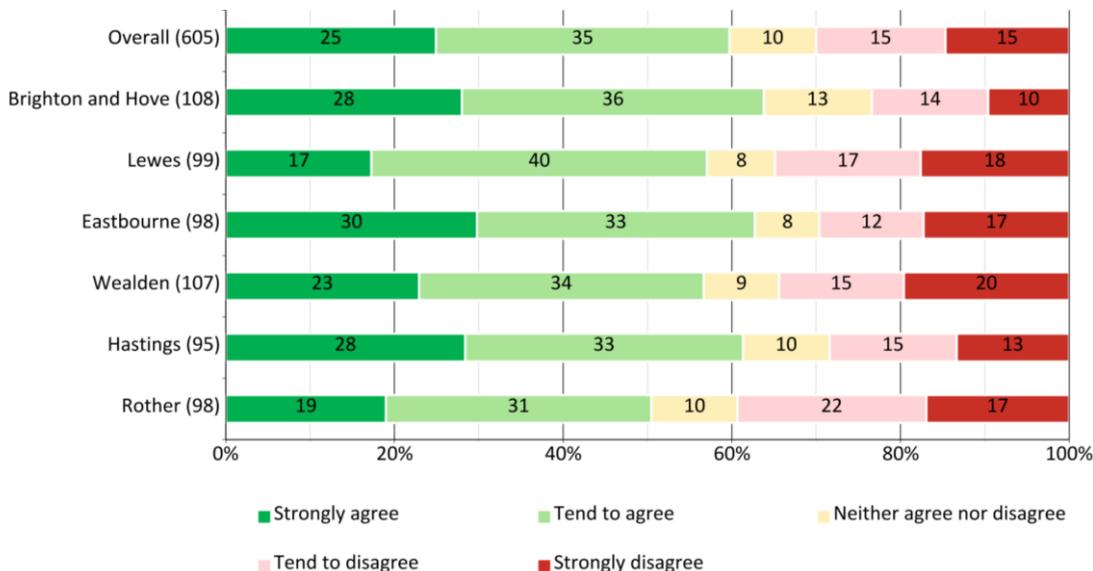
## Proposal 2: Changes to day-crewed fire stations

*For proposal 2, the Fire Service proposes to **introduce “day-only” crewing** at the stations in Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield which are currently “day-crewed”.*

*This would mean that full-time firefighters would be on-station during the daytime from Monday to Friday, with on-call firefighters providing cover during the evening, overnight and at weekends. The key change is that full-time staff are not required to provide extra on-call cover during the evening, overnight and at weekends as they were previously. This cover would be provided by dedicated on-call staff only.*

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?*

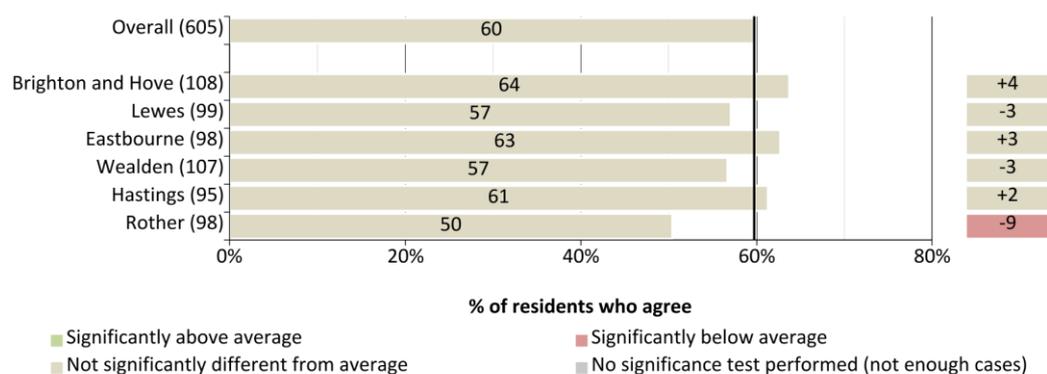
**Figure 22: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection work?**



**Base: (Number shown in brackets)**

- 4.12 Figure 22 shows that, overall, three fifths (60%) of residents agreed with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield. A quarter (25%) strongly agreed.
- 4.13 The districts with the highest proportion of agreement – with more than two thirds of residents agreeing – were Brighton and Hove with 64%, Eastbourne with 63% and Hastings with 61%.
- 4.14 Less than two thirds (57%) of residents in both Lewes and Wealden agreed with proposal 2, and only half of residents in Rother did so.
- 4.15 Overall, less than a third (30%) of residents disagreed with proposal 2, with only (15%) strongly disagreeing.
- 4.16 The highest level of disagreement was in Rother at 39%, which is significantly more than average. Over a third of residents in Lewes (35%) and Wealden (34%) disagreed with the proposal, whilst less than one third of residents living in Eastbourne (30%), and in Hastings (28%) did so. Less than a quarter of residents living in Brighton & Hove (23%) disagreed.

**Figure 23: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in**



**Base: (Number shown in brackets)**

- 4.17 Figure 23 shows that residents living in Rother are significantly less likely to agree with changing the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, when compared to the districts overall.

### Proposal 3: Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines

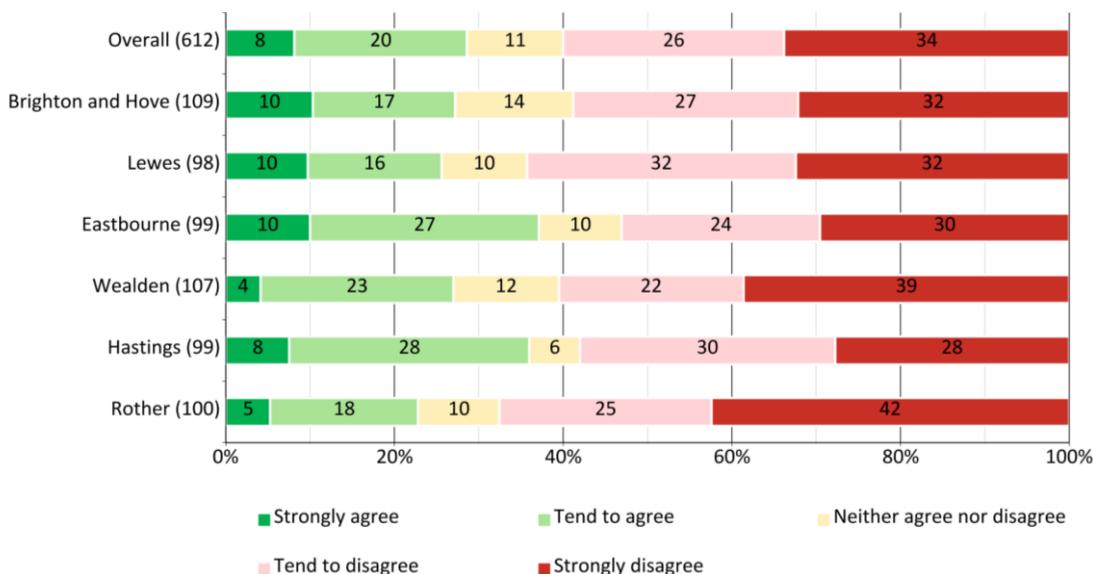
*Proposal 3 is about changing the number of Fire Stations that currently have 2 fire engines.*

*Currently, 9 of the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's 24 fire stations have two fire engines. Data shows that the second fire engines at day-crewed and on-call stations are not needed, as three-quarters (75%) of all calls in these fire station areas are dealt with by one fire engine.*

*So, ESFRS proposes to **remove the second fire engines** from the following stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield. The on-call crews of these engines would be used to crew the remaining fire engine at these stations in the evenings, overnight and at weekends.*

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?*

**Figure 24: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?**



**Base: (Number shown in brackets)**

- 4.18 Figure 24 shows that, overall, just less than a third (27%) of residents agreed with the proposal to remove the second fire engine from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations.
- 4.19 The districts of Eastbourne and Hastings had the highest levels of agreement with proposal 3, at 36% and 37%, respectively. Just over a quarter of residents living in Brighton & Hove (27%), Lewes (26%) and Wealden (27%) agreed, whilst less than a quarter (23%) in Rother did so.
- 4.20 Overall, three fifths (60%) of residents disagreed with the proposal to remove the second fire engine from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations, whilst around one third (34%) strongly disagreed.
- 4.21 More than two thirds of residents in Rother (68%), and three fifths in Lewes (64%) disagreed with proposal 3. Just under two thirds of residents in Wealden (60%), Brighton & Hove (59%) and Hastings (58%) disagreed, whilst 53% of residents in Eastbourne did so.
- 4.22 There were no significant differences in levels of agreement or disagreement in any district.

### Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings

*Proposal 4 is about crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings.*

*Currently, both of Hastings’ fire stations, which are at Bohemia Road and The Ridge, have one immediate response fire engine, which is available 24/7. However, data shows that Bohemia Road has a much higher risk profile than The Ridge – and that The Ridge’s fire engine attends more incidents in Bohemia Road than it does in its own area.*

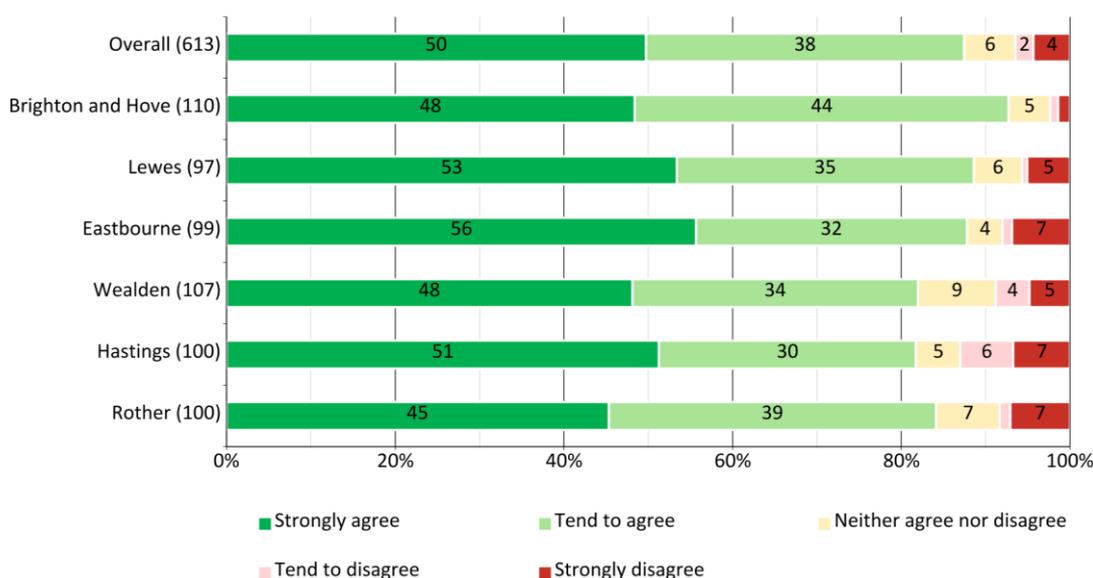
*Therefore, the proposal aims to rebalance fire cover across both station areas by:*

***Introducing day-crewing at The Ridge, so a fire engine would be immediately available during the day, and on-call during the evening and overnight; and***

***Introducing a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road.***

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?*

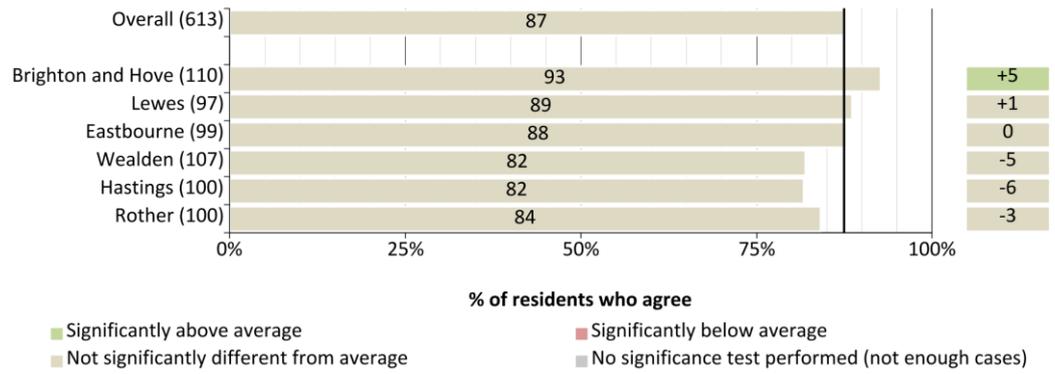
**Figure 25: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?**



**Base: (Number shown in brackets)**

- 4.23 Figure 25 shows that, overall, nearly 9 in 10 (87%) residents agreed with the proposal to introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road. Exactly half (50%) strongly agreed.
- 4.24 Brighton & Hove had the highest proportion of residents in agreement (93%) with proposal 3. Almost 9 in 10 of residents in Lewes (89%) and Eastbourne (88%) agreed with the proposal, whilst more than four fifths of residents in Rother (84%), Wealden (82%), and Hastings (82%) did so.
- 4.25 Overall, less than 1 in 10 (6%) of residents disagreed with the proposal to introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road.
- 4.26 Around one eighth (13%) of residents in Hastings disagreed with the proposal, which is significantly more than the overall average. Less than one in 10 residents in Wealden (9%), Eastbourne (8%), Rother (8%) and Lewes (6%) disagreed – as did less than 1 in 20 (2%) residents in Brighton & Hove, which is significantly less than the average.

**Figure 26: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road? (Grouped Responses by district)**



**Base: (Number shown in brackets)**

4.27 Figure 26 shows that residents living in Brighton & Hove were significantly more likely to agree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road, when compared to the districts overall.

## Proposal 6: Demand Management<sup>19</sup>

*For proposal 6, the Fire and Rescue Service is aiming to manage demand for its services in three ways to reduce the impact on its other work. It proposes to:*

***No longer automatically attend calls to Automatic Fire Alarms in low-risk commercial premises.***  
*These account for one third (32%) of all incidents, but 96% are false alarms;*

***Delay responding to release people from lifts, if the people are not vulnerable or in distress.*** *This is to give building owners – who are responsible for broken lifts – time to resolve the issue; and*

***No longer attend to birds trapped in netting,*** *as this can tie-up resources and often needs expensive specialist equipment.*

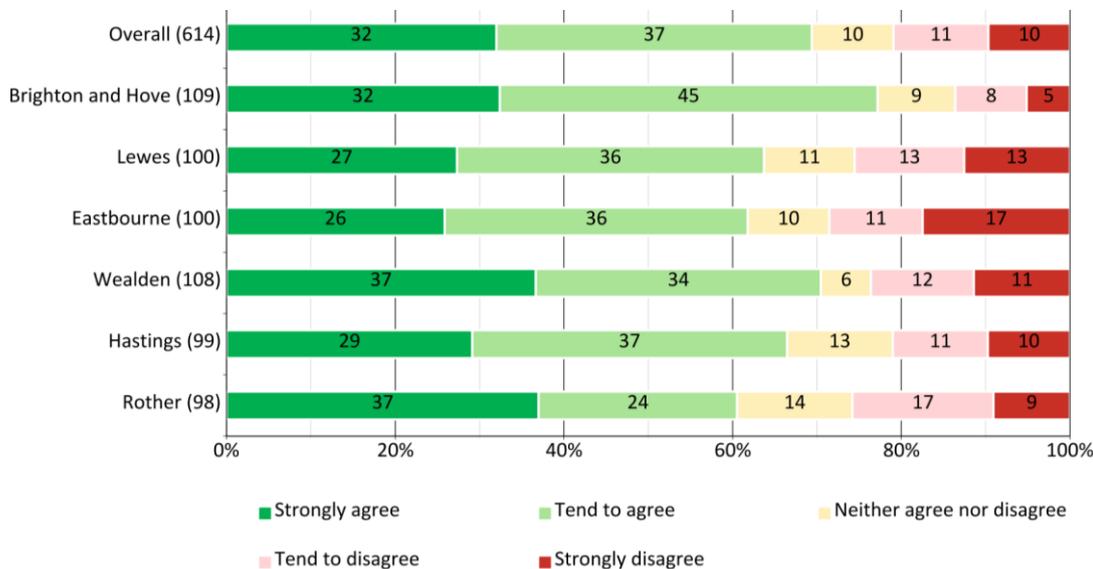
*These three types of incidents are low-risk, and these proposed changes would release capacity into fire prevention, protection and training.*

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<sup>19</sup>Proposal 5 was not consulted on as it relates to internal operational matters and therefore there were no resulting questions.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should stop attending these calls in order to release capacity for fire prevention, protection and training?*

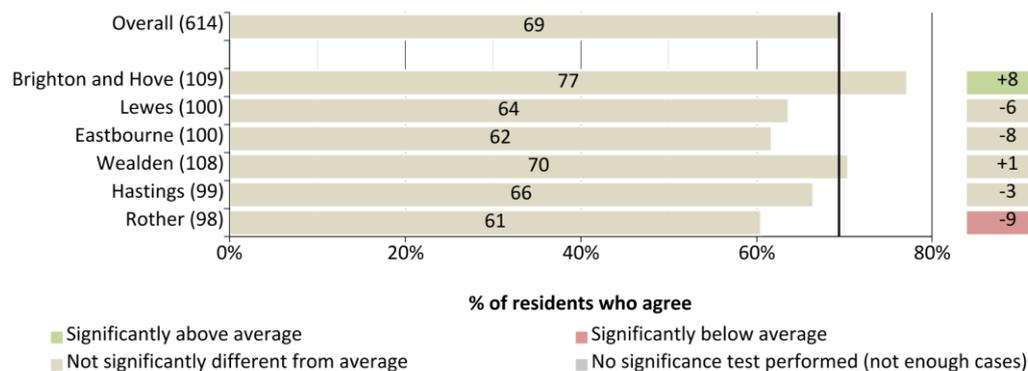
**Figure 27: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should stop attending to certain calls in order to release capacity for fire prevention, protection and training?**



**Base: (Number shown in brackets)**

- 4.28 Figure 5 shows that, overall, more than two thirds (69%) of residents agreed that ESFRS should stop attending Automatic Fire Alarm activations in low-risk commercial premises, delay responding to release people from lifts if the people are not vulnerable or in distress, and no longer attend to birds trapped in netting. Around one third (32%) of residents strongly agreed with the proposal.
- 4.29 More than three quarters (77%) of residents in Brighton & Hove agreed with the proposal to stop attending certain calls, whilst 70% of residents in Wealden agreed. Two thirds (66%) of residents in Hastings agreed with the proposal, whilst less than two thirds of residents in Lewes (64%), Eastbourne (62%) and Rother (61%) did so.
- 4.30 Overall, around one fifth (21%) of residents disagreed that ESFRS should stop attending certain types of calls, with 1 in 10 (10%) strongly disagreeing.
- 4.31 More than a quarter of residents in Eastbourne (29%), Lewes (26%) and Rother (26%) disagreed that ESFRS should stop attending certain types of calls, whilst just under a quarter (24%) of residents in Wealden did so. Around 1 in 5 (21%) of residents in Hastings disagreed, along with just over 1 in 8 (14%) residents in Brighton & Hove, which is significantly less than the average.

**Figure 28: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should stop attending to these calls in order to release capacity for fire prevention, protection and training? (Grouped Responses by district)**



**Base: (Number shown in brackets)**

- 4.32 Figure 28 shows that residents living in Brighton & Hove are significantly more likely to agree that the ESFRS should stop attending certain calls in order to release capacity for fire prevention, protection and training, whilst residents living in Rother are significantly less likely to agree with this proposal, when compared to the districts overall.

## Proposal 7: Changes to the four-watch duty system

*Proposal 7 is about **changing the way the Fire Stations at Bohemia Road, which is in Hastings, Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus, which is in Brighton, and Roedean, also in Brighton, provide a 24/7 response.***

*The current full-time duty system requires a firefighter to work 2 day-shifts, followed by 2 night-shifts, then followed by 4 days off. ESFRS believes there are more efficient alternatives now available that do not affect response levels.*

*Two options are:*

**Option A:** a “Flexible Rostering Duty System” at all 5 fire stations just mentioned.

*In this option, one team of firefighters plan their shifts between them in advance, to ensure the fire engines at their stations are always available. This system would result in a reduction of 5 posts, which could be used for prevention, protection, training or the flexible crewing pool.*

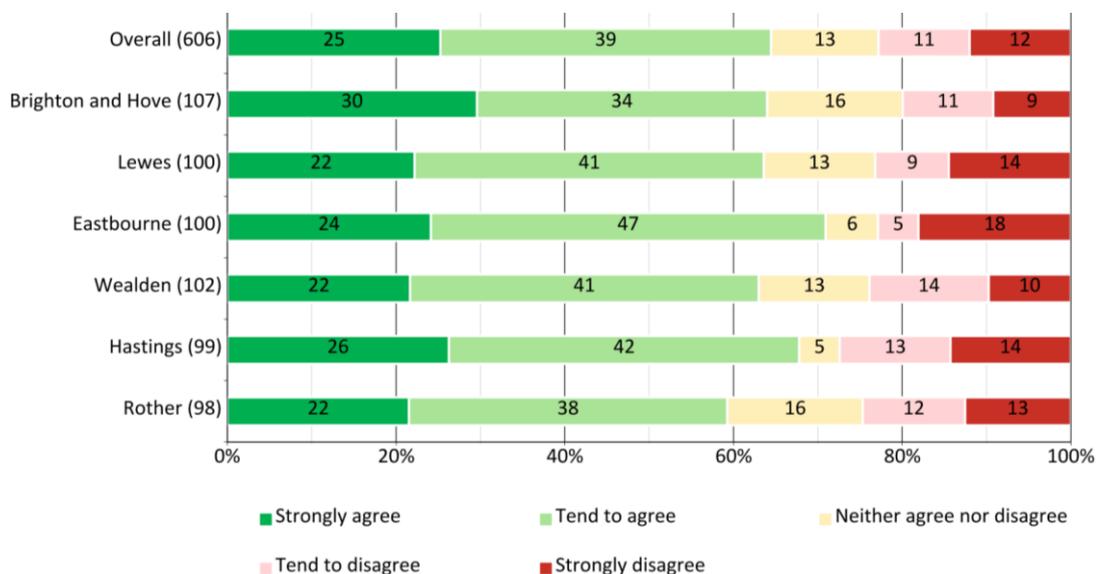
**Option B:** a “Group Crewing Duty System” ONLY at Preston Circus, Hove and Roedean

*“Group crewing” means that resources are used flexibly between a “group” of stations – with one or more stations supporting the others in the “group” to cover sickness, holiday and other absence. This option would result in a net reduction of 4 posts, which could be used for prevention, protection, training, or the flexible crewing pool.*

*Both options allow the Service to maintain its 24/7 immediate response and attendance standards.*

*In principle, do you agree/disagree with ESFRS looking at ways to change its 24/7 crewing arrangements – either through “flexible rostering” at Bohemia Road, Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus and Roedean, or “group crewing” at Preston Circus, Hove and Roedean?*

**Figure 29: In principle, do you agree/disagree with ESFRS looking at ways to change its 24/7 crewing arrangements – either through “flexible rostering” at Bohemia Road, Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus and Roedean, or “group crewing” at Preston Circus, Hove and Roedean?**



**Base: (Number shown in brackets)**

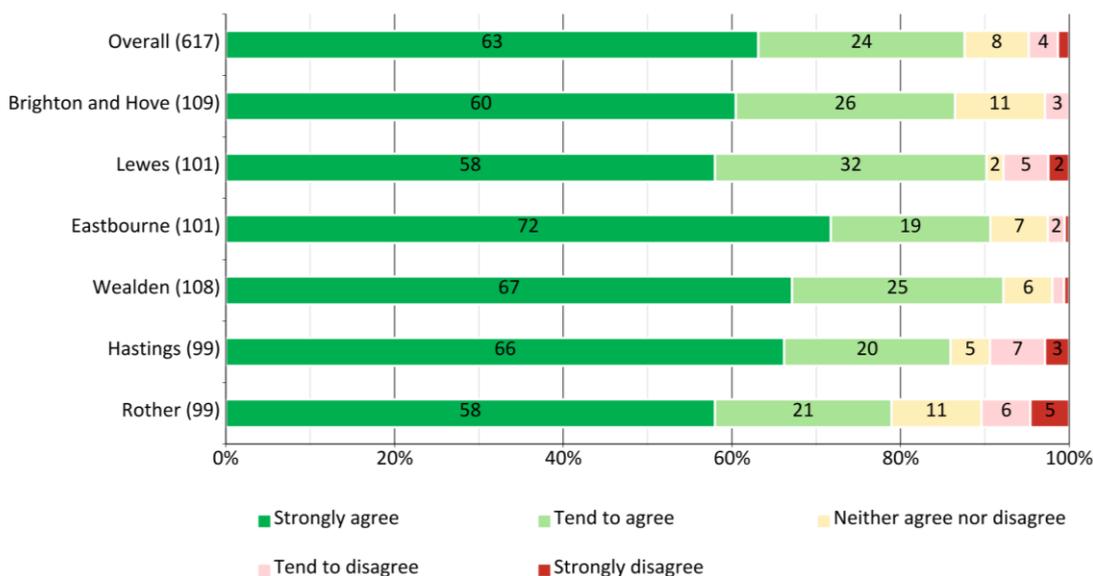
- 4.33 Figure 29 shows that, overall, just under two thirds (64%) of residents agreed with the proposal for ESFRS to look at ways to change its 24/7 crewing arrangements – either through “flexible rostering” at Bohemia Road, Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus and Roedean, or “group crewing” at Preston Circus, Hove and Roedean. One quarter (25%) of residents strongly agreed.
- 4.34 Around 5 in 7 (71%) residents in Eastbourne agreed with the proposal to look at ways for ESFRS to change its 24/7 crewing arrangements, as did more than two thirds (68%) of Hastings residents.
- 4.35 Overall, more than 1 in 5 (23%) residents disagreed with the proposal for ESFRS to look at ways to change its 24/7 crewing arrangements, whilst around one eighth (12%) of residents strongly disagreed.
- 4.36 More than a quarter (27%) of residents in Hastings disagreed, as did exactly a quarter (25%) of residents in Rother. Less than a quarter of residents living in Wealden (24%), Eastbourne (23%) and Lewes (23%) disagreed, whilst exactly 1 in 5 (20%) of residents in Brighton and Hove did so.
- 4.37 There were no significant differences in levels of agreement or disagreement in any district.

## Other issues: Building and home inspections

*The Fire and Rescue Service wants to ensure buildings are safe and fires are prevented. By reviewing its response models, the Fire and Rescue Service will release resources for more prevention work, and more building inspections and visits.*

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?*

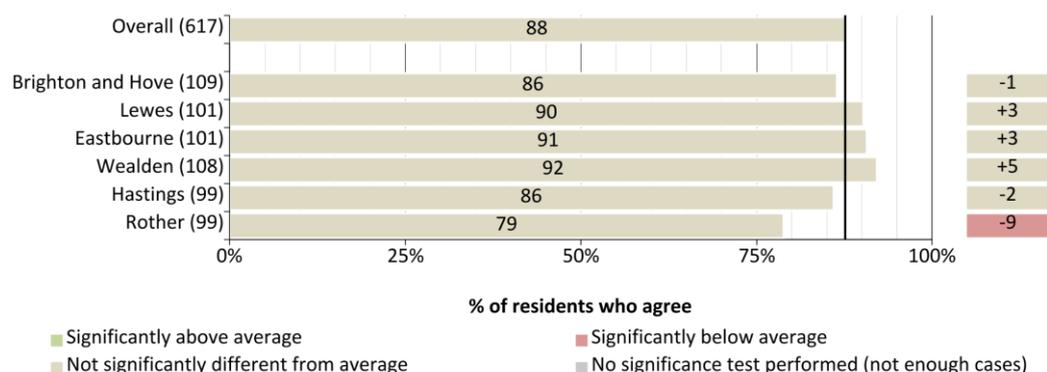
**Figure 30: To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?**



**Base: (Number shown in brackets)**

- 4.38 Figure 30 shows that, overall, around 9 in 10 (88%) residents agreed that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety. More than three fifths (63%) strongly agreed.
- 4.39 Around 9 in 10 residents in Wealden (92%), Eastbourne (91%) and Lewes (90%) agreed with more building and home inspections to help reduce fire risk. More than 4 in 5 (86%) residents in both Brighton & Hove and in Hastings agreed, whilst just under 4 in 5 (79%) residents in Rother did so.
- 4.40 Overall, just 1 in 20 (5%) residents disagreed that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety.
- 4.41 In Rother, 1 in 10 (10%) residents disagreed that more building and home inspections would be a positive way to help reduce fire risk, which is significantly more than the average. Less than 1 in 10 residents in Hastings (9%) and Lewes (8%) disagreed – as did very low numbers in Brighton & Hove (3%), Eastbourne (3%) and Wealden (2%).

**Figure 31: To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety? (Grouped Responses by district)**



**Base: (Number shown in brackets)**

- 4.42 Figure 31 shows that residents living in Rother are significantly less likely to agree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety, when compared to the districts overall.

## Other issues: Finances and investment

*Another key area of focus for the Fire Service is its finances in the future.*

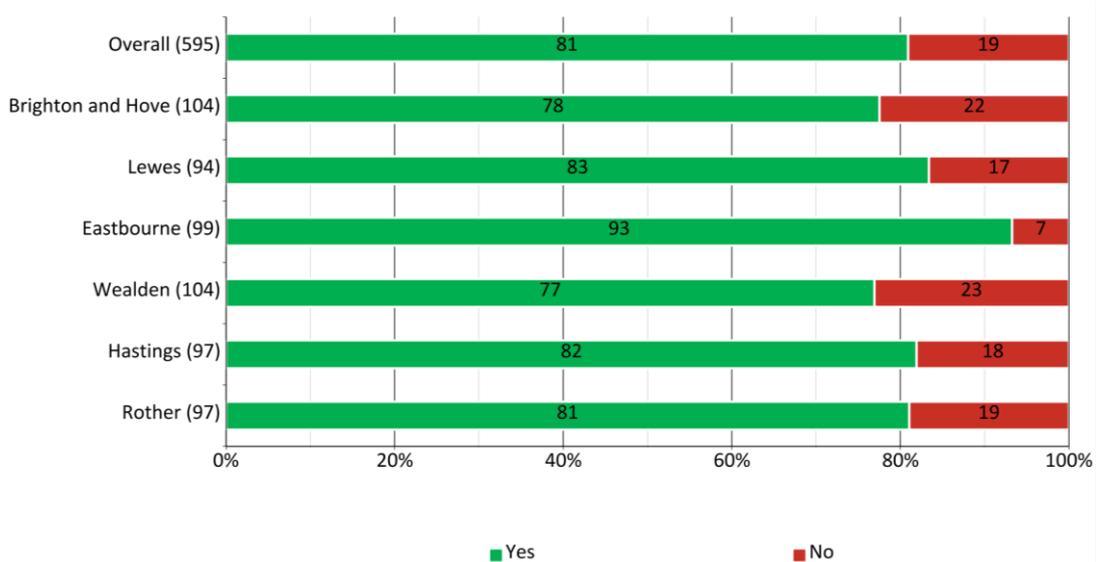
*The Service's revenue budget for 2020/21 is £39.7m. Over three-quarters of the budget is spent on employees, mainly firefighters.*

*Due to expected funding cuts, the Fire Service believes new savings of between £0.7m and £3.5m will be needed in the next 5 years, on top of already planned savings (of £9.8m), to balance its budget.*

*Since 2010/11, the Service has become much more dependent on the income it receives from council tax as government grants have reduced. Currently, the average household in the area pays £95.53 per year for their fire service, which is £1.84 per week for a Band D property.*

*Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?*

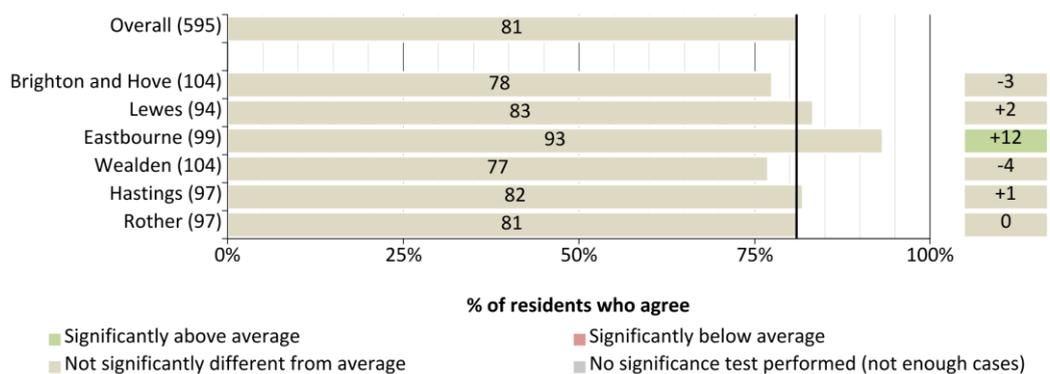
**Figure 32: Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year – 2021/22?**



**Base: (Number shown in brackets)**

- 4.43 Figure 32 shows that, overall, around 4 in 5 (81%) residents would be willing to pay more in council tax for their local fire and rescue service next year.
- 4.44 The district with highest levels of agreement – with more than 9 in 10 (93%) in favour of paying more council tax – was Eastbourne. Just over four fifths of residents in Lewes (83%), Hastings (82%) and Rother (81%) were prepared to pay more, while less than four fifths of residents in Brighton & Hove (78%) and Wealden (77%) were.

**Figure 33: Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year - 2021/22?**

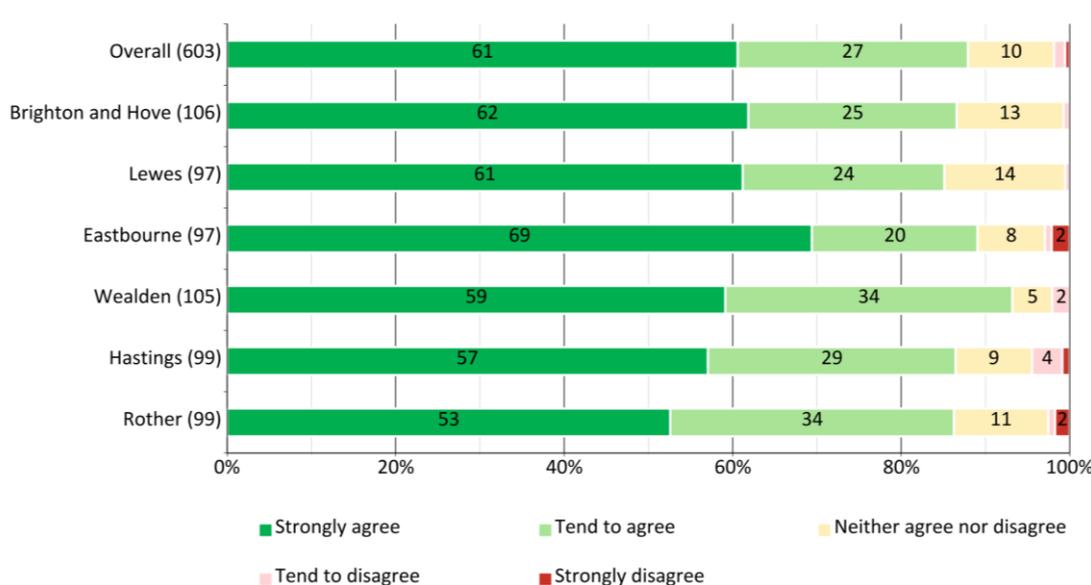


**Base: (Number shown in brackets)**

- 4.45 Figure 33 shows that residents living in Eastbourne were significantly more likely to be willing to pay more in council tax for their local fire and rescue service next year, when compared to the districts overall.

*To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?*

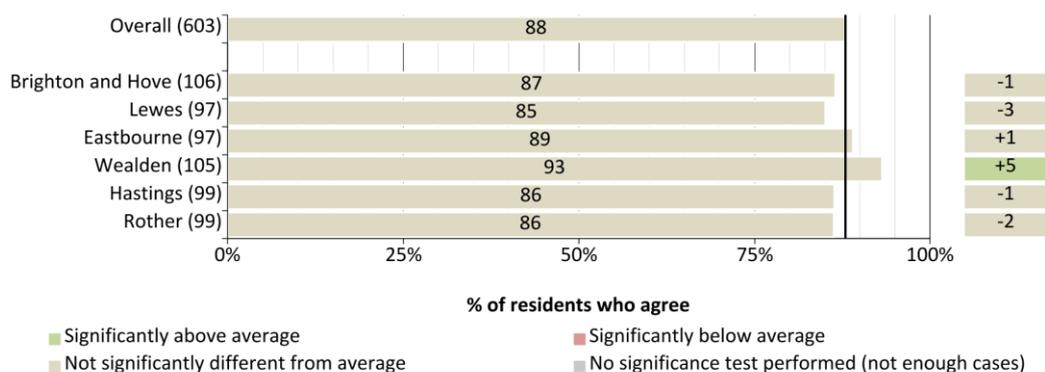
**Figure 34: To what extent do you agree or disagree that ESFRS offers value for money?**



Base: (Number shown in brackets)

- 4.46 Figure 34 shows that, overall, almost 9 in 10 (88%) residents agreed that ESFRS offers value for money, with around three fifths (61%) strongly agreeing.
- 4.47 The district with the highest proportion of residents (93%) who agreed that ESFRS offers value for money was Wealden, whilst just under 9 in 10 residents in both Eastbourne (89%) and Brighton & Hove (87%) did so. More than 4 in 5 residents in Hastings (86%), Rother (86%) and Lewes (85%) agreed that the ESFRS offers value for money.
- 4.48 Overall, only 1 in 50 (2%) residents disagreed that ESFRS offers value for money.
- 4.49 Less than 1 in 20 residents living in Hastings (4%), Eastbourne (3%) and Rother (3%) disagreed that ESFRS offers value for money, whilst 1 in 50 or fewer residents living in Wealden (2%), Brighton and Hove and Lewes (2%) disagreed.

**Figure 35: To what extent do you agree or disagree that ESFRS offers value for money? (Grouped Responses by district)**

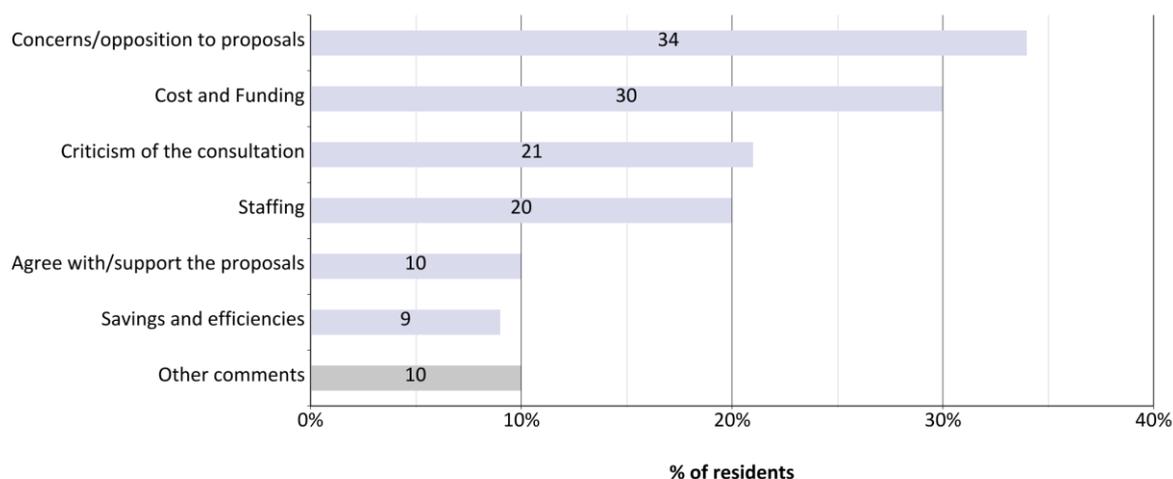


Base: (Number shown in brackets)

4.50 Figure 35 shows that residents living in Wealden are significantly more likely than average to agree that ESFRS offers value for money, compared to residents overall.

## Further comments

**Figure 36: Do you have any further comments you would like to make about any of the proposals we've just talked about?**



**Base: (195 – Residents who gave an additional comment (195))**

- 4.51 Figure 36 shows that, of the 195 residents who gave a further comment, around one third (34%) expressed concerns about or opposed the proposals – saying, for example, that they would prefer to keep things as they are and maintain the current provision of ESFRS services.
- 4.52 Just under a third (30%) expressed concerns directly relating to the future cost and funding of ESFRS. For example, some felt they already pay high amounts of council tax, or that the future service should be provided at the same rate of tax. Other residents stressed the importance of funding for ESFRS being increased by central government.
- 4.53 Around 1 in 5 (21%) residents who made a further comment criticised the consultation process. For instance, some residents felt that not enough information was available to them to make an informed decision, whilst others felt that the decisions to implement the proposals had, effectively, already been made and that the consultation was simply a “tick-box” exercise.
- 4.54 One fifth (20%) of residents who gave a further comment mentioned staffing. Frequent comments praised firefighters for doing a “great job”, whilst some suggested the need for a better recruitment process, as well as better pay and conditions for on-call staff.
- 4.55 One in ten (10%) of the residents who gave an additional comment expressed general agreement with the proposals, whilst just under 1 in 10 (9%) made suggestions about savings and efficiencies, such as having continuous and regular reviews of working practices.
- 4.56 Other comments (10%) included residents feeling that they were not well versed enough about ESFRS and fire and rescue services generally, and that the proposals were too technical to understand as a layperson.

# 5. Focus Groups and Stakeholder Webinar

## Introduction

- 5.1 This chapter reports the views from the six online focus groups and depth interviews with members of the public and the stakeholder webinar<sup>20</sup> (and includes the slides used during all sessions to outline the proposals).
- 5.2 The report has been structured to address each of the areas of discussion in some detail. The views of the six meetings and interviews with 40 members of the public have been merged to give an overall report of findings, rather than six separate and potentially repetitive mini-reports - but significant differences in views have been drawn out where appropriate. A number of polls were undertaken during the sessions whereby people were invited to give their views on the main consultation questions: these have been reported first, followed by the questions and comments raised in discussion
- 5.3 The stakeholder webinar has been reported separately. As at the public groups, a number of polls were undertaken during the session whereby the 38 attendees were invited to give their views on the main consultation questions: these have been reported first, followed by the questions and comments raised in the online chat and Q&A functions.
- 5.4 All participants were encouraged to express their opinions freely and to ask questions throughout, and all the meetings were successful in stimulating wide-ranging and informed debate on the issues under consideration.

## Main findings

### Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan (ORP)

<p><b>Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan (ORP)</b> </p> <p style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">ESFRS plans to increase the number of core fire engines available at the start of the day from 15 to 18</p> <p><b>Current</b></p> <p> <b>15 x core fire engines available at start of day</b></p> <p><b>Planned</b></p> <p> <b>18 x core fire engines available at start of day</b></p> <p>+ a further 6 fire engines for resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not as busy/don't cover such high-risk areas</li> <li>- Will respond to incidents (to support high demand and at longer incidents), but allowed longer to do so if needed → more flexibility for on-call staff</li> </ul>	<p><b>Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan (ORP)</b> </p> <p style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">ESFRS plans to increase the number of core fire engines available at the start of the day from 15 to 18</p> <p><b>Benefits to the community if ORP successfully implemented...</b></p> <p> <b>99% of high-risk dwellings covered (up from 93%)</b></p> <p> <b>93% of all incidents within attendance standards (up from 81%)</b></p> <p><small>*Attendance standards are the time between when a call is received to the first fire engine arriving at the incident: an 'on-station' response should be within 10 minutes 70% of the time; an 'on-call' response should be within 15 minutes 70% of the time</small></p> <p> <b>92% of all households covered (up from 80%)</b></p> <p><b>92% of population + 92% of over 80s population covered (both up from 75%)</b></p>
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<sup>20</sup>The full list of questions, answers and comments from the stakeholder webinar can be found in Appendix 1. Answers were supplied by ESFRS both during and after the session.

**Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan (ORP)** 

**2 new approaches to support this...**

**'Flexible crewing pool' to improve workforce flexibility/availability**

- Firefighters posted to stations as necessary to cover for absences due to sickness, training etc.
- Widely used across other UK FRSs

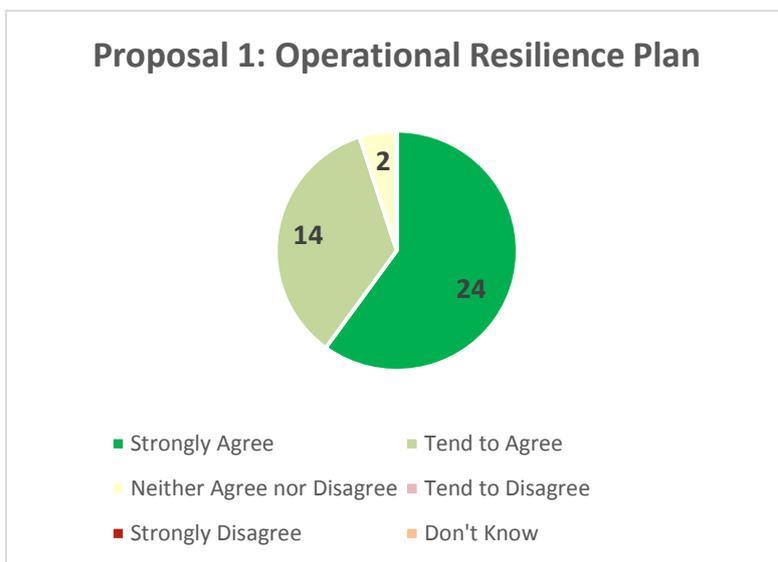
**New contracts for on-call firefighters to enhance their availability**

- On-call firefighters are currently paid a small retaining fee...
- ...but the majority of their pay comes from attending emergency calls
- Number of calls is much reduced → firefighters provide cover for long periods of time but with less financial reward
- Has led to problems finding and retaining enough on-call staff to keep fire engines available to respond
- New contracts would guarantee monthly income and ensure cover is given when needed to keep fire engines available

Public focus groups/depth interviews

- 5.5 24 of the 40 public focus group attendees strongly agreed with the proposed ORP, 14 tended to agree and two neither agreed nor disagreed. No-one opposed the Plan.
- 5.6 It is worth noting here that due to the interdependencies between Proposal’s 1 and 2 (that is, the former cannot be achieved without implementing the latter), participants were asked to cast their ‘votes’ after being given the background information on both, rather than take them in isolation. This ensured they were fully informed that increasing the number of ‘core’ fire engines available at the start of each day would only be possible by making changes elsewhere in the Service, and primarily by introducing a day-only duty system at ESFRS’ current day-crewed stations.

**Figure 37: To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines? Public focus group/depth interview result<sup>21</sup>**



- 5.7 In discussion, the ORP was considered on its own merit and generally supported as a means of increasing the number of fire engines guaranteed to be available at the start of each day, of improving coverage across the

<sup>21</sup>Due to the low numbers, the figures used in this chart and all others that follow in this chapter use counts rather than percentages.

city and county, and of introducing a necessary degree of flexibility to the Service overall through the introduction of the resilience appliances.

*“You are hitting 90’s and high 90’s with it so it’s obviously good for coverage. In terms of someone who you might not have been able to get to before, they can feel a bit more rest assured that they will be attended to” (Brighton & Hove)*

*“I think it does seem like a very efficient and effective way of dealing with operational things ... and the percentage increase I thought it was very impressive” (Rother)*

*“I know you say that for a fire engine to go out it needs four of the crew, but sometimes it needs more; bigger fires more crew. So, I think that if we can have more definitely available for the safety of everyone that’d be a massive benefit” (Wealden)*

*“Seems to me like, on a simple level, a good thing to have more fire engines available” (Lewes)*

*“I think the proposal is a great proposal, with adding on more fire engines ... going from having only 15 to 18 and having four of those on call, obviously that’s going to help with keeping different people and environments safe” (Hastings)*

*“I like the idea of having these resilience engines as back-up ... So, the initial appliance can start taking control of the incident, and yet they’ve got a support coming even though it’s a little bit late. I thought that was a really good, sensible idea” (Lewes)*

- 5.8 People were also pleased to see the commitment of on-call firefighters being better recognised and “valued” through salaried contracts, which they also suggested would aid both recruitment and retention in light of reduced incidents and thus (under the current system) reduced pay.

*“Firefighters need to be contracted. They need to be on a PAYE format which this new proposal seems to seek which is good. I don’t agree with how that’s set up currently; I don’t agree with that sort of format and to only pay a small retaining fee is absolutely awful ... The proposal is a lot more fitting for today’s society, I think allowing them to be contracted is a positive step” (Brighton & Hove)*

*“I think looking at the new proposals potentially firefighters are being valued a lot more because certainly by the old contract they weren’t valued at all” (Brighton & Hove)*

*“I think that retaining the firefighters with a better income is a good idea because it would be very difficult for people to remain committed if they don’t have a steady income stream” (Eastbourne)*

*“It could be quite hard to recruit people on the current standpoint because they don’t get paid that much; they’re just on-call” (Wealden)*

*“In Mayfield they don’t have many fire calls, they have a reduced rate as it stands, and they want to change that to make it across the board it’s the same rate. Well that seems a lot fairer” (Eastbourne)*

- 5.9 Despite the general positivity about the ORP, there were concerns around: potential on-call recruitment difficulties and whether the proposed salaried contracts would be sufficiently attractive to overcome these; the potentially detrimental impact of the more ad-hoc ‘flexible crewing pool’ on team cohesion; and whether

the delayed turn-out time for the resilience appliances will work in practice given the reductions being made in some areas of the Service.

