

Policy & Resources Panel

21 July 2022



Membership:

Councillors: Peltzer Dunn (Chairman), Evans, Galley, Lambert, Maples and Taylor

You are requested to attend this meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, East Sussex County Council, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes BN7 1UE at 11.30 am

Quorum: 3

Contact:	Ellie Simpkin, Democratic Services Officer 01323 462085 democraticservices@esfrs.org
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Agenda

1. 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.

2. Apologies for Absence/Substitutions

3. 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.

4. Minutes of the last Policy & Resources meeting held on 12 May 2022 5 - 10

5. Callover

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 Panel to adopt without debate the recommendations and resolutions contained in

the relevant reports for those items which have not been called.

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|-----------|--|------------------|
| 6. | Provisional Revenue Budget & Capital Programme Outturn 2021/22 | 11 - 42 |
| | Report of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer | |
| 7. | Revenue Budget & Capital Programme Monitoring 2022/23 | 43 - 60 |
| | Report of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer | |
| 8. | Fire Authority Response - Home Office White Paper "Reforming Our Fire & Rescue Service" | 61 - 118 |
| | Report of the Senior Democratic Services Officer | |
| 9. | Provision of Occupation Health Service | 119 - 124 |
| | Report of the Assistant Director People Services | |

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

Date of Publication: 13 July 2022

Information for the public

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POLICY & RESOURCES PANEL

Minutes of the meeting of the POLICY & RESOURCES PANEL held at County Hall, East Sussex County Council, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes BN7 1UE at 11.30 am on Thursday, 12 May 2022.

Present: Councillors Peltzer Dunn (Chairman), Evans, Galley, Lambert and Taylor

Also present: D Whittaker (Chief Fire Officer), D Norris (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), M Matthews (Assistant Chief Fire Office), D Savage (Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer), H Scott-Youlton (Assistant Director Operational Support & Resilience), J King (Assistant Director Safer Communities), L Woodley (Deputy Monitoring Officer), J Olliver (Payroll, Pensions & HR Assurance Manager) and E Simpkin (Democratic Services Officer)

31 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

32 Apologies for Absence/Substitutions

Apologies were received from Councillor Powell.

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

There were none.

34 Minutes of the last Policy & Resources meeting held on 20 January 2022

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Panel held on 20 January 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

35 Callover

Members reserved the following items for debate:

36. Revenue and Capital Budget 2021/22 and Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26 Monitoring at Month 11
37. Capital Programme Revision
38. Update on the Developing Situation on Firefighters' Pension Schemes (FPS) Age Discrimination, Remedy & Immediate Detriment

Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Policy & Resources Panel

40. Update on the Developing Situation on Firefighters' Pension Schemes (FPS) Age Discrimination, Remedy & Immediate Detriment – Confidential Appendices

36 Revenue and Capital Budget 2021/22 and Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26 Monitoring at Month 11

The Panel considered a report of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer (ADR/T) on the findings of the month 11 monitoring undertaken on the Revenue and Capital Budget 2021/22 and Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26.

The Panel noted that with regard to the revenue budget, an underspend to the sum of £264,000 had been identified which was a reduction in underspend of £124,000 from the position identified in the last report to the Panel. This was mainly due to vacancies across the Service, the identification of underspends within Information Technology Governance, Finance and Operational Support & Resilience, offset by overspends in relation to being over establishment in wholetime staff, overtime, Deputy Chief Fire Officer recruitment, additional allowances for Logistics & Control Support staff, ill health retirements, firefighter recruitment, occupational health and the staff pay award. Section 31 and Tax Income Guarantee grants received had been higher than anticipated and the transfer of £136,000 from reserves to cover budgetary pressures was no longer required. The Capital plans for 2021/22 had been reviewed and slippage on the delivery of projects to the value of £511,000 (19.2%) was reported. This was primarily due to further delays within Engineering due to the global supply issues. Additionally, an underspend of £40,000 was expected against capital schemes which comprised £55,000 underspend in Engineering and £15,000 (spend in advance) overspend in Estates. Further details on the Revenue and Capital programme risks were detailed in the report.

The Panel queried whether further action could be taken to help mitigate and manage the capital programme slippage, accepting that there were national supply chain issues which were beyond the Service's control. The ADR/T agreed that the delays were very frustrating, especially given that some projects had reached the point of delivery. The tender for the first design guide project at Hove Fire Station had come in over budget but options had been identified through a process of value engineering and additional consultation was taking place on these options. There was a degree of risk and uncertainty with regard to the outcome of tenders and lessons were being learnt for projects at Eastbourne, Roedean and Bohemia Road stations. It was important that all projects were phased appropriately and carried out within the capacity of operational requirements. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) added that the delivery targets were ambitious targets and there may be a need to rebaseline some projects, for example, there were long delays in vehicles build times. He added that it was important to manage expectations and engage with staff to make sure the challenges were fully understood.

Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Policy & Resources Panel

RESOLVED: That the Policy and Resources Panel noted:

- (i) the risks to Revenue Budget and the projected underspend;
- (ii) the risks to the Capital Programme;
- (iii) the reduced net forecast drawdown from reserves;
- (iv) the grants available and spending plans;
- (v) the monitoring of savings taken in 2021/22; and
- (vi) the current year investments and borrowing.