*"I'm just wondering how confident you are that the new contracts you offer will be enticing enough to bring more people forward. And what happens if it doesn't?" (Lewes)*

*"My thoughts about the flexible crewing ... how does it affect crew cohesion? I'm from a military background myself and one of the things we try to work on is if you're mates within a team you can work properly; you can predict each other's moves; you can work in a cohesive manner. If you're in the case of flexible crewing and you have a crew that has been put together from various different people from all over the place, how is that going to affect the efficiency of how they're going to work on a call?" (Rother)*

*"When we go to the other proposals for day-only stations and you see what is being proposed at The Ridge, I'm not sure that another 30 minutes then would actually work" (Rother)*

- <sup>5.10</sup> With regard to the recruitment issue, there was some suggestion that having a 30-minute turn-out time for the resilience engines may allow ESFRS to slightly widen its recruitment pool in certain areas – especially those where it will remain difficult to attract sufficient on-call firefighters, even with more advantageous contracts in place.

*"Finding people who live five minutes away or can get there in the five minutes is still going to be tough. I think it would put a lot of people off" (Brighton & Hove)*

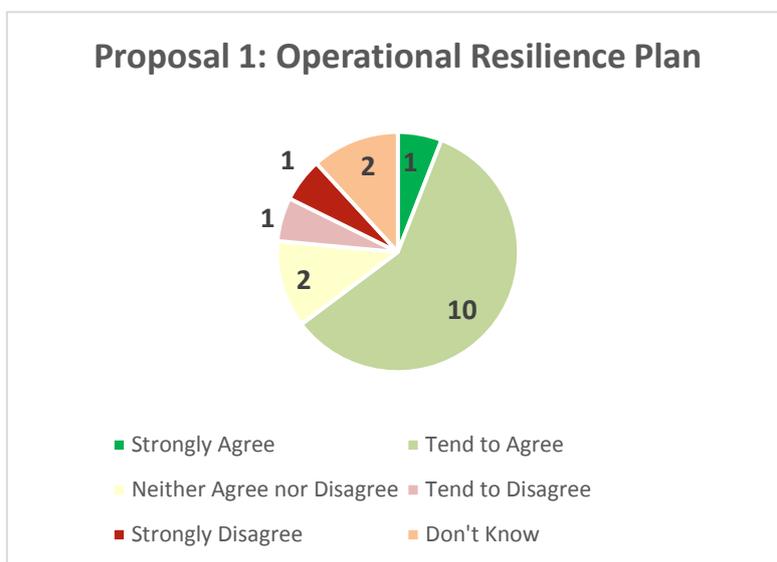
*"In the area where I live it would be difficult to recruit people under the five-minute rule. Having a bit more time would be good" (Rother)*

*"I definitely think that the extension to the time period to respond for the crew switch is a sensible idea. At a lot of the stations it's going to be really difficult if you just basically got a five-minute circle round the station where you can recruit from and it really would make recruiting a lot easier, I think" (Brighton & Hove)*

## Stakeholder webinar

- 5.11 Of the 17 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 11 agreed with the proposal, two disagreed and two neither agreed nor disagreed. There were also two 'don't knows'.

**Figure 38:** To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines? Stakeholder webinar result



- 5.12 In discussion, a number of clarification questions were asked around the specifics of the ORP, particularly in relation to the recruitment of on-call staff (and the reasons why it might be problematic) and the proposed new on-call contracts attendance times.

*“How are you planning on improving at Heathfield?”*

*“What contractual requirements do you require of on-call employees for your normal on-call model (5 minutes) and your 30 minutes model in terms of availability and remuneration?”*

*“How much will the new on-call contracts pay?”*

*“Do you think the reason for your struggles to employ persons is because the police are recruiting as well. From having friends and family in both services it takes a special person to take on these roles and surely that limits the numbers applying to each service? Surely it's not just down to wages!”*

*“If an incident occurs where a "30 minute" response pump is the geographical nearest resource, is there a way of speeding up the response?”*

- 5.13 The main issues raised around this proposal around: how a “guaranteed service” can be provided in view of the difficulties involved in recruiting and retaining on-call staff; whether the proposed new on-call contract will be as effective as ESFRS hopes; service-wide resilience in the event of a large and/or protracted incident and to ensure adequate cover for ‘non-core’ stations; and ensuring team cohesion within the flexible crewing team.

*“As you are struggling to recruit and retain retained personnel, how can you guarantee service?”*

*“You are confident, but the confidence is based on an assumption that the new contract will be effective in attracting and retaining staff. A big assumption”*

“The hours for on-call firefighters (on call nights and at weekends) are about as family-unfriendly as it’s possible to be. So, I imagine that you will find it hard to recruit so many on-call staff”

“Of course, more engines are good. The problem is the lack of personnel to man them”

“East Sussex [is] struggling to recruit on-call firefighters. But these proposals seem to depend far more heavily on on-call firefighters. Isn’t it dangerously risky to rely so heavily on a model that is not working / is not proven?”

“The recent (May 2020) Ashdown forest fire required the attendance of 8 fire engines. If the total number of fire engines is cut to 24 as in these proposals, how would cover be provided at the 18 core stations during future wildfires?”

“Increasing the number of ‘core’ stations while reducing the number of engines in East Sussex will increase the occasions on which there is no cover at all in some of the ‘non-core’ stations, such as Barcombe. What is your assessment of the number of occasions in which ‘non-core’ stations will have no cover?”

“[What about] the skill sets that individuals acquire and how they fit in to a team and resourcing into other teams should dynamic responses be required into out of area events?”

## Proposal 2: Changes to day-crewed duty stations

### Proposal 2: Changes to Day-Crewed Stations



ESFRS is proposing to change to ‘day-only’ crewing at its current ‘day-crewed’ fire stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield

#### Day-crewing (24/7)

- Used where risk levels are lower
- Some day-crewed stations have a relatively low level of activity (can be quieter than some on-call stations)



“Positive” hours worked on-station (daytime)  
 “Standby” hours worked on-call from a location within 5 minutes from the station (evening + overnight)  
 Same firefighters work positive and standby hours

#### Day-only (24/7)

- Difference = full-time staff do not provide evening, overnight + weekend on-call cover...
- ...provided by existing + newly recruited on-call staff



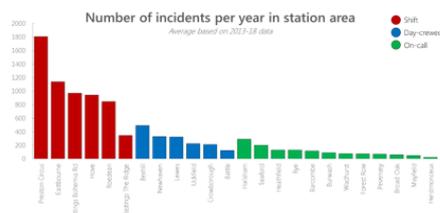
Full-time firefighters on-station Monday-Friday daytime



Different sets of on-call firefighters provide evening/overnight/weekend cover

*The change results in a reduction of between 27 and 33 posts, to be reinvested into the “flexible crewing pool” training and prevention and protection teams*

### Proposal 2: Changes to Day-Crewed Stations



Some day-crewed stations → less demand than some “on call” stations  
 Incidents in Hailsham similar to Newhaven + Lewes (+ The Ridge)  
 Incidents in Seaford similar to Uckfield and Crowborough  
 More incidents in 4 busiest on-call areas than in Battle

Appliance	Daytime weekend mobilisations per year	
	All Incident Types	Critical Incident
Battle P1 (9-4 only)	32	4
Bexhill P1	84	7
Crowborough P1	47	4
Lewes P1	58	9
Newhaven P1	61	6
Uckfield P1	54	6

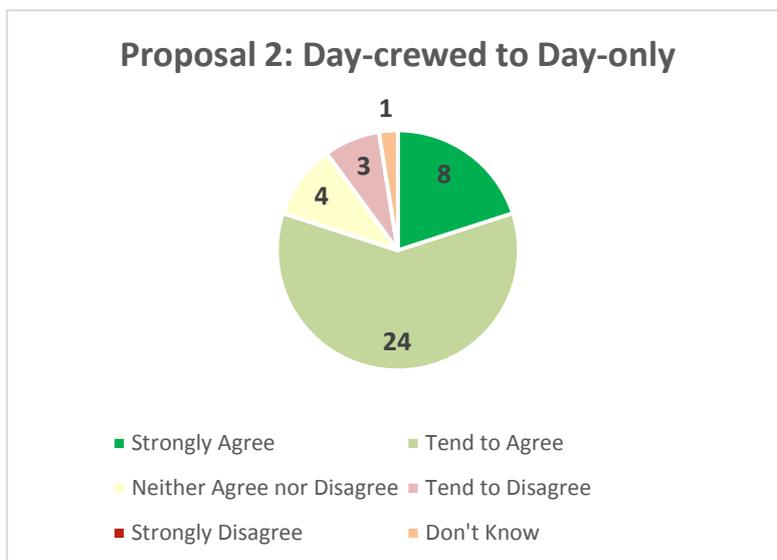
Average no. of incidents per year that would potentially receive a longer response time  
 Very few critical incidents (e.g. dwelling fire, RTC)

Data → change has very low impact on fatality rates, demand and performance

## Public focus groups/depth interviews

5.14 Eight of the 40 public focus group attendees strongly agreed with Proposal 2, and a further 24 tended to agree. Four neither agreed nor disagreed, three tended to disagree and there was one ‘don’t know’.

Figure 39: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection work? Public focus group/depth interview result



- 5.15 There was widespread agreement that the proposed crewing change is acceptable to facilitate the coverage improvements identified in Proposal 1 – the transfer of resources to prevention and protection and the 'flexible crewing pool' in particular.

*"I thought it was a good idea because I think it goes hand in hand with your Proposal 1 [and] I feel like Proposal 1, there is a lot more advantages. And I feel like the changes that Proposal 2 bring would be okay to allow the Proposal 1 to work. I'd rather Proposal 1 happen than it not happen and for Proposal 2 to just stay the same"* (Lewes)

*"That's a good rationalisation actually, and getting the best use of the resources"* (Eastbourne)

*"Proposal 1 looks very good. I can see where they come from. Proposal 2 could have a slight effect on response times ... but if you can make things easier as far as having more people to choose from and things like that then I feel that it could be beneficial thing to do"* (Rother)

*"I can see the logic in doing that. Obviously, the data speaks for itself and ... the reduction in those posts means that they can reinvest into the flexible crewing pool..."* (Brighton & Hove)

*"I'm thinking about important rationalisations and quality service delivery in the 21st century with references to this flexibility, training and development and prevention and protection"* (Eastbourne)

- 5.16 It was also said, though, that this proposal will be difficult to 'sell' to the wider public if people take it in isolation without understanding its potential benefits.

*"I agree with the first proposal ... But if you just put the second proposal to me without thinking about the first one, I think most people probably say 'no' because it is effectively a cut. People will be naturally less enthusiastic about the second proposal because of the longer waiting time ... You wonder what could happen in those extra three minutes even though it's only three minutes. I can see why the public wouldn't actually hear that and all they were compute is. 'What, I have to wait three more minutes for you to get to me' and just instinctively, that doesn't feel great ... I agree the trade-off is worth it, but it's just a hard thing to really feel warm about, I guess"* (Lewes)

- 5.17 As for concerns, longer response times were an inevitable worry for many, and several sought clarifications on what exactly 'slightly longer' means in this context and about the exact implications of additional minutes on fire spread.

*"If they did change it to the day-only then what would be the wait on the weekend? Would it be particularly long if people had a fire?" (Eastbourne)*

*"When you talk about the response times, I know it's very elusive ... People won't know what the actual specific longer response times will mean, but is there an average of how much longer it will take to get to them areas, especially in the critical emergencies? So, what does that 'slightly longer' mean?" (Lewes)*

*"How many minutes would that be typically, on average? So, in Battle there were four critical incidents that would have a longer time, are there any estimates of how much longer that would be and what the impact of that might be?" (Rother)*

*"When you say, on average, it's going to take three minutes longer, I know it's difficult, but in your average house fire, how much difference does that make to the fire?" (Lewes)*

*"I think this one is much harder to manage, and the extended attendance time is going to go down very badly" (Eastbourne)*

- 5.18 Other worries were around: the loss of experienced full-time firefighters from local areas to the 'flexible crewing pool'; the potential for difficulties as a result of separating daytime and night-time crews; and the impact of population growth on future incident numbers. There were also some specific local concerns, such as the need to be mindful of the number of firework-based organisations around Lewes.

*"With regards to the dispersal of firefighters. Are they the full-time firefighters, the ones with the most experience or the on-call? No-one would actually want to lose the most experienced people in favour of part-timer ... who probably hasn't quite had as much training or on-site management of a disaster" (Wealden)*

*"I'm not convinced that the weekend and night-time cover, separating it out like that, is the best way forward ... any incident that could crossover the handover of teams will be tricky because of the different crews" (Rother)*

*"Has this taken into account the growth of these areas? Because if you take Hailsham, Hailsham has grown tremendously in the last 10 years and it seems to Joe Citizen that all the services are reducing but ... the development is extensive, and the quality of the building isn't great, so the density is increasing" (Eastbourne)*

*"Looking particularly at Lewes ... we're not a normal town given the number of fireworks that are stored around Lewes, and we have seen in the past dreadful incidents with fireworks. With incidents like that, it's very important that fire crews get there quickly" (Lewes)*

- 5.19 In terms of the impact on staff and staffing, there was some debate as to whether the proposed change would be beneficial or detrimental. A few people considered the day-only system to be a marked improvement on day-crewing inasmuch as the latter appears over-burdensome in terms of hours worked, whereas others foresaw some "push-back" from existing day-crew firefighters who might be reluctant or unable to change from a system they are familiar with and have built their lives around – particularly

considering they would eventually lose a significant proportion of their income (£6,000) through no longer being eligible for a housing allowance.

*"I think that day-crewing 24/7 is absolutely horrendous. You have people working day shifts and night shifts; that shouldn't be happening ... the day only proposal, well it looks an awful lot better on paper"* (Brighton & Hove)

*"I actually kind of assumed that the new option was how it already worked otherwise you must have quite a lot of crew who must end up working long hours, whereas it's probably quite beneficial to have a whole different set of crew who do these out of hours, weekends and things"* (Brighton & Hove)

*"If I was one of the frontline firefighters that's going to lose that particular job and have another job found for them, I might argue about it..."* (Eastbourne)

*"The only thing that's stopping it being full agreement is there will always be that push back from people saying, 'I don't want to change my role'"* (Brighton & Hove)

*"My worry is that if you are reducing their wage by £6,000, actually how many of them can afford to realistically stay? It's a bit of a worry that you are kind of almost cutting some people out by saying ... you've got to accept this. Even though you'll get your same pay for three years, we are going to take £6,000 less. It's whether they can continue to do that role"* (Brighton & Hove)

- 5.20 Furthermore, there was disagreement as to whether day-only staffing would be better for recruitment purposes: some felt it would assist in attracting a more diverse workforce to the full-time Service (mothers of school-age children for example), whereas others worried that on-call recruitment may be more difficult if asking for evening and weekend cover only.

*"Making it day-only will make it easier to hire people. My sister is a single mum and so she's struggling to find things that will fit in with her child school regimen and so having weekends off would be easier and take less pressure off people who are parents wanting to go into the FRS"* (Wealden)

*"In terms of the on-call staff ... would that not actually make it more difficult to hire people if they are only hired for evenings and weekends. Obviously, that can go around an office job, but we've said already that some people get home from their 9-5 and don't want to sign on so would it not make it a bit more difficult?"* (Brighton & Hove)

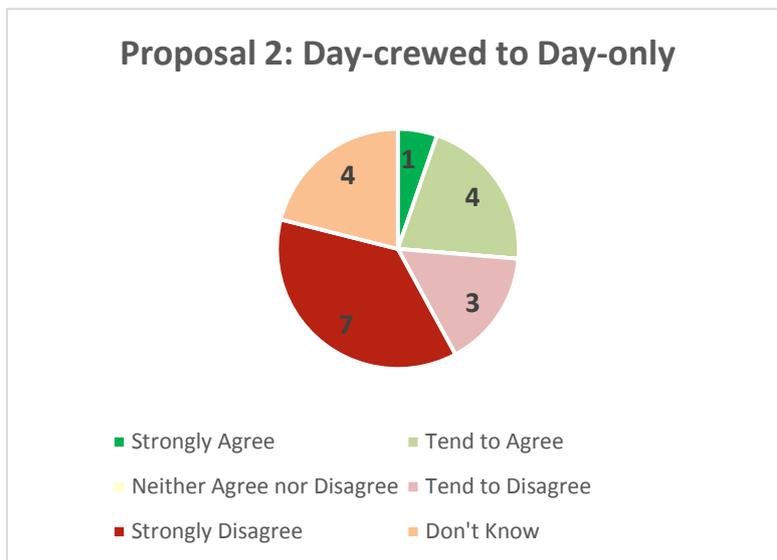
- 5.21 Finally, the importance of regularly monitoring the impact of any change such as this was stressed.

*"Anything that cuts firemen that are out there to respond, people will be concerned that the risk assessment is correct. So, I would support it as long as I knew that it was being kept under review and being monitored and it would be reported on to see what the impact of the change has been ... I trust the experts, but I want them to continue to engage afterwards. I would like them to report back on the real-world result"* (Brighton & Hove)

## Stakeholder webinar

- 5.22 Of the 19 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, five agreed with the proposal, 10 disagreed (seven strongly) and there were four 'don't knows'.

**Figure 40: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection work? Stakeholder webinar result**



- 5.23 In their questions and comments, several stakeholders referred to both proposals 2 and 3 together. For example, there was significant concern about the proposed change to crewing arrangements at, and the loss of the second fire engine from Crowborough Fire Station – primarily due to its location at the extremity of the county, its proximity to Ashdown Forest and the A26, and the town's significant population and development increases.

*“With Crowborough being on the northern extremity, what will happen to response times?”*

*“With Ashdown Forest on our doorstep, what will happen with large forest fires. One recent fire took about seven hours to extinguish and damping down was still going on next day?”*

*“With all the proposed development in Crowborough, nearly 600 houses in Walshes Road if approved alone with 197 already being built, surely these cuts to the service and vehicles will be disastrous? With the main A26 running right through Crowborough and beyond what will happen to response and attendance at serious and fatal road traffic crashes?”*

- 5.24 In terms of other areas, the following lengthy response was submitted in advance of the webinar in relation to the proposals for Newhaven Fire Station. The respondent was mainly concerned about: the *“misleading”* and *“loaded”* consultation document and questionnaire, which are based on *“out of date”* data; losing the frequent standby cover given by the second fire engine when the first is out; longer response times; longer second engine response times compromising firefighter safety; low on-call firefighter numbers and availability; and the loss of full-time firefighter posts locally.

*I would like to raise the following points relating to the proposals listed below, in relation to our Newhaven Fire Station. The proposals for Newhaven are:*

- Cut one fire engine from the station*
- Downgrade fire station from Day-crewed to Day-staffing*
- Cut Foam Tender from the station*
- Cut 50% of the full-time firefighting staff*
- Introduce a Command Unit and an Operational support unit (OSU)*

*It appears that the public consultation IRMP document is very misleading and full of loaded questions based on out of date data (only includes figure up to 2018 – there have been operational changes since, including an increase in the number of calls of around 12.5% in 2019 and the introduction of a close working relationship with SECAMB). It would seem that unfortunately, the Fire Authority has been briefed on this out of date data for many months now and it is hard for them to listen to up to date facts. However, there are some key issues pertaining to Newhaven fire station I would like to point out. I appreciate that we are not alone in these cuts proposals - this is county wide. Those key issues are:*

*Cut a fire engine (87P4) - This engine was used 51 times in 2019, but what is not brought to the attention of the Fire authority is that every time our first fire engine goes out (87P1), the second engine remains on station - giving cover to the community, when the first (87P1) is busy. Thus: no break in cover and consequently, a safer community.*

*When attending an incident, 87P1 will turn up with a crew of 4 - made up of an officer in charge (OIC), driver/pump operator/breathing apparatus, board controller and a Breathing apparatus (BA) team (2 x firefighters). Before the OIC can commit a BA into a burning building and to conform to Health and safety and fire service national risk assessments, the OIC must wait for another BA team to be available before committing the first. This is a national H&S standard and can only be breached in the most extreme circumstances. For Newhaven the second BA team is on the second engine (87P4) - the engine they want to cut. So 87P1 will have to wait for an engine from either Roedean or Seaford. That's an extra 10/15 minutes and often that's the difference between life and death or losing your property or business.*

*Downgrading of Newhaven Fire Station - This would reduce the community's fire cover greatly. The proposal states it wants full time firefighters to man the station - possibly 9 till 5 and no weekend cover. Times outside these hours would be covered by on-call firefighters, responding from their homes. As it stands at the moment, the full-time firefighters are split into 2 watches of 6 - doing a 'four days on, four days off' on a rota system. They cover a total of 96 hours per watch, being bolstered by on-call firefighters.*

*The trouble with relying on the on-call firefighters, is there is not enough of them to cover all the hours required. There have been some problems with on-call firefighters not turning into station for a call, for up to 10 minutes. Then having to get ready to go out. That results in a delay of 12/15 minutes from time of call. There is problem getting on-call firefighters to be available at crucial times of the day (i.e. 6am to 9am and 5pm to 7pm), because of their primary employment and having to get to and from work. Also, most on-call firefighters, can be full time firefighters from shift stations and so are hampered by the working time directive.*

*Introduction of command unit and OSU - This on the surface, appears to not be a bad thing, if the station is not downgraded. However, if it is and you have a call for one of these vehicles outside of 9am to 5pm, it causes a problem. Out of office hours, they will only have 4/5 on-call firefighters on duty. If they get a call for one of the new vehicles, that would mean the main fire engine (87P1), would no longer have a full crew and so would not be available and therefore no fire cover for the community.*

*50% full time firefighter posts lost - Loss of skills and experience, that would be detrimental and feasibly would have serious consequences for the service and the communities it serves.*

*Cut Foam Tender from the station - This is not of too much concern to the station, as I understand it was originally introduced to assist with potential refrigeration fires, etc. at the port. With the lessening of freight traffic over recent years in that vicinity, its requirement has similarly reduced. However, there are a number of small rural-based airfields locally and redeploying this to say, Lewes Fire Station, may be a prudent measure.*

*I would be grateful for a response to the above concerns that have been raised with me, by Fire Officers and local people. We cannot compromise on Health and Safety of our residents and businesses, when considering financial cuts. There is no price on life and property and our Fire Services have a duty of care, to the public and businesses it serves, as well as the brave firefighters and staff, that it calls upon to take on this responsibility within our communities.*

- 5.25 With specific regard to changing crewing systems from day-crewed to day-only, a few stakeholders sought clarification as to exactly what 'slightly longer' response times will entail, as well as why they are justifiable during the daytime on weekends.

*"This was a question I received from a constituent: The service has stated that there will be a delay to the second appliance but have only stated this will take 'slightly' longer.' Exactly how long would this be for any given area in Newhaven and Peacehaven's area and at the busiest times of the day? Thanks in advance"*

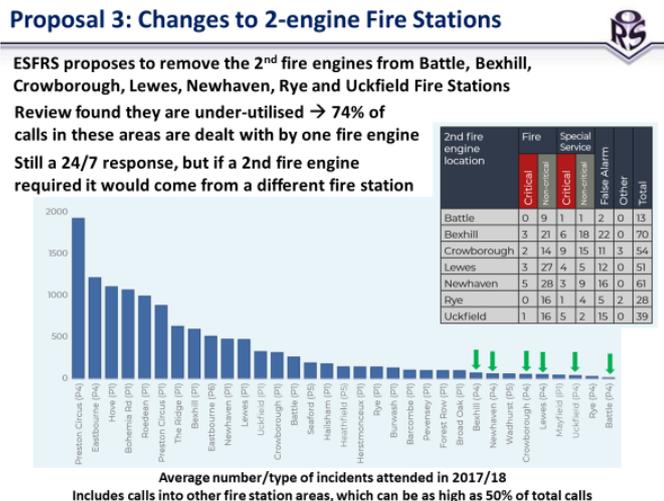
*"Can you give me a definition for how long 'slightly longer' would be and how much impact 'negligible impact' would be. What was this data based on as the definition of slightly and negligible would vary between different people?"*

*"A slide says about taking slightly longer to get to incidents due to day-only crews and reduced number of pumps at some RDS stations. How long is slightly longer and what is the impact of that?"*

*"If IRMP is based on risk, where is the reduced risk of crews taking longer to get to incidents just because it is a weekend?"*

- 5.26 Furthermore, another sought to understand the "the impact on service provision of specialist equipment and depth of cover for Ashdown Forest? The speed of development and recent history of fires on Ashdown Forest will potentially be significantly be impacted by reduction in service to daytime and weekday which are not our peak fire times. This leaves the environment at greater risk and properties, so scale and speed are important".

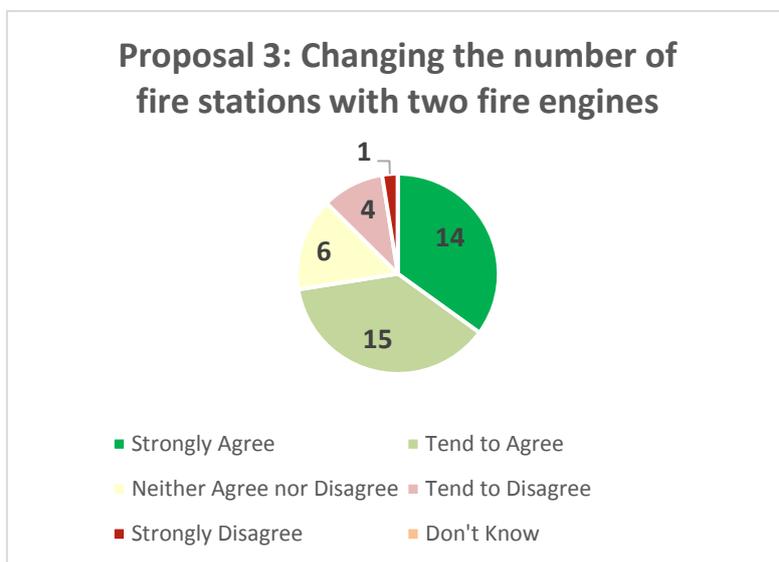
### Proposal 3: Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines



#### Public focus groups/depth interviews

5.27 29 of the 40 public focus group participants agreed with removing the second fire engines from the seven affected stations: 14 strongly agreed and 15 tended to agree. Six people neither agreed nor disagreed, four tended to disagree and one strongly disagreed.

Figure 41: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations? Public focus group/depth interview result



5.28 The proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations was supported by a majority of participants across all six focus groups as a sensible redistribution of under-used resources. Some typical comments are below and overleaf.

*“It seems to make complete sense ... if they’re just going to be sat there effectively not used and it’s not really going to change the stats then why have them? Especially if you know it’s costing a lot of money to the service which could be reinvested in better ways ... And then like you say if on the chance they do need a second one they come from elsewhere anyway...” (Brighton & Hove)*

*“I think that’s perfectly sensible ... to have the two appliances, you’ve got the crew for the two appliances and if you haven’t got the number of call outs that’s a waste of manpower. So, I think redistributing is a very good idea” (Eastbourne)*

*“I think that one does make sense ... it’s basically saying that the second fire engine is not always in use so therefore it’s not always needed ... if it’s not really been in use and you’re already getting another fire engine from another area anyway and that’s pretty much how its already working I don’t think it will make too much of a change” (Hastings)*

*“That sounds really sensible and it’s evidenced in the fact that you either can’t use it or it doesn’t have a use and the fact that money could be spent a lot better elsewhere in the Service ... it definitely sounds like it will be a better idea than having all these things you can’t use” (Wealden)*

*“Given the usage of these fire engines, they must be better off saving money by not being there or being redeployed to where they’re most effective” (Lewes)*

*“I did look through the detailed proposals and it makes eminent sense to me; I think it’s one of the best ones of all” (Rother)*

<sup>5.29</sup> In particular, people were seemingly convinced by the statistics around critical incidents, low appliance availability and the fact that currently, 74% of incidents in these areas are dealt with by one fire engine (though, as the last quotation below demonstrates) there was a minority view that the latter figure is unacceptably low).

*“Presented with the facts, it seems exceptionally reasonable” (Lewes)*

*“The critical incident stats are persuasive for me” (Hastings)*

*“I tend to agree now after looking at the statistics ... And along with being unable to crew the actual second fire engine from a local vicinity; there’s no point having an engine that can’t be used anyway. So, the whole thing makes sense” (Wealden)*

*“It’s the facts as well; 74% don’t require a second engine so you obviously have facts that prove that. It’s black and white and not grey and I like that ... I think if the facts are telling you that you’ve got 74%, that’s quite a high percentage. I think if it had been lower then it would really bad idea to take it away but ... those areas are sort of low risk ... because they are quite rural aren’t they?” (Eastbourne)*

*“If the secondary engine is clearing the other 26% then it’s needed in my opinion ... If it was 1% or 2% then maybe ... but it’s not. It’s nearly 30%; that’s quite a large percentage...” (Brighton & Hove)*

<sup>5.30</sup> This is not to say, though, that there were no concerns or anxieties, for there were several – most notably in relation to second engine response times, particularly to the more rural areas served by the seven affected stations. Indeed, this was the main reason why some people opposed this proposal.

*“How much longer would it extend the set response time for a second unit to attend a critical incident by not having one on site? I take your point that it may not be available anyway but generally at the current moment in time, how much longer does it extend the response time for the second vehicle?” (Hastings)*

*“I’m concerned about the geographical aspect ... if you were getting a Hastings crew to, say, a Bexhill incident, knowing what the link road is like I think there could be a delay on response times” (Rother)*

*“It’s the rural area. I live in a village and luckily, we have two fire stations near us; one in Mayfield and one in Crowborough. It’s having that cover ... If there is a big fire and we need more than one fire engine from Crowborough, how quickly are we going to get back-up for a major fire if it has to come from another area?” (Wealden)*

*“If we remove it from Rye, if you are coming from Hastings it’s probably a good 15 minutes journey for the second engine ... and there are historical buildings there and they are more prone to fire ... The George Hotel and stuff like that. It obviously comes down to the prevention that you do with older buildings but what about that sort of situation?” (Hastings)*

*“If I’ve paid my council tax and I’ve called at the wrong time because there is a fire in my home and they’ve had to get a secondary fire engine from a different place, which has added another five minutes ... I would fundamentally disagree. The two fire engine stations should remain as two fire engine stations” (Brighton & Hove)*

- 5.31 The other main concern was a potential lack of resilience as a result of removing the seven fire engines, both in terms of attendance at incidents and for stand-by moves to cover ‘gaps’ across the area.

*“I think that reduction in the total number of fire engines might adversely impact the Service’s resilience” (Eastbourne)*

*“Are all those stations in close proximity to a station that has two trucks available or are they all sort 1-1-1-1 in a small group and there’s a two in the middle and actually you’ve got quite a big space with only one truck per station?” (Brighton & Hove)*

*“It makes sense, but you don’t want to leave one station in a large area ... without any engines at all for an extended time because they are out on call” (Brighton & Hove)*

*“I do know that if Hove have a call out, usually a fire truck from Brighton will go and sit at Hove. I’m assuming that’s going to be the same sort of situation with these other places as well, once their primary goes out, their secondary will go to them?” (Brighton & Hove)*

- 5.32 Other worries were that: it will be difficult to reintroduce the “capital equipment” once it has been disposed of, even in the event of rising incidents; increased use of back-up appliances from other areas could mean a lack of local knowledge among those attending; and that future demographic changes may not have been sufficiently considered.

*“The problem is once you get rid of engines it’s difficult to step back from that, so I tend to disagree with this ... You can change rostering and crewing ... but once you’ve got rid of a bit of capital equipment then it’s harder to roll back. If it’s found in the real world that it does cause problems, then once you’ve lost an engine finding the budget to get it back is lot harder than it is to simply re-write your rostering rules” (Brighton & Hove)*

*“I think if this is implemented there will very quickly be a scenario where we think ‘oh crap, we needed that; if we’d had the other appliance, we would have been alright here...’” (Rother)*

*“You will have different firefighters in those engines going to different towns that they are not very sure about ... a Brighton fire engine will know all around Brighton but might not know all around Lewes or Bexhill etc.” (Brighton & Hove)*

*“The thing I’m not totally convinced about is how much the changing demographic, particularly in this part of the woods, has influenced the decision to take away the second appliances. The figures that were given in the plan reflect some change in the number of households and people that are in East Sussex and what that looks like across the age range but I’m still not sure it’s been extrapolated out long enough...” (Rother)*

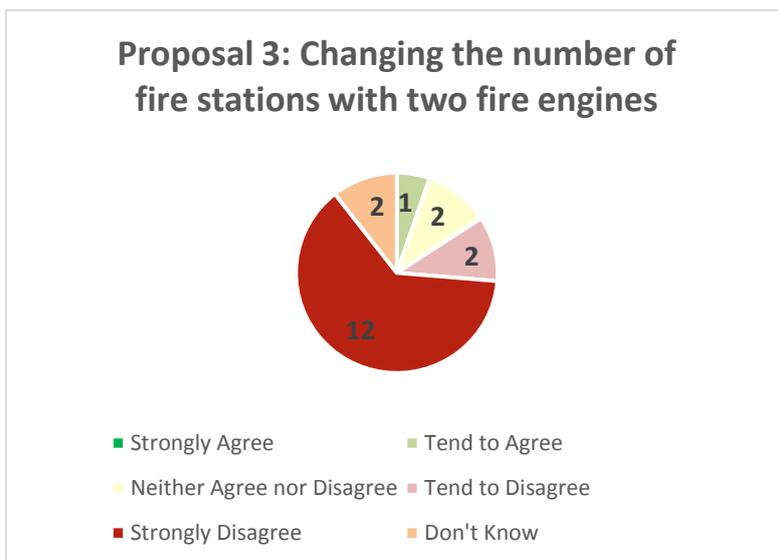
- <sup>5.33</sup> One Brighton & Hove participant suggested a phased approach to the proposed second fire engine removals, starting with the stations with the fewest incidents. This, they felt, will allow ESFRS to monitor incident levels at the busier locations to ensure they remain low prior to making changes there.

*“Would they not do better just removing the second engine from the ones that you can clearly see it’s not needed like Battle, Uckfield, Rye, possibly Crowborough. So Bexhill, I would probably say keep it there for the time being just to see if it is needed and if it’s not needed after a certain time, be that after 6 months or 12 months, if it’s clear that they don’t need it then remove it ... We’re looking at seven fire stations where they’re looking at removing the second engine, so that’s quite a lot really ... I would probably say Bexhill, Lewes and Newhaven ... in my view it would probably be keep at least two out of those seven. Test it out on Battle, Crowborough, Rye and Uckfield but keep the three with the highest rates on there. If it works and if it’s doable then yeah, get rid of those as well ... Probably trial and error first. If you take away everything and realise ‘oh we’ve made a mistake’ it could be quite fatal but if you trial and error and remove it from half of them first, then you can see where you go” (Brighton & Hove)*

#### Stakeholder webinar

- <sup>5.34</sup> Of the 19 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, only one agreed with the proposal, two neither agreed nor disagreed and 14 disagreed (12 strongly). There were a further two ‘don’t knows’.

Figure 42: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations? Stakeholder webinar result



5.35 Some of the issues raised in relation to Proposal 3 have been reported above for the reasons explained, but there was some worry about the loss of second appliances in isolation. Longer second engine response times from neighbouring stations were a concern, as was the fact the second engines under threat themselves provide back up to other areas (Crowborough to Forest Row for example).

*“The main issue that I have had from constituents so far including firefighters at our station, is that we are losing a pump. Bearing in mind our station is practically brand new this seems to people to be a waste. Their worry is that a loss of an appliance on site will surely result in an overall delay in response? I appreciate people do not always read all the information available, but people are afraid”*

*“Forest Row is struggling to respond. Crowborough provides back-up to Forest Row, but would not be able to assist with only one fire engine?”*

5.36 While it was recognised that 74% of incidents in the affected areas are dealt with by one fire engine, this was considered too low a figure to justify removing resources that are required over a quarter of the time. It was also again suggested that the figures being used to justify the proposal are “out of date” – and that they may be somewhat misleading if they relate to incidents as opposed to mobilisations.

*“If 74% are attended by one engine, that means 26% are attended by more than one. Surely this is still too a high percentage of requirement to consider the reduction unless the issue is with not being able to man the second engine?”*

*“Some of my constituents are concerned that the data used for this is out of date and is actually not reflective of the 2nd appliances use. I have had feedback from people who work in the fire service who have suggested this is the case. What if it turns out that there was an increase in use for this past year? Or next year? Newhaven has a projected increase in population for the next decade. My constituents are concerned that this cover will not be sufficient”*

*“Does the 74% relate to incidents or call-outs? Call out figures should be being used otherwise they give a false picture as a vehicle is being used whilst they are out on the road whether it ends up as a true incident or not. What about where there is a callout which is cancelled on the way to what is thought to be an incident? Also, with the standby movements it still means that the firefighters are having to respond elsewhere”*

5.37 A further response submitted post-webinar noted the *“impractical and dangerous”* assumption that Seaford Fire Station can, in future, provide a degree of cover for Newhaven give the two towns are separated by a swing bridge that is *“expected to have more openings in the near future”*.

*“The swing bridge at Newhaven is expected to have more openings in the near future, as there is a new tarmac plant that is soon to open on the North Quay – receiving materials by boat. If the bridge is open when the Seaford engine is required to cover west of the bridge, there would be a minimum delay of 10mins., whilst the bridge is open and a further delay through traffic jams caused as a result. This is even more an issue at peak times. It is impractical and dangerous, to rely on the cover for Newhaven, by a station or stations separated by the navigable river and its associated swing bridge on the A259 at Newhaven.”*

## Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings

### Proposal 4: Crewing + Fire Engine Changes at Hastings

*ESFRS is proposing to change the way it crews stations in Hastings and introduce an additional fire engine*

**Bohemia Road + The Ridge Fire Stations have one 24/7 immediate response fire engine each**

**Data shows that...**

Bohemia Road → far higher risk profile than The Ridge  
E.g. Bohemia Road area is 2<sup>nd</sup> across ESFRS for critical incidents + 1<sup>st</sup> for life-risk fire incidents

The Ridge fire engine attends more incidents in Bohemia Road than on its own ground  
Incident numbers at The Ridge are similar to typical day-crewed areas



### Proposal 4: Crewing + Fire Engine Changes at Hastings

*ESFRS is proposing to change the way it crews stations in Hastings and introduce an additional fire engine*

**ESFRS wants to introduce...**

- A day-crewed system at The Ridge
- A second (additional) 24/7 immediate response fire engine at Bohemia Road



**Current**  
1 x 24/7 immediate response fire engine at each station



**Proposed**  
2 x 24/7 immediate response fire engines at Bohemia Road



1 x 'day-crewed' fire engine at The Ridge

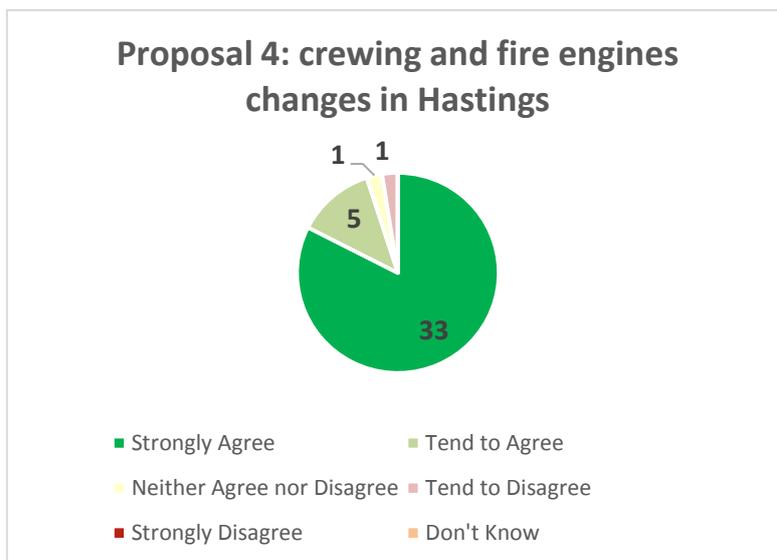
**ESFRS feels this will...**

- Improve risk/fire cover for both Hastings station grounds
- Building more resilience in Hastings
- Improve firefighter safety

## Public focus groups/depth interviews

5.38 Over 8 in 10 (33) of the 40 public focus group participants strongly agreed with the proposed changes at Hastings. A further five tended to agree, one neither agreed nor disagreed and one tended to disagree.

Figure 43: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road? Public focus group/depth interview result



<sup>5.39</sup> In discussion, it was clear that there was very little disagreement with this proposal: the vast majority of participants considered it something of a “no-brainer” in ensuring the right resources are in the right place.

*“The whole system obviously makes good sense; the statistics speak for themselves. If 74% or 75% of the fires are in Bohemia Road, it just makes sense to do that” (Wealden)*

*“From a purely pragmatic point of view, it makes sense to have one have more capacity than the other because that’s where the incidents are. This just feels like a no brainer” (Rother)*

*“I think it’s second highest for critical incidents ... Just that alone kind of highlights for me that you need more services or resources to try and overcome incidents” (Eastbourne)*

*“I like this one ... having the extra immediate response engine at Bohemia Road is a good idea considering were using The Ridge response team ... I think it would mean better response times for the public. That one is a very well thought out plan” (Hastings)*

*“To me this makes absolute sense. I think that’s a very good idea because you are putting the emphasis where most of the problems occur but still covering the other sites. I sort of know Hastings and so to me, it makes sense to have the support where you are currently having the highest number of calls. And it will also cut costs in a way because that Ridge area is being better utilised” (Eastbourne)*

<sup>5.40</sup> People were also reassured that both Hastings stations would continue to support each other and that, overall, the town would be adequately (some felt better) resourced.

*“It sounds like it really makes sense because these areas aren’t massively far apart, so even if you’ve got this day crew in the evening or whenever, if they can’t get to things Bohemia Road has been helping out with some of their calls anyway ... and they’ll be able to reach more calls quickly in the areas that actually need it” (Brighton & Hove)*

*“As it’s working right now, The Ridge also goes over and covers areas in Bohemia Road as well. So, if there really needed to be a crossover, it would just come from the other side. And so, I feel like even if there was major critical things happening, it would still be shared” (Lewes)*

*"They're not actually reducing it really ... and that actually puts an extra fire engine in there so I would very much agree to that ... essentially they are just sharing a workload and they are adding a new fire engine, so I think that's a positive move" (Brighton & Hove)*

*"I think it sounds like a good proposal; it overall increases the availability of resources in the area ... and distributes it based on whether the data shows they are actually needed" (Eastbourne)*

- 5.41 There was some negative opinion in the Hastings and Rother groups, mainly around cover for areas between Hastings and Rye during the evening and on weekends. With regard to Rye itself, it was said that the proposed removal of the second fire engine from the area would mean The Ridge having to travel there more frequently, which again led to concern about longer response times outside daytime hours.

*"The Ridge covers Westfield, Fairlight, Icklesham and Three Oaks ... would the Bohemia Road crew would be able to attend those if needed... what is the resilience into the hinterland of The Ridge?" (Rother)*

*"If there was a problem past The Ridge over towards Rye, obviously they would have to come from Bohemia Road and that's a lot longer" (Hastings)*

*"If you're going to take away the second fire engine at Rye, the closest fire engine to Rye would be The Ridge. If you are on a very busy bank holiday weekend, you would find it difficult to get a Bohemia Road engine up to The Ridge and out to Rye in anything like the time you would be able to get something from The Ridge out to Rye" (Hastings)*

- 5.42 One participant - who disagreed with the proposal - criticised the statistics used to justify it, and also sought clarification around possible redevelopment plans for Bohemia Road.

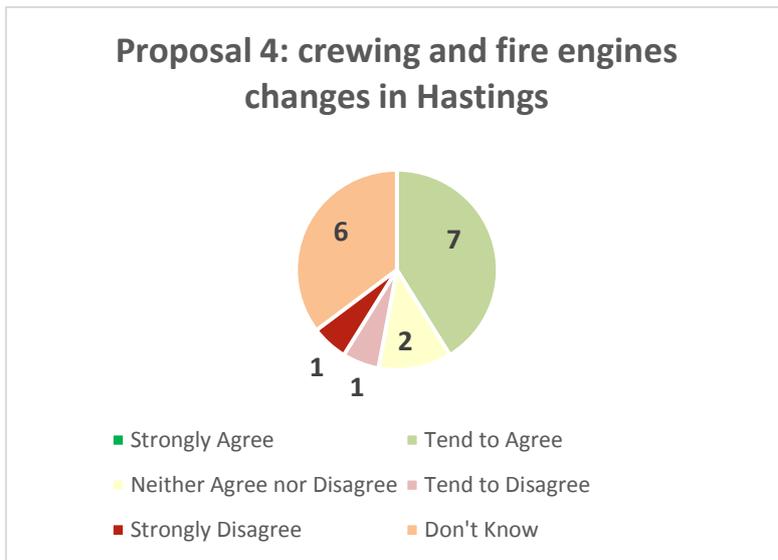
*"If you have a look, over half the difference between Bohemia Road and The Ridge is actually false alarms. The false alarms for Bohemia Road is 482, the false alarms for The Ridge is 146 so over 300 of those 'all incidents' that you've got there are actually false alarms. If you actually discounted the false alarms, the difference between the incidents wouldn't be anywhere near as great as you are making out ... You are presenting these figures with something in mind rather than actually something that's realistic because the false alarms are quick. You are laying it on a bit thick I think with those statistics" (Hastings)*

*"The timescale of this seems to be a bit odd because the Bohemia Road Fire station is in the Summerfield development area and under the plans from Hastings Borough Council in about three years' time, it is quite likely that you are going to move the Bohemia Road station. So, I find it a bit unusual that you are building up that station and running down The Ridge whereas the Bohemia Road one is probably the one that you are going to have to vacate" (Hastings)*

#### Stakeholder webinar

- 5.43 Of the 17 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, seven agreed with the proposal, two neither agreed nor disagreed and two disagreed (one strongly). There were a further six 'don't knows'.

Figure 44: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road? Stakeholder webinar result



5.44 Only one comment was made on this proposal: “it’s a shame Q4 isn’t in two parts as I would agree with the increase to 2 vehicles at 1 site but not a reduced service at the other site”.

### Proposal 6: Demand Management<sup>22</sup>

#### Proposal 6: Demand Management



ESFRS is aiming to manage demand for its services in 3 low-risk areas to reduce the impact on its other work

##### Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)

- Account for 34% of ESFRS’ c.9,200 annual incident responses (c.3,130)
- 96% turn out to be false alarms – and of those that are fires, very few require ‘firefighter action’ as fires are already out when crews arrive
- Significant drain on resources
- Proposal → no longer automatically attend AFAs in low-risk commercial premises

##### Lift Releases

- Proposal → delay responding to lift releases, if the people are not vulnerable or in distress
- Give building owners – who are responsible for broken lifts – time to resolve issues

##### Birds trapped in netting

- ESFRS works alongside animal charities to reduce this type of call
- Still attends some → tie up resources/often need expensive specialist equipment
- Proposal → no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting

*These changes will release capacity into prevention, protection and training*

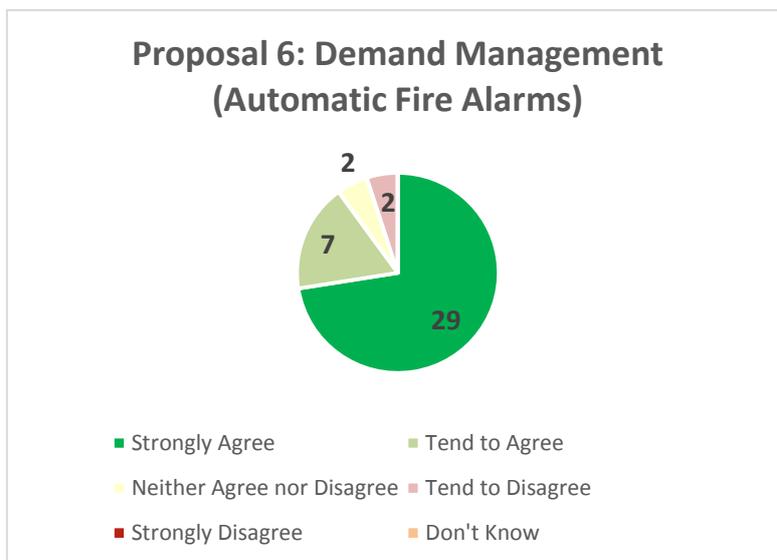
#### Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)

#### Public focus groups/depth interviews

5.45 29 of the 40 members of the public strongly agreed with ESFRS’ proposals in relation to AFA activations. A further seven tended to agree, two neither agreed nor disagreed and two tended to disagree.

<sup>22</sup>Proposal 5 was not consulted on as it relates to internal operational matters and therefore there were no resulting questions.

Figure 45: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises? Public focus group/depth interview result



- <sup>5.46</sup> Most participants recognised (some through first-hand experience) that AFA activations are a significant drain on ESFRS' resources and so supported the proposal not to automatically attend those in low-risk commercial premises.

*"I think that's sensible ... because people have got an avenue to make that call and get the assistance that they need so that's fine for me. I've experienced it myself and I know that when the fire alarm goes off, it's normally some error or it's got nothing to do with a fire..." (Eastbourne)*

*"I think it would definitely make sense for them not to waste their time going. I know I've been in buildings before when they've gone off and you know there's no fire there, but the fire engine still has to come, and it seems like a massive waste of resources" (Brighton & Hove)*

*"I agree with that ... we've got them at work and a lot of the time it could be one of our machines just overheating and you don't need the fire service to attend. Obviously if it goes off and you do need the crew then you make a phone call, usually there's more than enough people around in commercial premises for somebody to be able to ring 999" (Brighton & Hove)*

*"My company is actually quite guilty of that. Whenever we used the toaster in the kitchen it set the fire alarm off and the Service had to attend, which was rather embarrassing and a waste of their time. I didn't even know that they automatically attend; I assumed that they waited until you called them" (Wealden)*

- <sup>5.47</sup> There was, though, some associated worry about non-attendance at activations outside "office hours" when there may be no-one around to make a confirmation call, and about the 4% of calls that turn out to be actual fires.

*"My concern would just be if it's a false alarm during the day, the people in the premises would be just able to turn the alarm off and let you guys know so I wouldn't consider it to be a problem then. But outside of the working hours of wherever the fire alarm is, it could be that there is an actual fire and if you don't attend you've got to wait until somebody nearby notices ... when you could have attended sooner and prevented it from getting that far" (Eastbourne)*

*“If you have a commercial property and the AFA goes off and there is no-one to raise the alarm and the building burns down and a lot of businesses are lost ... it’s going to be a huge amount of damage to life there, loss of jobs, things like that” (Eastbourne)*

*“I’m a bit conflicted really. If it’s 34%, at an incident rate of 3,100 and 96% turn out to be a false alarm, that’s about 124 fires that are not false alarms in that year ... but then it would save thousands of call outs” (Brighton & Hove)*

*“It’s hard because although 96% turn out to be false alarms there could always be that chance that there is one that is an alarm for someone to attend. But I know that it can take up a huge amount of resource, so I think I’m a little bit in the middle on that one ...” (Hastings)*

- 5.48 Moreover, reassurance was sought that ‘person risk’ would be fully considered at locations such as nightclubs and shops with residential accommodation attached – and that the importance of ‘heritage risk’ would be recognised.

*“My concern is who chooses which AFAs in which type of building you won’t respond to? I would have suggested that clubs where there are a hell of a lot of people ... the volume of people inside a building, an AFA goes off, the experts of the fire service should attend” (Wealden)*

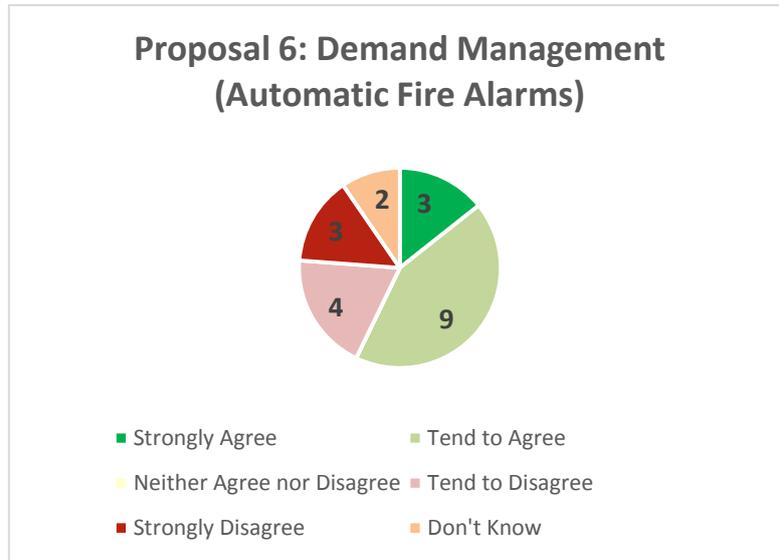
*“I think in principle, it’s a good idea. My one worry is ... there are a number of shops which have people living above the shop. So, with that, are you not coming to those? Because it could well be somebody asleep above a shop and the shop is on fire, and they wouldn’t know” (Lewes)*

*“In the area you cover there must be a lot of historic or old buildings, old town Rye, out in Battle. They won’t have someone living there but would they be included? You probably would be able to tier those calls and so if it was just a suite of offices in a portacabin on the edge of town that’s one thing but if it’s an old church in the middle of Rye or the middle of Hastings, I think that’s something completely different” (Hastings)*

#### Stakeholder webinar

- 5.49 Of the 21 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 12 agreed with the proposal and seven disagreed. There were a further two ‘don’t knows’.

Figure 46: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises? Stakeholder webinar result



<sup>5.50</sup> Despite the majority agreement, there were concerns around: the 4% of “real incidents”; fire spread in dense commercial/residential areas; and how operators of commercial premises will be informed about any change in procedure.

*“If 96% of automated fire alarm call outs are false alarms, 4% are real incidents. How many real incidents are there each year that you would no longer attend with these new proposals? In the dense commercial/residential centres of Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford, what do you consider to be the increased risk to life and of the fire spreading to adjacent properties?”*

*“How will operators be notified that the fire service will no longer automatically attend if there is an automated fire alarm call out?”*

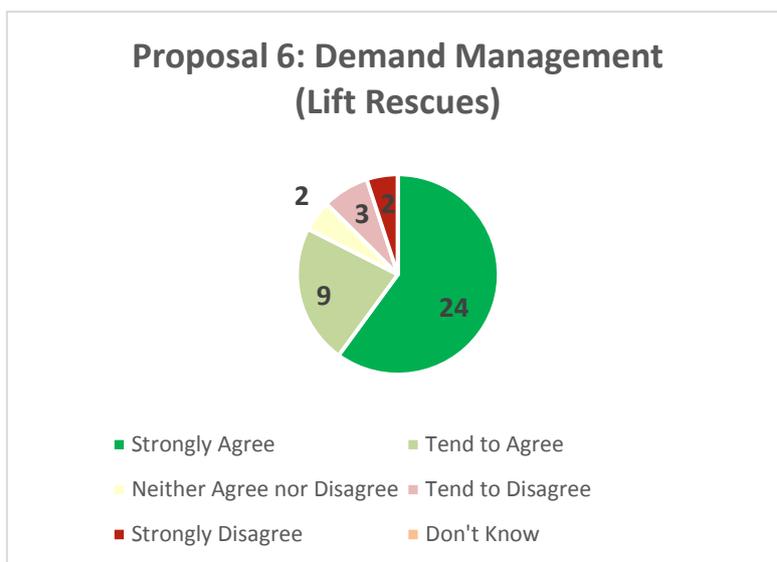
<sup>5.51</sup> One stakeholder commented that: “as a general comment, larger fines for false alarms might be better rather than to ignore it”.

## Lift rescues

### Public focus groups/depth interviews

- 5.52 33 members of the public agreed with ESFRS delaying responses to lift releases in certain circumstances, 24 strongly. Two people neither agreed nor disagreed, three tended to disagree and two strongly disagreed.

**Figure 47: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance? Public focus group/depth interview result**



- 5.53 Those in agreement with the proposal considered it wholly appropriate that building owners/managers should attempt to resolve issues with broken lifts themselves in the first instance, instead of immediately defaulting to FRS response. There was also a feeling that implementing a delayed response policy may encourage better equipment maintenance on the part of those responsible for it.

*"I think that sounds good ... the building owners have responsibility for it in the first place and I think at least giving them the opportunity to resolve the situation themselves is probably good and would reduce the strain on the fire service appliances ... allowing them to better use their resources on what is their responsibility rather than picking up the burden from building owners"* (Eastbourne)

*"I think it's a good idea to put more emphasis on the owners of the buildings because it's an easy call isn't, you just say 'Oh, someone is stuck in the lift, just call the fire brigade, they'll help' instead of taking the ownership yourself"* (Eastbourne)

*"I definitely think that the responsibility should be pressed onto them and they should be responsible in the first instance so I am very strongly in favour of this"* (Brighton & Hove)

*"It encourages landlords to have good maintenance; they will maintain their equipment better if they know there are policies in place"* (Wealden)

- 5.54 Those who disagreed or had worries about the proposed change were primarily concerned about the wellbeing of those trapped in lifts, even if they are not vulnerable or in significant distress. As such, they sought clarification around exactly how delayed the response would be given contractors are not often on-scene very quickly – and that some owners/managers apparently do not have any procedures in place at all.

*“I was once stuck in a lift in a tower block and I was never so pleased to see the fire brigade after four hours in my entire life ... how many hours would I have to be stuck in the lift before you decided I was in distress?” (Hastings)*

*“How long are you not going to attend because you can't always rely on the owners of the buildings to actually get the lift people there in a specific time, whereas the fire service is more reliable” (Wealden)*

*“I'm not entirely happy with that one. I just think if you were stuck in a lift and its dependent on what's considered a reasonable time for the building owner to sort it out, that depends on how responsible that building owner is” (Rother)*

*“I'm a little worried about vulnerable/non-vulnerable people in lifts trapped and delaying response. Can you give me some indication of what you mean here? Instead of everybody dropping everything and rushing round, do you wait five minutes or ten minutes or an hour and a half?” (Eastbourne)*

5.55 It was also suggested that charging for lift rescue callouts may be more appropriate than delayed response.

*“If the police are called as an emergency to a lift then the company owner should be charged a fee to cover that cost ... it gives the company an excuse to be crap and not comply with their responsibility” (Brighton & Hove)*

*“Would it be worth investigating taxing companies directly ... if you're having to go to the same building four times a month to go and get people out of lifts, maybe they should foot the bill?” (Rother)*

*“Just say if you go out there once for instance, you can say ‘We've been out here once, you've had your one free, get your lifts up to scratch, the next time I'm afraid it's going to cost you money’” (Eastbourne)*

5.56 Whatever is ultimately decided, it was considered imperative that any changes are widely communicated so that people know what to do and who to contact in the event of becoming trapped in a lift – and to ensure that building owners/managers can make alternative (or improved) arrangements if necessary.

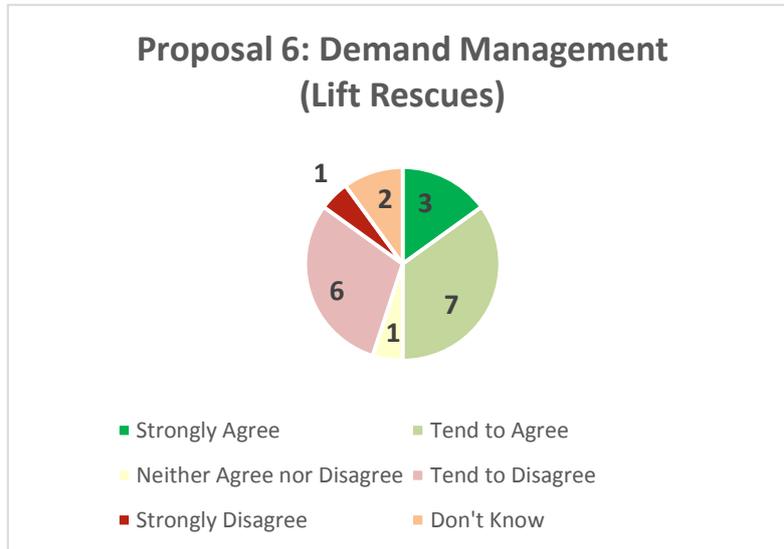
*“If I live in a block of flats for example and the lift had broken down ... do I call my landlord, or do I call a professional who I know can help me? Rather than call my landlord who I may not be able to get hold of, I would much rather call a professional who I know would be able to help me and would be able to get me out of the lift safely” (Hastings)*

*“I think it's something which has to be really circulated among businesses that they'd have to tighten up their response times for their particular lift contractors” (Rother)*

## Stakeholder webinar

- 5.57 Of the 20 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 10 agreed with the proposal, one neither agreed nor disagreed and seven disagreed. There were a further two 'don't knows'.

**Figure 48: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance? Stakeholder webinar result**

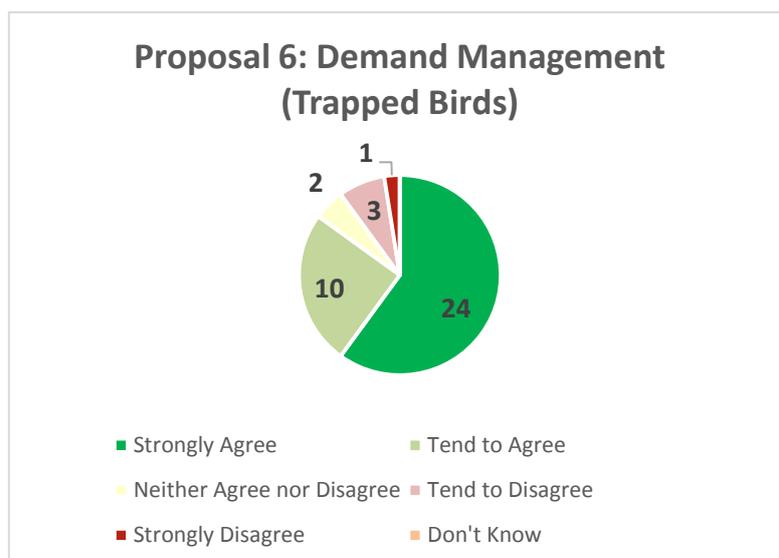


## Public focus groups/depth interviews

### *Trapped birds*

- 5.58 34 of the 40 public participants agreed with the proposal (24 strongly), two neither agreed nor disagreed and four disagreed.

**Figure 49: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting? Public focus group/depth interview result**



- 5.59 There was strong agreement that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting: several participants commented that this should not be its responsibility, but rather that of animal rescue charities.

*“That’s not a firefighter’s job ... that sounds really harsh but there are the RSPCA and all of that who will attend these sorts of emergencies ... if they are trapped in nets then there are government-funded pet charities that should respond” (Brighton & Hove)*

*“I don’t really think that it should be up to the fire service anyway ... they shouldn’t be the first point of call. Again, if there is an animal in severe distress and there’s no other specialist equipment then that’s fine...” (Brighton & Hove)*

*“As for rescuing birds, I can see why the fire brigade are called, they have nice long ladders and they are not scared of climbing those ladders but then you will get the situation where if they are stuck at rescuing a stuck pigeon in a roof then some poor soul is stuck in a car and can’t be released so I do very much agree with Proposal 6. I think that will put the resources more where they are required when they are required” (Rother)*

- <sup>5.60</sup> Some, though, caveated their agreement, stating that their support was conditional on animal rescue charities having the capacity to take sole responsibility for bird rescues. If they do not, then a delayed response approach such as that proposed for lift rescues was suggested – or at least some training and/or investment to increase other organisations’ ability to deal with such incidents.

*“I think if I were to know that charities would have the equipment or there would be some way of them being able to help with any of the trapped animals, I would be fine with that” (Hastings)*

*“If the charities have the capacity to pick this burden up ... then I think it’s good but if the charities don’t then I think the fire service should still be prepared to step in if needs be. But I can understand them not taking the lead on these anymore ... rather than a complete stop, closer to the lift releases where you just don’t respond straight away and see if it can resolve itself or the charities can take care of it but if no one else is going to then stepping in at that point” (Eastbourne)*

*“I’m an avid animal lover. So, I’m afraid my response to this isn’t very positive, but I’m trying to be as objective as possible. I completely agree that the fire brigade shouldn’t be the first port of call, but I’d be interested to know whether you’re going to invest time and money in liaising with animal charities to let them know how to deal with those situations” (Lewes)*

- <sup>5.61</sup> Indeed, those who disagreed with this proposal did so on the grounds that animal rescue charities almost certainly do not have the resources or capacity to respond to calls to trapped birds that would ordinarily have attracted an ESFRS response, particularly since the advent of the Covid-19 crisis.

*“That’s a difficult one ... I wouldn’t want to see a bird struggling. I’ve tried to save a wild bird before and to try to get anyone to come out and assist you is virtually impossible ... I can see why they are proposing it because they are trying to save money but at the end of the day, it’s a life isn’t it. So, I don’t support that one” (Eastbourne)*

*“If you’re going to put this on to animal charities solely as a responsibility, there needs to be some kind of help for them doing that. I think it’ll really stress them out quite a lot during this current financial climate where a lot of charities like that will be receiving no donations ... I think that their resources will be really stretched ... it will probably be quite a difficult time to sort that out with them” (Lewes)*

*“I’ve worked with the RSPCA; I know they have very limited funds and really do struggle to attend birds trapped. I’ve also witnessed birds trapped which a response officer would struggle to get to so I’m not entirely happy with that one” (Rother)*

- 5.62 Finally, informing the public about what they should do in the event of finding a trapped bird was also considered essential if a policy change is implemented.

*“I feel like a lot of people do call the fire and rescue service because they’re not sure who to call. So, is it going to be emphasised that they should call the RSPCA first?” (Wealden)*

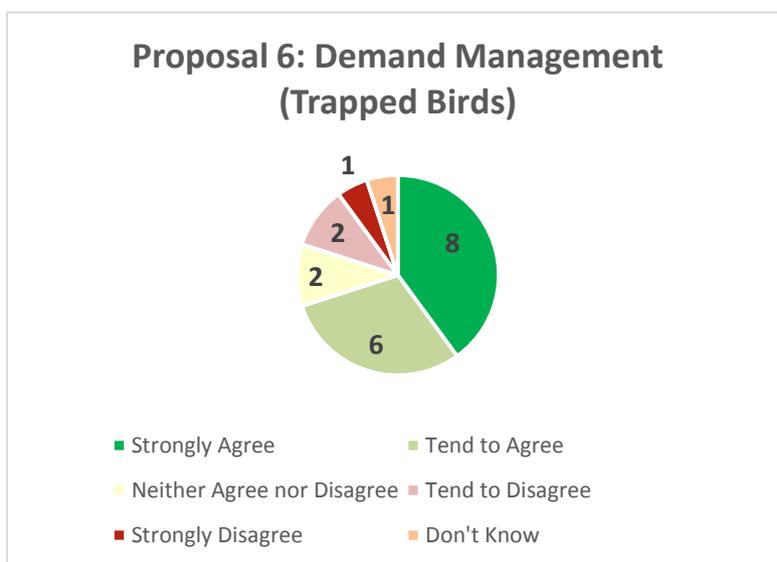
*“My only question with the bird thing ...it’s not for them to do but in terms of animal welfare and things like that, there’s not really awareness of who to call ... there’s no emergency response for things like that so obviously the wildlife charities or the fire service will have to put that forward” (Brighton & Hove)*

*Maybe if you were to get a call about a bird, you could say, ‘I’m sorry, we’re not responding to this in a minute, but could you please call this number?’ I’d just like to make sure that I would, if I saw it, be able to reach someone who could do something positive about it” (Lewes)*

#### Stakeholder webinar

- 5.63 Of the 20 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 14 agreed with the proposal (eight strongly), two neither agreed nor disagreed and three disagreed. There was a further one ‘don’t know’.

**Figure 50: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?**  
Stakeholder webinar result



- 5.64 Although there was a high degree of support for this proposal, there was some worry that members of the public or wildlife organisations may attempt risky bird rescues themselves in lieu of FRS attendance.

*“I understand from local firefighters that animal rescues are normally only attended if/when a wildlife charity has requested FRS attendance because other people cannot reach it. If the FRS don't attend, what is the risk to people attempting to rescue the animals themselves without proper equipment?”*

## Proposal 7: Changes to the four-watch duty system

### Proposal 7: Changes to 4-watch duty system



**ESFRS proposes to make changes to the duty system at its 24/7 fire stations that are crewed on the traditional 4-watch system**

**Current 'wholetime shift' duty system → 2 days, 2 nights, 4 days off**

- Worked at Bohemia Road + The Ridge (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, and Preston Circus + Roedean (Brighton)

**ESFRS → more efficient alternatives available that do not affect 24/7 immediate response or attendance standards e.g.**

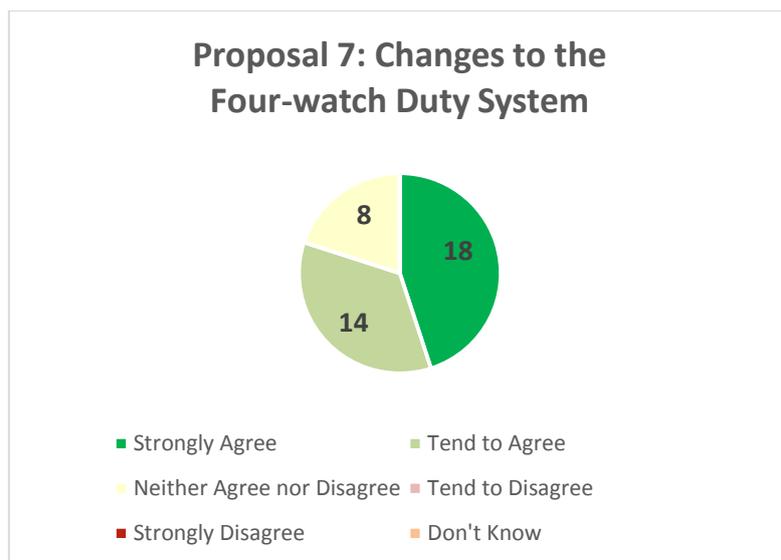
- 'Flexible Rostering Duty System' (at all above stations except The Ridge)
  - A team of firefighters plan their shifts between them in advance, to ensure their fire engines are always available
- 'Group Crewing Duty System' (ONLY at Preston Circus, Hove and Roedean)
  - Resources used flexibly between a "group" of stations – one or more stations supports the others in the "group" to cover sickness, holiday and other absence

*Both options release a small number of posts for prevention, protection, training, flexible crewing pool*

### Public focus groups/depth interviews

5.65 Members of the public were asked whether, in principle, they agreed or disagreed with ESFRS reviewing crewing changes at five of its wholetime shift fire stations. 18 strongly agreed, 14 tended to agree and eight neither agreed nor disagreed.

**Figure 51: Do you agree/disagree with a review of arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)? Public focus group/depth interview result**



5.66 For several participants (typically those who neither agreed nor disagreed), this proposal represents an internal matter on which that felt they could not, or indeed should not, comment.

*"If it works for the firefighters ... it should be down to them and the fire brigade to discuss with the staff what's best suited to them ... I don't feel it's my place to decide or have an input on what a station should be working" (Hastings)*

*"I didn't know whether I agreed or disagreed really because it goes down to personal preference ... it's what works for them" (Eastbourne)*

*"It's a very personal thing. I'm not a firefighter. I don't know how much it's going to affect them" (Lewes)*

*"It's an internal system and I think the crews should sort this one out for themselves ... as it doesn't impair the safety of the public it's all okay with me" (Wealden)*

- 5.67 Others did venture an opinion however, with some suggesting that the current system seems somewhat outdated and inefficient (both financially and in terms of firefighters being able to work to the best of their ability by the end of their last night shift).

*"I've always thought that the two days and two nights on and then four off is very uneconomical. The rest of the world doesn't live like that ... I think the days of the old shift patterns are over" (Eastbourne)*

*"I have done two nights and two days in my job and ... it does become extremely exhausting after a while. It would be a personal opinion, but I think for anyone that shift pattern is tiring and I think to be on nights or to be on days is a much better option... It's extremely difficult and it's harder to work to your 100% if you are doing nights and days together; it's not a good match" (Eastbourne)*

- 5.68 As such, they supported at least a review of the system to look at more flexible alternatives.

*"It's good that they are realising that there should be a flexible approach..." (Brighton & Hove)*

*"It's good to look at different ways to cover the other stations because with the shift pattern they're doing at the moment, you can't plan very much" (Hastings)*

*"I can understand from my work though that the working practices from when I started to now have changed. I can understand wanting to modernise" (Hastings)*

- 5.69 There was some disagreement as to the benefits or otherwise of duty system changes to firefighters themselves. Some felt that being able to plan shifts between themselves could result in a better work-life balance for staff, and that offering more flexibility may be what is required to attract a more diverse workforce to ESFRS.

*"I think this is better as it allows the teams to plan life better off-duty" (Hastings)*

*"If the staff were able to plan between them and not have this strict shift pattern ... they can pick and choose the shifts that fit them and their family life as well as the needs of the station. And it frees them up a bit more to go off and cover another station. So, I do totally agree with that; I think that is the way forward" (Brighton & Hove)*

*“I’m not in favour of this shift work thing because different staff have different needs and when it comes to our families and things like that some people might prefer working nights, people might prefer doing days, some people might not mind what they do... It will either work or it won’t work but I think it opens it up more the interest to potential new firefighters joining knowing that you haven’t got this 2 days, 2 nights then 4 off ... there is more variety there for the staff to choose” (Brighton & Hove)*

- 5.70 Others, though, could foresee difficulties in implementing changes to a system that has been in place for a long time – and which wholetime firefighters have based their lives around in terms of, for example, childcare and possible secondary employment.

*“How do the firefighters feel about it? I assume the current system works at the moment, is it more beneficial to them doing two days, two nights and four days off? Firefighters might have childcare issues” (Eastbourne)*

*“I know people on the four-on, four-off. It works with childcare” (Wealden)*

*“That sort of system where they have a certain amount of set days off, does that allow them to have other occupations which now they’ll have to stop? And will there be some reluctance to change for that reason?” (Lewes)*

- 5.71 There were also some worries around the mechanics of the flexible crewing system in particular: a few people (at Eastbourne especially) suggested that without strong management it could lead to unfairness if the more desirable shifts are ‘cherry-picked’ by more senior or forthright staff members. Moreover, a loss of crew cohesion as a result of no longer operating a watch-based system was a concern for one participant.

*“It sounds like they would both work. But on the ‘Flexible Rostering Duty System’, if it’s just left up to them firefighters I assume there would be a way of somebody higher up double-checking and ensuring that they are always available and that it’s not being unfairly slanted in favour of one or two employees who happen to be bigger personalities and able to push through the shifts that they want against some of the maybe less strong personalities that are just getting side-lined into the less desirable shifts?” (Eastbourne)*

*“I’m in two minds ... could this potentially start squabbling with people who are slightly higher than others saying, ‘I want to have the better hours as opposed to the worst hours’. Would this not cause conflict or friction?” (Eastbourne)*

*“If all the firefighters buy into it and act in a fair and responsible manner then I don’t see any reason why it wouldn’t work. In the companies I’ve worked for when they’ve tried implementing systems that rely on us all behaving ourselves, there’s always one or two people who do take the mickey and push things entirely in their favour at everyone else cost. As long as there is some way of countering that and making sure it is actually being applied in a fair manner then I don’t see any reason why that’s not a good idea” (Eastbourne)*

*“With flexible shifts, I feel like the more desirable shifts would be quite fought over” (Wealden)*

*“The watch system, it’s a bit like the military ... would you want to be in a battle with this man sort of situation. If people grow up together then would you like to ‘have that man behind you in the fire’. There must be a lot of that feeling because it’s that kind of job. We are talking about frontline here ... people who actually have to go in and rely on their mates so I can see that there could be a problem” (Eastbourne)*

5.72 If the decision is taken to make changes to the four-watch duty system, it was considered imperative that ESFRS fully engage its staff in the process at all stages – and that the Service continuously monitors the effectiveness or otherwise of any new arrangements.

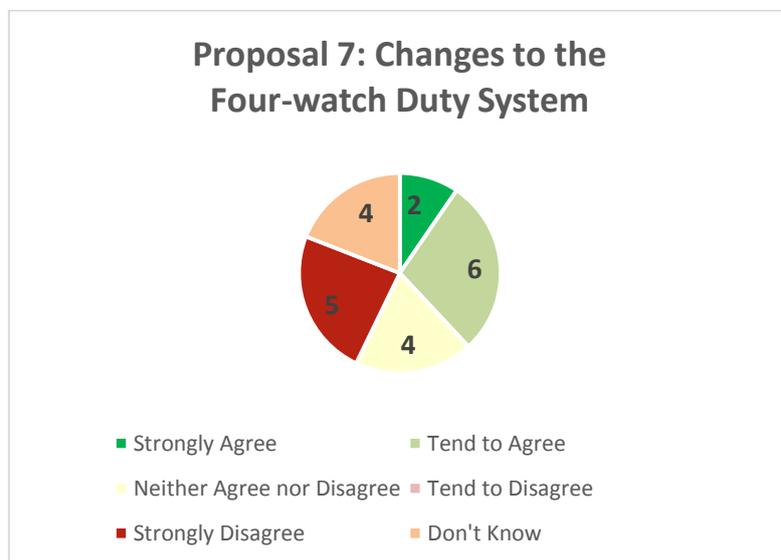
*“It’s very important to take your staff with you in these things, I’ve managed changes myself and if you don’t take your staff, it tends to take longer to bed in” (Hastings)*

*“I think this is another one I support with the caveat there should be continued engagement and the results of the changes should be monitored and disclosed. I’m prepared to trust the expertise of the planner, but I want it authenticated by what actually happens in the real world” (Brighton & Hove)*

Stakeholder webinar

5.73 Of the 21 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, eight agreed with the proposal, four neither agreed nor disagreed and five strongly disagreed. There were a further four ‘don’t knows’.

Figure 52: Do you agree/disagree with a review of crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)? Stakeholder webinar result



## Other issues: Building and home inspections

### Building and Home Inspections



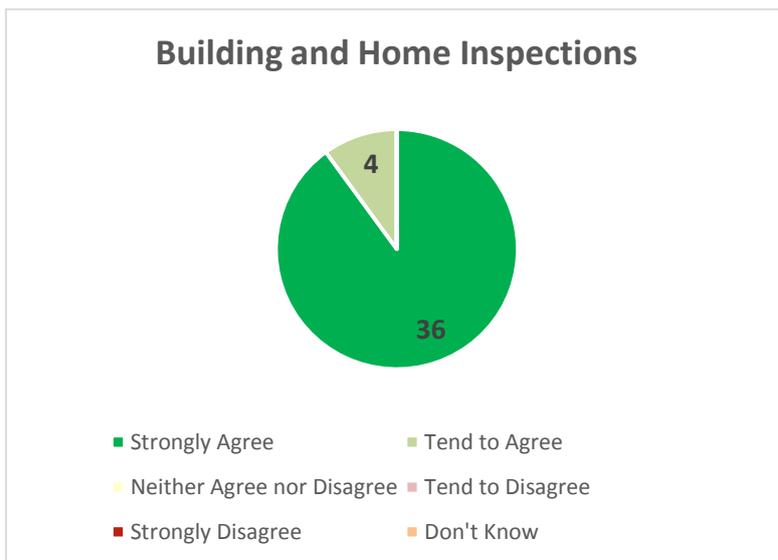
**One of ESFRS’ key areas of focus is to ensure fires are prevented and buildings are safe (prevention + protection)  
By reviewing its response models ESFRS will release resources to...**

- Do more prevention + protection work
- Have capacity for more building inspections/visits to offer advice and ensure compliance with legislation

### Public focus groups/depth interviews

5.74 All public participants agreed that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety – 36 strongly.

**Figure 53: To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety? Public focus group/depth interview result**



5.75 The old adage ‘prevention is better than cure’ was frequently raised across all discussions. Indeed, the overwhelming opinion was that it is better to prevent incidents before they occur to improve both public and firefighter safety and economic efficiency – and the Grenfell disaster was noted several times as a reason for more building inspections in particular.

*“It sounds like a very efficient use of resources and certainly would help to prevent some of the more serious incidents from happening in the first place. That can only be good so I’m very satisfied with that” (Eastbourne)*

*“They are in a position where they should focus more on prevention and give it a bit more resource ... I think in the long run it is going to be better for everyone” (Wealden)*

*“I think it’s really very important that you are talking about prevention and protection, which is absolutely essential ... Just to sit there and wait to run down your pole is not really the answer!” (Eastbourne)*

*“I work in a primary school and one of the topics we have is the fire of London. We’ve had Hastings fire crew come down and the children love it and they do remember what they are taught” (Rother)*

*“I think prevention is always better for everything anyway. It’s probably going to be more cost effective than having to send loads of people out” (Brighton & Hove)*

*“Absolutely agree ... Grenfell has brought this to the fore; all the things that happened there that should never have happened. There’s a need to review all the safety procedures all the time, it’s an ongoing situation; you don’t wait four or five years until the next building regulations are looked at again. If you see something that is going on, bring it up and change it ... do not wait for the disasters to happen before you do anything” (Wealden)*

5.76 An interesting perspective was offered by one Eastbourne participant, who said that:

*“In Eastbourne ... we’ve got a lot of hotels here and some of them will be struggling after Covid to pay for anything, let alone improvements to their fire safety. If somebody can go along and say, ‘Look you are doing a good job but if you did this, this and this, that might help a bit’, I think that’s really very important” (Eastbourne)*

5.77 One Rother participant stressed the importance of ensuring a good balance between prevention, protection and response activity – and a couple of others wanted to see evidence of the contribution the former in particular has made to reducing incident levels prior to endorsing any expansion.

*“I suppose it’s getting the balance between the two at the right level and also those resources to be released, what will be the training necessary to convert them from firefighters to fire preventers?” (Rother)*

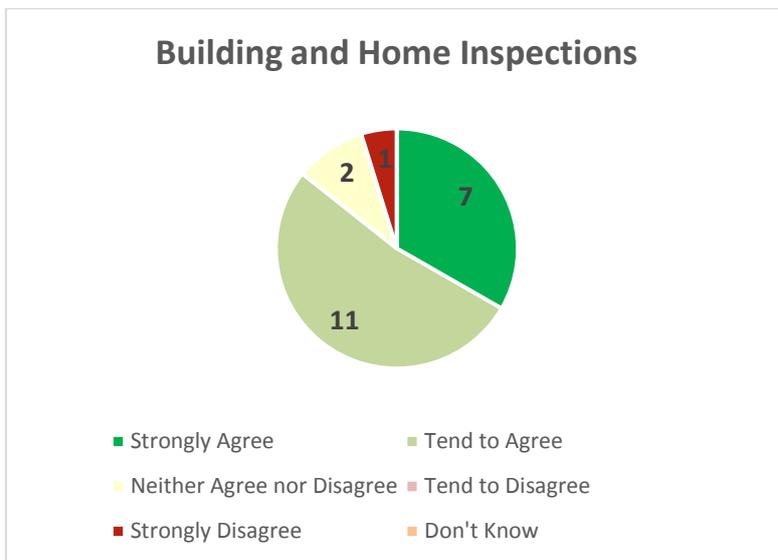
*“Presumably there’s been an increase in that over previous years ... has it had a measurable impact on reducing the number of fires say?” (Rother)*

*“If you are rebalancing the budget to increase the amount of money that you are spending on prevention, I’d like to see some correlated figures so that there is a correlation between the amount spent and the decrease in number of fires. Because I don’t know whether building regulations have changed and that it’s harder to start a fire or there could be a number of other factors that could lead to a reduction in fires ... not just that ‘we are putting more staff into it because we think it’s a good thing to prevent more fires and here’s the figures to show the fires have gone down’. I think you’ve got to show that fires have gone down and one of the reasons is the fire prevention officers roles and not just better building regulations” (Hastings)*

### Stakeholder webinar

5.78 Of the 21 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 18 agreed, two neither agreed nor disagreed and one strongly disagreed that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety.

Figure 54: To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety? Stakeholder webinar result



5.79 It would seem that only those with reservations around more building and home inspections commented at this juncture, primarily suggesting that any increase in prevention and protection should not be made at the expense of front-line response.

*“Isn't this just about cutting the front line to increase prevention and protection? These proposals will fundamentally affect the North Wealden safety”*

*“How does money switched from the front line to admin help safety? Ultimately, when we dial 999 we expect a fire engine, not a man with a clipboard to advise how we could have avoided the call”*

*“I responded that I tend to agree with increasing inspections etc, but that should not be read to mean that I agree with cuts in front-line services to fund”*

*“Yes is the answer but not at the cost of front line services”*

## Other issues: Finances and Investment

### Finances and Investment

#### ESFRS' budget for 2020/21 = £39.7m

–Over 75% of spending is on employees (vast majority on firefighters)

#### Uncertainty about funding beyond 2020/21

–Modelling → need for new savings of between £0.7m and £3.5m by 2024/25 to balance budget

–In addition to savings of £9.8m made since 2010/11 and already planned for period to 2024/25

	2019/2020	2020/2021	%
Employees	301	301	76%
Burning Expenses	100	101	25%
Capital Financing	0.9	0.8	2%
Gross Service Expenditure	410	410	103%
Income and Specific Grants	-37	-2.4	-6%
Net Contribution to Reserves	17	11	3%
Net Budget Requirement	390	397	100%

### Finances and Investment

- » Since 2010/11, ESFRS is much more dependent on council tax income
- » Has increased its charge by just under the maximum amount allowed by Govt. in each of the last 4 years (between 1.94% – 2.94%)

- Average (Band D) household across County + City now pays £95.53 per year for ESFRS - £1.84 a week

- » Considering the funding uncertainties, ESFRS has identified 2 options to increase funding through council tax in 2021/22

- Option A
  - Small increase of up to 3%
  - Average amount paid (Band D) would increase by up to £2.87 per year - just under 6p a week
- Option B
  - More than 3% increase
  - Each 1% increase → Average amount paid (Band D) would rise by 96p per year (under 2p a week)

	2019/2020	2020/2021	%
Government Grants	0.0	0.2	0%
Business rates	116	85	22%
Council tax	272	279	70%
Total Funding	390	397	100%

**?** Any questions?

**Would you be willing to pay more for ESFRS next year? If so, what level of increase?**

## Public focus groups/depth interviews

- 5.80 All but three public participants said they would be willing to pay more for ESFRS next year (one said they were not prepared to and there were two 'don't knows'). Among the 37 who were prepared to bear an increase, opinion was almost equally split between those who would tolerate an up to 3% rise (18) and those who would tolerate an over 3% rise (19).
- 5.81 Those who supported a more than 3% rise typically commented that the weekly increase would be 'less than a cup of coffee' and considered it a more than reasonable price to pay for an "essential" public service.

*"I think that it's absolutely right that we are the beneficiaries of the fire service and we should pay for it; local people should pay for a vital local service. Nobody likes paying council tax but its inarguable it's a public good"* (Brighton & Hove)

*"I think it's an essential service that needs the investment to enable it to maintain the levels we need and expect"* (Lewes)

*"Less than a cup of coffee. To me, it's a bit of a no brainer to know that this work is going on, particularly the prevention side which is showing such great results"* (Rother)

*"Of course, I'd pay more. Crikey, a pint of beer is three quid for goodness sake. It's peanuts isn't it? I would pay considerably more to have a fire service which is not constrained in any way"* (Wealden)

- 5.82 Those who supported a less than 3% increase did so on the grounds of affordability, for themselves and for others – and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on people's finances was also raised in the context of keeping increases to a minimum currently.

*"I think the council tax is exorbitant and I can see the point of needing to increase it to fund the service but ... I think to have an increase of more than 3% is completely unacceptable..."* (Eastbourne)

*"I'd be persuaded to pay a little bit more but not everybody will be in that position"* (Lewes)

*"I agree with option A. I think it's good to increase money towards the fire and rescue service and yes, it's a small amount of money, but there are so many households where every penny counts, and it does add up to be more than that small amount. Council tax can be a lot to some people ... and I think increasing it by a lot isn't the best idea"* (Hastings)

*"I work in the hospitality industry; I'd be lucky if I have a job by next year so I'm not for any council tax increases beyond what is absolutely necessary ... I don't agree with a more than 3% increase; I think I'm paying absolutely at the maximum because I can't afford it... You'll end up with a whole load of Band D people where I sit in life who can't actually afford to pay... It looks so little doesn't it, when you look at it, and I think to myself, 'Why am I even talking about this, what's £2.87 a year, it's nothing?' But council tax, you can't look at it in terms of one service because I know it's broken out into social care and the policing and the fire service and all of these things are really important, but I think they are pushing the boundaries a bit"* (Eastbourne)

*“Obviously the funding is needed, but what with everything that’s going on with Covid a lot of people will probably struggle because no one knows what’s going to happen next year... I would definitely opt for option A at the moment ... maybe for the following year review it but maybe start off with 3% ...and then in 2021-22 review it again and then maybe 4% ... At the end of the day everybody’s going to benefit ... but because of the situation financially at the moment everybody’s been hit by it... Now is not the right time to say, ‘We’re whacking up your bills’” (Brighton & Hove)*

- 5.83 The few who objected to or were unsure about any rise at all did so on the grounds that they already pay a significant amount of council tax – and even a few of those who would be prepared and able to pay more acknowledged that others would not be. There was also concern that other local services would also request similar precept rises, further increasing affordability.

*“I don’t agree with either of them. In Brighton specifically, we pay a huge amount in council tax already; it was raised 6% last year or the year before and we are constantly charged through council tax ... I’m around a lot of people that can’t make ends meet at the best of times ... although it might only be £2.87 per year increase, for a family that’s a dinner ... I understand that things need to be changed ... but I think it’s fundamentally unfair that all these services keep on just applying to council tax, council tax, council tax” (Brighton & Hove)*

*“An increase of that amount is not worth worrying about, but it is if everyone else is asking for that increase...” (Hastings)*

*“I think if you, say, had 5% for the fire service, there might be pressure on ... why shouldn’t the mainstream East Sussex and local district councils have the same...” (Rother)*

- 5.84 Many participants across the spectrum of views felt strongly that more money should be forthcoming from central government – and several urged ESFRS and ESFA to lobby for this. It was, though, acknowledged that the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the public purse makes it highly unlikely that further funds will be available in the near future.

*“They should be sorting funding and lobbying government to actually redistribute their funds fairly...” (Brighton & Hove)*

*“I realise that money is a problem, but the other thing is central government should be providing some of this as well ... I don’t earn a huge salary ... so anything to do with council tax increases for me are an affordability issue” (Eastbourne)*

*“To make a potentially very reductive and simple point ... if the government just gave them more funding, we wouldn’t have this issue of having to make reductions” (Lewes)*

*“I find it distressing that government is putting this onto the public rather than themselves” (Lewes)*

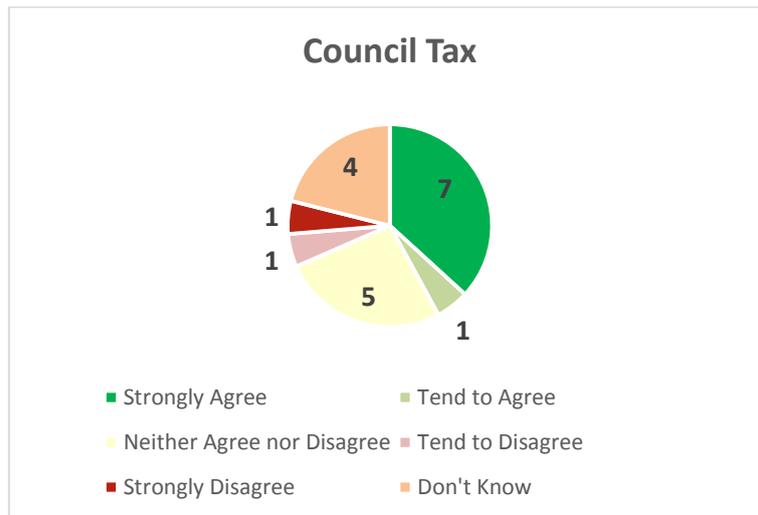
*“We are in such a terrible, dire situation now with this pandemic and the billions of pounds that have been spent on supporting people’s salaries and so on. What’s going to happen in the future? What we are talking about now may be academic frankly because they’ve got billions of pounds to find. It’s not a question of asking the Government to give you a bit more, there isn’t any more anywhere, maybe tax really has to go up as well as higher council tax” (Eastbourne)*

## Stakeholder webinar

### Council tax

- 5.85 Of the 19 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, eight agreed (seven strongly) that they would be willing to pay more in council tax for ESFRS next year, five neither agreed nor disagreed and two disagreed. There were four 'don't knows'.

**Figure 55: Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)? Stakeholder webinar result**

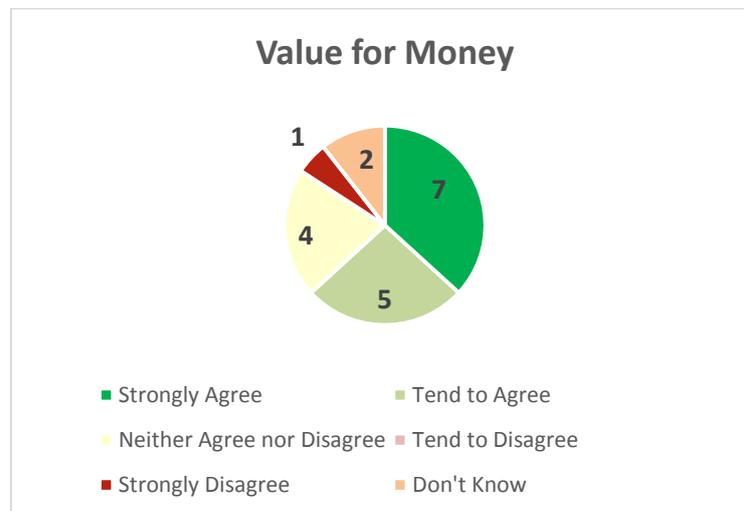


- 5.86 16 of the 19 stakeholders offered a view as to the level of increase they would be prepared to tolerate: five opted for an up to 3% rise; four for more than 4%; and there were seven 'don't knows'.

### Value for money<sup>23</sup>

- 5.87 Of the 19 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 12 agreed (seven strongly) that ESFRS offers value for money, four neither agreed nor disagreed and one disagreed. There were two 'don't knows'.

**Figure 56: To what extent do you agree or disagree that ESFRS offers value for money? Stakeholder webinar result**



<sup>23</sup>Due to time constraints, this was not discussed at the public focus groups/depth interviews.

- 5.88 In discussion, there were questions and comments around the level of “back-office” and other non-operational savings considered, and the need to lobby central government for more funding;

*“What ‘back office’ savings have been considered to reduce the impact on front-line services (e.g. reducing salaries of a few very highly paid staff, reducing use of expensive consultants, simplifying service reporting, bring the call centre back to East Sussex)?”*

*“Why are efficiency savings all made at operational end, which the fire service inspectorate reported were of a good standard, and not including other areas of the service?”*

*“Since the shortfall has been caused by the reduction in central government grants, why isn’t increased central government funding being considered as another option? As a Councillor, I would certainly support any lobbying of central government for proper funding of such a critical service”*

## Other issues: General

### Public focus groups/depth interviews

- 5.89 Several public participants commented positively on the overall ‘Planning for a Safer Future’ agenda, feeling that ESFRS is trying to do the best it can with the resources it has.

*“Every proposal makes sense to me ... the idea seems to be making things more efficient but not necessarily reducing the service. Improving it by making small changes that actually will make quite a big impact. So, they also seem really logical and sensible to me” (Brighton & Hove)*

*“The story, if I can call it that, is being delivered to us by people who have been looking at this for a long time and understand it fully. And they’re coming at it from exactly the right direction. So, it all sounds very reasonable and sensible and the right thing to do” (Lewes)*

*“Overall I can see that you have to make the best of what you’ve got” (Lewes)*

- 5.90 However, while they were generally positive, there was interest among participants in the views of firefighters and their representative bodies, with many questions and comments along the lines of:

*“What have they said about the proposals? The Union; have you run it past them yet?” (Brighton & Hove)*

*“How do the Unions find these proposals?” (Eastbourne)*

*“What do the Unions have to say about these proposals? Because they know more about it than we do” (Lewes)*

*“Have the actual firefighters been asked these questions and how do they feel about all the changes?” (Rother)*

*“We’ve had the side of the story of the people in charge, as it were, we haven’t heard the side of the story of the average firefighter. So, I tend to be more cautious. I don’t know both sides of the story. So, I could give more valid opinion if I had both” (Lewes)*

- 5.91 Other general concerns and anxieties were around the future impacts of climate change and local development on ESFRS' resources.

*"It worries me that with climate change, extreme weather, we're going to have terrible floods, wildfires. So, having less at a time when we seem to have unknown changes..." (Lewes)*

*"The statistics are based upon what has happened in the past and we've got these environmental climatic changes that are quite extraordinary now. I'm thinking about things like forest fires as well; does that mean that the crew need a different type of kit for dealing with those things than they would be dealing with building fires?" (Eastbourne)*

*"The developments are going to put presumably additional pressure on the fire service so it's something that we've got to bear in mind while we are talking about cutting and making all these cuts. With all the building that's going on, there's going to be more demand" (Rother)*

- 5.92 It should be noted here that a couple of participants at the Wealden and Rother groups had received leaflets through their door in opposition to ESFRS' proposals, which they felt were in contradiction to the information given during the focus group session. The main concern was that the conflicting information will cause confusion, and that if people read the leaflet only (and not the Service's background consultation documents) they may have a wholly negative and uncomprehensive perspective on the proposals.

*"I know they sent leaflets through our door saying they are losing some of their staff because of your changes and from what you tell me ... they are not losing staff. So that's why I sit on the fence a little bit. The leaflet you get through is just they are losing an engine and they are cutting all staff and then when actually when you look at what you are proposing, it doesn't marry up but that doesn't mean to say that they are wrong/you are right or you are right/they are wrong" (Wealden)*

*"Through my door yesterday came a leaflet from the FBU and it's quite a worrying document when you read it without going through the process of actually looking at the documents that the fire brigade have put together. It concerns me that if this has gone through everyone's door ... they will have a totally different understanding than others that have looked at the full document. It's quite concerning when you look at it because it talks about cuts, cuts, cuts rather than about the progress that's been made..." (Rother)*

- 5.93 Finally, it was said that: *"There needs to be continued engagement with the public so that we can be reassured that the delivery of the plans has been successful and has the way in which it is hoped and expected". (Brighton & Hove)*

#### Stakeholder webinar

- 5.94 Other, more general, issues raised at the stakeholder webinar were around:

*"Flawed" and "out of date" data*

*"Why is the data two years out of date?"*

*"Your Station Risk Profiles do not add up. Coverage percentages are out by up to 10%. How can you risk the lives of residents on flawed data?"*

*“It took 4 years for Wealden to fail to provide a viable Local Plan. Your data as seen in the Station Risk Profiles is error prone at best”*

*“Incident figures don't relate to callout figures, why aren't these included? This gives a false picture”*

The consideration given to current and future population and development increases

*“With all the new developments that's are planned for Wealden, i.e. the 1000 houses in Uckfield so a possible increase of 3-4000 car movements and many more from Hailsham and other areas, how do ESFRS foresee managing response times around this?”*

*“With the substantial increase in development of new homes in East Sussex over the next 10 years are the panel confident in their new proposals will be adequate?”*

Undertaking the Planning for a Safer Future consultation during the Covid-19 pandemic – and the need to revisit the proposals to account for its impacts

*“Covid-19 has shown the foolishness of cutting frontline staff until the services fail. Will these proposals be revisited in the light of the Covid-19 experience?”*

*“Why no review of IRMP due to impact of Covid?”*

The views of ESFRS' staff and representative bodies, and the implications of the consultation proposals being rejected

*“How much of the proposed changes are voluntary and have employees been consulted?”*

*“Are you concerned with the unions already rejecting these proposals that future strikes may be a direct result of some of these proposed cuts?”*

*“What happens if these proposals are not agreed? You said these have taken years to build? Would it be back to the drawing board completely or would it be tweaking?”*

The potential future impact of climate change on ESFRS' resources

*“How have you assessed the additional flooding risk that will result from climate change?”*

*“How have you assessed the increase in wildfires that will result from climate change? How many more call outs do you anticipate? How many engines does a 'typical' wildfire require?”*

The negative impact of similar past changes made by West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

*“West Sussex FRS implemented similar changes 4-5 years ago. Their most recent inspection report rated it as one of the worst Fire Services in the country (inadequate in its protection of the public and looking after its staff; and requiring improvement in the way that it keeps people safe and secure and the way it uses its resources). How will you ensure that these similar proposals in East Sussex do not lead to the same outcome?”*

*“Significant additional funding (£34m) has had to be allocated to address the shortfalls in West Sussex (far outweighing the range of savings anticipated by this consultation document). How have potential downside costs been factored into the calculation of savings?”*

#### The 'too narrow' focus of the consultation

*“I would also note that for an exercise aimed at addressing infrastructure and front line resourcing the discussion was overly almost exclusively around personnel and freeing up people to become more flexible. As an organisation, tasked with dealing with a wide range of situations and requiring a wide range of solutions, the tools and systems needed are wide and varied, including IT support, communications, training, mechanics and HR. I believe that very little of these were considered or presented”*

#### Equalities issues

*“A general question regarding your Equality Impact assessment in the info you previously sent out via email link. If I read it correctly, your EIA seemed to be saying that people with disabilities would be at greater risk because of these plans, however, it was not clear to me what the increased risks to disabled people would be. It would be helpful to understand this more clearly”*

# 6. Submissions

## Introduction

- 6.1 During the formal consultation process, 360 submissions were received via email, letter and telephone from residents, staff, organisations and stakeholders. The table overleaf shows the breakdown of contributors by type.
- 6.2 All submissions have been read and reported in this chapter. Most have been reviewed in a thematic, summary format in order to identify the range of views and issues as well as common themes, though some that have presented unique or distinctive arguments, that refer to different evidence or were submitted on behalf of organisations and individuals representing groups of people, have been summarised individually for accessibility and to highlight their main arguments and any alternative proposals.

*It is also important to note that the following section is a report of the views expressed by submission contributors.*

*In some cases, these views may not be supported by the available evidence - and while ORS has not sought to highlight or correct those that make incorrect statements or assumptions, this should be borne in mind when considering the responses.*

**Table 15: Summary of submission contributors by type**

<b>STAFF GROUPS AND STAFF MEMBERS (40)</b>			
'Blue Brighton' staff Red Watch, Station 83 (Crowborough) Station 85 (Forest Row)		Swift Water Rescue Team, Crowborough Fire Station Wadhurst Fire Station 35 individual staff members	
<b>REPRESENTATIVE BODIES (6)</b>			
Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Fire Brigades Union (FBU): Women's and LGBT+ Sections Fire Officers Association (FOA)		Fire & Rescue Services Association (FRSA) 2 x individual FBU representatives	
<b>PARTNER ORGANISATIONS (3)</b>			
Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service	Suffolk Fire & Rescue Service	Sussex Police	
<b>MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, COUNCILS AND COUNCILLORS (15)</b>			
Cllr Steve Bell (Leader of the Conservative Group at Brighton & Hove City Council) Brighton & Hove Labour Group	Green Councillors of Brighton & Hove Green Party in Lewes Hastings Borough Council Hastings & Rye Liberal Democrats	Lewes District Council Huw Merriman MP Cllr Andrew Mier Lloyd Russell Moyle MP & Cllr Imogen Makepeace	Maria Caulfield MP Cllr Adrian Ross Cllr Bob Stadley Wealden District Council Wealden Green Party
<b>TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS (22)</b>			
Battle Town Council Berwick Parish Council Camberhurst Parish Council Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council Chiddingly Parish Council Crowborough Town Council Crowhurst Parish Council Fairlight Parish Council	Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council Lewes Town Council Newhaven Town Council Peacehaven Town Council Pett Parish Council Plumpton, East Chilmington, Streat & St John Without Parish Council Rotherfield Parish Council	Rye Town Council Seaford Town Council South Heighton Parish Council Telscombe Parish Council Uckfield Town Council Wadhurst Parish Council Withyham Parish Council	
<b>OTHER SPECIAL INTEREST/COMMUNITY GROUPS (7)</b>			
Crowborough & District Chamber of Commerce Country Carers Forestry Commission Hastings Old Town Residents' Association		Nettleton & Dudeney Residents' Association Sussex & Surrey National Farmers' Union West Sussex Wildlife Protection	
<b>INDIVIDUAL RESIDENTS (267)</b>			

## Summary tables of themes from written submissions

- 6.3 Below and overleaf are summary tables of the main themes emerging from the written submissions received<sup>24</sup>. If making similar points, the submissions made by individuals, stakeholders and organisations have been reported thematically in the tables only - whereas any that are significantly different or more detailed are also included in a fuller format later in this chapter in an attempt to make these often-lengthy documents as accessible as possible.

<sup>24</sup>All submissions were read and classified by ESFRS.

## Views on the Planning for a Safer Future proposals

- 6.4 The table below shows that Proposal's 2 (changes to day-crewed duty stations) and 3 (changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines) attracted the most attention. The former was referenced by 103 respondents, most in opposition. Similarly, 107 respondents offered their views on Proposal 3, again with the majority opposing it.

**Table 16: Comments received on the Planning for a Safer Future proposals – by proposal**

PROPOSAL	GENERAL COMMENT	AGREEMENT	DISAGREEMENT	TOTAL COMMENTS
<b>1: Operational Response Plan (ORP)</b>	20	6	6	<b>32</b>
<b>2: Changes to day-crewed duty stations</b>	27	5	71	<b>103</b>
<b>3: Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines</b>	26	5	76	<b>107</b>
<b>4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings</b>	11	6	21	<b>38</b>
<b>5a: Changes to the provision and crewing of aerial appliances</b>	11	4	13	<b>28</b>
<b>5b: Changes to the provision and crewing of other specialist appliances</b>	5	4	12	<b>21</b>
<b>6a: Demand Management: Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)</b>	8	6	7	<b>21</b>
<b>6b: Demand Management: Lift Releases</b>	7	6	6	<b>20</b>
<b>6c: Demand Management: Trapped birds</b>	7	10	11	<b>28</b>
<b>7: Changes to the four-watch duty system</b>	10	4	12	<b>26</b>
<b>Building and home inspections</b>	4	13	0	<b>17</b>
<b>Council tax</b>	10	7	1	<b>18</b>

### Proposal 1: Operational Response Plan (ORP)

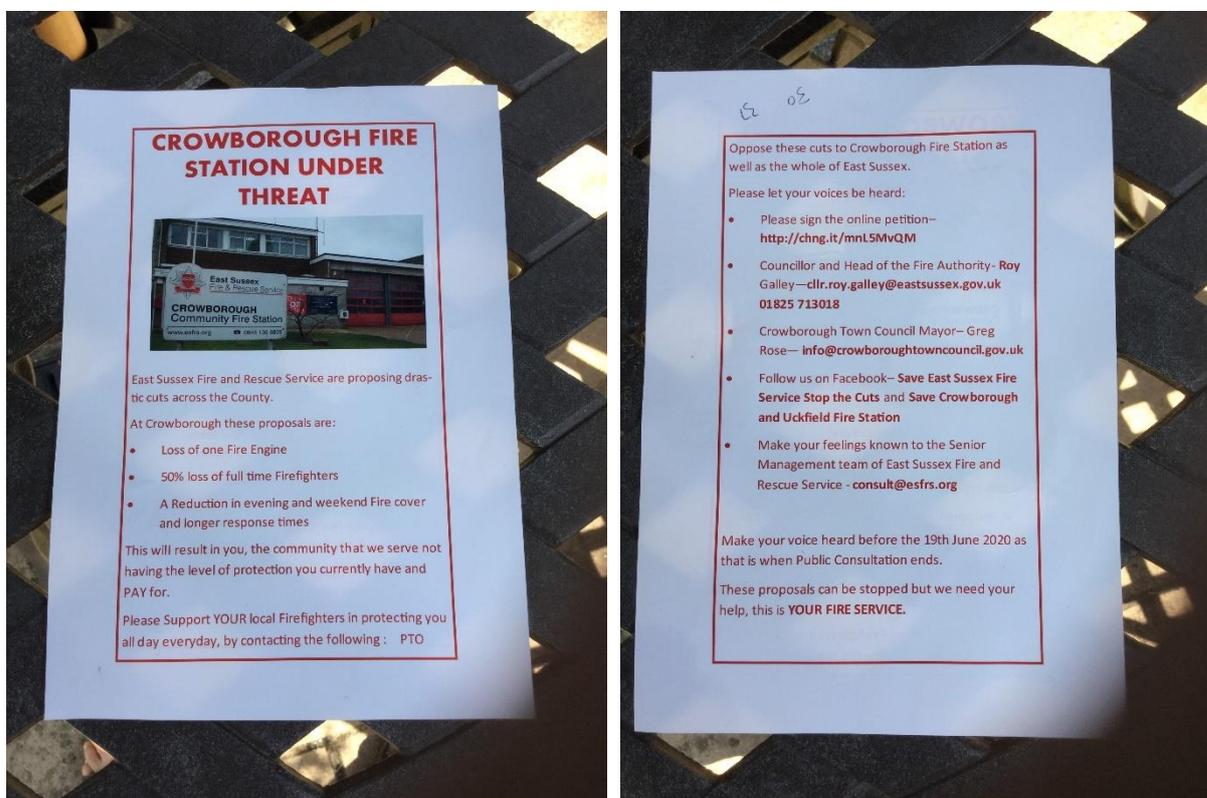
- 6.5 The ORR was supported by some as an attempt to improve county-wide FRS coverage, but opposed by others as disingenuous. Indeed, it was said that the promise of 18 immediate response fire engines at the start of each day under is “*misleading*” as only 14 will be crewed by on-station firefighters responding to an incident within a minute. The remaining would be either be available on a five-minute turnout or jump crewed and so potentially unavailable.

### Proposals 2 and 3: Changes to day-crewed duty stations and changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines

- 6.6 The most common reasons for opposing changing from day-crewed to day-only duty systems at the six relevant fire stations were: the prospect of longer response times during the evening, overnight and on weekends; the difficulties likely to be involved in recruiting sufficient on-call staff to cover those periods; and the possible impact on wholtime shift stations if having to travel into day-crewed areas (and indeed to the on-call areas currently covered by day-crewed stations) when there is no immediate response there. It was

also said that the current day-crewed stations house most of ESFRS' special vehicles, and that it will be difficult to ensure on-call firefighters' competencies on all of them due to their availability and capacity.

- 6.7 Opposition to removing the second fire engines on seven fire stations was largely on the grounds that these appliances offer significant county-wide resilience and allow swift safe systems of work at serious incidents. It was said that whenever these resources are available, residents in their areas get a faster two pump attendance and fire cover within five minutes if the primary appliance is unavailable. Furthermore, ESFRS is not required to make standby moves, thus maintaining cover on other station grounds that would otherwise be negatively impacted by this.
- 6.8 In terms of specific station areas, Crowborough was by far the most mentioned in the submissions, with respondents opposing the proposed crewing changes and the loss of the second fire engine there chiefly on the grounds that: response times will be longer in the evenings, overnight and at weekends resulting in increased risk to life, property and land; the station is in close proximity to Ashdown Forest and the A26; the town is the "largest inland town in East Sussex" and still growing; and is "out on a limb" and some distance away from neighbouring stations.
- 6.9 On a related note, there was also significant concern around the same proposals for Uckfield – both from Uckfield residents (again largely in terms of population and housing increases and proximity to Ashdown Forest) and from Crowborough residents worried about resilience levels in the north of the county.
- 6.10 It should be noted that many of the responses relating to Crowborough (and to a lesser extent Uckfield) seemed to have been submitted by residents following receipt of the following flyer, who referenced its exact text in their submissions. This may account for some mistaken perceptions that the station is earmarked for closure.



- 6.11 Newhaven and Seaford were frequently mentioned in the context that the proposed changes there are unjustified in terms of levels of industry and industrial development (in Newhaven specifically), growing populations and residential development and tourist risk (in Seaford specifically). Several submissions also

noted a 12.5% increase in calls at both stations, information residents again seem to have been given via a locally delivered campaign flyer.

- 6.12 Finally in terms of specific areas, the proposed removal of the second fire engine from Rye was opposed by several respondents, who were concerned about longer second appliance response times and enhanced risk to life and property in incidents requiring more than one fire engine – especially as the town is on the “*very edge of the county*” and at some distance from neighbouring fire stations. Particular local risks were highlighted also, most notably: the high number of high-risk heritage properties in the citadel area of the town (the incident at the George Hotel was frequently mentioned in this context); seasonal tourist risk at places like Camber Sands; several areas of conservation and special scientific interest; and a high level of water risk.

#### Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings

- 6.13 The proposals for Hastings were mentioned 38 times, with 21 respondents opposing the proposed crewing change at The Ridge (from wholetime to day-crewed) again on the general grounds of longer response times meaning greater risk to life – and more specifically as the station covers Hastings Old Town with its many listed buildings and ‘back to back’ layout. The potential for longer response times was an issue not only for respondents from Hastings itself, but also for those from the more rural areas between Hastings and Rye to which The Ridge responds currently.

#### Proposal 5a: Changes to the provision and crewing of aerial appliances

- 6.14 Many staff members and the representative bodies objected to the proposals for Aerial Ladder Appliances (ALP’s), particularly that those at Eastbourne and Hastings would, in future, be share crewed with a fire engine at those stations. Their primary objection was that the use of either vehicle would put the other out of action, resulting either in potentially unsafe practices at high-rise incidents (if the fire engine is out and the ALP is unavailable) or delays at incidents requiring a standard appliance (if the ALP is out and the fire engine is unavailable). In light of this, many demands for ALP’s to be single crewed were made.
- 6.15 In this context, there was particular concern around share crewing the Hastings ALP with the proposed second appliance at Bohemia Road in light of the fact the latter would likely be frequently mobilised on evenings and weekends if The Ridge becomes a day-crewed station (thus incapacitating the ALP).

#### Proposal 5b: Changes to the provision and crewing of other specialist appliances

- 6.16 There was worry among some respondents about losing 4x4 off-road vehicles from service, particularly that at Wadhurst Fire Station. Its removal was considered unacceptable, primarily due to the wildfire risk posed by Ashdown Forest, the rurality of the area and its difficult terrain. The retention of the swift water rescue team in light of climate change and more frequent flooding events was also strongly advocated in several submissions.

#### Proposal 6: Demand management

- 6.17 While there was some support for ESFRS no longer routinely attending AFA activations and incidents involving trapped birds and delaying its response to lift rescues – many staff members, representative bodies and other stakeholders advocated a continuance of current policy. Their main reasoning was that: it can never be known at the outset whether an AFA activation is an actual fire; confinement in a lift can be traumatic and so a swift response should be seen as a humanitarian gesture; and knowing the FRS will not be attending to

a trapped bird might result in members of the public and animal charities putting themselves in danger while attempting a rescue.

- 6.18 It was also often said that these types of incidents enable firefighters to familiarise themselves with their built environments and interact with businesses, organisations and communities and that bird rescues in particular are a positive means of real-life training with the ALP outside the ‘emergency’ environment.

#### Proposal 7: Changes to the four-watch shift duty system

- 6.19 Staff and representative bodies in particular criticised the proposed move away from the four-watch duty system toward a ‘less family friendly’ flexible rostering system, which they said would also result in the ‘destruction’ of the watch system that *“is the bedrock of the fire service and contributes enormously to our effectiveness”* (staff member)<sup>25</sup>.

#### Home and building inspections

- 6.20 More home and building inspections were supported as an important means of prevention and protection, though there were some comments that they should not be increased at the expense of front-line response services.

#### ESFRS’ finances into the future

- 6.21 Those who commented generally felt that ESFRS does currently provide value for money, but some said that perceptions might change in future if the Planning for a Safer Future proposals are implemented.

#### Overall

- 6.22 The table overleaf summarises the frequency with which common themes were raised in the submissions. It shows that by far the most often raised viewpoint was that the proposals represent a reduction in resources that will lead to longer response times and enhanced risk to life and property.

- 6.23 Other commonly recurring themes were around:

The need to consider the impact and implications of the current Covid-19 pandemic prior to making significant resourcing decisions;

The effect of the proposals on firefighters’ wellbeing and work-life balance;

The legitimacy of the data used for the Operational Response Review; and

ESFRS funding and the prospect of lobbying Government for a more realistic settlement.

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<sup>25</sup>The main objections raised by many staff to this proposal are covered in the FBU’s responses, which have been summarised later in this chapter.

**Table 17: Comments received on the Planning for a Safer Future proposals – other common themes**

THEME	NUMBER OF TIMES RAISED
<b>Cutting resources/increasing response times will cost public and firefighter lives</b>	111
<b>Need to wait for the impact and outcomes of the Covid-19 pandemic prior to making decisions</b>	24
<b>The proposals will affect firefighters' wellbeing/work-life balance/childcare arrangements</b>	20
<b>Out of date data used/data is different to fire stations' log books</b>	15
<b>ESFRS requires more funding from Government/need to lobby for more funding/the Government has not asked for reductions</b>	13
<b>Need clarification on 'slightly longer' response times</b>	11
<b>Should use wholtime firefighters to cover the evening and weekend periods/on-call staff lack experience and training</b>	11
<b>Insufficient on-call firefighters currently; more on-call firefighters needed; short-term contracts should be ended</b>	11
<b>Recruitment levels</b>	5
<b>Standbys are increasing</b>	3
<b>Requests for information on response times</b>	2

## Views on ESFRS and resourcing more generally

<sup>6.24</sup> As for comments on ESFRS and its resources more widely, the two most common concerns by some considerable distance were the need for adequate resourcing in light of rising populations and household numbers – and to properly accommodate risks associated with climate change. Wildfires and flooding were most frequently raised in relation to the latter. There was also some feeling that Planning for a Safer Future is merely a cost-cutting exercise.

**Table 18: Comments received on the Planning for a Safer Future proposals – ESFRS and resourcing**

THEME	NUMBER OF TIMES RAISED
<b>More resources are needed not fewer, especially in light of rising population/household numbers</b>	80
<b>More resources are needed to cater for climate change risks (wildfires and flooding in particular)</b>	58
<b>Proposals are a cost-cutting exercise</b>	25
<b>Thanks to/respect for firefighters and the FRS</b>	12
<b>Managers and support staff should be reduced, not front-line staff</b>	10
<b>References to large-scale past incidents (e.g. George Hotel, Claremont Hotel)</b>	10
<b>Reductions are being made in areas rated 'good' by HMICFRS</b>	5
<b>Need to consider amalgamation of/tripartite agreements and collaborative working between blue light services</b>	2

## Views on the consultation process

- 6.25 Finally, ESFRS' classification shows that 47 responses opposed the decision to undertake such a significant consultation during the Covid-19 pandemic, with a further five requesting a moratorium until the implications of the crisis for the FRS are better known. 39 respondents criticised the consultation itself as flawed and/or biased, citing: leading questions; cumbersome, misleading and unclear information; "massaged" data; and a perception that it is a 'done deal'. Moreover, six people said the consultation document and questionnaire did not reflect what they had heard elsewhere, via petitions and leaflets for example: in fact, a couple explicitly said they had changed their minds about the proposals (from opposition to support) after reading the former.

## Summaries of detailed and/or 'representative' submissions

- 6.26 As previously mentioned, some written submissions have been summarised in detail to highlight their main arguments and any alternative proposals. Those reported have been chosen either because they are particularly complex, well-evidenced or raise several 'different' issues to those being repeated by a number of respondents - or because they have been written to represent the views of larger groups of people (for example staff groups and representative bodies; and politicians, local councils or political parties/groups writing on behalf of their constituents).
- 6.27 These submissions are included in Appendix 2 of this report. They have been made available in full to Fire Authority members for their consideration, but the précis are offered in an attempt to make these often-lengthy documents as accessible as possible, and we believe they are faithful summaries of the key points made.

## Standardised submissions

- 6.28 In addition to the unique submissions reported above, 152 copies of a templated questionnaire response were received via email. This response is reproduced in its entirety in Appendix 4, but the main points are summarised below.
- 6.29 The submission provides responses to the consultation questionnaire, 11 of which are directly linked to the six IRMP proposals. The remaining six are around: building and home inspections; ESFRS' finances in the future; ESFRS' purpose and commitments; and further comments.
- 6.30 Predominantly negative feedback is provided, with the 'strongly disagree' response option chosen for nine of the 11 questions directly linked to the six IRMP proposals. The answer to the remaining two (around crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings and lift releases) is 'no opinion'.
- 6.31 The following reasons are given for the 'strongly disagree' responses, many of which match the code frame already used to classify comments from the consultation questionnaire:

Proposal 1 (Operational Resilience Plan): there is support for an increase in the number of immediate response engines but fears that this would be realised by decreasing the number of resilience engines, increasing risk;

Proposal 2 (Changes to day-crewed duty stations): the submission highlights that on-call firefighters are hard to recruit, retain and train, and that relying on this model to provide evening and weekend cover is dangerous. It further suggests that using "scratch" teams that do not train together would increase risk. Neither Option A nor B is supported;

Proposal 3a (Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines): it is said that removing the second fire station from seven stations will increase call-out times and risk;

Proposal 3b (Re-classifying the three 'maxi-cab' stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations): the submission says that removing the maxi-cab capability from three stations will reduce the effectiveness of response, increase call-out times and risk and leave other stations without cover when support engines are called in from other stations;

Proposal 6 (Demand management - AFAs): the submission highlights that the dense commercial areas of Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford would be particularly vulnerable to the spread of the fire and that the quicker response from responding to AFAs is critical in avoiding loss of life;

Proposal 6 (Demand Management - trapped birds): concern is expressed that if ESFRS no longer responds to incidents involving trapped birds, there will be a much greater risk of the public trying to rescue them themselves without suitable equipment; and

Proposal 7 (Changes to the four-watch duty system): the submission again states that replacing "permanent" firefighting crews with flexible or "scratch" crews increases risk. Neither Option A nor B is supported.

- 6.32 The remaining six questions (around building and home inspections, ESFRS' finances in the future, ESFRS' purpose and commitments and further comments) are more positively answered, with 'tend to agree' or 'agree' chosen as three of the response options.
- 6.33 The 'tend to agree' responses are chosen for the questions around 'whether more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety' (though the submission also says that this should not come at the expense of front-line services) and 'to what extent do you agree/disagree that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate'.
- 6.34 The 'agree' response is chosen for the question 'to what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money' - though the submission additionally says that if these proposals were implemented then ESFRS would no longer offer value for money.
- 6.35 For the question on whether respondents would 'be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)', the submission says that "*central government must provide assurances that Fire Service grants will not be reduced, so that the Fire Service can make proper plans for the future without the need to make these dangerous cuts to front-line services*". It is also said that the policy of front-line NHS cuts has been shown to be a mistake by the recent Covid-19 pandemic.
- 6.36 Lastly, for the question on 'ways that ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future', It is said that "*ESFRS should be properly funded by central government*".

## Additional comments

- 6.37 A few respondents added additional comments to the template submission, mainly outlining their objections to "cuts" in general and their perception that the proposed changes will increase risk to life and the local economy. Some typical comments are below.

*"Cuts to any of our essential services and particularly emergency service providers would be short sighted and, in this case, dangerous"*

*"Please keep our fire and rescue service as it is! Do not make cuts to such a vital part of civil society"*

*“Please do not compromise safety and security and the livelihoods and welfare of firefighters and other staff. Fire safety is not something to skimp on”*

*“We should do all that is necessary to maintain vital fire and rescue services. We have had personal experience of two major fires, and we dread to think what the outcomes would have been if ESFRS were operating under these proposed changes”*

*“I am well aware of legitimate concerns about the proposals to reduce the fire service and the potential for increased risk to life -- as well as economic risks. This is not a thought-through policy”*

*“If Newhaven harbour needs help due to a big accident coming from outside the town could be too late!!!”*

*“The proposals suggest you are willing to put lives at risk rather than ask the government to pay for what is an essential front-line service”*

- 6.38 A couple of people explicitly stated that they would be prepared to pay more council tax for ESFRS, albeit with the caveat that any increases should not inordinately disadvantage the less well-off. Moreover, the need for government to better fund the service was stressed.

*“I would be prepared to pay more in council tax, but it is important that people less well-off are not disadvantaged”*

*“In my opinion this service has already been cut to the bone and without extra investment we will all be in a more precarious situation. It is only in times of severe distress that we need these services, but that time can be vital and potentially life changing so I support more investment not less”*

- 6.39 More specifically, there was some explicit support for the ORP and more building and home inspections – but some opposition to delaying responses to lift rescues.

*“I agree [with the ORP] - particularly in the light of the need to safeguard our communities, protecting them from likely climate threats (droughts and floods)”*

*“I agree [with more building and home inspections], and this must take more account of communal areas in blocks of flats such as where I live, where there are no alarms or alerts in the main areas, or a designated meet space outside. Regular six monthly or annual building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety, as long as recommendations are followed up on the next visit”*

*“It's a bad idea. Building owners are unlikely to respond quickly”*

## Petition

- 6.40 One petition was received by ESFRS during the consultation period: it was organised by St Martins Sheltered Housing and signed by 40 people in “opposition to proposed cuts to East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and Battle Community Fire Station”. The petition statement was as follows:

*We, the residents of St Martins, after reviewing the information given in the public consultation, strongly disagree with the proposals put forward by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.*

# List of Tables

Table 1: Breakdown of target interviews and achieved number of interviews by district (count and %) .....	27
Table 2: Age – All Respondents .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 3: Gender – All Respondents .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 4: Disability – All Respondents.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 5: Ethnic Group – All Respondents .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 6: Working for ESFRS – All Respondents.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 7: Districts– All Respondents .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 8: Respondent type– All respondents.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 9: Telephone survey responses by area (unweighted and weighted) .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 10: Telephone survey responses by age (unweighted and weighted) .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 11: Telephone survey responses by gender (unweighted and weighted) .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 12: Telephone responses by working status (unweighted and weighted) .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 13: Telephone responses by ethnicity (unweighted and weighted) .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 14: Telephone responses by disability (unweighted and weighted).....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 15: Summary of submission contributors by type .....	126
Table 16: Comments received on the Planning for a Safer Future proposals – by proposal .....	127
Table 17: Comments received on the Planning for a Safer Future proposals – other common themes.....	131
Table 18: Comments received on the Planning for a Safer Future proposals – ESFRS and resourcing .....	131

# List of Figures

Figure 1: To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines? .....	34
Figure 2: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield? .....	36
Figure 3: Which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer? .....	37
Figure 4: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations? .....	38
Figure 5: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three "maxi-cab" stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst, as single fire engine stations? .....	39
Figure 6: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road? .....	40
Figure 7: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises? .....	41
Figure 8: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance? .....	42
Figure 9: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting? .....	43
Figure 10: Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)? .....	45
Figure 11: Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements at the 5 ESFRS fire stations listed above, if the crewing arrangements are changed, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer? .....	46
Figure 12: To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety? .....	47
Figure 13: Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)? .....	48
Figure 14: If you would be willing to pay more council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22), what level of increase would you accept? .....	49
Figure 15: To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money? .....	50
Figure 16: In what ways do you think that ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future? .....	51
Figure 17: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate? .....	55
Figure 18: How did you hear about this consultation? .....	56
Figure 19: Further comments you would like to make about any of the proposals in the consultation .....	57
Figure 20: Are there any positive or negative impacts from ESFRS that you believe should be taken into account? .....	61
Figure 21 :To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines? .....	68
Figure 22: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection work? .....	69
Figure 23: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection work? (Grouped Responses by district) .....	70
Figure 24: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations? .....	71
Figure 25: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road? .....	72

Figure 26: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road? (Grouped Responses by district).....	73
Figure 27: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should stop attending to certain calls in order to release capacity for fire prevention, protection and training? .....	74
Figure 28: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should stop attending to these calls in order to release capacity for fire prevention, protection and training? (Grouped Responses by district) .....	75
Figure 29: In principle, do you agree/disagree with ESFRS looking at ways to change its 24/7 crewing arrangements – either through “flexible rostering” at Bohemia Road, Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus and Roedean, or “group crewing” at Preston Circus, Hove and Roedean? .....	76
Figure 30: To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety? .....	77
Figure 31: To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety? (Grouped Responses by district) .....	78
Figure 32: Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year – 2021/22?.....	79
Figure 33: Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year - 2021/22? .....	79
Figure 34: To what extent do you agree or disagree that ESFRS offers value for money?.....	80
Figure 35: To what extent do you agree or disagree that ESFRS offers value for money? (Grouped Responses by district).....	80
Figure 36: Do you have any further comments you would like to make about any of the proposals we've just talked about? .....	81
Figure 37: To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines? Public focus group/depth interview result .....	83
Figure 38: To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines? Stakeholder webinar result.....	86
Figure 39: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection work? Public focus group/depth interview result.....	88
Figure 40: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection work? Stakeholder webinar result .....	91
Figure 41: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations? Public focus group/depth interview result.....	94
Figure 42: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations? Stakeholder webinar result .....	98
Figure 43: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road? Public focus group/depth interview result .....	100
Figure 44: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road? Stakeholder webinar result.....	102
Figure 45: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises? Public focus group/depth interview result.....	103
Figure 46: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises? Stakeholder webinar result .....	105
Figure 47: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance? Public focus group/depth interview result .....	106

Figure 48: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance? Stakeholder webinar result .....	108
Figure 49: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting? Public focus group/depth interview result .....	108
Figure 50: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting? Stakeholder webinar result .....	110
Figure 51: Do you agree/disagree with a review of arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)? Public focus group/depth interview result.....	111
Figure 52: Do you agree/disagree with a review of crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)? Stakeholder webinar result.....	114
Figure 53: To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety? Public focus group/depth interview result.....	115
Figure 54: To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety? Stakeholder webinar result .....	117
Figure 55: Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)? Stakeholder webinar result .....	120
Figure 56: To what extent do you agree or disagree that ESFRS offers value for money? Stakeholder webinar result.....	120



# East Sussex Fire Authority

## Planning for a Safer Future (IRMP 2020-2025)

Report of Consultation Findings:  
Appendices



Opinion Research Services

August 2020

# East Sussex Fire Authority

## Planning for a Safer Future (IRMP 2020-2025)

### Report of Consultation Findings: Appendices



## Opinion Research Services

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# Contents

<b>Appendix 1: questions, comments &amp; answers from stakeholder webinar .....</b>	<b>144</b>
Questions submitted in advance .....	144
Comments submitted in advance.....	151
Questions asked/comments made during the webinar .....	156
Questions submitted post-webinar.....	179
Comments submitted post-webinar.....	180
<b>Appendix 2: summaries of detailed or ‘representative’ submissions .....</b>	<b>182</b>
Staff groups and staff members .....	182
Representative Bodies.....	188
Members of Parliament and city/district/ borough councils and councillors.....	195
Town and parish councils .....	203
Other stakeholders.....	210
<b>Appendix 3: clarification questions from staff members.....</b>	<b>214</b>
<b>Appendix 4: templated questionnaire response .....</b>	<b>222</b>

# Appendix 1: questions, comments & answers from stakeholder webinar

## Questions submitted in advance

### General: resources

#### ***How many fire engines does ESFRS have now? How many will it have if these proposals are implemented?***

We currently have 32 fire engines which include 3 “maxi cabs” (which have a different cab design), 1 combined “aerial rescue pump” in Eastbourne, and 2 “aerial ladder platforms” in Hastings and Brighton. This is a total of 35 vehicles.

If all the proposals are accepted, by 2025 we will have 27 fire engines with a standardised design, and 3 aerial ladder platforms in Eastbourne, Hastings and Eastbourne. This is a total of 30 vehicles.

Under these proposals there will be some changes in where the fire engines will be based because we want to move resources to areas of high risk.

It is important to remember that currently not all fire engines are “available” to respond 24/7 due to staff availability and this is a key factor that we are seeking to improve.

#### ***How many full-time firefighters are there in ESFRS now? How many will there be if these proposals are implemented? How many on call firefighters are there in ESFRS now? How many will there be if these proposals are implemented?***

It is important to remember these proposals are not focused on making cuts. They are focused on making sure we have a better balance of resources in our prevention, building fire safety and emergency response teams. The proposals allow us to move resources to other areas where they can do more good. For example, in increasing the availability of a number of fire engines and / or into increasing our capacity to undertake more community safety fire prevention and building fire safety activity.

The number of posts affected depends on what options are selected by the Fire Authority at its meeting in September, and on other decisions about where and how we could reinvest released posts and associated funding.

The types of posts which are impacted are all based on fire stations, from Firefighters to Watch Managers and will range between 35 and 42 posts in total over a five-year period. This is principally linked to the proposals around the “day crewed” system (proposal 2). This does not mean we will make compulsory redundancies.

We will look to use between eight and twelve of these posts to form a dedicated “flexible crewing pool”, which will increase our ability to improve fire cover and fire engine availability at key strategic locations around the Service area. If possible, we will look to use other posts released to improve our capacity to do more community safety fire prevention and building fire safety activity.

The changes can be made over the next five years without the need for compulsory redundancies, because of natural turnover and retirements.

Year	Wholetime firefighters	On-call firefighters	Total Firefighters
2014	407	281	688
2015	384	283	667
2016	382	268	650
2017	352	306	658
2018	357	246	603
2019	352	235	587

***How many on call firefighters has ESFRS recruited in the last 5 years? What is the average tenure of an on-call firefighter (as an on-call firefighter – i.e. not becoming full time)? How long does it take to train an on-call firefighter?***

We plan to run 3 On-call training courses each year, each with a maximum of 8 candidates, however these are often not full for a varying number of reasons. 24 On-call Firefighters is normally sufficient to manage the turnover of On-call staff for 18 different sections.

We do not maintain an average tenure figure; however, we have On-call Firefighters who have spent more than 30 years fulfilling the role in their local community.

General: climate change

***How have you assessed the additional flooding risk that will result from climate change?***

We have considered this as part of our risk assessment and it is laid out in the main report of our Operational Response Review on pages 99-100, 108-109, and in each individual fire station risk profile under environmental risks as well as incidents attended. The combination of proposed future growth/housing developments combined with flood risk from rivers/seas, groundwater & surface-water flooding have also been analysed to understand the likely impact this may have on ESFRS resources in the future.

***How have you assessed the increase in wildfires that will result from climate change? How many more call outs do you anticipate? How many engines does a 'typical' wildfire require?***

The whole purpose of our proposed Operational Resilience Plan (proposal 1) is to ensure we have the right number of resources (for example fire engines and firefighters) to manage multiple incidents, protracted incidents and spate conditions. The proposals allow us to increase the minimum number of fire engines available from 15 to 18.

In addition, the minimum of 6 resilience fire engines will also give us an additional ability to further support protracted incidents, support standby moves and to provide regular relief crews to on-going incidents.

Sitting behind the IRMP document itself is a very detailed and comprehensive look at all of the risks whether past, present, and future to really get a comprehensive understanding of what could face us in the future - so things like flooding and wildfire. And attached to that main report are our

individual fire station risk profiles, we've got 24 of those. And, of course, we've taken cognisance of our list of local and national risk registers when formulating our proposals. So, the combination of those, along with our predicted increase in housing and development over the coming years, has all been considered. And so, our proposals, particularly this one around the Operational Resilience Plan is to ensure that we have the right number of resources to deal with these types of incidents and also to manage simultaneous incidents protracted incidents. And so, these proposals allow us to increase that minimum number of fire engines available from 15 to 18 which will give us additional ability to attend these sorts of incidents in the future.

#### General: Covid-19

***Covid-19 has shown the foolishness of cutting frontline staff until the services fail. Will these proposals be revisited in the light of the Covid-19 experience?***

The longer-term impact of Covid-19 won't be known for some considerable time and as the months pass, we will of course assess any new information or requirements which may emerge, but we don't anticipate significant change in the short term. The draft proposals are to ensure that both the Fire Authority and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service will be strongly placed to effectively deal with the inherent and anticipated risks for the future and over the next five-year term.

The impacts from a national event such as a pandemic were considered in the risk planning process for the IRMP. The Operational Resilience Plan (proposal 1) is targeted at ensuring the optimum level of cover is known and then maintained by targeting our resources.

You can read more about our work during Covid-19 on our website– this includes links with the IRMP.

Our IRMP is due to be delivered over five years as a long term, flexible programme supported by phased and measured implementation, giving us the flexibility to respond and adapt to any fundamental changes in our communities or Fire Service's responsibilities.

#### General: other

***West Sussex FRS implemented similar changes 4-5 years ago. Their most recent inspection report rated it as one of the worst Fire Services in the country (inadequate in its protection of the public and looking after its staff; and requiring improvement in the way that it keeps people safe and secure and the way it uses its resources). How will you ensure that these similar proposals in East Sussex do not lead to the same outcome?***

Our robust data gathering, and analysis process agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and the Combined Fire Authority was based on good practice from a number of other UK Fire and Rescue Services, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and Fire Brigades Union (FBU). In addition, we use a range of specialised predictive analysis tools with 9 years-worth of cleansed data that places us in the best possible position to accurately assess the best Prevention, Protection and Response provision for our City and County. This agreed process was recently hailed as best practice by the NFCC and there are a number of other FRS's who are taking a keen interest in replicating what we've done and how we've done it. Finally, the HMICFRS recognised improvement was required in how

we had previously assessed countywide risk. We can now say that the conclusions from this analysis in the form of the IRMP Proposals are entirely proportionate enabling us to better match our resources to risk.

Our HMICFRS report stated that “The service acknowledges that it isn’t clear how its IRMP links to its operational work. The IRMP doesn’t clearly detail how it influences the service’s prevention, protection and response activity.” (P10 of <https://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/east-sussex-fire-and-rescue-service-report-2018-19.pdf>)

We have spent 18 months preparing and analysing data in order to develop these proposals which seek to address that.

We are confident that this will bring about improvements not only in response, but also in prevention and protection.

We also believe that the proposals will improve training, firefighter safety and will better recognise the contribution made by on call staff through enhanced contracts.

#### Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan (ORP)

***Increasing the number of “core” stations while reducing the number of engines in East Sussex will increase the occasions on which there is no cover at all in some of the “non-core” stations, such as Barcombe. What is your assessment of the number of occasions in which “non-core” stations will have no cover?***

The IRMP proposes to enhance all our workforce availability, and this includes stations not contained in the ORP or the current core station policy.

We will introduce a new “flexible crewing pool” made up of firefighters who can be posted to all stations as necessary to cover for staff absences due to sickness, training or other matters affecting their availability levels. This concept is widely used across other UK Fire Services.

ESFRS wants to improve the availability across all our stations, however the ORP will specifically target the higher risk station areas to ensure we maintain a higher level of resilience for these higher risk areas. We expect stations such as Barcombe to benefit from the range of proposals, and overall cover levels to improve over the 5-year IRMP.

***The recent (May 2020) Ashdown forest fire required the attendance of 8 fire engines. If the total number of fire engines is cut to 24 as in these proposals, how would cover be provided at the 18 core stations during future wildfires?***

The proposals if fully implemented will ensure that we have 27 fire engines, with higher levels of overall availability by implementing the IRMP proposals. Furthermore 18 of these 27 will be providing high levels of cover. A further minimum of 6 resilience appliances will be provided to support large and protracted incidents such as forest fires.

The ORP proposes to include 4 stand alone On-call stations, and only 1 of these is currently a core station. Rye fire station is the only On-call station, which is a core station, over the 9-year data period their average availability is very high and has only dropped by 0.2%. However, the 3 other On-call

stations that are proposed to be part of the ORP have had significantly lower availability over the last 9 years. Hailsham as an example has seen its availability drop by 43.1% over 9 years.

It is important to differentiate between the proposed ORP approach where we would plan to have at least 18 immediately available Fire Engines and the existing Core Stations Policy where we currently plan to start the day with 15.

The new approach does not focus on stations, it focuses on a more geographic spread which helps with reducing the need for unnecessary stand-by moves. Most (74%) of all calls are dealt with within 15 minutes where, at the moment, we move any number of Fire Engines to cover an area that doesn't necessarily warrant it.

Proposals 2 (day-crewed to day-only) and 3 (changes to 2-engine stations)

***With Ashdown Forest on our doorstep what will happen with large forest fires. One recent fire took about 7 hours to extinguish and damping down was still going on next day?***

Answered above.

***With all the proposed development in Crowborough, nearly 600 houses in Walshes Road if approved alone with 197 already being built, surely these cuts to the service and vehicles will be disastrous? With the main A26 running right through Crowborough and beyond, what will happen to response and attendance at serious and fatal road traffic crashes?***

In summary, the proposal to move to a day only duty system or the removal of the second fire engines at some stations would only affect the response time for a small number of incidents, which was highlighted in the Fire Authority Paper considered on the 23rd April 2020 and which can be found on our consultation page [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture).

The work that has been done to reach these proposals and the methodology used is robust and the duty we have as a public service to ensure that the Fire Authority have an integrated plan for management of risk and use of resources is not only open to public scrutiny, but will also be judged by the independent inspectorate – HMICFRS against the guidance set out in the Fire and Rescue Services legislation and the underpinning national framework and guidance documents.

***With Crowborough being on the northern extremity, what will happen to response times?***

As above

***How will ESFRS manage the requirements of Crowborough when the part time firemen are so hard to find, and if the cuts are not financially driven, why are they being contemplated?***

ESFRS has committed to improving the current retention rate for on-call personnel since several national reports were issued by the RFU (Now FRSA), this is in-line with the national drive by the NFCC on-call working group. ESFRS setup a dedicated action learning set to target on-call improvements and the national recommendations, however limited improvements could be completed outside of the IRMP process.

The ORR and IRMP now present the opportunity for further investment in our on-call systems by realigning existing resources into improving overall on-call performance levels.

The following areas will be carried out subject to Fire Authority approval on the 3rd September 2020:

Introduce a dedicated crewing pool to improve appliance availability levels

Introduce trials of new and improved On-call contracts to drive recruitment and improve retention of existing on-call personnel.

Introduction of the ORP and in particular the use of resilience appliances, these appliances will utilise unused capacity in our on-call system when appliances are unavailable due to crew numbers but can be used as part of a slower planned approach to support large scale incidents and spate conditions.

We do recruit appropriate levels of on-call personnel, however due to the level of leavers being higher than the intake of new personnel the overall retention rate is negative. If we reduce the level of leavers and improve the level of new entrants, the benefit will be significant and more sustainable than taking no action.

***Would it be better if the Crowborough precept was transferred to the Kent Fire Service as Tunbridge Wells and Crowborough are more of a homogenous unit?***

Please be assured that ESFRS always mobilises the nearest available and appropriate resource(s) to an incident, so although you pay council tax in East Sussex you will always get the quickest resource even if it means an appliance from Kent FRS attends as part of our emergency response and this aligns with the Fire Services Act 2004 Section 13 Reinforcement Schemes.

Proposal 6: demand management (AFAs)

***If 96% of automated fire alarm call outs are false alarms, 4% are real incidents. How many real incidents are there each year that you would no longer attend with these new proposals? In the dense commercial/residential centres of Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford, what do you consider to be the increased risk to life and of the fire spreading to adjacent properties?***

We average around 9,200 operational responses to incidents each year. Automatic fire alarm (AFA) systems account for 34% of all these calls. 96% of the calls initially categorised as AFAs turn out to be false alarms – these are often described as “unwanted fire signals”.

Only 2% of calls to AFAs in non-domestic premises turn out to be fires (average of 32 per year). Of these 32 fires, 20 do not require any firefighting action (the fire will already be out when the crews arrive). The remaining 12 require varying amounts of firefighting action, ranging from an item being taken outside, use of portable extinguishers, and use of main jets. On average, only one call per year to an AFA in non-domestic property requires use of main firefighting jets.

Our HMICFRS report was critical of the Service in relation to this matter. We have the largest number of AFA calls compared to our family group average (our family group of comparable and similar sized fire and rescue services) and attendance at these particular call types are widely considered to be an unnecessary drain on valuable fire service resources.

They divert essential service resources rendering them unavailable, with the possibility of delayed attendance at genuine emergencies; they create unnecessary risk to fire crews and members of the public when appliances are responding under emergency conditions; they are disruptive to work routines, particularly community and business fire safety activity, and training; they have a demoralising effect on personnel attending a high number of false alarms, and instil a culture of complacency with an expectation of a wasted trip; they impose an additional financial burden on the Service, particularly salary and vehicle fleet costs; and they adversely impact upon other employers who release on-call staff for such calls.

Many other Services have already introduced sweeping changes to how they manage calls to premises with AFA systems. A number have simply stopped attending completely and will only attend if there is a confirmed fire.

We are proposing a more measured and risk-based approach. This includes appointing a subject matter expert on a fixed term contract to lead an engagement and education project with property owners and responsible persons, in order to allow them to better understand and comply with their responsibilities. Further, we will be introducing a more robust call challenge process via our control centre in line with best practice.

In relation to non-attendance, we are proposing that the Service no longer automatically attend calls to fire alarms operating in low risk commercial premises. These premises are classified as commercial (non-domestic) premises with no sleeping risk, such as offices, shops, factories, pubs, clubs and restaurants. In these premises, when people are present, they are able to check for fire and call back on 999 to confirm; we would then attend as a confirmed fire call with the full attendance of appliances. When people are not present, such as when the business is closed at night, then the life risk is very low.

Finally, we are also reviewing whether, at some point in the future, we should charge a fee for attending unwanted fire signals in some other premises types, in some circumstances. If the Fire Authority are minded to consider such an approach, this would be subject to a separate public consultation in due course.

### Building and home inspections

***Will Fire Service attendance and assistance at reported dangerous structures and buildings particularly out of normal day time hours be affected? Will Tech Team assistance be affected?***

No impact is expected to the current pre-determined attendances for these types of incidents.

***Will Fire Safety consultations on Building Regulation applications with Building Control be affected?***

No, not affected and may improve if we can get more staff into protection dept.

### ESFRS' finances into the future

***What 'back office' savings have been considered to reduce the impact on front-line services (e.g. reducing salaries of a few very highly paid staff, reducing use of expensive consultants, simplifying service reporting, bring the call centre back to East Sussex)?***

The Authority has already made over £9m of savings between 2010/11 and 2019/20 and these have been made across the whole service, not just from the operational frontline. The savings proposals for 2020/21 – 2024/25 currently stand at £0.651m, none of which relate to operational services, being primarily a combination of procurement savings and other efficiencies in our support services.

The reality is that given the Authority spends 76% of its gross revenue budget on its employees and the vast majority of them are operational, then to make the level of savings required to balance the Authority's budget over the last 10 years and in the future then reductions in operational posts have been / will be unavoidable.

The Service has reduced its number of senior managers – since 2012/13 it has removed two non-uniformed Principal Officer / Brigade Manager posts reducing the total from five to three (all now uniformed) and it has also reduced the number of Assistant Directors from six to five of which three are uniformed.

So, over the last few years we have managed the increase in the salary bill and other pressures by directly reducing costs in other areas, including senior posts, contracts and procurement, in fact the vast majority of savings (62%) that have been required during the current IRMP have been from corporate and professional services. However, if you consider the financial predictions and scenarios as set out in the Medium-Term Financial Plan, it is clear that savings in those areas alone will not be sufficient in order for the Fire Authority to balance the budget in the future.

***Significant additional funding (£34m) has had to be allocated to address the shortfalls in West Sussex (far outweighing the range of savings anticipated by this consultation document). How have potential downside costs been factored into the calculation of savings?***

A full financial impact assessment supports the proposals that enable us to contribute to the predicted shortfalls in funding for the same time period as identified within our Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

## Comments submitted in advance

***I would like to raise the following points relating to the proposals listed below, in relation to our Newhaven Fire Station:***

***The proposals for Newhaven are:***

- Cut one fire engine from the station***
- Downgrade fire station from Day crewed to Day-staffing***
- Cut Foam Tender from the station***
- Cut 50% of the full-time firefighting staff***
- Introduce a Command Unit and an Operational support unit (OSU)***

***It appears that the public consultation IRMP document is very misleading and full of loaded questions based on out of date data (only includes figure up to 2018 – there have been operational changes since, including an increase in the number of calls of around 12.5% in 2019 and the***

***introduction of a close working relationship with SECAMB). It would seem that unfortunately, the Fire Authority has been briefed on this out of date data for many months now and it is hard for them to listen to up to date facts. However, there are some key issues pertaining to Newhaven fire station I would like to point out. I appreciate that we are not alone in these cuts proposals - this is county wide.***

We're not using out of date data. The data that underpins the proposals in the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan used the most up to date data that we had when we started the review in late October 2018. So, at that time, we extracted all available incident and mobilisation data that was stored in our incident recording system, dating back to April 2009. We weren't then in a position to be able to use data for the 2019 year or beyond because we were still in the year at that time, but using nine years' worth of data has enabled us as a Fire and Rescue Service to get a really informative trend to undertake really informative trend analysis.

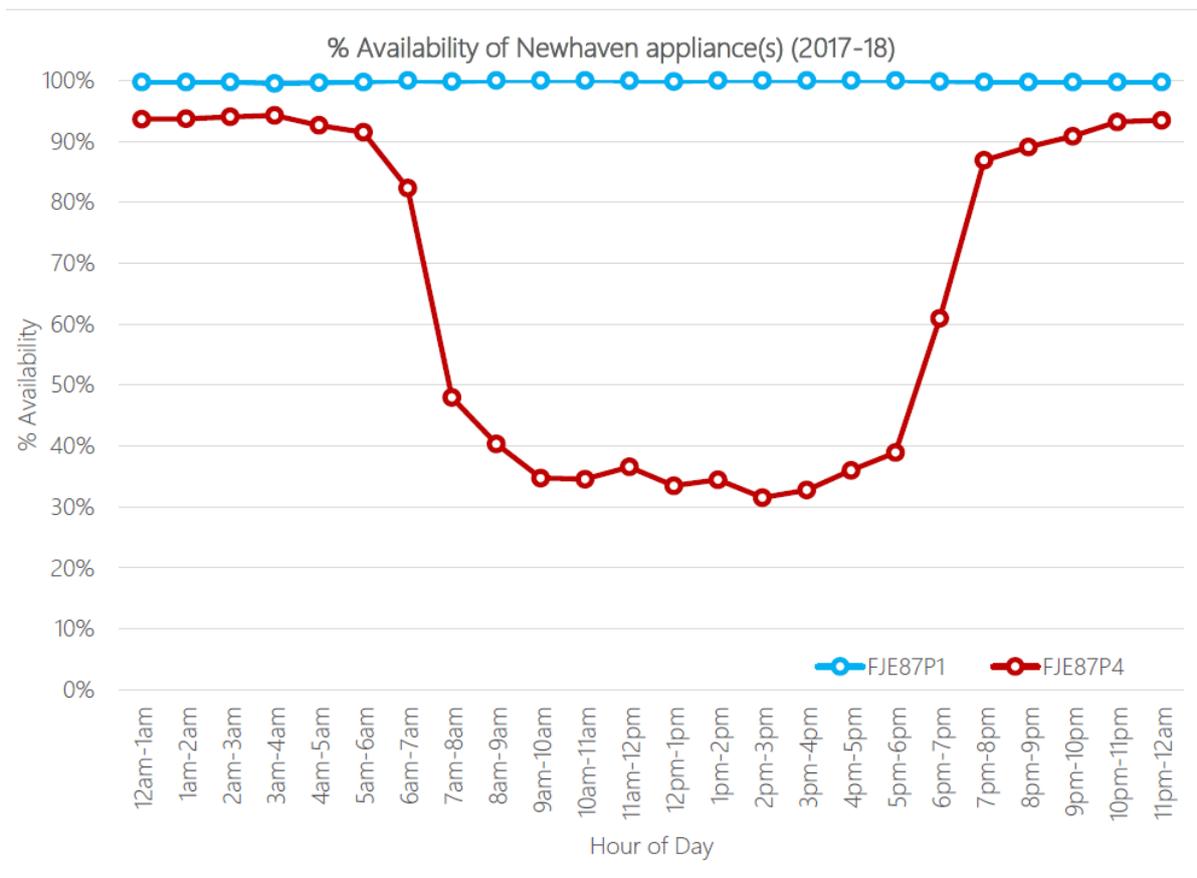
Typically, data covering between three and five years is considered appropriate when identifying trends and assuring robustness of data. So, our approach to using up to nine years' worth is over and above the standard approach. And so, the proposals that that are in the draft IRMP are therefore built on a solid evidence base, and our strategic and long-term view. And so, this means, importantly, that they don't become redundant because the data doesn't include an additional years' worth of data. And now over that nine-year period, there has been ups and downs, peaks and troughs in terms of the incident numbers. But over the longer term, a more reliable trend can be identified, which moderates for any annual changes from year to year.

In addition to that, we have also undertaken a very comprehensive assessment of future growth. So, we've looked at what's happened historically, we've looked at the numbers of households and residents between the last two censuses and the growth between the last census in 2011 up until now. And then looking forward, we've done an assessment to take account of future growth and its impact. So, to summarise, using up to nine years' worth of data helps us to really get a good long-term view of where we need to go, it gives us a good direction of travel.

***Those key issues are:***

***Cut a fire engine (87P4) - This engine was used 51 times in 2019, but what is not brought to the attention of the Fire authority is that every time our first fire engine goes out (87P1), the second engine remains on station - giving cover to the community, when the first (87P1) is busy. Thus: no break in cover and consequently, a safer community.***

The scenario you describe is as a result of Service Policy and only occurs when 87P4 is available. Whilst the primary pumping appliance has remained available nearly 100% of the time over 9-year period, it can be seen that the availability of 87P4 has fluctuated over the 9 years, with a peak of 79% availability in 2011/12 and a low of 61% in 2016/17.



Between April 2013 and March 2018, **82% of incidents within the Newhaven station area were attended by a single fire appliance**, which is higher than the ESFRS average of 72% of incidents – and is the greatest percentage out of all 24 stations, by a significant margin. This means that despite the number of emergency calls, the vast majority only require one crew of 4 Firefighters.

When there was a 2nd pump attendance, 87P4 was, as you would expect, the 2nd pump attendance on 52% of occasions. Roedean provided the 2nd pump attendance on 18% of occasions, the primary pump at Newhaven on 14% of occasions, and Seaford 10% of occasions.

***When attending an incident, 87P1 will turn up with a crew of 4 - made up of an officer in charge (OIC), driver/pump operator/breathing apparatus, board controller and a Breathing apparatus (BA) team (2 x firefighters). Before the OIC can commit a BA into a burning building and to conform to Health and safety and fire service national risk assessments, the OIC must wait for another BA team to be available before committing the first. This is a national H&S standard and can only be breached in the most extreme circumstances.***

***For Newhaven the second BA team is on the second engine (87P4) - the engine they want to cut.***

As described earlier, 82% of all calls for Newhaven were dealt with by 1 appliance with a crew of 4 Firefighters. Newhaven’s P4 is the second busiest from a Day crewed Station and despite its availability due to crewing ranging between 30% and 95% on any given day, is classed as low-activity due to the number of calls that do not require more than one fire engine.

***So 87P1 will have to wait for an engine from either Roedean or Seaford. That's an extra 10/15 minutes and often that's the difference between life and death or losing your property or business.***

The Newhaven Station Risk Profile is based on historic, inherent and foreseeable risk gathered from the Newhaven local area and from multiple local sources including East Sussex County Council, Lewes District Council, Newhaven Port Authority etc. The Operational Resilience Plan proposes to increase the number of available appliances from 15 to 18 as a direct result of recognising our risk needs more fire cover.

***Down Grading of Newhaven Fire Station - This would reduce the community's fire cover greatly. The proposal states it wants full time firefighters to man the station - possibly 9 till 5 and no weekend cover. Times outside these hours would be covered by on-call firefighters, responding from their homes. As it stands at the moment, the full-time firefighters are split into 2 watches of 6 - doing a 'four days on, four days off' on a rota system. They cover a total of 96 hours per watch, being bolstered by on-call firefighters. "This would reduce the community's fire cover greatly".***

This is incorrect. The community in Newhaven will still have an immediately available Fire Engine 24/7. The evening response time will be exactly the same as it is now because the current day-crew respond from home at night. There will however be the standard On-call response time introduced during the weekend daytimes which is the same as evening callout turn-out and response times.

***"The proposal states it wants full time firefighters to man the station".***

This is also incorrect. As a socially inclusive organisation ESFRS and its Combined Fire Authorities proposal does not differentiate which members of staff shall crew its Fire Engines by gender, race, religion or any other of the protected characteristics identified by the Equalities Act 2010. It is fundamental to our organisation that we are as diverse as the community we serve and are pleased you reference firefighters.

***The trouble with relying on the on-call firefighters, is there is not enough of them to cover all the hours required. There have been some problems with on-call firefighters not turning into station for a call, for up to 10 minutes. Then having to get ready to go out. That results in a delay of 12/15 minutes from time of call. There is problem getting on-call firefighters to be available at crucial times of the day (i.e. 6am to 9am and 5pm to 7pm), because of their primary employment and having to get to and from work. Also, most on-call firefighters, can be full time firefighters from shift stations and so are hampered by the working time directive.***

Almost all UK FRS' rely on the on-call duty system. The majority of stations outside of metropolitan areas tend to have a high proportion of on-call stations. Our proposal to improve the on-call system is proven in a number of other UK FRS' and we need to improve what we do and how we do it, because we want to make more fire engines more available. Traditional recruitment and retention systems are no longer efficient partly due to the commuter belt.

ESFRS service has a large on-call capability already and we have a lot of on-call firefighters available and working for the service. We want to improve availability and yes, in East Sussex and nationally it is harder at the moment to recruit and retain on-call firefighters. So, what we are doing is proposing a range of options that will improve that current picture.

However, at the moment we do have very good on-call availability in some areas ... Seaford and Rye have nearly 100% availability, which is very high for on-call stations. And the proposals we're bringing in such as the crewing pool enables us to use our wholetime resources more effectively to help put on-call stations back on the run. So, we are very confident about the ability of the on-call to provide cover. And the periods that we're asking them to provide additional cover is actually quite small. We are only talking about the two weekend days; they already provide cover seven days a week, in the evenings and during the days and weekends. We are asking for a bit more cover from them, obviously at the weekends but that is why we're putting these proposals in place, to encourage more recruitment and better retention.

***Introduction of command unit and OSU - This on the surface, appears to not be a bad thing, if the station is not downgraded. However, if it is and you have a call for one of these vehicles outside of 9am to 5pm, it causes a problem. Out of office hours, they will only have 4/5 on-call firefighters on duty. If they get a call for one of the new vehicles, that would mean the main fire engine (87P1), would no longer have a full crew and so would not be available and therefore no fire cover for the community.***

ESFRS wants to improve the availability across all our stations, however the ORP will specifically target the higher risk station areas to ensure we maintain a higher level of resilience for these higher risk areas. It is important to differentiate between the proposed ORP approach where we would plan to have at least 18 immediately available Fire Engines and the existing Core Stations Policy where we currently plan to start the day with 15.

The new approach does not focus on stations, it focuses on a more geographic spread which helps with reducing the need for unnecessary stand-by moves. Most (74%) of all calls are dealt with within 15 minutes where, at the moment, we move any number of Fire Engines to cover an area that doesn't necessarily warrant it.

Current systems in place deal with the mobilisation of Special appliances and teams through stand-by moves as necessary.

***50% full time firefighter posts lost - Loss of skills and experience, that would be detrimental and feasibly would have serious consequences for the service and the communities it serves.***

No decisions have been made to date. If proposal 2 or 7 were taken, changes would be sequential and over the period of the IRMP. As we have planned to not require any redundancies, the careful management of posts and the support mechanisms required will be in place beforehand to prevent any degradation of safety or service delivery.

***Cut Foam Tender from the station - This is not of too much concern to the station, as I understand it was originally introduced to assist with potential refrigeration fires, etc. at the port. With the lessening of freight traffic over recent years in that vicinity, its requirement has similarly reduced. However, there are a number of small rural-based airfields locally and redeploying this to say, Lewes Fire Station, may be a prudent measure.***

No firm decisions have been made in regard to the relocation of any Specialist team, appliance or equipment. This operational matter will be subject to ongoing reviews to ensure they meet the needs of the risk profile without under or over-provision.

***I would be grateful for a response to the above concerns that have been raised with me, by Fire Officers and local people. We cannot compromise on Health and Safety of our residents and businesses, when considering financial cuts. There is no price on life and property and our Fire Services have a duty of care, to the public and businesses it serves, as well as the brave firefighters and staff, that it calls upon to take on this responsibility within our communities.***

The draft IRMP proposals remain exactly that until the Combined Fire Authority meet in September. Rest assured that the CFA would not publish any proposal without receiving full assurances, as documented in the extensive research and analysis documentation already published, of their feasibility to be successfully implemented in our County and City.

## Questions asked/comments made during the webinar

### General: resources

***Are specific skills/trainings influential in availability? i.e. dangerous materials, sensitive buildings, flooding***

The primary influence on the availability of on-call fire engines are the skills required for Incident Command and driving; however, these are all part of the relevant role maps. Firefighters are trained to use all equipment on both the first and second fire engines including dangerous materials, sensitive buildings, flooding etc.

***Kelly said earlier in the call that East Sussex was struggling to recruit on-call firefighters, but these proposals seem to depend far more heavily on on-call firefighters. Isn't it dangerously risky to rely so heavily on a model that is not working / is not proven?***

Almost all UK FRS' rely on the on-call duty system. The majority of stations outside of metropolitan areas tend to have a high proportion of on-call stations. Our proposal to improve the on-call system is proven in a number of other UK FRS' and we need to improve what we do and how we do it, because we want to make more fire engines more available. Traditional recruitment and retention systems are no longer efficient partly due to the commuter belt.

ESFRS service has a large on-call capability already and we have a lot of on-call firefighters available and working for the service. We want to improve availability and yes, in East Sussex and nationally it is harder at the moment to recruit and retain on-call firefighters. So, what we are doing is proposing a range of options that will improve that current picture.

However, at the moment we do have very good on-call availability in some areas ... Seaford and Rye have nearly 100% availability, which is very high for on-call stations. And the proposals we're bringing in such as the crewing pool enables us to use our wholetime resources more effectively to help put on-call stations back on the run. So, we are very confident about the ability of the on-call to provide cover. And the periods that we're asking them to provide additional cover is actually quite small. We are only talking about the two weekend days; they already provide cover seven days a

week, in the evenings and during the days and weekends. We are asking for a bit more cover from them, obviously at the weekends but that is why we're putting these proposals in place, to encourage more recruitment and better retention.

***Will there be a reduction in full time personnel?***

There could be a reduction in full-time personnel; however, this is dependent on the Service's Medium-Term Financial Plan which is influenced by long-term central funding. The Integrated Risk Management Plan's primary objective is to rebalance resources and so we expect a significant amount of posts identified being reinvested into the crewing pool, prevention and protection. East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service has a Workforce Planning Strategy and every attempt will be made to implement the proposed changes without having to use voluntary or compulsory redundancies.

***Do hours of opening reflect hours of need?***

Yes, the main report and risk profiles show the response activity times and they change dependent on area. Across the whole service, calls tend to rise from 08:30 peaking in the early afternoon before tapering off to 20:00 hours.

**General: attendance standards**

***Does this mean there is a delay in [on-call firefighters] responding to incidents i.e. for Heathfield?***

Heathfield, amongst a number of other current on call stations, will remain the same. There'll be no adverse effect to response standards in those areas. In fact, we are planning to improve availability, particularly at Heathfield, and three other on-call stations around the county. So, in short, the answer to that question is no, there will not be any adverse effect to emergency response standards.

***What is the basis for determining the rate of 70% compliance with your response standards?***

Attendance standards are one way in which the Fire Authority monitors and measures the performance of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. They help explain how long it could take the Service to respond to emergencies.

Since departing from the National Standards of Fire Cover, East Sussex Fire Authority have locally set its own attendance standards since 2004/5. Through the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2017-20, it was agreed that a full review of our attendance standards would be undertaken as, due to a number of operational policy changes, our standards at that time were no longer fit for purpose.

In 2018, the Fire Authority agreed that the Service would move away from using Home Office's definition of average response times. This is because members of the public may get a different response time in different areas for a whole range of reasons. One reason is that fire stations are staffed in different ways.

Therefore, the Service:

Set an attendance standard for the first fire engine with an 'on-station' response of 10 minutes 70% of the time

Set an attendance standard for the first fire engine with an 'on-call' response of 15 minutes 70% of the time

It also included the call handling time as part of the new attendance standards – this is the amount of time it takes our Sussex Control Centre staff to take the call and send out the right fire engines or other resources.

An analysis of attendance times was undertaken using historic incident data, and considered our response times against a range of variables including incident types, location and the time of day, alongside an analysis of call-handling times and fire-engine turn-out times to enable the Service to set these standards.

These standards are service-wide performance indicators which enables us to monitor our emergency response to all incident types. It is important to note that these are therefore not targets, as we will always endeavour to send the quickest, appropriate resource.

***Major appliances are located primarily on the coast. How can the orphan area, North Wealden - Crowborough, Forest Row, Wadhurst, Mayfield and Heathfield get access in time?***

It is true that the disposition of our resources are matched to our risk profile and, in fact, the Fire Authority's proposals in this draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025 seek to enhance and/or move resources to ensure an overall improvement to public safety across the Service area. Around two thirds of the population across our Service area are to be found in the main conurbations along the coast and the number, type and disposition of our emergency resources are appropriately matched to the risk profile.

The individual fire station risk profiles provide a breakdown, by each fire engine, of the percentage of calls attended within 5, 8, 10, 13, 15 & 20 minutes.

So, for example, the fire engine at Forest Row attended 61% of its calls (where it was the first-arriving fire engine) within 15 minutes. However, it's important to note that our current attendance standards are service-wide standards based on the duty system and not the individual fire engine/station so, for instance, we are not saying that Forest Row failed.

It is important to note that these are therefore not station-based targets and that we will always endeavour to send the quickest, appropriate resource.

***Will response times be shorter or longer?***

Fundamentally, the proposals in the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025 are about a rebalance of our emergency resources to address the risks across our communities as well as a reinvestment into prevention and protection so that the number and severity of emergencies are reduced in the first place. The Operational Resilience Plan (ORP) will improve public safety by having more fire engines available than currently; the crewing pool will further enhance on-call availability over and above the core 18 ORP fire engines; the addition of another fire engine into Hastings will ensure that our resources are better aligned to the risk within Hastings and the wider area, improving community safety and reducing the overall risk profile and the positive impact of the demand management proposals (AFAs, lift releases and trapped birds) will also ensure that fire engines are more available to attend incidents with risk to human life.

Therefore, for many incidents, response times will improve due to the reasons mentioned above. However, the proposal to move to a 'day only' crewing model on six fire stations and the proposal to remove the second fire engines from 7 fire stations will mean that response times may be slower in some areas – but not at all times.

We have analysed the likely numbers of incidents per year that may have an increased response time as well as the impact that this would have on community risk and these were highlighted in the presentation. However, our analysis shows that there is a very low impact, whether looking at community risk, attendance standards or incident demand.

We believe these proposals, if agreed, will enable the Service to use its resources more effectively both now and in the future and are robust and proportionate. Furthermore, where we have identified any perceived change in community risk, we will focus our prevention and protection resources in those areas to further reduce or mitigate the risk in those areas – as prevention is better than cure.

#### General: data

##### ***Why is the data 2 years out of date?***

We are not using 'out of date' data. The data which underpins the proposals in the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan used the most up-to-date data we had when we commenced the analysis in January 2019. At that time, we extracted all available incident and mobilisation data stored in our Incident Recording System, dating back to April 2009. We were therefore not in a position to use data for the 2018/19 year, or beyond, as we were still 'in-year' at that time.

##### ***Your Station Risk Profiles do not add up. Coverage percentages are out by up to 10%. How can you risk the lives of residents on flawed data?***

We are confident that our data is not flawed. At the heart of the proposals in the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-25 is the most comprehensive risk review that the Service has undertaken to date. Our data went through a robust cleansing, validation and enrichment process in order to develop a risk assessment methodology and which underpins the information contained within the main Operational Response Review report and the 24 individual fire station risk profiles.

We believe that you are referring to some of the percentages contained within the 'headline summary' of the station risk profiles. For example, in the Crowborough station risk profile, we state that the main fire Crowborough engine "mobilises to 34 critical incidents per year - 65% in own area, 11% in Uckfield, 8% in Forest Row area, 8% Mayfield". The percentages highlighted here are not meant to add up to 100% as they are indicators of which station areas the Crowborough fire engine mobilises to the most. In the main content of the report, page 34, we show the full breakdown of mobilisations and every station that it has mobilised to. The 'headline summary' on page 4 is just that - a summary, to show the main areas it supports, otherwise we would need to include an additional 10 stations in the list.

***It took 4 years for Wealden to fail to provide a viable Local Plan. Your data as seen in the Station Risk Profiles is error prone at best***

As above, we are confident that our data is not flawed. At the heart of the proposals in the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-25 is the most comprehensive risk review that the Service has undertaken to date. Our data went through a robust cleansing, validation and enrichment process in order to develop a risk assessment methodology and which underpins the information contained within the main Operational Response Review report and the 24 individual fire station risk profiles.

Furthermore, we have undertaken an in-depth analysis of the predicted impact of the proposed development areas across the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Area which has provided the Service with an initial assessment of the impact on community risk, and was based on available information and assumptions of the proposed development areas as well as national / local research.

It is interesting to note that there was more historic growth over the last 10-20 years than is portrayed in the adopted local plans going forward, and the quantity and severity of incidents have also decreased over the past 10-20 years. All residential development sites which were supplied to the analytical team sit within the existing attendance standards isochrones and these have been fully portrayed in the Operational Response Review Main Report and the Individual Station Risk Profiles.

***Incident figures don't relate to callout figures, why aren't these included, this gives a false picture***

If you mean standby moves then the standby moves of each fire engine have been fully documented in each of the 24 fire station risk profiles, as well as the main analytical Operational Response Review report. However, it is important to note that these have been considered separately to our incident data because one relates directly to an emergency and the other relates to a non-emergency mobilisation which are linked to our internal policies and procedures. It would therefore be inappropriate to include standby moves with incident data to assess the level of risk in any particular area, or indeed, the level of emergency activity of an appliance in its own response area.

**General: population and development**

***With all the new developments that's are planned for Wealden, i.e. the 1,000 houses in Uckfield so a possible increase of 3,000-4,000 car movements and many more from Hailsham and other areas, how do ESFRS foresee managing response times around this?***

Over the last nine years, there's been increases in cars on the road, population increases and increases in households. And we've looked at that. We've looked forward and done a number of risk analyses on all of the proposed housing developments. We've looked at those to determine what the additional impact is in terms of community life risk, so the impact on additional fatalities effectively, and casualties, injuries, rescues in dwelling fires. We've undertaken a comprehensive assessment that takes into account these proposed housing developments. We've looked at the types of houses, the numbers of houses in each area, we look at the response times for those areas for the first and second fire engines, we look at and predict the likely socio-demographic background

of these areas to get a really good indication of the likely additional number of incidents, but also the service-wide impact of the proposals.

So the bottom line is that yes, we have absolutely taken consideration of that and we've supplied a comprehensive report to our senior leadership team based on the data that we had at the time we compiled our analysis, and the outcome of that was that ... with the proposed increase in growth, there was no real community risk impact. We've looked at census data and household projections, and all of that going forward.

Over the past 10-20 years, the numbers of incidents and the severity of those incidents has decreased over that time. And so, this goes back to the great work that we do with prevention and protection ... And that's our key driver. That's why emphasise again, our first proposal around our Operational Resilience Plan in getting more fire engines available will allow us to have that better coverage of risk to stop the thing happening in the first place.

***With the substantial increase in development of new homes in East Sussex over the next 10 years are the panel confident in their new proposals will be adequate?***

We are confident. As discussed, there is a very large amount of data that has led us to these conclusions in the form of the 7 proposals. We have included 9 years of previous callouts and current and foreseeable risks. The proposals have considered the difference between a perception of risk and real fire and rescue related risk. E.g. modern premises are built to modern building standards with modern materials and with hard wired detection.

General: consultation

***I'd also like to ask if this is just a review of land-based service or includes sea based? i.e. marina, onshore, etc.***

So East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, like every UK Fire and Rescue Service we know, has no statutory duty to respond to incidents at sea. However, there are a small number of services now that provide an offshore firefighting capability, along with or under the auspices of the maritime and coastguard agency.

***Beyond fire and rescue, what infrastructure is included? IT, IT Support, maintenance, VPN***

The significant areas of impact are detailed in the IRMP proposals. However, smaller changes may occur in IT and equipment and are considered as business-as-usual.

***What types of specialist equipment are included? I.E. ladder, decontamination, etc.***

The significant areas of impact are detailed in the IRMP proposals. However, smaller changes may occur in specialist equipment and is considered as business-as-usual.

***Are Community Fire stations included? Such as Roedean Community Fire Station?***

Yes, all community fire stations are included in the proposals, including Roedean.

***What is the final date for representations against these nonsensical and dangerous proposals?***

We strongly disagree with your analysis of the proposals which are based on 18 months of data gathering from multiple internal and external sources. We would welcome the opportunity to hear

how your empirical data and analysis contradicts ours for the benefit of the Community of East Sussex and City of Brighton and Hove.

The consultation closes on 19th June.

***Has the police or pcc commissioner expressed a view?***

I don't believe we have had a response from the PCC as yet.

***How much of the proposed changes are voluntary and have employees been consulted?***

This process has taken a couple of years to get to this point. And we have regularly spoken to current employees and have been very much in correspondence with trade unions and with employee groups all the way through the formation of these proposals. But when you get to the point of whether it's going to be voluntary or compulsory, that depends on what the proposal is. But we've been very clear all the way through this is that the implementation plan is a very different set of options. And we can't get fully detailed implementation plans until the decisions are made. So, at the moment, these are proposals, but we have laid out some key principles to our employees that we don't expect certain things to happen.

So, in the case of on-call contracts, we are very much of the mindset that these should be voluntary. We have no intention of making our on-call and personnel take on contracts that are going to be detrimental to their own ability to carry out that contract. So, we are looking at providing more opportunities, more flexibility but not making it compulsory. But the final details won't be provided until the decisions are made because we have to do full impact assessments with all employees to make sure that our implementation is done in the best way possible.

***Are you concerned with the unions already rejecting these proposals that future strikes may be a direct result of some of these proposed cuts?***

The Unions' responses to the proposals will be considered along with all of the consultation responses. It will be a matter for them.

We are always concerned when any single one of our valued stakeholders raises legitimate reservations in regard to any proposal for change. We have a long-standing formal internal consultation and negotiation framework that enables both employers and employees representatives' sufficient time and space to objectively debate proposals for change.

***What happens if these proposals are not agreed? You said these have taken years to build? Would it be back to the drawing board completely or would it be tweaking? I'm trying not to be vague! Sorry!***

We have worked hard over the last couple of years to actually get the proposals into a shape for the Fire Authority to undertake the consultation. The whole point of the consultation exercise is for people to have a view, including staff, in terms of what they think of the proposals and if they can suggest alternatives. The Integrated Risk Management Plan and the proposals within it are part of a five-year implementation plan and a five-year window.

So, at the moment, we are forecasting that we may need to make savings of between £0.3m and £3.5m over the next five years because of the uncertainty around funding in the future. So, in terms

of the proposals and the information that we receive back and the comments that we receive, then absolutely all that will be taken into consideration by the Fire Authority when they make their decision in September. Over recent years, we've had changes to plans put forward because staff have come in with alternatives. That's part of the consultation process. The Fire Authority will take cognisance and take note of the comments that people are sending in. And if there are changes that are appropriate and that can be made, we'll consider that as part of proposals going forward.

#### General: equalities

***A general question regarding your Equality Impact assessment in the info you previously sent out via email link. If I read it correctly, your EIA seemed to be saying that people with disabilities would be at greater risk because of these plans; however, it was not clear to me what the increased risks to disabled people would be. It would be helpful to understand this more clearly. Thanks.***

So, with regards to disability, that is a bit of a generic term. The specifics were with regard to current members of staff with neuro disabilities such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD and associated conditions. And us being able to effectively communicate the changes to them to make sure that they understand as well as their colleagues do. So, we put in place a communication strategy to make sure that we got to every single member of out of our workforce.

#### General: other

***I would appreciate understanding the impact on service provision of specialist equipment and depth of cover for Ashdown Forest? The speed of development and recent history of fires on Ashdown will potentially be significantly be impacted by reduction in service to daytime and weekday, which are not our peak fire times. This leaves the environment at greater risk and properties, so scale and speed are important.***

The whole purpose of our proposed Operational Resilience Plan (proposal 1) is to ensure we have the right number of resources (for example fire engines and firefighters) to manage multiple incidents, protracted incidents and spate conditions. The proposals allow us to increase the minimum number of fire engines available from 15 to 18. In addition, the minimum of 6 resilience fire engines will also give us an additional ability to further support protracted incidents, support standby moves and to provide regular relief crews to on-going incidents.

***Is this the first Risk Management Plan? Also, if not what did the previous one achieve?***

We've done a number of them since the law changed from the Fire Services Act 1947. Back in 2004, that was repealed to the Fire and Rescue Services Act. And that's when the statutory duty for fire services to do an IRMP came in. And we're required to do them between every three and five years.

Additional information provided: If you refer to the following page, it has details of some of our previous IRMPs: <https://www.esfrs.org/about-us/publication-of-information/strategies-plans-and-performance-information/community-risk-analysis/integrated-risk-management-planning/>

***Is it possible to get a copy of the flexible rostering and group rostering policies/guidance documents?***

The actual policies, procedures and guidance documents are not being drawn up yet because this is part of the proposals to go out and consult with. So, once the proposals are agreed, the next phase of the project, that's when all the guidance documents, policies and procedures etc. will be drawn up, with staff feeding into the proposals and their development. So that will be part of the implementation plan if the proposals are agreed in September.

***It sounds as if employers are not being considered in this equation.***

Just to assure you, the employer (ESFA via ESFRS) complies with the legal duties to ensure sufficient transparent consultation on organisational Policy has been afforded. All ESFRS Policies drawn up by the employer require a minimum of 6 weeks staff consultation before acting on any suggested amendments or additions and submitting them to the sign-off committee chaired by our Deputy Chief Fire Officer with employee representatives.

***On 1/6 there was a fire near Heathfield, 1 of the vehicles attending was from Seaford which is miles away***

We regularly use available appliances from all areas of the county to deal with incidents, whether on initial callout, on requests for assistance by the incident commander or because they are specialist appliances. The Seaford vehicle you refer to was one of our 5 Land Rovers.

ESFRS wants to improve the availability across all our stations, however the ORP will specifically target the higher risk station areas to ensure we maintain a higher level of resilience for these higher risk areas. It is important to differentiate between the proposed ORP approach where we would plan to have at least 18 immediately available Fire Engines and the existing Core Stations Policy where we currently plan to start the day with 15.

The new approach does not focus on stations, it focuses on a more geographic spread which helps with reducing the need for unnecessary stand-by moves. Most (74%) of all calls are dealt with within 15 minutes where, at the moment, we move any number of Fire Engines to cover an area that doesn't necessarily warrant it.

**Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan (ORP)**

***How are you planning on improving at Heathfield?***

The ORP will target Heathfield as an appliance we want to improve availability to near 100%. The crewing pool will assist us in doing this.

***What contractual requirements do you require of on-call employees for your normal on-call model (5 minutes) and your 30 minutes model in terms of availability and remuneration?***

We are following the guidebook terms and conditions for on-call personnel. So, we currently don't have any variations to that approach other than the fact that we offer a whole, three-quarter unit and half unit status. And all eligible firefighters in an on-call role have to be within five minutes of a nearest fire station either working or living. However, we are proposing through the IRMP to introduce new contracts such as combined salary, and other enhancements.

***As you are struggling to recruit and retain Retained personnel how can you guarantee service?***

ESFRS is not alone in struggling for a number of years to recruit and retain on-call staff in the traditional manner. This is why this proposal has been put forward, because we do know that there are a number of services across the country that have made some changes that we would like to bring in because they are experiencing some real successes.

The ORP is very much focused on increasing the availability of the core on-call stations. We will continue to invest in those stations to keep their availability as high as possible. So, the range of options that we're proposing such as the crewing pool could be utilised to help keep the availability of these stations higher as well. And this is a complete package designed to improve the overall availability of all stations.

***How many staff have accepted this disruptive pooling suggestion?***

We strongly disagree with your interpretation of the flexible Crewing Pool as disruptive. Whilst Policy and ways of working remain a matter for consultation and negotiation with the employees' representatives, there would not be any reduction in remuneration, pension or leave allowances. Hours at work and responsibilities pertaining to each of their individual roles (rank) would also remain unchanged and their rota pattern would be mutually agreed in advance. In addition, transport from base to workplace will be provided.

It's a proposal at this time, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service have not brought in the crewing pool. However, we do know because we've done our research across the country that a number of other services have benefited for a number of years by having this additional level of access to other firefighters who can be sent to cover.

***How much will the new on-call contracts pay?***

The proposals to introduce new on-call contracts will not contain final details on payment until the Fire Authority decision on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. However, we have been considering a range of contracts that are available across the country, but it is not possible to disclose full payment terms at this point.

***Given the total number of engines is reduced (by 7??), how/why do the coverage percentages appear to increase?***

East Sussex has 24 fire stations and there are a mixture of wholetime and on-call stations. With wholetime stations we can guarantee the availability of those appliances by the way we roster our staff on duty. All the other on-call appliances such as Heathfield, Hailsham, we cannot guarantee 100% availability because we rely on the availability each station provides through their on-call staff. So, the ORP targets on-call stations that historically have not had 100% availability. The only one that did was Rye and it was treated as a core station, so we actively put resources there. For the ORP, there's going to be three more stations, Heathfield, Seaford and Hailsham that will be having a higher degree of availability. That is why our coverage will increase with the 18 appliances being available. Obviously, there are times a day when all 24 stations have all their classes available. But that is not always 100% of the time.

***If an incident occurs where a "30 minute" response pump is the geographical nearest resource is there a way of speeding up the response?***

The 30-minute response is to describe resilience crews where we can notify colleagues that they may be required to make up a relief crew.

If fire control receive any emergency call out, they'll do their immediate assessment as per normal. If it requires an immediate attendance, then the nearest and fastest appliances will be sent. Sometimes that may be one of these stations that's been identified as one of the six that has a resilience pump. If that pump is available but doesn't form part of the 18 that we definitely need to cover the most risky parts of the county, it will be sent first and foremost if it is the closest and the fastest. And the only time that 30 minutes or any kind of delay would come in is if there is a non-life threatening call that comes into a particular area where we know there's perhaps three people who are currently available, but we always need four to turn out a fire engine ... if we know that fourth person is going to be available because they finish work in, say, 20 minutes time, that's when we will allocate that resource to that particular incident, but only if it's a non-life threatening situation.

***You are confident, but the confidence is based on an assumption that the new contract will be effective in attracting and retaining staff. A big assumption.***

We disagree with your interpretation of the proposal as an assumption. The proposal is based on the research and analysis of how other Fire and Rescue Services, Police Services and Ambulance Services have benefitted from prioritising their calls and have managed them according to risk.

***Do you think the reason for your struggles to employ persons is because the police are recruiting as well? From having friends and family in both services it takes a special person to take on these roles and surely that limits the numbers applying to each service? Surely, it's not just down to wages!***

Our on-call colleagues are a valuable asset and we realise that lots of factors influence their decision to join the FRS is. They are paid a retaining fee at the moment and a call out fee for the incidents they attend, We think a salaried scheme may be more attractive to some and other FRS' have employed them successfully.

***The hours for on-call firefighters (on call nights and at weekends) are about as family-unfriendly as it's possible to be. So, I imagine that you will find it hard to recruit so many on-call staff.***

We have 235 on call colleagues and they do give up a lot for their local community. We think the contracts may be attractive to some, but our on-call staff can remain as they are if they don't want to move to the new contracts.

***This is a thoroughly misleading question. Of course, more engines are good. The problem is the lack of personnel to man them.***

***Have you considered implementing the new contracts before reducing the full-time staff?***

Please see the answer provided earlier.

## Proposals 2 (day-crewed to day-only) and 3 (changes to 2-engine stations)

***The main issue that I have had from constituents so far including firefighters at our station, is that we are losing a pump. Bearing in mind our station is practically brand new this seems to people to be a waste. Their worry is that a loss of an appliance on site will surely result in an overall delay in response. I appreciate people do not always read all the information available, but people are afraid.***

The proposal to withdraw 7 of our second appliances is based on the data we mentioned earlier from 9 years in the past, what we're doing now and what we can anticipate for the future including housing developments, demography, geography, road networks, business etc. Noting this, and that our modelling for the removal of P4s' was based on their 100% availability, there was a negligible impact across the Service.

***If there aren't crews at Uckfield at a weekend and response times are longer, wouldn't there be a risk to life at this point either if a fire or a vehicle accident on the roads? With ESFRS making these cuts and the cuts the paramedic teams and police are struggling with, surely this leaves someone in an incident at even a longer risk because you are all taking longer to get there to help?***

There will be crews at the weekend. It's just that they will be on-call. The difference between on-call and day crewed in terms of immediate response, at the weekend there's a potential for a 10-hour window, where on-call colleagues turn out to incidents. And the modelling that we've done has shown that actually there's very few critical incidents at the weekends. But the on-call crews will still be there, and they will still turn out, albeit it's a slightly longer turnout because they have get to the station and then turn out to the emergency incident.

***Forest Row is struggling to respond. Crowborough provides backup to Forest Row, but would not be able to assist with only one fire engine?***

Forest Row does have periods when they are not available, when this happens, we send the nearest resources to an incident in Forest Row. Sometimes this will be from Crowborough, but it could also come from other station areas. We also send the nearest and quickest appliance to an emergency call. The second appliance at Crowborough is not available 100% in a similar way to Forest Row.

***Does the 74% relate to incidents or callouts? Call out figures should be being used otherwise they give a false picture as a vehicle is being used whilst they are out on the road whether it ends up as a true incident or not. What about where there is a callout which is cancelled on the way to what is thought to be an incident? Also, with the standby movements it still means that the firefighters are having to respond elsewhere.***

Callouts and incidents are the same thing. 74% of our incidents are dealt with by one appliance within 15 minutes.

All incident data is used in our calculations and modelling. Standbys are not included as they are internal vehicle movements. When there is an emergency, control room staff will mobilise the nearest available resources to deal with the incident, supported by our mobilising IT systems. As part of this process, sometimes this will include a number of 'standby' movements. This is where other fire engines are mobilised, normally to other fire station areas, to ensure that there is an

optimum level of cover across the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service area at all times whilst an incident is being resolved in a specific area. These standby moves are essentially cover moves and are not in themselves a mobilisation to an emergency/incident.

***So, looking at this you are stating that you are cutting fire appliances. Am I correct on this?***

We are proposing to withdraw 7 but immediately relocate 2 of these. One to Eastbourne and one to Bohemia Road in Hastings. The impact has been modelled in consideration of past, present and future risk and there is little to no impact to life or response standards. One of these 7 attends about 13 calls a year. The time, equipment, maintenance and resources required to keep these available when we know we can provide at least the same response service with an improved prevention and protection team to reduce calls in the first place can only be a good thing.

***Some of my constituents are concerned that the data used for this is out of date and is actually not reflective of the second appliance's use. I have had feedback from people who work in the fire service who have suggested this is the case. What if it turns out that there was an increase in use for this past year? Or next year? Newhaven has a projected increase in population for the next decade. My constituents are concerned that this cover will not be sufficient.***

We're not using out of date data. The data that underpins the proposals in the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan used the most up to date data that we had when we commenced the analysis in January 2019. So, at that time, we extracted all available incident and mobilisation data that was stored in our incident recording system, dating back to April 2009. We weren't then in a position to be able to use data for the 2019 year or beyond because we were still in the year at that time, but using nine years' worth of data has enabled us as a Fire and Rescue Service to get a really informative trend to undertake really informative trend analysis.

Typically, data covering between three and five years is considered appropriate when identifying trends and assuring robustness of data. So, our approach to using up to nine years' worth is over and above the standard approach. And so, the proposals that that are in the draft IRMP are therefore built on a solid evidence base, and our strategic and long-term view. And so, this means, importantly, that they don't become redundant because the data doesn't include an additional years' worth of data. And now over that nine-year period, there has been ups and downs, peaks and troughs in terms of the incident numbers. But over the longer term, a more reliable trend can be identified, which moderates for any annual changes from year to year.

In addition to that, we have also undertaken a very comprehensive assessment of future growth. So, we've looked at what's happened historically, we've looked at the numbers of households and residents between the last two censuses and the growth between the last census in 2011 up until now. And then looking forward, we've done an assessment to take account of future growth and its impact. So, to summarise, using up to nine years' worth of data helps us to really get a good long-term view of where we need to go, it gives us a good direction of travel.

***If 74% are attended by one engine, that means 26% are attended by more than one. Surely this is still too a high percentage of requirement to consider the reduction unless the issue is with not being able to man the second engine.***

The attendance of two appliances at 26% incidents is a significant figure, however this figure is before we remove the non-critical incidents. A critical incident is an incident that involves a life risk, critical calls only account for only 5.2 % of total incidents. The key reason for the 26% is the use of pre-determined attendances, these are agreed in advance and specify the weight of attendance across a range of incidents. An example would be an automatic fire alarm call at a residential property, this would attract a two-pump attendance even though we know that 96% of AFA incidents turn out to be false alarms.

The next important factor to consider is the fact that the 26% of two appliance incidents will include responses from two different stations particularly in rural areas. In these cases, the quickest two appliances are sent one from each station due to the location of the incident determining a split attendance.

Only a small number of incidents occur where the home station sends two appliances to the same incident, these are mainly found in the City, Eastbourne and Hastings areas due to the higher risk profiles.

***This is misleading. What is your response to the fact that the Forest Row calls are supported 15% from Crowborough 83P4 and 6% from 83P1?***

The Station Risk Profile for Forest Row highlights the numbers of incidents that occur in its area, along with the numbers of mobilisations of each fire engine. The figures you have quoted above appear to be incorrect.

On page 27, we state that 69% of incidents within the Forest Row station area were attended by a single fire engine over a five-year period (April 2013 – March 2018). For the remaining 31% of occasions where there was a second fire engine, Crowborough's main fire engine (FJE83P1) was the second fire engine on 14% of occasions. Crowborough's second fire engine (FJE83P4) to which you allude in your question was the second fire engine on just 2% of occasions.

There are, on average, 74 incidents per year within Forest Row station area.

***If the quickest response - Crowborough is no longer available, what happens in Forest Row? Wrong - 14% is correct***

We disagree with your interpretation of the data. There are many and varied factors that may affect which appliance is available at the time of the call. From page 27 of the Forest Row station profile, we know that if there is an incident in Forest Row station area that requires a second fire engine, this is provided by an over-border fire engine on 35% of occasions and, in fact, on 22% of occasions, Forest Row itself is the second-arriving fire engine. Crowborough's main fire engine is the second fire engine on 14% of occasions and this is likely to remain the same going forward. However, the proposal to remove the second fire engine at Crowborough (FJE83P4) will have a small impact. If you refer to the Crowborough Station Risk Profile, the table on page 34 demonstrates that the

Crowborough's second fire engine mobilises to, on average, 2 incidents per year in Forest Row (of which <1 are critical incidents).

***Can we have an apology for incorrect information given?***

Thank you for your questions and comments around the data. I would strongly encourage you to submit a detailed response which brings together all of your comments in that regard to be included in the consultation feedback.

As an on-call station, sometimes availability drops, and the engine is not available at Forest Row. So, when that happens, depending on the location of a call we will send the next nearest appliance. Sometimes that will be from Crowborough, sometimes that'll be from neighbouring stations. So, who goes depends on where the actual call comes from. And so, I don't believe that's misleading; it's just down to how things actually happen based on the address of the incident.

Just to add to that looking at the Forest Row station profile, when there was a requirement for a second fire engine to attend, it was Uckfield's main fire engine that attended on 15% of occasions. Crowborough's second fire engine attended in Forest Row as the second appliance 2% of the time, not 15.

In addition to the response (above) we gave in real-time, we don't believe we gave any incorrect information and sought to square some of your own figures which did not match those in the station-risk profiles whilst in a fast-paced Q&A session. However, in hindsight we recognise there may have been different ways of handling the many questions coming and this is something we will take on board. As explained in the stakeholder webinar, this was the first time that both Opinion Research Services and East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service had conducted a stakeholder groups via an online webinar.

***This was a question I received from a constituent: The service has stated that there will be a delay to the second appliance but have only stated this will take 'slightly' longer.' Exactly how long would this be for any given area in Newhaven and Peacehaven's area and at the busiest times of the day? Thanks in advance***

It is actually a very complicated question because it depends on so many aspects. So, if we took Newhaven, the impact on the second appliance is dependent on what appliances are available. So, at the moment, Newhaven has got two fire engines. And the second fire engine is not a wholtime fire engine it is an on-call fire engine, so it's not 100% available. So, when it's not available, we have to send another second appliance into Newhaven anyway. Now the other issue we've got is, where the call is in the Newhaven area will depend on which two appliances attend. So normally as you would expect, one appliance will always pretty much attend from Newhaven. But the second appliance may come from a bordering fire station into Newhaven ... So, the actual time it takes for a second appliance to arrive at a call in Newhaven will be dependent upon where that call is and what time of day it is. But we do appreciate if we remove it, then there will be more dependency on other stations to come in. But as we've already mentioned, that happens quite regularly already because the availability is not 100%.

***Can you give me a definition for how long 'slightly longer' would be and how much impact 'negligible impact' would be? What was this data based on as the definition of slightly and negligible would vary between different people?***

East Sussex Fire Authority have a statutory duty to balance risk with a resourcing plan and, in executing those duties, we need to factor in a number of issues to ensure that we can always mobilise the nearest/quickest available crew, fire engine(s) and other resources required to respond to an incident.

There are three main reasons why we haven't provided figures on the additional time that it might take for a fire engine to arrive, which are outlined below.

### **1. Large variability in timings due to wide array of factors**

Resources may come from your local fire engine/ station, but not always and that's for a variety of reasons:-

It may be that the local fire engine is not the most appropriate resource to send because different or specialist equipment is needed

The local crew may already be at a different incident, or on standby at another fire station;

The local crew may be out conducting a home safety visit or undertaking some business safety activity in a different part of their station area;

The local fire engine may be unavailable because of training or for mechanical reasons;

There may be significant congestion or roadblocks/diversions which would mean the local fire engine would not be the quickest resource;

Sometimes the local station is not available due to staffing issues.

Therefore, we need a plan to ensure that we have resilience and ensure the correct resources, sometimes from neighbouring fire stations and, on occasions, a neighbouring fire and rescue service to ensure that we achieve our agreed response times.

Given the wide range of factors that impact on our response, it would be inappropriate to place a hard figure on how much longer it would take for a particular fire engine to arrive at an incident as there are so many variables that already affect the attendance time of our fire engines, so we instead plan by taking a wider view of risk and available resources. This is clearly demonstrated in the fire station risk profiles which shows the actual distribution of our attendance times – these can be found on our consultation page [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture) and an example is provided in Appendix A.

### **2. Perception of risk vs actual risk**

The important thing to understand is that the perception and fear of risk is different to reality. It is therefore important to look at the facts, data and the robust analysis which has been undertaken and sits behind these proposals. For example, our analysis shows that 95% of our incidents have no life-risk associated with them. Furthermore, out of the 528 accidental dwelling fires we attend per year:

Almost 90% result in no form of injury.

For those that do, less than half (approximately 46%) are classed as serious or slight injuries, equating to around 26 incidents per year

0.4% of accidental dwelling fires result in a fatal injury.

Another thing to bear in mind is that, over the last 20 years in the UK the number of dwelling fires has been reducing, partly due to more modern and safer electrical devices, but also because of the other two elements of our statutory duty – prevention and protection:

Our prevention activity helps educate people to reduce the risk of fires occurring in the first place and when people are vulnerable, we must ensure we continue to work alongside partners in health and social care to identify and reach these individuals before they have a life-threatening emergency - prevention is better than cure.

Our duty for protection and building safety means we regulate buildings that have higher fire risk. In all elements of our work we will continue to proactively target areas where community risk is higher, and we can evidence that this balanced approach helps ensure risk is reduced and mitigated.

### **3. Response times are part of a larger collection of factors that affect community risk**

Whilst we agree that a quick response with the appropriate resource can reduce the risk to life, we are aware that our response time is just one of a number of factors that contribute to community risk.

We have previously stated that our modelling indicates that there will be no material impact on community risk and our current attendance standards with these proposals. Our robust modelling process considers a range of factors to determine the overall community risk impact including the number of dwellings and residents in each local area, the socio-demographic profile of the area, a historical analysis of what has happened in the area over a number of years, as well as the average response time for both the first and second arriving fire engines.

The predicted fatalities, serious and slight injuries are calculated using algorithms defined by comprehensive national research, which also feature as the underlying risk calculations within the government's Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) toolkit. Full details can be found in our risk assessment methodology on our consultation page [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture).

#### **Summary**

In summary, the proposal to move to a day only duty system or the removal of the second fire engines at some stations would only affect the response time for a small number of incidents, which was highlighted in the Fire Authority Paper considered on the 23rd April 2020 and which can be found on our consultation page [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture). Appendix B illustrates this.

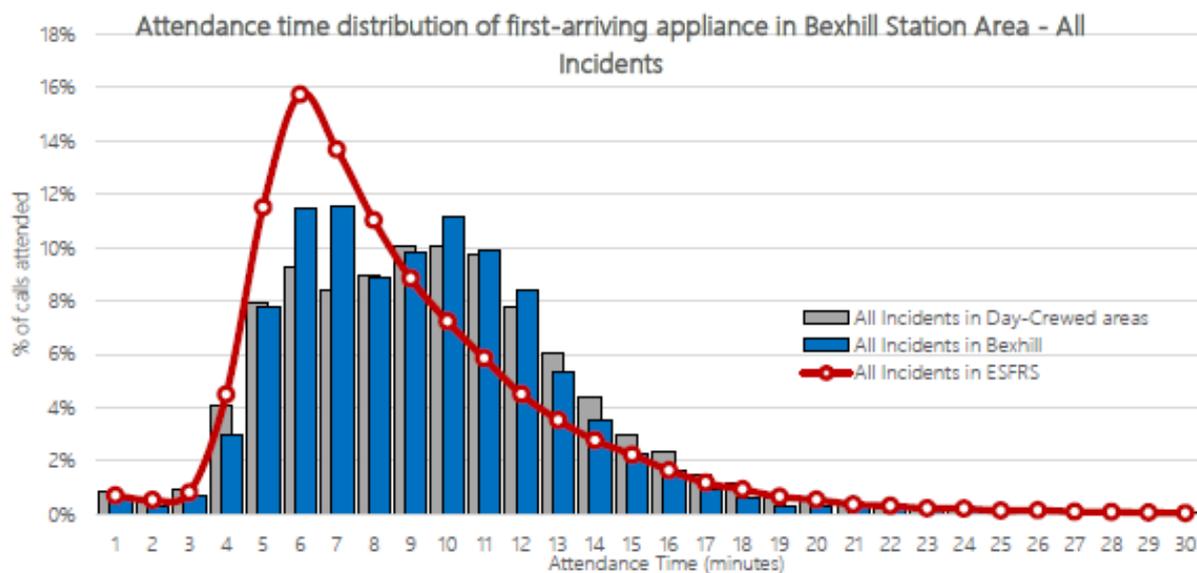
The work that has been done to reach these proposals and the methodology used is robust and the duty we have as a public service to ensure that the Fire Authority have an integrated plan for management of risk and use of resources is not only open to public scrutiny, but will also be judged

by the independent inspectorate – HMICFRS against the guidance set out in the Fire and Rescue Services legislation and the underpinning national framework and guidance documents.

**Appendix A**

Example of an attendance time distribution curve – taken from Bexhill Fire Station Risk Profile.

The chart below depicts the distribution of attendance times for incidents in the Bexhill area, ranging from 0 to 30 minutes. This demonstrates the difficulty in providing a hard figure for the ‘increased attendance time’ due to some of the proposed changes in the IRMP, as the chart clearly shows there are many factors which already affect the response times of our fire engines.



We can also see in the table below that the primary fire engine based at Bexhill attended 67% of all incidents within 10 minutes and 95% of all incidents within 15 minutes.

Incidents attended within X minutes by FJE73P1 where first-arriving appliance (Apr 2013 – Mar 2018)

Performance of FJE73P1 as first arriving appliance	< 5 mins	< 8 mins	< 10 mins	< 13 mins	< 15 mins	< 20 mins	Total Incidents
All Incidents	304 (13%)	1074 (46%)	1548 (67%)	2084 (90%)	2212 (95%)	2286 (98%)	2,323
Critical Incidents	15 (14%)	65 (59%)	82 (74%)	105 (95%)	109 (98%)	109 (98%)	111

It is likely, therefore, that the small number of incidents affected by the proposal to move to a day only duty system will not significantly alter the attendance time distribution curve, nor on our attendance standards.

The 24 fire station risk profiles and main operational response review report can be found on our consultation page [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture).

**Appendix B**

The table below shows the average number of incidents per year that would potentially receive a longer response time and it can be seen that there are very few critical incidents which may be impacted with a longer response time. The table below also shows the attendance times of each

day crewed fire engine over 5 years (April 2013 - March 2018). Given the small number of 'daytime' weekend incidents, along with the small number of calls made by some of our second fire engines, our modelling suggests there will be no material impact on our attendance standards and negligible impact on community risk.

Please refer to the individual fire station risk profiles for further details including data around the average time difference between the first and second fire engines arriving, found on our consultation page at [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture)

Home station of appliance	Appliance	Ave. Mobilisations to Incidents per Year (2013-18)	% < 5 mins	% < 8 mins	% < 10 mins	% < 13 mins	% < 15 mins	% < 20 mins	'Day time' weekend mobilisations	Critical incidents	Home station of appliance	Appliance	No. of Mobilisations in (2017/18)	Critical Incidents
Battle	FJE72P1	243	13%	34%	49%	71%	81%	95%	32	4	Battle	FJE72P1	13	1
Bexhill	FJE73P1	557	13%	46%	67%	90%	95%	98%	84	7	Bexhill	FJE73P1	70	9
Crowborough	FJE83P1	290	15%	38%	55%	76%	84%	94%	47	4	Crowborough	FJE83P1	54	11
Lewes	FJE89P1	410	15%	39%	56%	79%	89%	97%	58	9	Lewes	FJE89P1	51	7
Newhaven	FJE87P1	423	13%	37%	60%	85%	93%	98%	61	6	Newhaven	FJE87P1	61	8
Uckfield	FJE84P1	332	12%	30%	47%	69%	81%	94%	54	6	Uckfield	FJE84P1	39	6
											Rye	FJE70P4	28	1

***Can I sum up for you Paul? Times cannot be guaranteed because staffing levels are under pressure, and no viable solution to this has been proposed by ESFRS.***

Proposal 4: crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings

***It's a shame that Proposal 4 isn't in two parts as I would agree with the increase to two vehicles at one site but not a reduced service at the other site.***

Proposal 6: demand management (AFAs)

***How will operators be notified that the fire service will no longer automatically attend if there is an automated fire alarm call out?***

If the proposal is agreed, we will work with the premises we have identified and let them know the new procedure.

If the Fire Authority agrees to us not going to this type of call outs, the service will be employing a project manager to work out all the details and how we liaise with all the businesses to make sure that everybody's aware of the new process and the new procedures.

And just to say that we've got some call challenge procedures in place at the moment, which we've had in place for quite some time. So call operators, on receipt of a call, they go through a set process to identify whether the service needs to attend immediately or otherwise ... to ask whether the reason for the alarm going off has been checked, what systems they've got in place to ensure that someone's checked as to why the alarm has gone off, and things like that. If at that time there's no reason to call the fire service out, then the call will be ended. However, if there is then obviously, they're informed and requested to call dial 999 immediately if they find a fire.

***If an AFA takes place, how would you then ascertain if an appliance was required?***

The responsibility for maintaining commercial/ industrial fire safety lies with the responsible person. The FRS has robust call challenge systems to assess whether we need to attend immediately or otherwise.

***As a general comment, larger fines for false alarms might be better rather than to ignore it.***

We are also reviewing whether, at some point in the future, we should charge a fee for attending unwanted fire signals in some other premises types, in some circumstances. If the Fire Authority are minded to consider such an approach, this would be subject to a separate public consultation in due course.

***So, if the alarm goes off at night, would you attend or wait for 'positive confirmation'?***

In most cases, we would still be attending AFA activations at night. However, the proposal states that we will be increasing our levels of call-challenge therefore repeat offenders may receive changes to the pre-determined attendance. We will have an AFA Reduction Manager, who will work with the premises to lower the amount of false alarms. If this is not successful, then ultimately, we decide not to attend until a positive confirmation is received.

**Proposal 6: demand management (trapped birds)**

***I understand from local firefighters that animal rescues are normally only attended if/when a wildlife charity has requested FRS attendance because other people cannot reach it. If the FRS don't attend, what is the risk to people attempting to rescue the animals themselves without proper equipment?***

It is correct that our policy requires involvement of RSPCA and/or other wildlife charities before we attend. However, in a significant amount of animal rescue calls, no third party is in attendance when the call is made to the fire service. We are unable to comment on the actions of people that choose to carry out their own animal rescues, but we would attend an incident if there is a life-risk involved. Please note, this proposal is only related to birds trapped in netting, of which we have around 80 per year.

**Home and building inspections*****These sound like chargeable services ... Protection & Prevention?***

We do not charge for prevention services. That's a free service that we provide to the public. It's a key priority of ours to provide home safety visits to all the premises that require them to reduce the occurrence of fires. With regard to protection, some aspects are chargeable. But that's very small amounts of it. And again, protection is more an enforcement role for the fire service. However, we do have the primary priority scheme, which is a scheme that we've put in place that does enable us to make a charge for some services we provide around protection. And if you want further information on that, that is available on our internet website.

***Isn't this just about cutting the front line to increase prevention and protection? These proposals will fundamentally affect the North Wealden safety***

Our proposals are to make sure our resources are better matched to risk. The call numbers and risk profiles in comparison with our FRS family group (similar group of 12 UK FRS's) demonstrate the proposals are proportionate and appropriate. We have never produced such a rich and robust assessment of fire and rescue related risk and these proposals will place us in a good position to deal with incidents now and for the future, and, to invest into prevention and protection to stop the incidents from happening in the first place.

Our Operational Response Review has taken 18 months of hard work for a team of dedicated individuals to gather an enormous amount of information based upon nine years' worth of historical data and plan for the future, looking into all of the foreseeable risks that we could possibly be faced with. As a result, we've been able to do a really robust risk assessment which has stood up to scrutiny by the National Fire Chief's Council. They've acknowledged we've used best practice, and that has enabled us to stand by proposals to say that they are proportionate and appropriate, and they'll deal with the risk that we have identified not just now but for the future. And that will enable us to not only cover our emergency response, which is of course really important, but also the prevention and protection activities that stop incidents happening in the first place. The proposals will release a number of posts back into the service so that we can reinvest them into those really, really important areas of prevention and protection. That's the aim of this. It's not about financial cuts. Notwithstanding that, like every local authority, we do have a challenge with regards to working within our cost envelope. In addition to that, fire services are funded on an annual basis, and it's very difficult to try and plan effectively further than that. So again, our proposals not only improve an enormous amount of operational cover, we also improve the prevention and protection side of the business, as well as working within our financial boundaries.

***How does money that is switched from front line to admin help safety? Ultimately, when we dial 999, we expect a fire engine, not a man with a clipboard to advise how we could have avoided the call.***

The proposals are a balance of prevention protection and response. The fire service has been very successful in reducing incidents over the last decade. Our incidents have reduced by 40% in 10 years. We work hard from preventing incidents from happening in the first place, but when you call 999 in an emergency you will get a fire engine responding

When we receive an emergency call, we would continue to send the correct pre-determined attendance from the nearest and quickest station. We would never send one of our firefighters with a clipboard to deal with an emergency incident.

***On this question, I responded that I tend to agree with increasing inspections etc, but that should not be read to mean that I agree with cuts in front-line services to fund.***

It is vital for the community and our valued stakeholders to recognise that front-line services includes the Firefighters, Crew Managers, Watch Managers, Station Managers and their professional equivalents who work in the Prevention and Protection teams which is a statutory duty. In many respects, these valued colleagues are more front line than their equally valued colleagues

who respond to emergencies when something has gone wrong. It is the responsibility of all our staff to prevent and protect first to improve safety, reduce emergencies and harm.

***Another unreasonable question. If the base data was not flawed, the answer would be 'agree', but this is a PR BBC-style question. You demean yourselves.***

We would welcome the opportunity to hear how your empirical data and analysis contradicts ours for the benefit of the Community of East Sussex and City of Brighton and Hove.

***Another loaded question. 'Yes' is the answer but not at the cost of front-line services.***

Please note the previous comment above. The proposals include the reinvestment of posts into prevention and protection work.

ESFRS' finances into the future

***Because of the recent grants you have received due to Covid-19 will you not need to make so many cuts?***

We have received a certain amount of money from the government around COVID-19, but that money is actually ring-fenced to undertake whatever extra work we've had to carry out because of the pandemic. So that grant money is a one-off; once we've spent it on additional resources or people to help us out with some of the work that we've had to undertake, then that money is gone. It's not something that would be in our base budget year after year after year ... we can't use that in terms of what our future budget is and what our future projected savings or improvements and efficiencies need to be.

***Since the shortfall has been caused by the reduction in central government grants, why isn't increased central government funding being considered as another option? As a Councillor, I would certainly support any lobbying of central government for proper funding of such a critical service.***

Because Central Government Grant funding is consistently reducing. Despite this, our proposals make some considerable improvements in frontline service delivery (prevention, protection, response) all based on risk where very few others have.

Our Fire Authority and Chief do lobby central government, as do the National Fire Chiefs Council, in terms of the central grant. But we are, as a local authority, bound by what central government allow us to raise Council Tax by and what their settlement figure is. This is why we've come up with a suite of proposals which we think balances our prevention, protection and response based on the information and the findings from the Operational Response Review, and gives us some flexibility in terms of what the financial position and the situation will be over the next five years.

It will also be improvements that we'd like to make in terms of efficient efficiencies to the Service. So, we might not have to take the savings, we can reinvest that money in certain areas as well. So, the IRMP proposals at the moment set a range of options for the Fire Authority to consider in terms of how we might need to tackle the financial constraints that we find ourselves under. If the picture changes, then we can we can reinvest that money and those posts to improve the other services in prevention and protection and response.

We know that already because of the outcome of the Grenfell inquiry that the Inspectorate has a view on how Fire and Rescue Services are run. They've said across the board that actually more investment needs to be put into the prevention and protection arm of the service.

***Why not use the £17m non-essential costs to fund the prevention?***

The proposed IRMP is based on a comprehensive assessment of risk across the communities of East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove and, if approved, will improve the effectiveness of our prevention, protection and response services. The proposals primarily focus on the reallocation of resources across the Service in line with that risk assessment.

There is significant uncertainty about our future funding (in common with many public sector bodies). The Authority currently has a one-year funding settlement from central Government for 2020/21. Beyond that the Government has made no commitment – it was planning to carry out a comprehensive review of fire funding for the next 3-4 years in 2021/22 but Covid-19 is likely to delay this.

This makes financial planning for the Authority's future extremely difficult. The Authority included three funding scenarios in its Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2020/21 – 2024/25 giving potential savings requirements over the next five years of between £0.7m and £3.6m. The IRMP proposals could provide efficiencies of between £1.7m - £2.4m. The extent to which the Authority may need to realise these as savings or could use them to reinvest in the Service or reduce the planned level of future council tax increases is dependent on the Government providing certainty on our future funding.

The Authority is continuing to explore the potential for further savings to meet the identified target by 2024/25 through the activities set out in the Efficiency Strategy which detailed in the IRMP document.

The Authority has already made over £9m of savings between 2010/11 and 2019/20 and these have been made across the whole service not just from the operational frontline. The savings proposals for 2020/21 – 2024/25 currently stand at £0.651m, none of which relate to operational services, being primarily a combination of procurement savings and other efficiencies in our support services.

The reality is that given the Authority spends 76% of its gross revenue budget on its employees and the vast majority of them are operational, then to make the level of savings required to balance the Authority's budget over the last 10 years and in the future then reductions in operational posts have been / will be unavoidable.

The Service has reduced its number of senior managers – since 2012/13 it has removed two non-uniformed Principal Officer / Brigade Manager posts reducing the total from five to three (all now uniformed) and it has also reduced the number of Assistant Directors from six to five of which three are uniformed.

A significant proportion of the savings that have been required during the current IRMP have been from Corporate and professional services. It is clear, going forward, that savings in those areas alone will not be sufficient for the Fire Authority to balance the budget in the future.

**How do you justify £4.9m for Corporate costs?**

70% of our budget is actually on operational staff costs and wages. Like any organisation we do have a back-office function ... we have engineering, we have estates, we have payroll, we have equipment ... we have fire stations to maintain. So, there's a whole suite of costs that are attributed to the corporate centre. And we couldn't provide a frontline service if there wasn't a number of additional costs within our budget.

**Questions submitted post-webinar**

General: Covid-19

**Why no review of IRMP due to impact of Covid?**

Answered earlier.

Proposal 2 (day-crewed to day-only) and 3 (changes to 2-engine stations)

**If IRMP is based on risk, where is the reduced risk of crews taking longer to get to incidents just because it is a weekend?**

The ORR is the most comprehensive risk assessment carried out by ESFRS; it has considered data over a 9-year period. The use of risk assessment tools such as FSEC and extensive modelling of proposals has underlined the level of risk introduced by the proposals. The overall benefit from introducing improvements from the ORP, demand management, Hastings second appliance and the on-call enhancements improving availability levels will reduce overall risk levels across the service. Finally, the balancing of Response resources with greater resources in Prevention and Protection will reduce future risks levels.

**A slide says about taking slightly longer to get to incidents due to day-only crews and reduced number of pumps at some RDS stations. How long is slightly longer and what is the impact of that?**

Please see earlier answer.

Proposal 5: aerial appliances

**How is it a dedicated appliance at Eastbourne and Hastings if it is shared with the aerial crew?**

This is about the balance of call numbers in a higher risk area and us taking a balanced view based upon risk as to what the most appropriate provision to deal with that risk is. So, our risk analysis showed that we needed to improve the immediate response provision in the Hastings area. And as a result, we want to put an additional frontline fire engine into Bohemia Road.

The number of calls that the current primary crewed aerial appliance at Bohemia Road attends is roughly 50% fewer than its sister appliance and crew at Brighton Preston Circus. Based upon that and the fact that the calls predominantly require frontline fire engines to attend, the balance of risk is proportionate, and we have made sure that all three of those appliances, the two frontline appliances and the aerial, remain available. In the event that all three appliances are required for the same incident, shared crewing will be used ... if the Fire Authority decided to go ahead.

What would happen is all three appliances could still turn out to the same incident. The crew from the second appliance would split two and two, and all three appliances would attend that incident. What this means is that aerial appliances aren't traditionally the first vehicles that we need to get to something like a fire, we need crews to do that wearing breathing apparatus... Having the aerial appliance there at the very early stage enables us when other appliances turn up to redistribute the people who are on scene and get the aerial working. If we don't do that, we know that through past experience trying to get a very large aerial vehicle in after multiple fire engines have attended, perhaps in a busy residential street, is almost impossible.

So, there are a number of key operational opportunities that we see will be beneficial doing it this way. It's almost like having a cake and eating it by making sure that we get the right number of people there with the right number of appliances at the right time.

#### ESFRS' finances into the future

***Why are efficiency savings all made at the operational end, which the fire service inspectorate reported were of a good standard, and not including other areas of the service?***

Please see earlier answer.

#### Comments submitted post-webinar

***The reduction in fire engines in Newhaven and the resultant cover being reliant on the Seaford Station. The swing bridge at Newhaven is expected to have more openings in the near future, as there is a new tarmac plant that is soon to open on the North Quay – receiving materials by boat. If the bridge is open when the Seaford engine is required to cover west of the bridge, there would be a minimum delay of 10mins., whilst the bridge is open and a further delay through traffic jams caused as a result. This is even more an issue at peak times.***

***It is impractical and dangerous, to rely on the cover for Newhaven, by a station or stations separated by the navigable river and its associated swing bridge on the A259 at Newhaven.***

The swing bridge at Newhaven has been considered when undertaking our risk analysis and is representative of many locations, permanent or otherwise which have an impact on our response times. Naturally, this response-time impact is inherent within the 9 years of fire appliance mobilisation data that we have analysed, and which is summarised in the individual station risk profiles.

However, it is important to note that the numbers of instances where the bridge has had to open has steadily decreased over the years. The shipping numbers requiring the opening of the swing bridge have steadily decreased by 83%, from 853 in 2004 to 141 in 2019.

The new developments (including Conway's and Tarmac) north of the bridge include a potential maximum of 96 bridge closures per year which is the current situation/ phase of Port development. Bridge average opening time is 10-15 minutes maximum.

Even with this increase in bridge closures, this is still lower than the number of closures at the beginning of our review period. However, these will continue to be monitored and reviewed if the Fire Authority agree the proposals in September.

*The consultation is entitled "Planning for a Safer Future - East Sussex Fire Authority" and is well supported by a wide range of documents. It is based on a risk management assessment which includes an organisational evaluation of front-line resourcing and response to events. I found the amount of information was extensive and easily accessible, however I did have some concerns as to transparency and the language used for the public's understanding.*

*I would also note that for an exercise aimed at addressing infrastructure and front line resourcing the discussion was overly almost exclusively around personnel and freeing up people to become more flexible. As an organisation, tasked with dealing with a wide range of situations and requiring a wide range of solutions, the tools and systems needed are wide and varied, including IT support, communications, training, mechanics and HR. I believe that very little of these were considered or presented. Also, little time was given to the skill sets that individuals acquire and how they fit in to a team and resourcing into other teams should dynamic responses be required into out of area events.*

*So, asking, as a part of a consultation, for people to give a vote of confidence mostly based on a perception of what can be seen at the front end and yet not be able to feedback on to after an event. There seems also to be no public feedback after an event; there is no tradition of the public being engaged in the "lessons learned".*

*In all the discussion no thoughts seem to be based upon improving Prevention with improving engagement with the community, such as redeploying staff.*

ESFRS is required by the National Fire Service Framework to complete an integrated risk management plan every 3 to 5 years, this is in addition to providing annual business plans for Prevention, Protection, Training and several other key strategy documents. We have a range of strategies published on our website covering areas such as IT, HR, Estates, Engineering, Workforce planning and financial planning. The areas you raise in your question are fully covered in these long-term documents.

The purpose of the IRMP is to address the balance between Response, Protection and Prevention. In addition, we have to consult the public and stakeholders on any changes to response provision that could impact on public risk.

# Appendix 2: summaries of detailed or ‘representative’ submissions

## Staff groups and staff members

### Brighton Fire Station (Blue Watch)

‘Blue Brighton’ Staff raise the following points and questions:

The IRMP presentation contains significant inaccuracies, inconsistencies and misleading statements;

The consultation should not have been undertaken during lockdown as *“this will lead to a very small level of engagement with the public and a total lack of opportunity for questions and challenges to be heard and answered”*;

Does the call analysis that the process is based on take account of how frequently ESFRS goes across border?

The process is based on ‘projected budgets’ but uses 18-month-old data and so does not take into account the extra work that being undertaken supporting SECAMB or other additional work-streams being negotiated;

Eastbourne is said to have a dedicated ALP as a bonus of the proposals, but it is not a dedicated appliance if it is not primary crewed;

The proposed changes to crewing models *“do not leave enough firefighters for our own task analysis”*, which states that for a single occupancy domestic house fire with one casualty needing rescue via internal stairs, 11 Firefighters are required as a minimum. Moreover, with the additional resources coming from further afield due to the removal of many second appliances, this will place even more moral pressure on officers in charge to rapid deploy in the early stages of an incident;

ESFRS is sixth in the country for high-rise buildings therefore demand for lift rescues is high;

In the event of The Ridge becoming a day crewed station, dynamic mobilising would likely initially mobilise from Bohemia Road during the evening and on weekends, which would have an impact on ALP cover in Hastings;

Where are the risk assessments on how the proposed changes impact firefighter safety – and with such significant changes being proposed, why has there not been an Officer and Green book review to reflect changes?

### Crowborough Fire Station (Red Watch)

Staff at Crowborough Fire Station have produced a detailed PowerPoint presentation which has been made available to the Fire Authority. The following key points were raised in relation to the proposals.

#### Proposal 2: Changes to day-crewed duty stations

Day crewed firefighters are more part of the community and are passionate and committed;

Attendance times on evenings and weekends will be further increased at Crowborough due to the location of wholetime personnel;

It is difficult to recruit on-call staff and the five-minute attendance time has been stretched in some areas, meaning extra road risk;

There would be no guaranteed evening and weekend cover, with a heavy reliance on new contracts and recruitment strategies;

The north of the county is a unique area and very isolated – and it is a large area to be covered;

There may be issues with special appliance availability on evenings and weekends, and with training in their operation; and

There is a great deal of development planned for Crowborough over the next three years.

#### Proposal 3a: Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines

There will be long waits for second appliances;

Unlike the coastal stations, there is no wholtime support nearby; and

With turnout times increasing, *“this is severely reducing the ability to provide the public with definitive care within the golden hour”*.

#### People

The proposals will result in demotivated staff, and anxieties around their impacts on individuals and families. Moreover, it is said they will result in a *“less effective service for residents of Crowborough”*.

#### Swift Water Team, Crowborough Fire Station

The author of this submission strongly disagrees with the decision to remove a swift water rescue asset from ESFRS and with the statement that ‘the data and analysis so far have demonstrated that we no longer need to maintain a swift water rescue team in its current guise...’ They provide a great deal of evidence (which has been provided to the Fire Authority) to support their claim that the team has been mobilised on significantly more occasions than referenced in the IRMP and is thus an important resource to be maintained.

#### Recommendations

Currently, the swift water team’s full strength is set at 24 to ensure sufficient resilience to provide relief crews when required. It is recommended to/for:

Split the existing team into two smaller teams of 12+ with one based at Crowborough and one based on the coast (Lewes);

Split the two existing sets of kit between the two sites, one set stowed on the swift water rescue van (once fitted with radio and MDT) and the second set on the technical rescue unit based at Lewes;

Current swift water rescue instructors to train new team members in-house to level 3 technician standards;

Assign a single call sign and response vehicle to mobilise across the county for simplicity; and

Allow instructors to review and re-write water rescue risk assessments and manual notes to agree on better ways to utilise resources within East Sussex.

This plan, it is said, would:

Offer reduced basic training costs (utilising the competent crew at Crowborough) and reduced costs in training new team members in Lewes by doing so in-house;

Build resilience across the service.

Enable crews based at Crowborough to support, train and maintain the competence of Animal Rescue Operatives; and

Maintain the wealth of knowledge and experience built up by instructors and technicians over 10 years.

#### Other observations

Finally, the submission notes that:

ESFRS has reduced the calls it attends and resources it sends to incidents to an all-time low and would not be able to reduce further without detriment to firefighters and the public;

There is major growth across the county and its population is increasing, but infrastructure is not keeping pace;

Severe weather events peaked in 2019 with 21 swift water rescue team mobilisations, and already in 2020, the team has been mobilised 10 times; and

ESFRS should be proud to provide the swift water rescue team as a national asset and it should be re-registered as so.

#### Wadhurst Fire Station

Staff at Wadhurst Fire Station have produced a detailed PowerPoint presentation which has been made available to the Fire Authority. The following key points were raised in relation to the proposals.

The Wadhurst Land Rover is in the right place to serve Wadhurst and the rest of the county (it sits close to the A21, A26 and A22 and so can support incidents in its area, Ashdown Forest, Hastings, Eastbourne and Brighton) - and its calls are increasing, not decreasing;

Wadhurst already has the infrastructure in place i.e. two bays;

Climate change will put more pressure on ESFRS and Wadhurst has an experienced wildfire/forest firefighting team and has been used for incidents in the snow and flooding response; and

Keeping a two-vehicle response at Wadhurst improves public and fire firefighter safety - and allows the Service to have a wider range of options when deploying the station's primary appliance as a standby or relief pump.

#### Individual staff member (1)

In addition to reiterating many of the points made in the FBU submission (summarised later in this chapter), one individual staff member makes the following observations in their detailed response.

##### Proposal 3a: Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines

The respondent says that *“the significance of cutting seven [second] fire engines and the loss of cover and resilience these appliances provide to East Sussex residents should not be underestimated”* and that *“whilst these ... fire engines may attend some of the fewest numbers of incidents, these figures alone do not tell the whole story”*. The reasoning for this is that whenever these resources are available, residents in these towns get a faster two pump attendance and fire cover within five minutes if the primary appliance is unavailable. Furthermore, ESFRS is not required to make a standby move, thus maintaining cover on other station grounds that would otherwise be negatively impacted by a standby mobilisation.

### Proposal 3b: Re-classifying the three 'maxi-cab' stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations

The respondent cites a recent decision to replace the three maxi-cabs with two pumps at each station. They find it *"difficult to understand"* why, with no new data, a proposal has been put forward to downgrade these stations to single pump status – and suggest that *"further interrogation of this proposition is required to understand the evidence base for this proposal"*.

### Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings

Introducing a second appliance at Bohemia Road is *"a welcome proposal"*, but not when considered in tandem with reduced cover at Battle and Bexhill (who attend 10% of their incidents in Hastings), and changing The Ridge from wholetime to day crewed. Moreover, this second appliance would be dual crewed with the ALP, meaning that *"any incident requiring aerial cover would effectively reduce the immediate response available in Hastings to one fire engine. To make use of both fire engines, an aerial response would have to be provided by either Eastbourne or Brighton"*. The respondent feels that *"a slower response from surrounding stations at night-time and the weekend, an increased reliance on Bohemia Road to cover a much larger area, and the dual crewing of the second pump with an aerial does not represent an improvement in fire cover for Hastings"*.

The respondent suggests that a *"much more detailed examination of Hastings resourcing should be undertaken before any decision is made to reduce cover by dual crewing the aerial at Bohemia Road"* because this appliance is busier than that at Eastbourne – and there will be less support available from neighbouring stations if the changes to day crewing go ahead, changes that *"would put significant pressure on the two Bohemia Road appliances, especially at night and over the weekend"*.

### Proposal 5: Changes to providing and crewing specialist vehicles, including aerial appliances

In addition to the comments made in relation to Hastings above, the respondent welcomes that ESFRS modelling supports the retention of three aerial ladder platforms in the county and that the Combined Rescue and Aerial Platform (ARP) will be replaced with a dedicated ALP and Extended Rescue Tender. However, they say that while the IRMP implies Eastbourne will be given an additional resource, this is not the case because *"Eastbourne currently has two fire appliances, one of which can be used as either a fire engine or an aerial. Replacing one combination vehicle with two vehicles that will perform the same functions with the same number of crew is not an increase in resourcing"*.

The respondent notes that Seaford, Hailsham, Heathfield and Rye have been identified as four stations where efforts will be focused on improving on-call cover and that, if achieved, *"this may go some way towards mitigating the risks identified by ... dual crewing"*. However, they also suggest that as it takes a significant period of time to recruit and train competent on-call staff, it would *"perhaps be prudent to primary crew Eastbourne's two appliances and aerial ladder ... at least until the Fire Authority can be satisfied that adequate support can be provided from surrounding stations..."*

### In conclusion

The respondent says that the trends identified in recent data evidence that: ESFRS's incidents are on the rise; the Service continues to attend a significant proportion of incidents at night; it has had the least success at reducing incidents during the night; and that there is no evidence to suggest it attends fewer incidents on the weekend. As such, the data *"does not support changing our crewing model from one that provides consistent availability of appliances throughout the day and over the year, to one that increases fire cover"*

during the day, but reduces cover at night and over the weekend". Moreover, the reduction from 33 fire engines to 26 will *"impact firefighters' ability to respond to emergencies across the county"*.

Finally, the respondent says the proposals were drafted prior to the Covid-19 public health crisis, and do not account for the new risks posed by this pandemic. They consider it encouraging that there is cross-party consensus locally to secure additional funding for ESFRS from central government, which *"could enable ESFRS to provide the 18 appliances needed to meet our expected level of activity and could also enable further investment into prevention and protection"*.

## Individual staff member (2)

### Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan

The respondent says that the ORP's promise of 18 immediate response fire engines being available at the start of each day under is *"misleading"* inasmuch as only 14 will be crewed by personnel on station responding to a fire call within a minute. The remaining would be either be available on a five-minute turnout or jump crewed *"so cannot be viewed as immediately available ... since a choice would need to be made between a fire engine and aerial appliance"*. They also say that ESFRS has not communicated clearly that on the weekend six of the 14 'guaranteed' fire engines would be crewed by on-call staff with a five-minute turnout.

### Proposal 2: Changes to day-crewed duty stations

The respondent feels that:

No matter what the new contracts and pay structures are, it will be incredibly difficult to recruit and maintain the number of on-call staff required to crew the relevant appliances on evenings and weekends – and to achieve a balance between the skill sets and experience of wholetime and on-call contingents;

Offering on-call contracts to those working the proposed new duty system will be a *"necessity"* since it takes two to three years to reach competence, a year to drive and the move from firefighter to junior officer is based on experience and personal drive to progress;

The day crewed stations house most of the special appliances, the use of which are not part of basic training;

The new proposals ask current day crewed personnel to work Monday to Friday (or longer days four days per week) – which is *"not a family friendly proposition, especially in light that their take home pay will be reduced significantly with the removal of housing allowance [and] many staff will feel forced into taking up retained contracts to manage the shortfall in income"*.

Their main opposition to the proposed duty system change, though, is that when there is an incident during the daytime on the weekend, response times will be at least five minutes longer than they are currently for a *"sufficient amount of fire appliances to make a safe intervention"*.

### Proposal 3a: Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines

The respondent comments that while ESFRS presents these second fire engines as underused, they have actually been historically under-resourced. Moreover, they say the mobilisation of the second appliances relies on on-call personnel, *"the same people that the service expect to be able to guarantee cover for seven fire appliances over evenings and weekends, and four around the clock"*.

#### Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings

The respondent feels that:

Adding a fire engine to Bohemia Road station does not offset downgrading four of the five closest stations - Bexhill, Battle, The Ridge and Rye;

Risk levels on The Ridge's station ground have not changed and so the crewing change is not justified there; and

If it is intended that the proposed new second appliance at Bohemia Road will pick up many of The Ridge's calls, this would *"serve to reduce cover in Hastings ... since this would make the aerial appliance unavailable, and whatever standby move brought into Hastings would be from a surrounding station with less resources than before, leaving their area uncovered"*.

#### Proposal 5: Changes to providing and crewing specialist vehicles, including aerial appliances

The respondent welcomes the proposed introduction of additional fire engines at Bohemia Road in Hastings and Eastbourne but is very concerned that they are to be share crewed with ALP's. Using Hastings as an example, they explain that if the Bohemia Road second fire engine goes out it leaves the ALP unavailable, which is a *"downgrade to resources in Hastings, and the replacement of the current full proof system of crewing which guarantees appliance availability"*. Moreover, in terms of issues around which vehicle to choose in the event of needing more resources at an incident, the respondent does not agree that members crews could split, with two bringing the second fire engine and two bringing the aerial because *"the resources are not worth much without the adequate crew"*.

#### Proposal 6: Demand management

The respondent supports continuing attendance to AFA activations and people stuck in lifts. In relation to the former they suggest that *"owners and responsible people ... should be penalised if they do not have adequate keyholder or contact details in place to expedite a quick outcome"*. They also support responding to trapped birds to mitigate the chances of a member of the public or an animal rescue charity putting themselves at risk and because *"these jobs can be seen as good, practical, non-time critical practice for ladder pitches and aerial use outside of training scenarios"*.

#### Proposal 7: Changes to the four-watch duty system

The respondent is *"very worried"* about the impact the proposed shift changes would have on their family life and the relationships firefighters build at work through the current watch systems. They say; *"the service teaches that a team approach to incidents is of utmost importance, the change to a flexible duty system would destroy the watch culture, and the team environments they facilitate"*. They also have particular worries that people's mental health will be affected by the proposed change, because managers will not be able to monitor their staff effectively over periods of time.

#### Other comments

The respondent also says that:

While ESFRS states that many of the cut firefighter posts will be used to bolster its protection work, local MPs say they have not been asked for more funding to enable the service to deliver in these areas. *"This route should be explored before cutting frontline posts"*; and

They are very disappointed that the proposals have gone to consultation during the pandemic.

## Representative Bodies

### Fire Brigades Union (FBU)

#### Introduction

The FBU is of the opinion that ESFA's consultation process fails to meet the Gunning Principles that govern consultation processes because:

The reasons for the proposals are untrue: they are not 'centred on public and firefighter safety' nor do they 'aim to deliver our service in a more flexible and efficient way' - they are purely cost driven; and

Those being consulted were not given enough information about the consequences of the proposals to allow intelligent consideration and response.

The FBU also criticises the decision to consult on proposals during the Covid-19 health crisis, which has limited the opportunity for maximum engagement and external scrutiny. It also disputes the narrative that ESFA had to consult during the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### Proposal 1: Operational Response Plan (ORP)

The FBU supports a proposal to work to increase the number of appliances guaranteed to be available. However, it suggests it is misleading to state that 'our new Operational Resilience Plan (ORP) will plan for 18 immediate-response fire engines' because *"only an appliance crewed by on-duty wholetime firefighters guarantees an immediate response"* – which will no longer be the case on weekends as it is also proposed to change all day crewed stations to day only.

It is said that *"improving appliance availability must seek to improve availability no matter the time or day of the week"* as the data produced by ESFRS does not support a reduction in cover or an increase to response times at night-time and over the weekend. Indeed, the data *"proves that incidents are on average marginally more frequent on the weekend ... and proportionally more of those incidents are likely to be critical in nature"*. Moreover, the FBU says:

The ORR findings report that over the last three years there has been an increase in the number of critical incidents per year, and that the proportion of incidents per year that have been critical has been rising for the last five years;

26% of critical incidents occurred in day crewed areas, meaning that reducing cover and increasing response times in the evenings and weekends will present more risk; and

The data also shows that the number of incidents attended tends to increase throughout the day, peaking between 5pm and 8pm – and that over the nine years of data used, there was a greater reduction of incidents during the daytime compared to the night-time. This *"suggests that ... we do not have a proven or successful strategy for reducing incidents at night and that we will continue to receive a similar, or higher ... number of calls at night-time"*.

#### Proposal 2: Changes to day-crewed duty stations

The FBU reiterates the points made earlier in relation to the data not supporting a reduction in cover or an increase to response times at night-time and over the weekend in day crewed areas. It has also concluded through available modelling that:

Appliances at Brighton, Hove, Roedean, Eastbourne and Hastings are already travelling further to incidents at night than in the past, which in turn reduces fire cover in highest risk areas;

Day crewed primary appliances are also travelling further to incidents in the daytime; and

If these this proposal is introduced *“the impact on shift stations at the weekend will be very significant”* because their appliances will start travelling into day crewed areas if there is no immediate response there - and they will provide more cover to the neighbouring on-call areas currently being picked up by the day crewed stations.

The FBU thus rejects options 2a and 2b due to the negative impact on fire cover at weekends and evenings, and the impact this will have on not only the day crewed and on-call station communities, but also the highest risk areas in towns and cities.

### Proposal 3: Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines

The FBU says that this proposal will have a negative impact on both public and firefighter safety because *“firefighters work to agreed safe systems of work that require a certain number of firefighters to be in attendance at an incident before they can make rescues or extinguish fire”* and *“removing the second appliances from these stations would severely hamper firefighters ability to make rescues, extinguish fires and save lives at the most life critical incidents”*.

The FBU outlines the *“historic reasons”* why availability of some of the second appliances at these stations is low: it says that *“successive senior management teams ... have failed to recruit and retain on-call firefighters, they have also taken policy decisions that have been detrimental to on-call availability such over utilisation of fixed term contracts and failing to run wholetime recruitment processes”*.

It is also said that these stations often provide resilience when larger incidents occur, and/or when the primary appliance is mobilised into other areas. Removing these second appliances would *“leave the local communities without any fire cover for potentially, long periods of time”*.

The FBU thus recommends that ESFRS should: seek to review and address historic policy decisions and planning failures; seek to recruit and retain on-call firefighters to improve availability at these stations; cease using fixed term contracts to fill gaps in wholetime deficiencies; commit to running external wholetime recruitment processes; and use funding to improve building safety and protect the built environment across the county.

### Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings

The FBU says that Hastings is a high-risk area due to the high levels of vulnerability of residents and social deprivation, and that any reduction in fire cover there will cost lives.

With particular reference to the proposed change of crewing system at The Ridge (from wholetime to day crewed), the FBU makes the following points:

The change will result in a reduced response at night, which will impact those living in the north and east of the town and the more rural areas to which the station currently responds; and

The Ridge provides a vital 24-hour immediate response to other neighbouring fire stations at Bohemia Road, Broad Oak and Rye. In the latter two areas, this mitigates the impact of their on-call response and ensures suitable speed and weight of resources.

The FBU supports the addition of a second fire appliance at Bohemia Road fire station, but not if this is to the detriment of a primary crewed, immediately available ALP. Its reasons are that:

The proposed shared crewing model (whereby firefighters to crew either the second fire engine or the ALP) does not guarantee the availability of the ALP because if the second appliance is committed to an operational incident, the ALP will be unavailable for response; and

This is likely to happen much more frequently if the changes are implemented, as the proposed second appliance at Bohemia Road will form part of the predetermined attendance for all two pump calls in the surrounding areas – and will likely be mobilised to areas at night that The Ridge Fire Station would have historically covered.

Other points are that:

The Hastings ALP provides aerial cover to the whole of the east of the county;

East Sussex has more high-rise properties than anywhere else in the South of England outside London. The county's risk profile evidences the need for a primary crewed ALP at Hastings;

Without a primary crewed immediate response ALP at Hastings, several recent high-profile incidents would have had a very different outcome;

The ALP has recently been added to the predetermined attendance for all 'assistance to paramedic calls' where a casualty is located above the ground floor and who is in need of removal to hospital, which has reduced injuries to firefighters undertaking this new work; and

UK FRS' that have historically share crewed ALP's have learnt lessons from the Grenfell disaster and are seeking to reverse this model in favour of primary crewing.

#### Proposal 5a: Changes to providing and crewing aerial appliances

The FBU repeats many of the points made above in stressing its opposition to the proposed shared crewing model for ALP's, but also says that:

The ALP's provide aerial cover to the whole of the county.

The reality of shared crewing of ALP's is that the crew is not available to crew the standard appliance if they are committed to an operational incident or if they are undertaking community safety work (as they take the fire appliance when doing such work); and

Shared crewing means the public are "*at the mercy of luck*" as to whether the ALP is available.

#### Proposal 5b: Changes to providing and crewing other special appliances

The FBU is deeply concerned that current 4x4 provision within East Sussex is to be reduced from five to four – and that Wadhurst Fire Station shall cease to have a 4x4 off-road capability.

Moreover, while East Sussex has rope rescue and swift water capabilities, the future of these teams, vehicles and equipment are not addressed in the proposals – and the FBU is particularly worried that the swift water team no longer appears to be part of ESFRS's capabilities in the future "*due to the very low mobilisation of the team*". It is said that the data referenced sits at odds with that held locally at Crowborough and that the 114 recorded mobilisations during the period referenced in the ORR "*clearly shows a need for the swift water team both as a local and national asset*".

#### Proposal 6: Demand management

The FBU stresses that every attendance is an opportunity for the Service and its firefighters to interact with communities. Therefore, it does not view the incident types below as a burden on resources but rather as

*“opportunities to carry out engagement work, use equipment in an operational environment, enhance knowledge of the built environment and improve both firefighter and public safety”.*

Overall, the FBU feels that ESFRS should:

Continue to attend all AFA activations, lift releases and incidents involving trapped birds (with regard to the latter, there is concern that should the Service seek to cease attending incidents relating to trapped birds, members of the public or partner agencies will put themselves at greater risk by trying to free them without suitable equipment);

Seek to work with premises with high numbers of AFA activations and lift rescues through engagement work;

Utilise these mobilisations to undertake engagement work with responsible persons, partner agencies and the public and carry out reviews of Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) data – and as familiarisation/training to further enhance firefighter knowledge and safety in the built environment.

#### Proposal 7: Changes to the four-watch duty system

The FBU does not support proposals that seek to introduce a flexible or self-rostering duty system at the five wholetime shift fire stations because:

They will not improve training, reliance on overtime or be more family-friendly than the current shift pattern – and will worsen work-life balance; and

Removing the watch-based structure at wholetime shift stations would be detrimental to public and firefighter safety as it provides a far safer team approach at emergency situations and *“provides the safest and most efficient training mechanism for imparting and retaining knowledge and skills”.*

The FBU says it has witnessed the introduction of similar self-rostering and group crewing duty systems elsewhere, with little success – and that it has seen a rise in the use of overtime to maintain operational availability of appliances in services where these duty systems have been introduced.

#### Fire Brigades Union (FBU): Women’s Section and LGBT+ Section<sup>1</sup>

The FBU’s Women’s and LGBT+ Sections are concerned that the IRMP Impact Assessment has found ‘the proposals shall have a negative bearing on disabled persons (staff and public), carers of disabled persons, those with neurodiverse conditions, and female primary carers’. They therefore expect ESFA to review any such proposals prior to voting on their implementation to ensure the impacts are reduced for both staff and public.

There is significant concern expressed around the proposal to change the four-watch duty system for the following reasons:

Having a regular shift pattern where leave days change week by week in a progressive manner is more family-friendly than a work pattern where shifts are organised six weeks in advance;

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that several of the points made in this submission were also included in the FBU’s main organisational response.

*“A higher proportion of women than men have childcare and caring responsibilities [and] LGBT+ carers can in particular find it difficult to organise culturally appropriate respite care. This proposal would more negatively impact women and LGBT+ carers”; and*

It may impact on individuals making parental access arrangements through courts, as if they are unable to commit to planned arrangements beyond a six-week window, *“this could cause undue stress and harm to the individuals concerned”*.

It is also said that the proposed changes to the day crewed shift system will rely on wholetime firefighters taking on additional contracts to provide cover at evenings and weekends – and that a *“sense of moral obligation combined with new financial pressures when current allowances are no longer payable will lead firefighters to agree to contracts that will have a negative impact on their ability to balance work and family life”*. This, it is felt, may disproportionately affect women and LGBT+ firefighters who often have to accommodate the dual pressures of parental and caring responsibilities.

In light of the above, it is recommended that ESFA apply the ‘family test’ to any proposed changes, which ensures that policy makers recognise and make explicit the potential impacts on family relationships in the process of developing and agreeing new policy. The FBU’s Women’s and LGBT+ Sections reiterate that any proposal to change duty systems to a flexible or self-rostering style pattern would introduce uncertainty for firefighters around work patterns and childcare.

Finally, it is acknowledged that the ESFRS workforce does not reflect the communities it serves in terms of diversity and gender, and Fire Authority members are urged not seek to introduce duty patterns that will be less attractive to under-represented groups.

## Fire Officers Association (FOA)

### Introduction

FOA considers the proposed re-allocation of resources to match risk and demand for prevention, protection and response activities to be a considered and sensible approach.

FOA also describes the approach to data gathering to identify trends and station risk profiling as *“sound”* but highlights significant concern across its membership that ESFRS has seen a marked increase in demand in the last 18 months. Whilst understanding that the ORR utilised nine years of data, it did stop in 2018 and FOA recommends using the latest and most recent call data in future planning.

### Proposals 1, 2 and 3: Operational Resilience Plan (ORP), changes to day crewed stations and changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines

FOA says that the proposal for 18 immediate response appliances to be available is directly linked to changes to day crewed stations and the future robustness of cover by on-call firefighters. Its concern is that it would wish to see ESFRS demonstrate the robustness of the on-call duty system before considering changing any day crewed station to day only.

Although *“there are some recognisable benefits of a day only duty system”* (firefighters will not be required to live in an area and it may be more family friendly which in turn may encourage recruitment of under-represented groups), FOA feels that its impact on firefighter safety and operational response could outweigh these. In particular, *“the impact of routine planned crewing four firefighters on an appliance and the dynamic pressures associated by these restrictions raise concerns to the adoption of more frequent rapid deployment procedures and therefore reduced safe systems of work for life threatening calls, this whilst waiting for a second appliance to arrive from further afield”*.

It is also the view of FOA that the proposed system will impact on the availability of specialist appliances (especially those requiring enhanced levels of training and qualification) at nights and on weekends as *“it is highly unlikely the on-call colleagues will have the availability and capacity ... to train and provide these current response services”*. Moreover, although Kent FRS has an urban search and rescue (USAR) team and West Sussex FRS has Technical Rescue, FOA says ESFRS cannot base its own IRMP on other services’ provision.

Finally, in relation to these proposals, FOA suggests that if ESFRS’ management of on-call contracts, recruitment and retention processes were more robust, this would provide adequate cover on current day crewed stations. Therefore, *“the reason to change the day-crew duty system or remove the second appliances is questionable and the focus would be to improve the recruitment of on-call staff, which has been long proven as a more efficient system”*.

#### Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings

FOA considers it difficult to understand why ESFRS seeks to introduce a day crewed model at The Ridge which would *“not only be unique across the service ... it would be unique and reliant on wholetime staff only and no on-call which is not a proven system ... and may have a detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of the firefighters...”*. It also foresees significant mobilisation of the Bohemia Road appliances away from the risk areas to support calls in other regions of the town during the evenings when day crewed staff would be at home.

#### Proposal 5: Changes to providing and crewing specialist vehicles, including aerial appliances

FOA considers the current provision of ALP’s to be adequate and notes the professional opinion of many past Chief Officers that the crewing of such appliances should remain dedicated.

#### Proposal 7: Changes to the four-watch duty system

FOA says the proposed changes to the shift system should be supported if efficiencies are identified and reinvested into prevention and protection services – and as long as crewing and training are fully supported. There are reservations around the proposal of a ‘crewing pool’ though due to training, inclusivity, welfare provision and lone working.

#### Consultation process

The consultation process has, it is said, *“been hindered by current circumstances and has made consultation difficult”*. FOA suggests a *“delay or an improved engagement process would be more helpful for all stakeholders to be advised, informed and engaged with so that the Service could reach a satisfactory outcome via a meaningful consultation process...”*

#### Conclusions

In conclusion, FOA says *“the new principles of design around the ORR ... is supported, however some of the current proposals remain underdeveloped or [not] fully understood to enable agreement”*. It suggests:

- An effective engagement process to collectively seek alternative solutions to the difficulties facing ESFRS;

- An IRMP that focuses on individual areas aligned to station risk profiles as opposed to a blanket approach of removing second appliances;

- Improving on-call availability via better contract, recruitment and retention management;

- Ensuring any efficiencies identified are reinvested and showing a transparent, auditable transfer of resources into prevention, protection and response services; and

If financial savings are required, a Service-wide expenditure review to include the exploration of collaborative working arrangements with other blue light services, partners and agencies.

## Fire Rescue Services Association (FRSA)

### Introduction

The FRSA believes ESFRS has failed its on-call firefighters in the following ways (all of which have resulted people leaving the Service):

- A lack of recruitment;

- Using fixed-term contracts to fill wholetime shortfalls, which has had a *“devastating effect”* on on-call stations and appliances and on firefighters working such contracts, as they *“have been used and then dropped when not needed”*;

- Using migration during recruitment;

- Allowing firefighters to move to day crewed stations in their final year;

- Removing the sixth seat on fire appliances; and

- Letting wholetime firefighters take up on-call contracts and watch and crew manager positions without any processes.

It is also said that *“your service has, for too long, been held hostage by the FBU ... and managers need to manage without fear of the FBU”*

### Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan (ORP)

The FRSA seeks clarification as to what any new contractual arrangements for on-call firefighters will entail, and stresses that *“just paying someone more money does not mean they can cover the hours needed. The hours required have been a problem for years and years, because on-call firefighters have to work and spend time with their family during the hours you want them to be available. Even in large numbers, it cannot be achieved”*.

### Proposal 2: Changes to day crewed duty stations

The FRSA is against the proposed changes to day crewed stations because:

- On-call firefighters cannot crew appliances nights and weekends alone – and cannot safely be trained on all appliances on affected stations;

- Longer response times at weekends and some hours during the week *“is a backward step in serving our community”*;

- Due to lack of interest in the role, some stations have increased the recruitment radius for on-call firefighters, so the statement that ‘firefighters will live within 5 mins...’ is not correct; and

- Having wholetime firefighters at day crewed stations 24/7 is essential for ensuring all appliances have the correctly trained and available staff when required.

### Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings

The FRSA does not agree with the proposed changes because *“by changing The Ridge to day crewed it will decrease the support to other stations and its own community”*.

### Proposal 5: Changes to providing and crewing specialist vehicles, including aerial appliances

The FRSA feels that dedicated ALP crews must be maintained in all areas as *“outside London we have the most risk regarding high rise buildings and the increase in NHS and other incidents where the platform is needed is increasing”*.

In terms of other special appliances, the FRSA believes that:

While the water rescue team could be removed from Crowborough, swift water rescue trained staff should be maintained there *“due to the risks to staff while carrying out animal rescue in or around water”*. It also feels that a swift water rescue team should be available in the county and city due to future flooding risks, and that this would be best based at Lewes & Battle on the proposed technical rescue vehicle and rapid response vehicle;

While the rope rescue team could reduce to one 4x4 vehicle, it should not be reduced to half a team and must be based over two stations - Battle & Bexhill. Moreover, *“if the 4x4 is to go the rope rescue equipment needs to be on the proposed RRV at Battle ... due to the increased number of NHS incidents where rope rescue and TRU/RRV has be needed together”*; and

The 4x4 vehicle is needed at Wadhurst for incidents within Ashdown Forest.

### Proposal 6: Demand management

The FRSA believes AFAs, lift rescues and incidents involving trapped birds should be attended *“as you never know when these incidents can become life risks”*. It does, though, feel ESFRS should charge for attendance.

## Members of Parliament and city/district/ borough councils and councillors

### Conservative Group at Brighton & Hove City Council

The Conservative Group passed the following motion: *“to inform our two representatives on East Sussex Fire Authority ... that we as a Group are against the loss, through deployment, redundancy or otherwise, of firefighters on the front line in Brighton & Hove”*.

### Huw Merriman MP

Mr Merriman’s first concern about the consultation is its timing. While noting the reasons for not wishing to delay, he feels that the pandemic should have led to a pause in process because of: the ability for the public and stakeholders to fully consider and respond to the proposals within the timescales (meaning the number and quality of responses may not be as high as in normal circumstances); and the expansion of ESFRS’s role during Covid-19.

In relation to the latter point, Mr Merriman says this role expansion has presented the service with a unique opportunity to examine whether any of its recent Covid-related work is likely to lead to new responsibilities or work. His view is that it would be *“sensible to pause and reflect on the changes this may bring and incorporate the outcome in the IRMP”*. Moreover, he asks whether ESFRS would have the staffing capacity to support the Local Resilience Forum (as it has done this year) under the new proposals in the event of another national crisis?

Mr Merriman is concerned about the proposals to reduce the number of fire engines at Bexhill Fire Station from two to one and to change the crewing model from 'day crewed' to 'day only' - particularly in light of the fact ESFRS data demonstrates that Saturdays are *“the busiest days”*. He also asks for clarification about exactly what 'slightly longer' response times will entail.

Mr Merriman's worries are based on the demographic profile of Bexhill, which has a high proportion of vulnerable residents unable to self-rescue, a higher than average retired population and is an area of poorer general health. He also notes that he was informed by local firefighters that their own records show they were mobilised 949 times in 2019, and that the 519 incidents quoted in ESFRS' plan does not include incidents attended in neighbouring towns and villages or standby moves.

Mr Merriman fully agrees with the proposal to increase the number of fire engines at Hastings Bohemia Road but has concerns about the crewing of the town's ALP if firefighter numbers are not to increase overall. This, he suggests, *"will mean that if two fire engines are required to attend an incident, the ALP could not also be crewed. The next nearest ALP would have to be sent from Brighton"*. He notes that following Grenfell, other FRS' in England with a high proportion of high-rise properties (as East Sussex does) are primary crewing rather than share crewing ALP's.

The re-classification of Heathfield from a two- to one-engine station is noted in the context that the station will, in future, be considered to have one fire engine (the maxi-cab) and therefore a reduction in cover – and that in order to balance this the proposals for a new shared crewing model will increase the fire engines available from 15 to 18. Mr Merriman asks for clarification on *"how this will benefit the residents of Heathfield and surrounding villages"*.

Finally, as new contracts for on-call firefighters are proposed, Mr Merriman asks whether ESFRS anticipates any difficulties in the negotiation process and whether the new contracts will attract more people to this role? If not, he asks: *"is there a risk that you will not have enough staff to fill the posts and provide the cover that is needed?"*

### Lloyd Russell Moyle MP and Maria Caulfield MP

The two MPs feel that it is not the right time to proceed with such a major restructure of the local fire and rescue service. They are not satisfied with the urgency of the review and consider it unfair that firefighters should have the proposed changes forced on them while taking on extra duties during the Covid crisis.

The MPs are particularly concerned about the proposals for Lewes and Newhaven, which help support the east of Brighton. They also say that demand figures are based on historic cases which have *"since be superseded by more recent, higher callout figures which are not being taken into consideration"*.

The MPs say that *"no-one knows what the future shape of local government, including fire and police services, will look like after this pandemic"* and so they think it is premature to be making determinations that may need to change. As such, they call for a moratorium on any wholesale changes until the impact of the pandemic on ESFRS and the wider community is better understood.

### Brighton and Hove City Council Green Group of Councillors<sup>2</sup>

The councillors are concerned that the changes proposed could lead to a poorer service and have negative impacts on Brighton and Hove. Indeed, while they are relieved to see that none of the city's fire stations will close, they feel that *"the removal of secondary engines from surrounding towns will have an impact on the capacity of the service to respond to fires across the region and therefore in our city"*.

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<sup>2</sup> This response is acknowledged to have been *"informed by feedback from staff represented in the Fire Brigades Union"*.

The councillors have reviewed proposals 1 (the Operational Resilience Plan) and 3 (changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines) together. They say that the proposal to increase the number of fire engines available at the start of the day from 15 to 18 does not affect fire cover in the city, but they are concerned that the fire engines at Preston Circus and Roedean will be taken out of the city to cover neighbouring fire stations like Lewes and Newhaven if their second engines are removed. Moreover, they say this proposal will mean there are fewer fire engines to back-up the city.

The Councillors also state that: *“if this number of second engines is removed, then that might leave some fire stations (including some ‘core’ stations) without any engine available in the event of a local fire”*; and that as climate change is likely to mean an increase in wildfires and flooding across East Sussex, *“we need all of our fire engines to remain as is”*.

The councillors’ views on the other proposals are as follows:

Proposal 2 (changes to day crewed duty stations): there is again concern that Preston Circus crews *“will go on calls further towards the Lewes area”* due to the reduction in the immediate response provided by Lewes at night-time and on weekends – and that the same will happen with Roedean in relation to Newhaven;

Proposal 3b (re-classifying the three ‘maxi-cab’ stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations): again, there is worry that Roedean’s fire engine will be *“taken out more and more from the city, leaving the city vulnerable”*;

Proposal 4 (crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings): with regard to Brighton and Hove, the Councillors are concerned this will mean there will be no guaranteed second ALP for Brighton to call upon;

Proposal 5 (changes to the provision of specialist vehicles, including aerial appliances): the councillors say that the reduction of wholetime and retained staff on day crewed stations and the removal of second fire engines means that there will be fewer staff to crew big incidents. If there is a large incident in Brighton and Hove and both fire engines and special vehicles are needed to come, they question whether there will be enough staff to crew them;

Proposal 6 (demand management - AFAs): The councillors note feedback from firefighters that AFAs are never false alarms to start with and that without checking, actual fires can be left to burn for longer periods of time, needing more resources to put them out once they are called;

Proposal 6 (demand management - lift rescues): There is deep concern that this proposal is being made without regard to what other services may or not be available. The Councillors say that: the FRS has the equipment and expertise to deal with lift rescues; there is a high degree of trust in the FRS as a responder to these incidents; lift maintenance teams may not respond in an acceptable timescale; and that firefighters themselves believe that lift rescues are vital in maintaining a core humanitarian service and in offering opportunities to maintain familiarity with high-rise buildings;

Proposal 6 (demand management - trapped birds): it is suggested that if animals are not rescued by ESFRS, there is potential for greater risk that the public will attempt to rescue them themselves. It is also said that: firefighters consider bird rescues to be a positive means of real-life training with the ALP; and that animal charities do not currently have the funding, equipment or necessary training to make rescues safely and appropriately; and

Proposal 7 (changes to the four-watch duty system): The councillors are concerned that both flexible and group crewing could have a negative impact on Brighton and Hove inasmuch as:

Flexi-rostering could prove detrimental to firefighters needing childcare and will mean some people will never work or train with the same crew. In the context of the latter point it is said that *“individuals may be less effective on incidents due to unfamiliarity with the team and ... such conditions can also affect morale”*;

Group crewing takes four firefighters from Brighton and Hove and reduces the watch strength at Hove and Roedean to five. The concern is that *“when leave is rostered this will leave both stations always crewing at the minimum”* and without numbers at certain incidents until the second fire engine arrives. Moreover, *“the arrival of the second fire engine could also be delayed owing to the impact of other proposals...”*

The councillors agree that more building and home inspections and visits is a positive way to reduce risk and would offer more public assurance about fire safety - and that as the service is under pressure to make savings, prevention is better than cure.

They also strongly agree that ESFRS offers value for money and say that *“the level of public trust and engagement with the service cannot be underestimated”*. In this context, the councillors consider it vital that the approach to changes within the FRS are not only viewed through a ‘monetary’ lens but also through a need to strengthen communities, adopt new and innovative practices and support hard working fire crews. For this, stronger investment from central government is said to be needed, and the Fire Authority is urged to continue to take an active role in lobbying for this.

In terms of savings and efficiencies, the councillors suggest: reducing permanent office space; recruiting staff on permanent contracts; energy efficient buildings; refurbishments of existing space; and sharing expertise with other authorities.

Finally, the councillors express concern that the length of this consultation and the detail of the proposals involved will have deterred many members of the public from responding.

### Brighton and Hove Labour Group

The Labour Group of Councillors on Brighton and Hove City Council call upon ESFA members to halt the consultation and any plan to implement changes to ESFRS until the Covid-19 crisis is over and the post-pandemic financial settlement for local government and the FRS is arranged. The Councillors say that as part of the response to Covid-19, firefighters are already taking on extra duties and that *“now is not the time to try and implement disruptive changes, including further cuts, to our fire and rescue service”*.

The Councillors also share FBU concerns that the loss of equipment and crew would lead to *“a reduction in crucial coverage in some areas of the county, and therefore increase the risk to public safety”*.

### Green Party in Lewes and Councillor Imogen Makepeace (some points also made by Councillor Adrian Ross)

The Green Party in Lewes comments on the proposals as follows:

Proposal 1 (the Operational Resilience Plan): this looks like a better arrangement as it seems to increase cover, but it does so *“by spreading the service more thinly over most of the area covered”*. Moreover, Lewes station will be downgraded to a ‘non-core’ station meaning that *“an incident in Seaford will take away a vehicle, leaving Lewes with a diminished capacity”*;

Proposal 2 (changes to day crewed duty stations): the Party objects to this proposal on several grounds as below:

The crew providing evening, night and weekend cover would be entirely different to the permanent crew, so *“will have limited experience operating the engine and equipment”*;

Recruiting on-call firefighters is extremely challenging, particularly in a reasonably prosperous town like Lewes – and those undertaking the role often have other work commitments that affect their availability;

On-call staff turnover is very high, which is a particular problem as *“training firefighters in all of the necessary disciplines generally takes about 2 years”*;

On-call crews are *“scratch crews”* with availability dictated by other work commitments; therefore, assembling a crew with the right skills mix will be complex;

The on-call crews will have limited experience of working together and will not know each other’s strengths and capabilities well, reducing the efficiency of the response;

There would be less emergency/contingency cover available in the event of multiple calls; and

The replacement of trained full-time firefighters with a ‘flexible crewing pool’ will increase stress and risk to them as the strength of working in established teams will be compromised.

Proposal 3 (changing the number of fire stations that have two fire engines): for bigger incidents in Lewes, two engines are deployed as a matter of course to provide additional equipment, resilience and flexibility, *“which would be lost if this proposal were implemented”*. Moreover, if a second engine was needed it would have to come from another station, increasing response times – and *“if there was an incident elsewhere in East Sussex, Lewes would be far less likely to be able to provide an additional engine for fear of leaving the town unprotected”*;

Proposal 6 (demand management - AFAs): there is a risk of fire spread in the high-density/old commercial areas in Lewes which could lead to loss of life, especially in the flats above many of the town centre commercial properties;

Proposal 6 (demand management - lift rescues): it is questionable whether this will make a great deal of difference as lift maintenance teams are unlikely to respond within an acceptable timescale; and

Proposal 6 (demand management - trapped birds): members of the public and others might try to rescue the birds themselves, putting themselves at considerable risk.

The Party also says that:

Central Government must provide assurances that FRS grants will not be reduced, so that ESFRS can make proper plans *“without the need to make these dangerous cuts to front-line services”*;

West Sussex FRS implemented similar changes a few years ago and was recently rated one of the worst FRSs in the country. It now requires £34m of investment to address the identified failings and so *“trying to make similar savings in East Sussex would ... have a high risk of actually costing more in the medium term”*;

According to ESFRS’ risk profile for Lewes; incidents have increased 0.3% since 2009; Lewes is the third busiest day crewed area within East Sussex; and there are proportionally more fires and RTC’s and twice the number of non-residential fires compared to other areas;

A Lewes firefighter has said that ‘figures covering January 2018 to May 2020 showed that if the proposal to change the current shift system was in place then, the first appliance at Lewes would be available for response by on-call staff for less than 10% of the time’; and

The consequences of climate chaos (flooding and wildfires), and the town's increasing residential and business development makes it clear that reducing FRS capacity in Lewes will compromise public and firefighter safety.

### Hastings Borough Council

The Council recognises the challenges facing ESFRS to modernise, provide best value for public money but also to operate within an uncertain and ever tighter financial envelope. However, it is extremely concerned about:

The reduction in overall firefighter posts;

The move from a wholetime to a day crewed system at The Ridge, which it feels will lead to longer response times during evenings and on weekends generally and *"a delay to major event responses where all three appliances are required or where there are concurrent emergencies..."*. It is noted that Hastings has recently experienced a series of major fires and that climate change resulting in longer periods of drier weather, is *"putting areas such as our country park at a greater risk"*;

The ability to recruit and retain enough on-call firefighters to cover the move to day crewing, especially if new contracts are aligned only to periods where cover is needed at weekends/evenings; and

The change proposed to the crewing of the ALP at Bohemia Road to a shared crewing model as *"the number of HMOs in Hastings always necessitates this facility to be available and staffed"*.

As regards the timing of the consultation, the Council believes any changes should not be reviewed or made whilst ESFRS and its partners and communities are dealing with a global pandemic.

The Council welcomes:

The focus on prevention, support to businesses and the evidence and risk-based targeting of resources (though it also advocates that FRSs should be *"funded at an appropriate level to avoid the need to choose between competing priorities..."*);

The introduction of an additional fire engine at Bohemia Road, in the light of the higher risk profile within that station ground; and

The moves to direct resources into prevention, protection and training, with the following caveats:

AFAs: the 96% statistic should be well-publicised to businesses, together with clear criteria, particularly where lack of appropriate maintenance is an issue; and

Lift releases: the Council would not support a move to delay responses to lift rescues but would be prepared to consider supporting a fee for attending such calls if it is clear that there are not adequate maintenance and support arrangements in place.

### Hastings and Rye Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats consider Rye to be *"amongst the jewels of this country"* and say that the Citadel contains many timber buildings and must be considered as a potential risk on that basis. They note that the recent fire that destroyed much of the George Hotel was attended by eight engines. Furthermore, it is said that the IRMP identifies Camber as a potential problem because of its housing stock, a problem exacerbated by tourist risk in the summer months – which can make access difficult. For these reasons, any reduction of service at Rye Fire Station is opposed.

The Liberal Democrats say that similar arguments apply to The Ridge Fire Station in Hastings, which affords a significant time saving on Bohemia Road in reaching incidents in the villages between Hastings and Rye (Fairlight and Pett in particular). On that basis, they do not recommend any reduction of service at The Ridge.

### Lewes District Council (some points also made by Councillor Adrian Ross)

The Council tends to disagree with proposal 1 (the Operational Resilience Plan). While it supports the proposal to increase the number of immediate response fire engines at the start of the day to 18, it does not support a reduction in the number of fire engines at Lewes and Newhaven to enable this. The Council's main concern is that these fire stations would be unable to provide a resilience fire engine in Seaford, and that if one were required, it would likely need to come from Barcombe. This would mean a longer wait for said resilience engine and may leave Barcombe without a fire engine for that period. The Council is also concerned about the potential for heightened risks to households, businesses and firefighters from increased delays arising from the reduction in the total number of fire engines.

The Council disagrees with proposals 2 and 3 (changes to day crewed duty stations and changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines). With regard to the latter, it says that removing second fire engines has the potential to significantly increase call-out times, increase the risk that fire engines will not be available, and increase the risk to households, businesses and firefighters. Moreover, it is said that climate change is expected to increase wildfires and flooding in East Sussex, incidents that require the attendance of many fire engines for long periods. The Council feels that *"a reduction in the number of fire engines ... may compromise the ability of ESFRS to respond to any such incidents"*.

The proposal to re-classify the three "maxi-cab" stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations is a concern in that this may *"decrease the effectiveness of any response and has the potential to increase the time required to respond to larger incidents. This may also increase the likelihood that other fire engines will need to be called in from nearby fire stations"*.

With regard to demand management, the Council:

Is concerned that in the dense commercial areas of Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford, where in many cases people are living above the commercial premises, *"the ability to respond quickly to AFAs will be critical in avoiding loss of life or the spread of fire to other businesses"*. Councillor Adrian Ross adds that *"the relatively small savings that might be achieved by not responding to AFAs could be very quickly dwarfed by the cost (in lives and property) of a fire that has longer to take hold"*;

Agrees that building owners should resolve lift-related issues when there is no risk or distress to the people who are trapped, but questions how often this will be possible without causing risk or distress to lift occupants who are trapped;

Worries that if trapped birds are not rescued by ESFRS, there is potential for greater risk to the public and others in attempting to rescue them themselves.

The proposed changes to the four-watch duty system are a concern in the context of replacing permanent fire fighters with flexible and/or on-call crews.

Finally, the Council:

Agrees that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and would offer more public assurance about fire safety. Councillor Adrian Ross, though, adds that *"these must not come at the expense of front-line services"*;

Agrees that ESFRS offers value for money, but argues that the IRMP proposals *“have the potential to compromise the overall ability of ESFRS to maintain its range of services and consequently, this may reduce the organisations’ ability to provide value for money...”*; and

Suggests some potential ways to make savings, including simplifying services or sharing or multi-purposing office spaces to reduce administration costs.

### Wealden District Council

The Council strongly agrees with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18 (in addition to a further 6 fire engines), but tends to disagree with the proposal to change from day crewed to day only, particularly at Crowborough and Uckfield Fire Stations. It says that the Uckfield area has and is likely to have increased numbers of dwellings over the coming years, which could increase risk – and that the road safety in the Wealden area must be considered. It is also noted that changing the crewing system may mean longer response times during evenings and weekends.

The proposals to remove the second fire engines from seven fire stations and re-classify the three “maxi-cab” stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations are considered operational decisions *“to be assessed on risk and experience”*.

With regard to demand management, the Council agrees that ESFRS should:

No longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises, providing it works with local businesses to raise awareness of the changes and ensure they comply with fire regulatory standards;

Consider delaying its response to lift rescues, providing the person(s) trapped are not in distress or any other immediate danger. It also says that ESFRS must educate building owners about the importance of regular lift maintenance and alternative rescue arrangements;

No longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting, while being mindful of the distress such issues can cause to some people, who may *“undertake high risk activities to facilitate a rescue”*.

The Council agrees that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety as *“prevention is always better than cure and can be a better use of resources”*. However, it is said that *“research and evaluation must be part of any prevention work to ensure ...it is effective and is leading to less emergency calls...”*.

Finally, the Council stresses that the area will see significant housing and other developments in the coming years and that ESFRS must take this into account when deciding on the way forward, as well as making any changes and proposals subject to review to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. It also says that the consultation proposals will have positive and negative impacts, and that it is particularly important that *“communities are communicated with and any changes and the rationale behind them explained. It will be important to particularly highlight the positive impacts of the changes”*.

### Wealden Green Party

The Green Party feel that the consultation format and questions *“has been designed to hide the true nature of the consultation, which is little more than a cost saving exercise, and will result in a degraded service...”* They also say ESFRS should be planning for a worst-case scenario rather than looking at historical data and planning on the basis of minimum required resources.

Particular concerns are that:

While second fire engines are not called out as often as first fire engines, they are available to provide cover when the latter are at incidents;

Changing from day crewed to day only would *“lengthen response times at weekends and in the night, and leave less experienced crews to deal with emergencies”*;

Changes to the four-watch duty system will worsen working conditions for those with families as *“they will find it impossible to plan ahead for childcare and schooling commitments”*;

The dual crewing of the ALP’s at Eastbourne and Hastings could potentially leave only one fully crewed ALP to cover the whole of East Sussex;

Switching from wholetime to day crewed duty systems will increase response times at night and on weekends, *“which are not lower risk times and therefore danger to life and property would be increased”*;

There is no mention of consultation with or information from neighbouring FRSs in West Sussex, Surrey and Kent, who are *“vital to the safety of East Sussex residents in a major incident”*; and

There is no mention of the time it would take to get multiple engines to incidents at hospitals or care homes *“where there will be many people needing specialist rescue”*.

## Town and parish councils

### Fairlight Parish Council and Cllr Andrew Mier

Fairlight Parish Council opposes the proposed duty system change at The Ridge Fire Station in Hastings because:

Response times will increase outside daytime hours due to on-call firefighters’ turn out times or the need for a crew from Bohemia Road to respond (*Bohemia Road fire station is further away [5.3 miles] from the centre of Fairlight than The Ridge [2.7 miles]*). As Councillor Mier notes, *“the additional time required to call out retained staff will add significantly to response times, which must already be at the margins of acceptability”*;

There is a high percentage of residents over the age of 65 in Fairlight and these residents are more likely to need third party assistance. There are also many timber-framed properties in the ward that are vulnerable to fire;

There are narrow lanes between Ore and Fairlight and these can be difficult for large vehicles to negotiate, which further enhances the potential for increases in response times.

### Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council

Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council strongly objects to the consultation proposals and has *“serious concerns over the information in the consultation document”*. It particularly alleges that call-out figures are two years out of date and that not all callouts have been included.

With regard to the proposals and specifically their impact on Heathfield, the Council suggests that:

A reduction in vehicles and staff would mean less resilience in the event of a large fire. For example, Heathfield firefighters have attended a number of large fires over the past year at the Claremont Hotel in Eastbourne, in Ashdown Forest and at Isenhurst, all of which were tackled in conjunction with other stations;

A reduction in vehicles and staff would lead to increased response times. Heathfield Fire Station is an on-call station that does not currently meet attendance standards, and there is worry that response times would be further impacted by changes at nearby Uckfield – as well as at Battle, and Crowborough;

The “*cutbacks*” are not centred on public and firefighter safety and will put people’s lives at greater risk.

The Council feels that three of the four commitments raised in the consultation document are not satisfied by the proposals: these are ‘delivering high performing services’; ‘having a safe and valued workforce’ and ‘making effective use of our resources’. However, it does applaud ESFRS’ efforts in education and fire prevention.

The Council makes the following additional points

Population and housing increases will place more pressure on the FRS and will lead to more road traffic collisions;

The consultation should not have been undertaken during the Coronavirus pandemic as public meetings cannot be held and ESFRS staff are already under extra pressure;

Sharing a call centre with other counties will result in savings, but a loss of local knowledge could prove crucial in emergency response;

There is no definition of ‘slightly longer’ and ‘negligible impact’ in the consultation document.

### Lewes Town Council

Lewes Town Council wrote to James Brokenshire MP, Minister of State for Security, to formally requested “*that you halt the cuts in the central government grant to ESFRS*”. The Council believes that “*the reduction in direct grant, alongside a lack of secure ongoing funding, has deeply compromised the Fire Authority in its ability to effectively plan for the future*”.

With specific regard to the proposed removal of the second fire engine and six firefighters from Lewes, the Council is specifically concerned that: the proposal to replace full-time positions with on call staff is unlikely to meet the needs of the area; and that the changes do not take into account the increasing local population or the increasing effects of climate change.

Lewes Town Council recognises that Integrated Risk Management Planning is a legal requirement for fire authorities and that ESFRS were required by the government to continue with theirs during the Coronavirus pandemic. The Council says, though, that this “*has caused concern and consternation among local residents and councillors*”.

### Plumpton, East Chiltington, Streat and St John Without Parish Council

Plumpton, East Chiltington, Streat and St John Without Parish Council has “*great sympathy*” with ESFRS in respect to the savings that must be made due to reduced Government grant and feels these reductions would have not have been considered were it not for ESFRS being put in an “*impossible situation*”.

With specific regard to the proposed removal of the second fire engine and a number of firefighters from Lewes, the Council accepts there would still be 24/7 cover but is concerned about a reduction in capacity, and about slightly longer response times during the daytime and at the weekend. It also cites two other factors that have emerged relatively recently:

Climate change: May 2020 was one of the driest months since records began, which led to forest/moorland fires at Ashdown Forest, Chailey Common and Ditchling Common; and

The Covid-19 pandemic and the increased number of people working from home.

The Council would like to see further work to fully understand the impact of climate change on the area and how the fire risk profile will have changed as a result of these home working arrangements.

The Council recognises that the IRMP is a legal requirement and that the Minister of State instructed all Fire Authorities to continue with their consultations despite the pandemic. However, it believes Government *“should instead be lobbied to relax this requirement to meet the requirements of the framework at this time and to reverse funding cuts to ESFRS”*.

## Rye Town Council

Rye Town Council, using the knowledge of a councillor who is a serving firefighter, make the following comments about the seven Planning for a Safer Future proposals.

### Proposals 1 and 2: Operational Resilience Plan (ORP) and changes to day crewed duty stations

The Council says that:

The new contract for on-call retained firefighters does not appear to cover their training time, nor does it consider that some people will want to become on-call firefighters in the spirit of community service rather than financial gain;

On-call staff must take time off work to train as firefighters and there is concern that not enough is being done to up-skill them;

It is becoming more difficult to recruit in Rye due to an older demographic, fewer self-employed people, less flexibility from employers and cover eating into family and leisure time, so recruitment should be done centrally rather than being the sole responsibility of Rye Fire Station;

ESFRS’s own policy of offering firefighters at retained stations fixed term contracts at wholetime shift stations is having a detrimental effect on crewing at Rye;

It is concerned that the ‘flexible crewing pool’ may be less resilient because it is being used everywhere and has no back up;

The new contract gives staff at some stations longer to turn-out, but this will mean increased response times;

The data shows that there are a large number of institutions outside the agreed attendance times, certain businesses and caravan parks for example. There are also additional considerations in the Rye area such as the number of water incidents, tourism, flooding, listed buildings, and heavy industry; and

Eastern Rother, Camber and Rye are in the top 5% of the most deprived areas in the UK and statistics prove that these areas are some of the most at risk due to fire related incidents.

### Proposal 3: Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines

The Council says that:

There is already a second appliance at Rye, and it does not currently need to be replaced, so the only costs will be maintenance related in the next few years;

The 55% availability of the second fire engine at Rye is due to the fact that insufficient numbers of firefighters are trained and, therefore, it cannot be used when needed. Statistics would show much greater usage if it were operational;

Removing the second appliance puts more pressure on neighbouring stations to cover the area if the Rye appliance is already in use, thus reducing their availability in their own locale;

Not having a second engine in Rye will increase response times and could/will lead to a greater loss of property, injuries to the public and firefighters and, potentially, more deaths;

Greater upskilling and training of Rye firefighters would mean more local knowledge that could save vital minutes as a result of them understanding the roads and built environment.

#### Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes in Hastings

The Council says that:

Rye relies on The Ridge for supporting fire engines and the proposed change from full time shift crewed to day crewed would mean extended attendance times if the second appliance is removed at Rye. This is because it is not always possible for Kent crews to cross over the border;

The proposed changes in Hastings are due to social demographics which are mirrored in the Rye area, with Camber being in the top 5% of deprived areas in the UK. If this argument is applied in Hastings, then Rye should also retain its second appliance; and

The population of Camber swells with tourists in the summer, which can lead to increased attendance times due to congestion. There is an additional risk from gas cylinders at caravan parks.

#### Proposal 5: Changes to providing and crewing specialist vehicles, including aerial appliances

The Council says that:

Removing the swift water response can only be detrimental to a coastal station and this is a current issue due to the increase in illegal immigration seen on the beaches in the past few months;

Rye's listed buildings, as seen during the major fire at the George Hotel last year, would benefit from a closer ALP; and

The Council would be interested to learn whether a smaller vehicle would be more beneficial in gaining access to the medieval citadel, holiday homes and manoeuvring around nearby business parks.

#### Other observations

Rye Town Council concludes with the following observations;

The consultation appears to look only at front line services for 'efficiency savings' and does not consider savings in other areas, such as back office work;

There is no reassurance that ESFRS is investing in 'future proof' IT systems that could save money in the longer term; and

It would be more advantageous to wait a few months to see what resources and responses are needed post-pandemic, so they are more robust.

## Seaford Town Council

Seaford Town Council believes that the *“review should be more honest about the fact that one of the main purposes must be to make up a deficit in funding”* but does welcome the fact that no fire stations will close.

The Council is, though, concerned about/that:

The reclassification of Seaford from a maxi-cab to single engine station and future cover due to *“significant housing growth in the town”* and its large elderly population;

Proposed changes at Newhaven Fire Station will affect emergency cover in both towns;

Accidents on the A259 between the two towns could block the road and prevent assistance to other incidents;

The ‘flexible crewing pool’ may affect staff morale *“which comes from attachment to a particular team or watch at a specific home station”* – and proposed staff reductions will not improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the service;

While not attending AFAs may sometimes be appropriate, this *“discriminates against small business and could have grave consequences for those businesses and their neighbours”*;

Lastly, the Council has concerns about delayed responses to lift releases but would support charging.

## South Highton Parish Council

South Highton Parish Council:

Expresses concern about the decision to hold the consultation during the Covid-19 pandemic, stating that *“the pandemic, and its effect on fire and rescue services, must be taken into account within the consultation process”*;

Highlights residents’ worries that ‘slightly longer’ response times outside daytime hours as a result of the proposed changes to day crewed stations *“has the potential to put lives at risk”*;

Notes that the increasing population of East Sussex *“will undoubtedly lead to increased traffic on our roads and increased households within our towns and villages”*. The recent closure of the Newhaven Port lorry holding area over the weekends and the large influx of tourists to the South East coast are also cited as contributing to increased traffic locally. As a result, the Council and local residents *“feel that now is not the time to be reducing available fire engines and crewed stations”*;

Says that the Newhaven Swing Bridge causes significant queues and tailbacks, which are likely to increase due to further industrial developments in the area- and that recent flooding in the area has led to worry that the proposed removal of second fire engines may reduce the capacity to respond to such incidents.

## Wadhurst Parish Council

Wadhurst Parish Council strongly opposes any resource changes at Wadhurst Fire Station, noting that in the space of three years, the service there has been reduced from two appliances and 13 firefighters to one appliance and five firefighters. The Council says, *“this is a huge reduction and puts lives at risk”*.

Wadhurst Parish Council notes that local response times are already longer than the ESFRS average and that the proposals will only exacerbate this. It is particularly concerned about this because Wadhurst:

Has a higher proportion of elderly residents and children than the ESFRS average;

Has a hospital, five schools, three nursing homes and numerous assisted living premises; and

Is in close proximity to the largest inland body of water in south-east England (Bewl Water) which is used for leisure activities and is largely inaccessible by road.

Wadhurst Parish Council also comments that:

A second appliance needs to be *“at the scene of any fire before fire crews can enter the building in Breathing Apparatus”* and that the current 17-minute average is already too long, with any cuts only serving to *“exacerbate the problem”*;

Wadhurst sits close to the Kent border, and Kent FRS has different procedures for breathing apparatus - so there are locations where three appliances need to be in attendance before such equipment can be used;

There are currently significant difficulties recruiting on-call fire fighters and *“this will not be helped by the further reduction in watch strength”*;

Undertaking the consultation during the pandemic was inappropriate *“as peoples’ focus is rightly elsewhere”*, community engagement and scrutiny would be insufficient, and *“it is not the right time for a restructuring of an emergency service”*.

Ultimately, Wadhurst Parish Council is opposed to the removal of the land Rover (second appliance) from Wadhurst as this will make *“accessing Bewl Water, rural properties and forest fires more difficult in what is a largely rural location”*.

### Withyham Parish Council

Withyham Parish Council strongly disagrees with five of the six proposals for the following reasons:

Proposal 1 (Operational Resilience Plan): the loss of ten potentially available fire engines;

Proposal 2 (changes to day crewed duty stations): this *“will lengthen response time and leave less experienced crews to deal with emergencies”*;

Proposal 3a (changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines): the second engines *“provide continuing cover when the first engine is called away”*;

Proposal 3b (re-classifying the three ‘maxi-cab’ stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations): the maxi-cabs *“enable a single machine to take a full life-saving team to an incident”*;

Proposal 4 (crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings): day crewing at The Ridge is opposed, but a second engine at Bohemia Road is endorsed;

Proposal 7 (changes to the four-watch duty system’): uncertainty over shifts means it would be difficult to organise family life.

Withyham Parish Council strongly agree that ‘more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety’ and ‘that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate’, and tend to agree that ‘ESFRS offers value for money’. They also support the three demand management proposals.

The Council also comments that:

Withyham is a rural area with isolated farms, a large number of big houses and narrow lanes - and as two fire stations in the area are losing their second fire engine, there is concern about the level of cover should a major incident occur;

Dual crewing of the ALP at Eastbourne and Hastings could potentially leave only one ALP to cover the whole of East Sussex;

Danger to life and property would be increased by longer response times at night and on weekends due to the switch from “*fully crewed*” to ‘day crewed’;

There is no mention in the IRMP of the adjoining fire services of West Sussex, Kent and Surrey which are relied upon for assistance in major incidents – nor is there any mention of response times to properties such as The Horder Centre Hospital or care homes where there will be many people needing specialist rescue in the event of an incident;

ESFRS should be planning for a ‘worst case scenario’ instead of the “*minimum number of engines and crews that could deal with past incidents*”.

Other Town and Parish Councils submitted shorter responses as follows.

**Battle Town Council** expresses its “strong objection to the changes proposed for Battle Fire Station”.

**Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council** is concerned that the gradual removal of posts, and the cutting of second engines at Lewes and Uckfield Fire Stations is a risk to fire protection across the Parish. It also feels that “*growing extremes of weather lead to a clear potential of larger and more severe fires in the countryside during extended periods of high temperature*”. The Council would like the Service to re-consider the cut of second engines at Lewes and Uckfield.

**Chiddingly Parish Council** objects to the Planning for a Safer Future proposals and endorses the responses submitted by Crowborough and Uckfield Town Councils.

**Crowborough Town Council and Rotherfield Parish Council** are “*vehemently opposed*” to the changes proposed to firefighter contracts and the removal of the second fire engine from Crowborough because: the proposals haven’t taken into account the planned extra housing developments in Crowborough and Uckfield over the coming years; the nearby A26 has a poor safety record of the A26 road; there are an increasing number of wildfires in Ashdown Forest; and because on-call firefighters are “*notoriously difficult to recruit*”. The Councils also note that their respective areas sit “*on the extremity of East Sussex*” away from other supporting stations.

**Crowhurst Parish Council** “does not support [the] proposals to remove a second fire appliance from Battle and Bexhill, and to move to ‘day only’ at Battle and Bexhill”.

**Newhaven Town Council** believes “the proposed cuts will place the town and its surrounding villages at an increased level of danger and will therefore ... seek to maintain the current high standards of coverage and first rate service that the people of Newhaven have come to expect”.

**Peacehaven Town Council** feels that: the consultation should have been postponed owing to the Covid-19 restrictions; no changes should yet be made as firefighters are undertaking additional engagement with the public as well as their normal duties; that the consultation documents are too complicated; and that the modelling and statistics used are “*out of date*”. More specifically in relation to the proposals, the Council says that: Peacehaven has previously been identified as a remote area but there is nothing in the IRMP to reduce associated risks; natural and geographical restrictive features have not been properly considered, nor has Telscombe Cliffs; the proposal to remove the second appliance from Newhaven and change shift patterns at Roedean will lead to increased response times and risk; and it

is unacceptable that fire cover for the entire area during evenings and on weekends will be solely dependent on the availability of retained firefighters.

**Pett Parish Council** feels that the consultation *“fails to address questions specific to our rural location”*, which is equidistant between Rye and The Ridge Fire Stations. It also asks questions around: how long is ‘slightly longer’ and *“how do you quantify any potential loss of life that may be caused the ‘slightly longer’ response times?”*; the extent to which the availability of the ALP at Bohemia Road can be guaranteed; and the reasoning behind reducing emergency response to invest in additional protective duties, *“downgrading”* Rye Fire Station given its proximity to a chemical/industrial facilities, airport and a nuclear power station, and making The Ridge a day crewed station.

**Telscombe Town Council** strongly opposes the proposals for Newhaven Fire Station, which it feels will *“come at a cost of risking the lives of local people”*. The Council cites the following reasons for its opposition: the slower response time on weekends is *“totally unacceptable and presents a danger to the public”*; the A259 road suffers heavy congestion which could further impact on response times; changes to employment contracts are unfair to firefighters; local population increases and development; and Newhaven has a ferry port and requires firefighters with specialist training to deal with incidents there. The Council also expressed concerns that the consultation is taking place during the Covid-19 pandemic and requests that it be suspended *“until it is clear what resources the fire service will need”*.

**Uckfield Town Council** *“urgently and forcefully call upon ESFRS to immediately drop all and any proposed amendments to the fire service”* in the county. It believes the proposed changes *“will put the town and its villages at risk and in danger”*. The Council particularly asks that: the proposals are suspended until they can be given *“proper consideration”* following the Covid-19 pandemic; ESFRS takes more account of upcoming population increases and housing developments and the risk of fires within Ashdown Forest; a comprehensive risk assessment of the changes and their impact on capacity takes place; and that ESFA provides a full explanation of the proposals. It is also said of the consultation document that there is a *“lack of detail with regard to some of the statistics”* and that *“in a number of places, the content appears vague”*.

## Other stakeholders

### Forestry Commission

Within the IRMP or its supporting document, and as part of FRS statutory duties for fire safety and to ‘assess, plan and advise’, the Forestry Commission would like to see the following information for the general public, landowners, Local Planning Authorities and National Parks and forestry and environmental regulators:

A clear list and/or map/s of wildfire risk in the Fire and Rescue Service area, to provide an evidence base to help target increasing building wildfire resilience today and in the future;

How FRS engages on wildfire mitigation and adaptation with landowners in terms of government land management incentives;

How land management regulators will be effectively engaged in Community Risk Registers to ensure short, medium and long-term mitigation and adaptation to wildfire;

Advice, assessment and planning on building wildfire resilience, such as providing advice to land managers on wildfire risk and future impact on climate change;

FRS policy on wildfire mitigation and adaptation and how this is reported in terms of the Climate Change Act;

How wildfire risk should be addressed by Local Planning Authority Local Plans and development applications; and

Ways of improving partnership working and interoperability between FRSs and land management organisations who work at the landscape scale (Natural England; National Park Authorities; other large landowners such as National Trust and the Ministry of Defence; and representative organisations such as National Farmers' Union, Countryside and Built Landowner Association and environmental Non-Government Organisations.

It also suggests examining the current FRS definition of a wildfire to prevent the risk of under-reporting; and the need for a consistent format with other FRSs, using a national approach to set standards across the land management and fire sectors. This *"will be critical for landowners who have property across adjacent county borders as well as national land management agencies"*.

## Sussex Police

Sussex Police welcomes and supports ESFRS' evidence-led approach in compiling its Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2020 –2025 for consultation. It says that *"understanding your operational demand can only help shape and inform your response to managing risk and highlighting opportunities in order to deliver a better service to the public and partners"*.

## Individual resident (retired watch manager)

### Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan (ORP)

The respondent says that:

15 'immediate response' fire engines has and will continue to be the bare minimum provision from the current 36 fire engines and the remaining 27 if the proposals are implemented;

Additional fire engine availability has always been provided by on-call fire stations and second engines at day crewed stations. However, the daytime availability of on-call staff has severely diminished over the past 10 years and the proposal offers no evidence that ESFRS will definitely be able to form or maintain a 'flexible crewing pool' or to recruit and retain sufficient on-call firefighters to guarantee the availability of additional stations – which in any case would not be available for immediate response, but would be delayed by five to six minutes;

The further six 'resilience' fire engines will only be crewed 'as far as practicable' and the suggestion that they could be allowed up to half an hour to turn out is *"laughable"*.

### Proposal 2: Changes to day crewed duty stations

The respondent is concerned that the day only system would be reliant on on-call firefighters being available to cover nights and weekends, and that the Service's own statistics show that this cannot be guaranteed. They suggest that this proposal has the potential to result in no fire appliances being available on evenings and weekends outside of Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings due to the potential lack of on-call personnel and will extend attendance times from six fire stations by at least five minutes at weekends.

The respondent also states that ESFRS has been repeatedly asked to clarify what 'slightly longer' means in the context of attendance times if the changes to crewing systems occur and have failed to do so *"because [they] do not know which fire engines will be available at any one time during evenings and weekends"*.

### Proposal 3a: Changing the number of fire stations with two fire engines

The respondent notes that the evidence offered for this proposal concentrates on the 'under use' of the second fire engines, but that there is little information about the reasons for this: that they are not available due to the lack of available on call firefighters (an issue caused partly through ESFRS utilising many of its on-call staff on temporary wholetime contracts to plug gaps in full time crewing). They also say:

There is no evidence of how many calls these fire engines would have attended had they had an available crew or how many standby cover moves were required due to their unavailability;

The claim that these stations would still provide a 24/7 response is potentially untrue due to the proposed changes to the full-time duty system and the inability to guarantee on-call crews;

When crewed properly, the seven fire engines are the Service's resilience and negate the need for a large number of standby moves; and

This proposal will extend attendance times of a critical second fire engine to these seven fire station areas by at least 10 minutes (which is problematic inasmuch as fire engines increasingly have crews of four firefighters, which restricts the ability of a first responding appliance to intervene at certain incident types until the arrival of a second).

### Proposal 3b: Re-classifying the three 'maxi-cab' stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations

The proposal to reclassify maxi-cab stations as one pump stations is opposed because: it will extend attendance times of a second fire engine to these three fire station areas by at least 10 minutes.

### Proposal 4: Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings

The respondent opposes "downgrading" The Ridge to a day crewed fire station as it "will extend attendance times to East Hastings and communities to the East and North of the town compounding the removal of the on-call fire engine from The Ridge in 2015". Moreover, they are concerned that shared crewing of the proposed additional fire engine at Bohemia Road with the ALP combined with shared crewing of The Ridge's fire engine and 4x4 vehicle means that "only three of the five Hastings appliances can ever be 'truly' available".

### Proposal 5: Changes to providing and crewing specialist vehicles, including aerial appliances

The respondent notes that this proposal raises several concerns regarding appliance availability, training and competencies, notably around: the reduction of 4x4 capability; special appliances at on-call stations risking losing fire engine availability; special appliances on day duty stations having no available crew if removing second pump; and the need for additional and regular training for on-call personnel on special appliances.

### Proposal 6: Demand management

The respondent says that "an automatic fire alarm is not a false alarm until it has been confirmed as such" and the ESFRS has no right to ignore such alarms at the risk of a company losing its business. They also support maintaining response to lift rescues "on humanitarian grounds" (while engaging with building owners to ensure they are improving lift maintenance) and to incidents involving trapped birds to prevent other organisations or individuals attempting to rescue them without the appropriate equipment.

### Proposal 7: Changes to the four-watch duty system

The respondent says that "this proposal has nothing to do with risk management but is purely about cutting further firefighter roles and money saving" and that "further reducing full-time posts will nullify the formation

*of a 'resilience pool' as the pool will also be called upon to cover crewing shortages due to sickness, leave, training etc at the shift stations".*

#### Building and home inspections

While the respondent has no objection to increasing public awareness of the dangers of fire, they say this *"cannot be at the further expense of operational cover"*.

#### ESFRS' finances into the future

The resident notes that Wealden residents contribute more to the Fire Authority budget than any other district outside of 'the City' yet receive the worst service and are disproportionately impacted by the proposals. They also feel that value for money overall *"is being eroded"*.

#### Other comments

The respondent also states that:

No detailed evidence is offered in the consultation documents of how the 'resilience pool' would operate and there is no evidence to prove that any of appliances (other than full-time ones) would have a guaranteed available crew at any time;

The recruitment and retention of on call personnel has been an issue that FRSs nationwide have been struggling with for many years and is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon; and

The consultation is *"descending into chaos"* with continual accusations by ESFRS and numerous parties of 'misinformation'.

#### In conclusion

The respondent feels that, if approved, these proposals *"will pare emergency response and resilience to the bone and can only have a detrimental impact on all, but particularly rural communities across the county"* and that *"hiding behind manipulated statistics to further reduce resources and emergency cover across the county make ... this IRMP the most dangerous document that ESFRS has ever produced"*.

# Appendix 3: clarification questions from staff members

THEME	QUESTIONS
<b>Operational Response Review (ORR): general</b>	<p><i>In the IRMP You are proposing to have 18 fire engines available at the start of each shift before demand. Can you guarantee these 18 fire engines will remain available all day unless they are on a call and will not be taken off the run due to lack of crewing? (Individual staff member)</i></p> <p><i>It states you are proposing to enhance the operational resilience of ESFRS, by increasing the number of core fire engines available at the start of each day to 18. Will these 18 fire engines remain available all day every day after the start of the day (unless they are at an incident of course), or will the service allow this figure to drop to below 18 fire engines after the start of each day as it progresses, thus not increasing the operational resilience at all? (Individual staff member)</i></p>
<b>Operational Response Review (ORR): flexible crewing system</b>	<p><i>Could you tell me if we moved to the flexible crewing system on wholtime stations as per the IRMP proposal, as there will be in effect no watches and just a station leader, what would happen to the current Watch Managers would they be demoted back down to Crew Manager and pay protected, or would they be moved into other Watch Manager roles within the service? (Individual staff member)</i></p> <p><i>The current day crewed rota system allows all staff who work this shift system to provide on call hours at evenings and weekends. By changing this shift system to just day crewed, means these individuals do not have to give on call cover at night or weekends. The service will have to recruit and retain a lot more new on-call firefighters to keep these stations available during these periods. You will notice around the UK Fire and Rescue Service that they already struggle to recruit and retain on call staff; do you not envisage this a problem? (Individual staff member)</i></p>
<b>Day-crewed to day-only duty system</b>	<p><i>We are unclear as to how the On-Station response improves by 0.04% as a DO Station bearing in mind the turn out times are not improved during the daytime. Please could you advise how these figures are calculated? (Station 83, Crowborough)</i></p> <p><i>Now we are in the public consultation period is there any chance that anybody in a management role could explain to us what the actual proposals are for the Day crewed duty system? This would include proposals on how the on-call firefighters would be deployed. We have no meat on the bones to the vague proposals put forward to the fire authority. How will your proposals work, we cannot see how you can make it work with no on-call availability now? (Individual staff member)</i></p> <p><i>I work at Lewes and there is not enough retained personnel to guarantee a pump at night or weekends. This is why the second pump is hardly ever on the run. They have just one driver and no J.O's, so until that changes the new system cannot work. It would take quite some time to recruit and train at least a couple more drivers and at least a couple of J.O, to be able to do the new system. Will the Service press ahead or wait until sufficient crew are available? Management must be aware of this; what timescale do they think they can make the new system work. (Individual staff member)</i></p>

**Crewing and fire engine changes at Hastings**

*As per the proposals in East Sussex IRMP, I understand that The Ridge Fire Station will be day crewed Monday to Friday, then be covered by on call firefighters in the evenings and weekends.*

*(1) Could you tell me how and why the risk in The Ridges fire ground changes on weekend days and evenings, to enable ESFRS to increase the response time by covering this period using on call firefighters?*

*(2) I also understand there is a whole time second appliance going into Hastings Bohemia Road. This is excellent as I understand the risk in this area has been discovered to be greater following this IRMP and annual assessment of risk.*

*(3) Due to the 4i mobilising system picking nearest and quickest fire appliances, won't this second wholetime fire appliance from Bohemia Road pick up all The Ridges fire calls first?*

*(4) Won't this leave a greater risk at Bohemia Road as the calls for The Ridge take away that second fire appliance for Bohemia Road?*

*(5) How will Bohemia Road jump crew the aerial appliance when their 2nd appliance is out?*

*(6) And finally, what happens if both fire appliances for Bohemia Road are attending incidents who covers the aerial capability at this station? This question would also apply to Eastbourne if they jump crew their aerial. (Individual staff member)*

*I'd like to know the total average number of two pump incidents in Bexhill, Battle and Hastings areas over the last few years please.*

*With my experience from working in Fire control, I would estimate that the proposed second appliance for Hastings Bohemia Road will form part of the PDA for all two pump calls into these areas and beyond should P4s be removed. I would also hazard a guess that at night two appliances from Bohemia Road would be mobilised to The Ridge fireground ahead of The Ridge fire station should the proposal for The Ridge to move to a day-crewed model. Any one pump calls in the Eastern group that leave a station requiring a standby move will also inevitably mean 76P2/P4 would be moved. Has any modelling been done to predict the total number of mobilisations predicted for station 76?*

*My concern is that as much as on paper an additional pump in that area is a good thing, coupled with the removal of surrounding pumps it will be extensively used to the point where the proposed dual crewed 76A1 will frequently be unable to mobilise, or at best be waiting for one of the Hastings pumps to return to station to crew. There is also the likelihood that the two Hastings pumps are mobilised as a standard Two pump PDA, an incident commander requires an ALP and despite one sitting in Hastings would have to wait for one to come from elsewhere. I know other services dual crew ALP's but most, if not all of the stations that I'm aware that use this model have RDS resilience at the same station to backfill appliances and at least drive, or even crew the ALP. Has the service calculated the potential attendance times of an ALP in the Hastings area should 76A1 not be able to attend? (Individual staff member)*

<p><b>Aerial and other special appliances</b></p>	<p><i>In the proposal It eludes that its acceptable for 2 persons to travel to and incident on a P4 appliance and the remainder of the crew to travel on an ALP. It is my understanding that if the incident commander decides that the ALP is not required then it can be parked up, and those crew will revert to the BA positions on the P4 Appliance. If this is deemed an acceptable practice to have crews swapping over vehicles and duties once in attendance, why is it currently not acceptable for the OIC to also be the driver for an incident when skill sets are deficient? All firefighters are trained to operate the pump, interrogate the MDT, utilise the main scheme radio and can take on the role of command support. None of these tasks are included within the ERD Initial training course any way. (Individual staff member)</i></p> <p><i>I would like to raise the issue of the Landrover being removed from Wadhurst. I have looked through the “The Plan” that is available on the ESFRS website which the public are asked to read before taking part in the survey. There is no mention of the removal of the Landrover from Wadhurst in The Plan, the survey also has no reference or question relating to this either. The only place I could find any referral to the Landrover at Wadhurst is that it is removed from the map and not listed on the specials. There is no information on the Landrover removal in the short videos on Proposal 3 &amp; 5, again there is no information when referred to page 46 &amp; 50 of the IRMP Document. How can there be an informed/consulted decision on this important issue of an appliance being removed from the front line when it is not clear to see and appears to be covered over? What are the deciding factors regarding the removal of this special, and why have they not been communicated in the consultation? (Individual staff member)</i></p> <p><i>I understand that it is being proposed that the ALP in the City of Brighton and Hove will be primary crewed, but the aerial appliances in Hastings and Eastbourne will be dual crewed. Can I ask what happens if the City appliance goes off the run through damage servicing or defect, will we still get a primary crewed aerial to cover the risk in the City from Hastings or Eastbourne like we do now? Also, if you do send the Aerial over from the dual crewed stations won't that take an appliance off the run at Hastings or Eastbourne which reduces fire cover in these areas, which increases the risk? (Individual staff member)</i></p>
<p><b>Changes to the four-watch duty system</b></p>	<p><i>Please could you take the time to answer the below questions that have been requested by Blue Watch Eastbourne....</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. How has the change to the flexible rostering duty system been assessed to be ‘more a family friendly work pattern’?</i></li> <li><i>2. To what extent has the impact of flexible rostering on dual contract staff been considered?</i></li> <li><i>3. How will flexible rostering not have a negative impact on teamwork and crew familiarity when crews will rotate on such a frequent basis, working with different people constantly?</i></li> </ol> <p><i>(Blue Watch, Eastbourne Fire Station)</i></p> <p><i>Hoping to consult with [name] this evening and I know they will ask me on Group crewing models, under this option, is there a decision on how many J.O's would be based at the single pump station in the City? There is a thought process that there would be a reduction across watches from 6 to 5 at the single stations under these proposals, would the reduction in watch establishment be a firefighter or a Junior officer Level? Secondly when do we expect the changes to the shift options to take place if the agreement is to move forward with a or b? Are you able to share the proposed timings over the next five years for the DC stations to move to DODS if agreed?</i></p> <p><i>Does The Ridge going day crewed mean that under 41 the station ground at 75 would in fact mean that 76 appliances would be called to respond to any calls , thus leaving 75 to only attend 3 pump calls in in the Hastings Area or provide the standby as a Pump that is available under the cluster Cover? (Individual staff member)</i></p>

<b>RDS recruitment</b>	<i>From the presentation, there appears to be a heavy reliance on retained crews to fill the gaps with evenings and weekends. Working on station, I am aware that current recruitment of RDS can be challenging. What would the financial impact be on the service for recruitment and training of the additional RDS crews. Does the service have capacity in terms of staff and premises for the training of the additional crews needed? If not, what would the additional financial implications be for providing? (Individual staff member)</i>
<b>Housing and demographics</b>	<p><i>Been reading ORR ... got a couple of questions below;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Whilst you breakdown housing type in our area, is there a National benchmark, so we can see how we compare to the national data sets with regards to building type and population density?</i></li> <li>• <i>Is there any National comparisons available with regards to building height i.e. number of high-rise dwellings?</i></li> <li>• <i>There is an absence of any information around officer attendance at incidents, surely this is a key part of our response to emergency incidents (including specialisms and specialist response), is there a reason for the absence of any data? I did some of this work a couple of decades ago after the Palmeria Avenue Fire and we had some of the highest HMO (buildings converted to flats) densities in Europe, even greater than London at that time.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Obviously, these questions are following the datasets made available through the NFCC Protection Board, which line us up with Metropolitan Services rather than our Family Group 2, this goes someway to explaining our higher than average AFAs, Lift Rescues and being coastal animal rescues. (Individual staff member)</i></p>
<b>Figures/data</b>	<p><i>The Service has presented Crowborough's risk profile detailing that between April 2013 &amp; March 2018 there have been 1,505 mobilisations to incidents by a Crowborough appliance. From the work that the local teams have undertaken, they have produced the following statistics which vary significantly from those produced by the Service. Could you please confirm if the Service figures include:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Cross border working</i></li> <li>2. <i>Standbys</i></li> <li>3. <i>Specialist Water Rescue calls</i></li> <li>4. <i>Animal Rescue Calls</i></li> <li>5. <i>Specialist Landrover calls</i></li> </ol> <p><i>There is disparity of 1000 calls which is of obvious significance to the team here and we would therefore welcome your advice on how the statistics are calculated. (Station 83, Crowborough)</i></p>
<b>Consultation process</b>	<p><i>As the IRMP process moved into Stage four on Thursday, we were hoping to arrange a meeting with yourselves to discuss the proposals of the IRMP. We have all seen the You Tube presentations, that are available to the general public, but it would be good to speak to someone, from the ORR Team. We were hoping that now the process has been given CFA approval for consultation, we could be told of any plans that you have on the table. Again, we have all seen the generic plans but now that we are at this stage, it would be good to have a bit more detail. Obviously, in these current times, it would need to be carried out "virtually". (Individual staff member)</i></p>

**General/  
Multiple  
themes**

Please could you provide answers for the following questions regarding the IRMP?

1. The IRMP states the new proposed fire engine for Bohemia Road will be available for 24/7 response, how is this possible under the shared crewing model? Is it not only available when the alp is not at an incident?
2. Will this new fire engine be quicker to The Ridge fire station at night than the day crewed staff there? If so, will that mean more calls for that appliance and even less availability of the alp there?
3. How will cover at The Ridge be maintained at night when there are members of the duty watch off sick?
4. Fires in the open: How will we cope with the increased number and likelihood of fires in the open like forest fires with less appliances and 4x4's? Crowborough could currently mobilise two appliances and a 4x4 to a fire on Ashdown Forest yet if these proposals go through, they could only mobilise one of these appliances and the next nearest 4x4 is also proposed to be removed?
5. Can you explain how the ORR plans to reduce standby moves? If the second appliances are removed from DC stations, as soon as the remaining appliance from these stations, or the station special(s), go out for the pre-determined time a standby appliance will be required. This must vastly increase required standby moves and because the DC stations will only be one appliance these 6 stations will no longer be useable for standby moves because they would automatically need backfilling? At the moment, providing the second appliance is available at these stations, the first appliance can fulfil standby moves but without these second appliances this resilience will be taken away.
6. Proposal 1 includes 6 RDS stations be allowed a longer turn out time for resilience purposes. Could this principle be applied to all current RDS stations/appliances?
7. How do you calculate the proposals to be a total net loss of 5 fire engines?
8. How many fire engines does Wadhurst currently have? The IRMP says it is classified as a two fire engine station yet CFO said it has only one fire engine?
9. How does the service propose to have no RDS redundancies? For example, Crowborough has 14 RDS firefighters, if there was only one appliance there and the remaining 6/7 DC WT staff all also took RDS contracts that would be 20/21 firefighters for one appliance?
10. When will the service release the details of proposal 7 option A? How can staff consult on this proposal without knowing the full details of which type of flexible rostering is being proposed?

(Individual staff member)

1. My question related to the wording in the IRMP for the new appliance at Bohemia Road. How can the new appliance be claimed to be available 24/7 if it doesn't have a dedicated crew? I appreciate the policy on how it will be crewed is yet to be written but if the crew for the appliance are committed to a call on an alternative appliance how will the new appliance remain available?
2. What is the predicted time it would take an appliance from Bohemia Road to attend a call at The Ridge Fire Station at night? What is the turnout time for a retained appliance at night? If the appliance from Bohemia Road will get to The Ridge fire station quicker than the appliance from The Ridge could turn out, then the appliance from Bohemia Road will be quicker to all calls that The Ridge would attend at night. This would also have a detrimental effect on the availability of the ALP at Bohemia Road.

3. *The IRMP states that Wadhurst, Seaford and Heathfield are currently classed as two fire engine stations. The IRMP proposes to change this so those stations will be classed as one fire engine stations. This is a reduction of one fire engine at each of the 3 stations so increases the total reduction to 10. Why are these 3 fire engines not included in the reduction figures released by ESFRS?*
4. *Swift Water Rescue – What is the services plan for response concerning incidents involving swift water rescues? As far as I can see, all other specialisms and associated appliances are mentioned within the IRMP but the SWR team isn't mentioned? Is it being removed? Is it being moved to an alternative station while keeping the same capabilities? Is it being moved to an alternative station while increasing the teams capabilities? Is it being moved to an alternative station while reducing the teams capabilities? Why isn't it mentioned in the IRMP?*
5. *Crowborough is a rapidly growing town with many new houses currently under construction and in the planning phase, there will be a minimum of 938 new houses built by 2023/24 which is double the amount of the last 9 years combined. Can you explain how these new houses won't automatically increase the risk in this area?*

*(Individual staff member)*

*Have local councils/authorities been consulted about future housing developments, proposed changes to built environments, infrastructure etc?*

*How many hours will the new Day only contracts be and how does this compare to the current DC?*

*Will those moving from DC to Day only contracts be financially impacted and if so how?*

*If crewing is being reduced at affected DC stations, what number of personnel will they be reduced to?*

*What is the purpose of the crewing pool?*

*The figure quoted for the crewing pool is 8 – this seems very low, how was this figure arrived at?*

*Is the proposal to replace the Aerial appliances with one standard model still being considered or will a crew still need to accompany an aerial if it moves to another station?*

*(Individual staff member)*

*Could I ask if there is a criteria on who specifically will be liberated from posts at the proposed stations if that is the direction it IRMP goes, for example if someone at a proposed station is already qualified within the mentioned areas of training/protection will they be more likely given notice that they are to be liberated and reassigned to the training or protection teams. Alternatively, if not is there a budget for the cost of retraining those liberated and if that is the case will there be a minimum time frame they have to hold that post? (Individual staff member)*

*Change always brings uncertainty and understandably there is concern from our whole-time colleagues about their future both financially and as to how their working environment may change. This has the potential to promote speculation and cause discontent between the different work groups, undoing a lot of hard work by myself and others into building and improving relationships.*

*Examples of questions I have been asked by RDS staff, reluctant to speak openly are:*

*Will RDS Staff be required to be on call every evening and weekend?*

*Are RDS staff putting whole time Firefighters out of their job by supporting these proposals?*

*I've been told only a limited number of On-Call positions will be required at each station and whole-time staff will be given first refusal on these to maintain their pay. Therefore, if these proposals go through, will I be out of a job?*

*We need to know more about the contract options available to RDS staff, as I've been told I'll be considerably worse off financially but expected to be available more with little or no flexibility.*

*Whilst I am confident these statements are misguided, I do not feel that I have been provided with enough information to rely the fears of my crew and I am concerned this may lead to greater anxiety, stress and potentially resignation of RDS staff across the County at this testing time. (Individual staff member)*

*I've been stopped several times in the streets of Hove & Brighton and asked the following. Please can you provide some guidance, as I wouldn't want to be accused of giving the whole story*

*Why are certain tweets being blanked out or deleted on the various East Sussex twitter feeds? (I'm unable to answer)*

*Several people have asked this question. Who much longer is longer for a fire engine to arrive- if I dial 999 in an emergency how long are you going to take? And they got no answer or were told to read the IRMP (which doesn't give a time)*

*You (i.e the fire service) put out information the other week, that certain parties weren't telling the whole story. Who is this and what have they said that's not factual or correct? Why does your IRMP/ Plan not make sense –its written in such a way that both a lawyer and baker have said they don't understand what certain parts mean and I was asked separately? And they've also both asked How long is longer? With no reply*

*I was also asked how many fire engines were in the city? And when I asked where they lived in the event of incident and they said a block of flats, so when I told them we send 6 fire engines as PDA to a block of flats (they asked what PDA meant, so I told them ) and they were shocked that a city as big as Brighton & Hove only had 4 fire engines but needs 6 for a block of flats and the figures don't add up- so perhaps you could tell me how I answer that . I also explain that we send 3 fire engines to a confirmed house fire and 2 to a car crash and they said the numbers didn't again add up. (So how am I meant to answer this) They were concerned as it was the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Grenfell Tower.*

*I also got asked about the big fire in Lancing / & the hotel In Eastbourne the other day and asked if we went, So people in Brighton and Hove are aware of the news.*

*One person said they saw Sky news and the MP's from Brighton on TV talking about the cuts, but nowhere in the letter they received or anything they've read talks about cuts, but it was clearly mentioned on the TV, and in the House of Commons.*

*One person was told to go away and read the IRMP- he told me he's got 2 degrees, one in English & one in engineering and it didn't make sense to them. So how are staff meant to answer these questions honestly? (Individual Staff Member)*

*Where in the IRMP does it make the workforce feel valued and supported?*

*Is there an example where the changes to On-call have been successful in another service that proves that the contracts and payments will work?*

*How are we going to guarantee 24-hour fire cover at current Day Crewed stations when WT are only providing day cover?*

*The latest Comms regarding payment scales for contracts are steered at On-call and take little account of WT at those DC stations.*

*Even during Covid-19 when many On-call staff are either working at home or on Furlough, still there has been very little positive impact on P4's on Day crewed. This illustrates the lack of depth in our staff at DC stations.*

*Where is the SWOT analysis on the IRMP proposals? It feels there are plenty of 'opportunities' but where is the other detail?*

*The 'performance impact' slide shows on station response versus on-call response, which are portrayed in percentages as opposed to times. Isn't there at least a 5-minute addition to turn out times when a call is received outside day crewed hours?*

*Concerns the IRMP is beyond the point of change*

*Pay protection v taking new contract? If WT take new contract will they still get pay protection?*

*Pay protection for those that have to drop their current RDS contract?*

*Implications of 4-hour rule?*

*How will it work for WT staff taking an On-call contract if they are out after midnight?*

*How would they decide who were being moved from stations if Watch sizes are reduced?  
(Red Watch and Green Watch, Uckfield Fire Station)*

*Question 1: Will on call staff be utilised to crew specials such as the Water Carrier throughout the weekdays?*

*Question 2: Will the service maintain current employment of on call Staff to be available during the day to crew mixed crew pumps anywhere in the county?*

*(Individual staff member)*

*Special appliances at on-call stations rely on trained personnel from that station. If that special appliance is then deployed, that station then goes off the run.*

*Will there ever be a point where on-call will be used for resilience pool at other on-call or day only duty stations?*

*(Mayfield Fire Station)*

# Appendix 4: templated questionnaire response

To whom it may concern:

Please find below my responses to the consultation questions regarding your “Planning for a Safer Future” proposals.

1. To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?

*Strongly disagree. I support the proposals to increase the number of ‘immediate response’ engines. But this must not be achieved by reducing the total number of ‘resilience’ fire engines as this would significantly increase risk across the whole of East Sussex.*

2. Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from ‘day crewed’ to ‘day only’ at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a ‘flexible crewing pool’ and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?

*Strongly disagree. On-call fire fighters are extremely hard to recruit, retain and train; relying on this unproven model to provide all evening and weekend cover is dangerous. And having all evening and weekend cover provided by a scratch crew who do not work and train together all the time would present an unacceptable risk to households, businesses and fire fighters.*

3. Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing system from ‘day crewed’ to ‘day only’ at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, if the crewing change is agreed by ESFRS, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?

*I strongly disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from ‘day crewed’ to ‘day only’, and therefore do not support either of the alternative options proposed.*

4. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?

*Strongly disagree. Removing second fire engines from seven fire stations will significantly increase call-out times, increase the risk that fire engines are not available to attend an incident, and unacceptably increase the risk to households, businesses and firefighters.*

5. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three “maxi-cab” stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations?

*Strongly disagree. Removing the “maxi cab” capability from Seaford and the other stations will reduce the effectiveness of the response, increase the time required to respond to larger incidents and increase the likelihood that fire engines will need to be called in from nearby fire stations, leaving them without cover.*

6. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?

*No opinion.*

7. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises?

*Strongly disagree. In the dense commercial areas at the centre of Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford (where buildings are often constructed of timber, other business next door, and often flats above) the quicker response from responding to AFAs is critical in avoiding loss of life and the spread of the fire to other businesses.*

8. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance?

*No opinion.*

9. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?

*Strongly disagree. If the animals/birds are not rescued by ESFRS there will be a much greater risk of the public / others trying to rescue trapped or dying animals and birds themselves without suitable equipment, putting themselves at considerable risk.*

10. Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)?

*Strongly disagree. Replacing permanent fire fighters with 'flexible' or 'scratch' crews increases risk unacceptably for the reasons given in response to Proposal 2, above.*

11. Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements at the 5 ESFRS fire stations listed above, if the crewing arrangements are changed, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?

*I strongly disagree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements, and therefore do not support either of the alternative options proposed.*

12. To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?

*Tend to agree. More building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety. But these must not come at the expense of front-line services.*

13. Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?

*The cuts are being proposed because of reductions / uncertainty in Government Grants. Central Government must provide assurances that Fire Service grants will not be reduced, so that the Fire Service can make proper plans for the future without the need to make these dangerous cuts to front-line services.*

*The policy of cutting front-line services has been shown to be a mistake by the Covid-19 crisis and the inability of the NHS to respond adequately; these proposals must therefore be reconsidered in the light of Covid-19.*

14. To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?

*Agree. ESFRS offers value for money currently. However, if implemented, these proposals would make such severe cuts in services that ESFRS would no longer offer value for money.*

15. In what ways do you think that ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future?

*ESFRS should be properly funded by central government.*

16. To what extent do you agree/disagree that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate?

*Tend to agree.*

## IRMP Media Coverage

### 20<sup>th</sup> April

- Eastbourne Herald- Online

<https://www.eastbourneherald.co.uk/news/people/major-changes-way-east-sussex-fire-service-2544064>

### 21<sup>st</sup> April

- Splash FM

[http://www.pressdata.co.uk/viewbroadcast.asp?a\\_id=20849624](http://www.pressdata.co.uk/viewbroadcast.asp?a_id=20849624)

- Splash FM

[http://www.pressdata.co.uk/viewbroadcast.asp?a\\_id=20864426](http://www.pressdata.co.uk/viewbroadcast.asp?a_id=20864426)

### 22<sup>nd</sup> April

- Brighton and Hove News

<https://www.brightonandhovenews.org/2020/04/22/fewer-jobs-and-flexible-rosters-proposed-by-fire-chiefs/>

### 23<sup>rd</sup> April

- The Argus

<https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/18394270.east-sussex-fire-authority-set-face-major-shake-up/>

### 24<sup>th</sup> April

- Splash FM

[http://www.pressdata.co.uk/viewbroadcast.asp?a\\_id=20871148](http://www.pressdata.co.uk/viewbroadcast.asp?a_id=20871148)

- Brighton and Hove News

<https://www.brightonandhovenews.org/2020/04/24/fire-chiefs-to-consult-on-shake-up-despite-coronavirus-concerns/>

- Eastbourne Herald (Paper Page 9)

[Calls for delay over 'drastic changes' to the fire service](#)

- Sussex Express (Paper Page 9)

[Delay 'drastic' changes to the fire service until after the pandemic say union chiefs](#)

### 27<sup>th</sup> April

- The Argus

<https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/18406814.east-sussex-firefighters-furious-proposed-cuts/>

- Uckfield News

<https://uckfieldnews.com/cuts-proposed-for-uckfield-fire-station/>

- Bexhill Observer

<https://www.bexhillobserver.net/news/politics/firefighters-union-warns-major-threat-public-safety-around-east-sussex-changes-2551694>

- **The Argus- (Paper- Page 9)**

[Firefighters up in arms](#)

- **Eastbourne Herald**

<https://www.eastbourneherald.co.uk/news/politics/firefighters-union-warns-major-threat-public-safety-around-east-sussex-changes-2551694>

- **Hastings Observer**

<https://www.hastingsobserver.co.uk/news/politics/firefighters-union-warns-major-threat-public-safety-around-east-sussex-changes-2551694>

- **Rye and Battle Observer**

<https://www.ryeandbattleobserver.co.uk/news/politics/firefighters-union-warns-major-threat-public-safety-around-east-sussex-changes-2551694>

- **Sussex Express**

<https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/news/politics/firefighters-union-warns-major-threat-public-safety-around-east-sussex-changes-2551694>

#### **28<sup>th</sup> April**

- **The Argus**

<https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/18410482.union-says-east-sussex-fire-service-changes-will-threaten-safety/>

- **BBC Sussex Radio**

[BBC Sussex 28 April 2020 18:02:13](#)

- **BBC Sussex Radio**

[BBC Sussex 28 April 2020 17:24:43](#)

- **Splash FM (Radio)**

[Splash FM 28 April 2020 11:00:46](#)

- **Splash FM (Radio)**

[Splash FM 28 April 2020 09:01:22](#)

#### **29<sup>th</sup> April**

- **The Argus (Letters)**

<https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/18411482.letter-no-justification-cuts-fire-service-east-sussex/>

- **The Argus**

[Union says East Sussex fire service changes will threaten safety \(Web\) \(pdf\)](#)

- **BBC Sussex (Radio)**

[BBC Sussex 29 April 2020 07:03:39](#)

- **Heart (Kent) Radio**

[Heart Kent 29 April 2020 06:31:54](#)

- **Heart (Sussex) Radio**

[Heart Sussex 29 April 2020 06:31:47](#)

- **The Argus (Paper)**

[Do they care at all?](#)

- **BBC Sussex (Radio)**

[BBC Sussex 29 April 2020 16:01:54](#)

#### **1<sup>st</sup> May**

- **Kent & Sussex Courier (Paper)**

[Union's safety warning over sweeping changes planned for fire service](#)

- **Eastbourne Herald**

[Fire service denies claims.](#)

#### **4<sup>th</sup> May**

- **Brighton Argus**

[Fire service changes 'will threaten safety'](#)

#### **8<sup>th</sup> May**

- **Eastbourne Herald**

<https://www.eastbourneherald.co.uk/news/opinion/letters/consequences-cuts-fire-service-could-be-dire-2846573>

- **Eastbourne Herald**

['Some very positive proposals' in fire and rescue service's new plan](#)

#### **11<sup>th</sup> May**

- **The Argus (paper)**

['Public too busy to be consulted on fire service'](#)

#### **18<sup>th</sup> May**

- **Splash FM**

[Splash FM 18 May 2020 18:02:38](#)

#### **21<sup>st</sup> May**

- **ITV Meridian**

[ITV1 Meridian South East 21 May 2020 18:12:37](#)

#### **22<sup>nd</sup> May**

- **Kent & Sussex Courier**

['Damaging' fire service cuts will 'cost lives' warns union](#)

- **The Argus**

[Firefighters are furious](#)

### 23<sup>rd</sup> May

- **Hastings Observer**

[Major changes on way for East Sussex fire service \(Web\) \(pdf\)](#)

- **The Argus**

[East Sussex firefighters furious over planned cuts \(Web\) \(pdf\)](#)

- **Sussex Express**

['Now is not the right time,' MPs tell fire chiefs](#)

### 2<sup>nd</sup> June

- **BBC Sussex**

[BBC Sussex 02 June 2020 15:00:25](#)

### 3<sup>rd</sup> June

- **BBC Sussex**

[BBC Sussex 03 June 2020 16:57:40](#)

[BBC Sussex 03 June 2020 13:02:19](#)

### 11<sup>th</sup> June

- **The Argus**

[ESFRS cuts could put lives at risk, Labour councillors warn \(Web\) \(pdf\)](#)

### 12<sup>th</sup> June

- **The Argus**

[Fire service changes 'increase safety risk'](#)

- **Eastbourne Herald**

[Firefighters fear sweeping changes will cause 'unnecessary loss of life'](#)

- **Sussex Express**

['No confidence' vote Family backs Chailey Heritage in fire service plans](#)

### 16<sup>th</sup> June

- **BBC Sussex**

[BBC Sussex 16 June 2020 07:04:27](#)

[BBC Sussex 16 June 2020 19:28:48](#)

[BBC Sussex 16 June 2020 10:03:00](#)

### 19<sup>th</sup> June

- **BBC Sussex**

[BBC Sussex 19 June 2020 07:22:56](#)

[BBC Sussex 19 June 2020 06:01:32](#)

- **Bexhill on Sea Observer**

[Village Voices](#)

- **Eastbourne Herald**

[Consultation on fire service plan ending](#)

- **Sussex Express**

[Village News](#)

- **Sussex Express**

[Heathfield objects strongly to cuts in fire services](#)

### **25<sup>th</sup> June**

- **The Argus**

[Stuck in a lift? There may be a fee if fire cuts go ahead](#)

### **26<sup>th</sup> June**

- **The Argus**

[East Sussex Fire and Rescue cuts, explained \(Web\) \(pdf\)](#)

- **Sussex Express**

[Call to scrap planned fire service cuts](#)

### **7<sup>th</sup> July**

- **Bexhill Observer**

[Unpopular changes to East Sussex's fire and rescue service being redrawn \(Web\) \(pdf\)](#)

- **Eastbourne Herald**

[Unpopular changes to East Sussex's fire and rescue service being redrawn \(Web\) \(pdf\)](#)

- **Hastings Observer**

[Unpopular changes to East Sussex's fire and rescue service being redrawn \(Web\) \(pdf\)](#)

- **Rye & Battle Observer**

[Unpopular changes to East Sussex's fire and rescue service being redrawn \(Web\) \(pdf\)](#)

- **Sussex Express**

[Unpopular changes to East Sussex's fire and rescue service being redrawn \(Web\) \(pdf\)](#)

- **The Argus**

[East Sussex Fire Service changes 'to be modified' \(Web\) \(pdf\)](#)

- **Splash FM**

[Splash FM 07 July 2020 15:04:34](#)

[Splash FM 07 July 2020 13:04:01](#)

### 8<sup>th</sup> July

- **The Argus**

[Controversial changes to fire service 'are being modified'](#)

### 10<sup>th</sup> July

- **Kent & Sussex Courier**

[Controversial changes to the fire service are being redrawn](#)

- **Eastbourne Herald**

[Revised plans for future of county's fire and rescue service a 'vast improvement'](#)

- **Sussex Express**

[Fire plans to be 'redrawn'](#)

[Unpopular fire service changes to be redrawn](#)

[Unpopular fire service changes to be redrawn](#)

### 17<sup>th</sup> July

- **Bexhill Observer**

[Major crewing changes at Bexhill's fire station won't go ahead \(Web\) \(pdf\)](#)

- **Eastbourne Herald**

[Major crewing changes at Eastbourne's fire station dropped \(Web\) \(pdf\)](#)

- **Hastings Observer**

[Hastings fire station still set to be downgraded \(Web\) \(pdf\)](#)

- **Rye & Battle Observer**

[Crewing changes at Battle's fire station still going ahead \(Web\) \(pdf\)](#)

- **Sussex Express**

[Crewing changes at Lewes and Wealden fire stations won't go ahead \(Web\) \(pdf\)](#)

- **Splash FM**

[Splash FM 17 July 2020 18:01:41](#)

[Splash FM 17 July 2020 17:01:10](#)

### 21<sup>st</sup> July

- **The Argus**

[Changes to the fire service are scaled back after outcry](#)

### 22<sup>nd</sup> July

- **The Argus**

[East Sussex fire Service will see changes and jobs lost \(Web\) \(pdf\)](#)

# Equalities Impact Assessment

## Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020 - 2025

An Equalities Impact Assessment or EqIA involves analysing the effect, or potential effect, of the way we do our business upon groups that share protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

This requires us to look at the equality data which we capture or have access to and to consider the outcome of our community engagement. We need to assess whether our policies and practices show “due regard” for the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) listed below.

***The analysis should highlight effects that increase equality, decrease equality, or have no impact upon equality across the protected characteristics.*** Its purpose is not just to paint a picture, but to identify practical steps to improve our performance by:

- a) Eliminating any unlawful discrimination,
- b) Advancing equality of opportunity and
- c) Fostering good relations between different groups.

### **The equality statement for this assessment:**

*Clearly explain and provide supporting evidence to show how the policy/activity satisfies the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and DOES NOT cause or have the potential to cause a NEGATIVE (detrimental) effect:*

The ESFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2020 – 2025 addresses the need for transformational change within East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS). East Sussex Fire Authority (ESFA) and ESFRS have consulted widely on their proposals for change within the “Planning for a Safer Future” IRMP and is responding with a wide-ranging change programme linking in seamlessly with our new Leadership Framework, Inspection Improvement Plan and improvements to Protection Services through the outcomes of both the Hackett Review and independent review into the Grenfell Tower fire. These significant challenges require a workforce which can respond positively to deliver the changes needed.

The role of ESFRS in an environment brought about by the Policing and Crime Act 2016, has implications for professional development, well-being, and organisational culture. The IRMP Implementation Plan which this EqIA supports, will seek to advance cultural change through individual leadership skills required by all members of the organisation during each phase of definition, design and delivery, attracting a diversity of thought and knowledge. Within the IRMP Implementation Plan, seven key workstreams have been identified to help define and plan improvements:

1. Ensure the provision of 18 frontline fire appliances before demand/ at the start of each day
2. Introduce changes to our current 2-Watch Wholetime Day-crewed duty system including a one-Watch, flexible rostering/variable crewing system at 7 Stations including the reclassified fire station at The Ridge in Hastings and 5-day week at Battle Fire Station
3. Remove seven low-activity fire appliances designated as PAPA4 from six Day-crewed and one On-call stations whilst re-introducing 3 operational spares at Battle, Newhaven and Crowborough
4. Implement changes across the two Hastings fire stations including the introduction of an additional frontline fire appliance designated PAPA2 at Bohemia Road and the reclassification of The Ridge fire station from a 4-Watch 24/7 to the new-look one-Watch Day-crewed duty system
5. Complete a review of Specialist appliances and teams including a “Shared” Crewing Policy for specialist appliances exclusive of two Aerial appliances at Preston Circus and Bohemia Road Fire Stations

6. Withdraw extant IRMP decisions from 2013 and extant SLT decisions from 2018 and implement robust demand management plans and;
7. Implement a “Group Crewing” system to improve the efficient use of our resources at the three fire stations across the City of Brighton and Hove.

The 2020 – 2025 IRMP, through its identified improvements will also seek to:

- Strengthen Leadership and Line Management to support organisational change and improved community outcomes
- Developing cultural values and behaviours which make the Fire & Rescue Service a great place to work for all our people
- Ways of working that are able to respond to service needs
- Provide excellent training and education to ensure continuous improvement of services to the public
- Continue to support the Health and Well-being of all our people
- Strengthen our ability to provide good service by diversifying our staff and creating a fair & equal place to work

The definition and design stages for each of these detailed individual work programmes, as they are built, will identify the provision of inclusivity that overtly demonstrates:

- A compelling vision, taking people with them
- Leading across boundaries
- Utilising high levels of emotional intelligence in order to influence a shared mission or goal
- Being in the present, but horizon scanning for the future
- Promoting and developing distributed leadership
- Acting as an advocate for learning through practice whilst creating and sustaining a learning environment
- Embracing diversity, innovation and being open to alternative views
- Demonstrating and promoting compassion for self and others, with a focus on improvement and accountability

As such, the areas that are surfaced through this overarching EqIA will ensure that developed programs for change can demonstrate due regard to the elimination of any unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between different groups as is required.

The IRMP Strategic Implementation Board and the work within the implementation plan will be monitored and evidenced against its 7 overarching objectives and the characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010, as applicable.

- a. There will be a blended learning approach to ensure learning needs are met
- b. **Involvement from a range of stakeholders is crucial as it is a proven principle that people tend to support what they create. Co-production throughout the definition and design phase will be key to embedding and facilitating continuous improvement.**
- c. Working with and learning from partners who have a proven track record in leading organisational/transformational change will be also be vital

## Who?

This EqIA has been constructed by an Officer attached to the Operational Response Review on behalf of the Strategic Project Sponsor, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer. The intention of this EqIA as outlined above is to establish any serious impacts across all 7 proposals that would present a barrier of such significance to render the proposal(s) unfeasible for ESFRS to implement.

Far more detailed and individual People Impact Assessments that additionally assess the impact of equality in regard to the 9 protected characteristics on any member of staff or customers that the change suggests, will be completed by delegated leaders within the existing ESFRS network of Action Learning Sets.

The modified proposals/ Combined Fire Authority IRMP decisions affect all ESFRS Firefighter to Watch Manager (inclusive) roles and the community they serve regardless of the PC's.

### **Negative impacts on any protected characteristic?**

As planned, the draft IRMP communications plan supported by its own separate EqIA enabled the most productive set of IRMP returns ESFRS has ever received. At this time there is little evidence, emerging or otherwise that shows that there are any negative impacts on any of the 9 PC's other than what the initial and subsequent revisions of the overarching EqIA found:

1. Disability: In effective communication of change to staff/ customers with a neurodisability. The ORR Communications Plan took account of this and the new IRMP Implementation Communications Plan will need to repeat and improve this and; Employees who are the primary Carers for their family may be disadvantaged during the short to medium term of a new duty system resulting from being part of an institutionalised workforce having to make alternative care arrangements for disabled family (members of the community) at some considerable expense.
2. Gender: In disadvantaging female members of staff who may be adversely affected by the changes to Wholetime duty systems based on the national statistic that 70% of all carers are female. Greater analysis of this noting the modified proposal to NOT include the changes to 24/7 "Shift" stations is necessary as the impact still exists for existing female Firefighter – Watch Manager inclusive who work at any one of the Stations impacted by a change to the Day-crewed duty system (DCDS). Wholetime female FF-WM's on or wishing to transfer to a DC Station must be individually assessed to establish the impacts of change.

Notwithstanding this, the full analysis of the IRMP consultation process is being included within the Combined Fire Authority report noting that there have been a number of counters to the original draft proposals and any equalities data that has arisen has been assessed.

### **Positive impacts on a protected characteristic?**

How do any of the 7 main proposals positively affect staff or fire and rescue service customers?

1. ORP – This increases the number and spread of immediately available frontline fire engines across the County from 15 to 18, improving cover to deal with fire and rescue related emergencies being experienced by any of our customers, including those with any of the 9 PC's. Fact identified within ORR Main Report published 2020.
2. Flexible Resourcing Pool – The introduction of the FRP will present the opportunity for any existing staff and newly transferred in to consider the flexible nature of this crewing system as a positive lifestyle choice fitting in with Age (as our workforce profile increases) and gender (Carers) and other underrepresented groups. However, greater research and analysis for this is required to establish the veracity of this claim during and when implemented.
3. Enhancements to On-call duty systems - This will require greater recruitment, some of whom may have been disadvantaged by the inflexibility of the extant RDS and contracts. Greater/ongoing monitoring and analysis of this claim is required.
4. DCDS – A flexible rostering or variable crewing system may be attractive to underrepresented groups/carers regardless of gender/gender assignment. Greater research and analysis for this is required.

5. DODS - A Day-only duty system may be attractive to underrepresented groups. Greater research and analysis for this is required.

### Findings & effects?

At this time, there still remains two PC's which require the ESFA and ESFRS to maintain cognisance of with regards to the definition and design of future policy and ways of working should the CFA choose to implement ANY changes (disclosed neurodisability requiring better, specific means for communicating change and alleviating anxiety), and gender with regards to duty systems at Day-crewed Stations. As more detailed information from the consultation process emerges, it will be analysed within a revised EqIA. Below is the headline data currently available from consultations dealt with in-house (See attached appendix infographic):

- 177 Stakeholder Groups contacted
- 156 of these overtly E&D specific with no specific observations in relation to the 9 PC's
- 87 Business contacts
- 70 Emergency Services
- 7 Local education establishments
- 13 VIP's/ MP's etc.
- Libraries left out due to CIVID restrictions
- 86 Parish Councils
- 137 Councillors and Administrative support
- 799 Survey responses – (refer to infographic)
- 498 Email responses
- 21 Telephone responses
- 69 registrations of interest to the Stakeholder webinar – 38 attended (04/06/20)
- 26 paper copy requests (postal)
- 31 staff questions
- 3 local engagement with town council

Media/ Social media will be reported more fully at a later stage but includes:

- Several press-releases/ newspaper articles/ PO interviews
- Several social media responses/interaction etc.

### Other outcomes so far:

- All staff who may be placed at risk of a move from their current workplace or role will be treated equitably and within the processes identified in current ESFRS HR Policies
- Over 65s over-represented in the responses - about 60% more than one would expect which was pleasing to see, as some of our targeting methods were to our more elderly households
- Potential negative impact under Disability and Gender remains valid with amended proposals. However it is subject to the implementation of a planned and proactive communication and training strategy to control adverse impacts on disabled staff or customers, and female primary carers. This must ensure that any member of staff or customer, particularly individuals with a neurodiverse condition or those who perform the role of primary carer have every opportunity to be informed of changes and the personal options open to them.

This EIA will continue to be reviewed with relevant stakeholders and any matters arising will be recorded for action in consideration of any existing, new or emerging data.

### Outcomes of an assessment

There are three, more than one of which may apply to a single policy or practice:

- **Outcome 1: No major change**

The assessment demonstrates the policy is robust; there is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.

- **Outcome 2: Adjust the policy, practice, procedure or plan**

The assessment identifies potential problems or missed opportunities whereby the policy or practice needs to be adjusted in order to remove barriers or better promote equality.

- **Outcome 3: Stop and remove the policy, practice, procedure or plan**

The policy or practice shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. It must be stopped and removed or changed.

### Equality Impact Analysis Record (Inclusion Risk and Benefits)

This form should be completed in conjunction with EIA Tip Sheet and Key EIA Considerations

#### Part 1 – The Document

1.	Name of Policy, Procedure, Activity, Decision or Service:	ESFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020 – 2025 revised/ amended proposals following consultation. The evidence in this EqIA is evolving. At the time of writing, full details have not emerged from ORS and fuller, more detailed analysis will inform the next review in late August/ early September.		
	Status of PPADS (please tick)	<input type="checkbox"/> NEW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNDER REVIEW	<input type="checkbox"/> CHANGING <input type="checkbox"/> EXISTING
2.	a) Main purpose of PPADS:	<p><b>This EIA is made in support of the range of changes proposed for the 2020-2025 IRMP:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational Resilience Plan</li> <li>• Crewing Pool</li> <li>• On-call Combined Salary Contracts</li> <li>• On-call Flexible Contracts</li> <li>• FRDS/VCDS at 5 DC Stns (9 staff)</li> <li>• FRDS/VCDS at 1 DC Stn (7 staff)</li> <li>• Removal of DC P4's</li> <li>• Re-classify Maxi-cabs to P1</li> <li>• Replace P4's with Op spares</li> <li>• New P2 to Bohemia Rd</li> <li>• Reclassify The Ridge to a DC Stn FRDS/VCDS (9 staff)</li> <li>• Relocation &amp; revision of Special appliances/ Teams</li> <li>• Group Crewing at 3 24/7 Shift Stns across Brighton &amp; Hove</li> </ul>	b) Project Manager and Process owner:	ORR Project Board – then transferred responsibility to the IRMP Strategic Implementation Board
	c. Project/processes this PPADS is linked to:	ESFRS Operational Response Review 2019-20 ESFRS Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025 (Modified proposals)		
3.	List the information, data or evidence used in this analysis:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESFRS diversity data</li> <li>• ACAS Research paper - Neurodiversity at work 09/2016</li> <li>• CIPD Neurodiversity at work Guide 02/2018</li> <li>• ORR End-of-Stage 1 Main Report</li> <li>• ORR Individual Station Risk Profiles</li> <li>• Draft IRMP Consultation data</li> <li>• HM Treasury - Public Service Pension Scheme EqIA July 2020</li> <li>• NFCC draft EqIA template</li> </ul>		

Part 2 - Analysis				
Characteristics	Neutral Impact (x)	Negative Impact* (Risk Assess & score)	Positive Impact (x)	Narrative Section, detail below why and how you scored impact, you should consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the risks &amp;/or negatives, benefits and or opportunities to that Protected Characteristic?</li> <li>You <u>will</u> need evidence to support your analysis.</li> </ul>
A person of a particular age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 x 2 = 2 (LOW) This subjective assessment indicating a positive impact reflects the potentially attractive nature of a flexible working pattern identified within the Flexible Resourcing Pool and/or FRDS/VCDS. Other Workstreams are assessed as neutral at this time as no evidence to the contrary has emerged.
A disabled person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 x 2 = 2 (LOW) This subjective assessment is based on the nationally recognised statistic of the average number of employed staff with a neurodisability across a workforce and the actual number of declared within ESFRS as a percentage.
A person of a particular sex, male or female	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 x 2 = 2 (LOW) This objective assessment is based on the nationally recognised statistic stating that on average 70% of carers are female,
Pregnancy, Maternity, Marriage or Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This Workstream is assessed as neutral at this time as no evidence to the contrary has emerged.
A person of a gay, lesbian or bisexual sexual orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This Workstream is assessed as neutral at this time as no evidence to the contrary has emerged.
A person of a particular race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This Workstream is assessed as neutral at this time as no evidence to the contrary has emerged.
A person of a particular religion or belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This Workstream is assessed as neutral at this time as no evidence to the contrary has emerged.
Transgender a person whose gender identity/expression does not make their assigned sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This Workstream is assessed as neutral at this time as no evidence to the contrary has emerged.
<b>Community considerations</b> Application across communities or associated with socio-economic factors considering the 10 dimensions of Equality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 x 2 = 2 (LOW) This subjective assessment indicating a positive impact reflects the evidence presented in the ORR modelling for the ORP (modified proposal 1) where greater emergency response cover is provided for longer periods of time, notably where socio-economic factors are prevalent.
Criminal convictions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This Workstream is assessed as neutral at this time as no evidence to the contrary has emerged.
Rural living	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 x 2 = 2 (LOW) This subjective assessment indicating a positive impact reflects the evidence presented in the ORR modelling for the ORP (modified proposal 1) where greater emergency response cover is provided for longer periods of time. Existing standards are not made worse.
Human rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This Workstream is assessed as neutral at this time as no evidence to the contrary has emerged.

## Part 3 – The results

	Yes	No	
Are some people benefiting more than others? If so explain who and why.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Any staff or customer with neurominority conditions will not be disadvantaged or discriminated against <u>subject to a planned, proactive communications strategy that provides sufficient time and detail in a range of formats to mitigate.</u> Subject to agreement of amended proposals by the CFA, all decisions will be defined and designed in cognizance of robust People Impact Assessments that will stimulate more detailed and specific EqlA's in regard to each workstream.
Are one or more negative scores in <b>Medium</b> or <b>High</b> ? (See guidance)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

## Part 4 - Consultation, decisions and actions

If medium or high range results were identified who was consulted and what recommendations were given?

None at this time - N/A

Describe the overall decision on this Policy, Procedure, Activity, Service or Decision:

1. **Maintain this EqlA by reviewing available I&D data and assessing the impacts to the 9 x protected characteristics**
2. **Maintain action point list and use emerging data in the definition and design stages of each IRMP workstream as a structured agenda item**

## Part 5 – Sign Off

Created by (Print Name): MATTHEW ELDER

Department: PLANNING & INTELLIGENCE TEAM

Signature\*\*  (electronic/ by email)

Date: 20/08/2020 (5<sup>th</sup> review)

To be completed by Equalities Team

Signature\*\*

EIA number:

Assessment date:

Review date:

\*\* Please type your signature to allow forms to be sent electronically\*\*

The overall outcome for this EqIA is:

**Outcome 2: To adjust the policy, practice, procedure or plan. “The assessment identifies potential problems or missed opportunities whereby practices need to be adjusted in order to remove barriers or better promote equality.”**

Part 6 - Equality Improvement Plan				
Issues Area of adverse impact and Reasons	Solution Action What can be done to mitigate impact, what can be done to obtain further information	Responsibility/Lead Manager Who will be responsible for this action	Target Timescales When will this be completed Financial factors	Comments Corporate Risk Factors
<p><b>Disability:</b> Employees who are the primary Carers for their family may be disadvantaged during the short to medium term of a new duty system resulting from being part of an institutionalised workforce having to make alternative care arrangements with some considerable expense.</p> <p><b>Gender:</b> National statistics show that 99% of primary carers are female. Changes to duty systems may have short to medium term disadvantageous impacts as above</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Pace of change:</b> Dependent on numbers of staff leaving the DCDS through natural turnover from 12 to 11 to 10 before swapping to FRDS/VCDS.</li> <li>Identify real or perceived barriers and the solutions to either remove or provide adjustments using consultation responses, direct investigation with staff/ Action Learning Sets and Peer review</li> <li>Review Policy docs related to each change and area of adverse impact/ evidence emerging</li> </ol>	<p>Senior Responsible Officer for IRMP Implementation with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme Manager</li> <li>PIA Lead/ Action Learning Set</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30.3.20 - then as per specific delivery timeframe for each IRMP workstream.</li> <li>No financial factors identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Litigation based on negligence</li> <li>Reputational following litigation/ investigations into discriminatory practice</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disability:</b> Neurodiverse conditions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct communications article in consideration of ND for publication across a range of media explaining the proposals for change</li> <li>Identify any real or perceived barriers and the solutions to either remove or provide adjustments using consultation responses, direct investigation with staff/ Action Learning Sets and Peer review</li> <li>Review Policy docs related to each change and in consideration of area of adverse impact/ evidence emerging</li> </ol>	<p>Senior Responsible Officer for IRMP Implementation with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme Manager</li> <li>PIA Lead/ Action Learning Set</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>31.3.20 – then as per each specific delivery timeframe for each of the IRMP workstreams.</li> <li>Dependent upon the adjustments which need to be implemented based upon who declares their ND condition. May include equipment, staff costs etc.</li> </ul>	

## Risk Matrix

Fatalities	5	10	15	20	25
Major	4	8	12	16	20
Serious	3	6	9	12	15
Minor	2	4	6	8	10
Negligible	1	2	3	4	5
↑ <b>Severity</b>	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Moderate	Likely	Very likely
	<b>Likelihood</b> →				

Page 961

Low Risk	Adequate control measures are needed that are proportionate to the level of risk
Moderate Risk	More effort is needed to identify appropriate control measures
High Risk	Considerable effort is needed to identify sufficient control measures to reduce the risk, and/or the benefit of the activity has to be high (e.g. life-saving measures)

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## APPENDIX J

**Overall staffing changes: Original\* Vs Modified Proposals**  
 (\*predicated on proposal 2 option B and proposal 7 option B)

Station (Shift)	Current Establishment	Original IRMP Proposal*	Modified Proposals
Bohemia Road	36	44	52
The Ridge	24	12 (Day crewed)	9 (day crewed)
Eastbourne	44	44	44
Roedean	24	20	20
Preston Circus	56	60	60
Hove	24	20	20
Total	208	200	205
Change across shift stations + / -		- 8	- 3
- 2 posts transferred to Business Safety in the City			- 1

Station (DC)	Current Establishment	Original IRMP Proposal*	Modified position
Bexhill	12	7	9
Newhaven	12	7	9
Crowborough	12	7	9
Lewes	12	7	9
Uckfield	12	7	9

Battle	9	7	7
Total	69	42	52
Change across day crewed stations +/-		- 27	- 17
Overall change (shift plus day crewed)		- 35	- 18
Minus 8 posts transferred into flexible crewing pool		8	8
Total number of posts released providing FA flexibility		- 27	- 10