37 Capital Programme Revision

The Panel received a report from the ADR/T which sought approval of changes to the Capital Programme. The ADR/T explained that subsequent to the Authority's approval of the Capital Programme for 2022/23 to 2026/27 an error in the Estates Capital Programme had been identified. This error was due to an omission of a line covering general capital schemes which were essential for the maintenance and operation of the Service's fire stations. The additional cost of reinstating these schemes into the Capital Programme was £1.814m. There would also be a revenue cost as a result rising to £0.103m per annum by 2026/27.

The ADR/T offered his reassurance that the Finance Improvement Plan which was currently being implemented would increase capacity within the Finance team, as would the development of the Estates Shared Service, allowing necessary capital planning to be carried out earlier in the budget setting process and for robust checks and review before the capital programme proposals were submitted for approval.

The report additionally sought agreement for an increase in the Capital Programme of £0.214m to fund temperature control works in the new sleeping arrangements for staff at the Service's five wholetime stations, ensuring that they would be fit for purpose. This proposal had been agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and would be funded by the unbudgeted income from successful challenges to the business rates levied on Service buildings. There would be no net additional borrowing.

RESOLVED: That the Panel:

- (i) noted the reasons set out in the report for the increase in the Capital Programme;
- (ii) approved the increase in the Capital Programme of £0.721m in 2022/23 and £2.016m in total over five years; and

Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Policy & Resources Panel

(iii) noted the assessment of the revenue budget impact for 2022/23 and revenue pressure in subsequent years.

38 Update on the Developing Situation on Firefighters' Pension Schemes (FPS) Age Discrimination, Remedy & Immediate Detriment

The Panel received a report from the Assistant Director People Services (ADPS) which provided a further update on recent advice received from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) regarding the processing of retirements under the Immediate Detriment Framework.

The Panel noted that following a response from HM Treasury to the Firefighters' Pensions England Scheme Advisory Board (SAB), that NFCC had written to all Fire & Rescue Services on Immediate Detriment (ID). The letter from the Treasury had clarified and expanded on their assessment of the risks facing Services and scheme members who make payments under ID, without the statutory instruments and full guidance from HMRC in place. This information had led to a decision the Chief Fire Officer, after consultation with the other statutory officers, to pause the processing of Category 1 cases under ID in advance of full consideration of the matter by the Panel. The Panel was asked to consider the position from NFCC and Treasury advice and decide whether to continue the processing of Category 1 cases.

The ADR/T reminded the Panel that at its meeting in January 2022 it had taken the decision to pause the processing of Category 2 cases but continue with Category 1 cases for those coming up to retirement. There had been a range of risks considered in taking that decision. It was noted that there had still not been any revised tax regulation and there was now clear advice from the Treasury about the risks in connection to the payment of Category 1 cases. The ADR/T added that the number of services paying ID was dwindling. The CFO highlighted the huge level of frustration felt across the sector and reiterated that the Service would do its utmost to support its workforce and continue to sign post staff to available information.

The Panel agreed that, regrettably, given the latest advice there was no other not option but to pause the processing of Category 1 cases.

RESOLVED: That the Panel:

- i) agreed to pause the processing of Category 1 cases under ID entirely until the Full Home Office remedy is published;
- ii) agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and the Treasurer to decide whether to process a specific Ill Health Retirement case (referred to in paragraph 6.3 of the confidential report) under ID; and noted that the position on Category 2 cases was unchanged.

39 Exclusion of Press of Public

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RESOLVED: That agenda item 40 be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 and accordingly are not open for public inspection on the following grounds: the information relates to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

40 Update on the Developing Situation on Firefighters' Pension Schemes (FPS) Age Discrimination, Remedy & Immediate Detriment - Confidential Appendices

RESOLVED: That the Panel noted the confidential appendices to item 38 on the agenda.

The meeting concluded at 11.59 am

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

2022

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EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Meeting Policy and Resources Panel

Date 21 July 2022

Title of Report Revenue and Capital Budget 2021/22 and Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26 – Provisional Outturn

By Duncan Savage – Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer

Lead Officer Alison Avery - Finance Manager

Background Papers Fire Authority Service Planning processes for 2021/22 and beyond – Revenue Budget 2021/22 and Capital Asset Strategy 2021/22 to 2025/26

Revenue and Capital Budget 2020/21 and Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25 – Provisional Outturn

Revenue and Capital Budget 2021/22 and Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26 Monitoring at Month 11 (end February).

Appendices Appendix 1: Revenue Budget 2021/22 Objective
 Appendix 2: Savings Programme 2021/22
 Appendix 3: Grants and Spending Plans 2021/22
 Appendix 4: Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26
 Appendix 5: Capital Budget 2021/22
 Appendix 6: Engineering Capital Budget 2021/22
 Appendix 7: Reserves 2021/22

Implications

CORPORATE RISK		LEGAL	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
FINANCIAL	✓	POLITICAL	
HEALTH & SAFETY		OTHER (please specify)	
HUMAN RESOURCES		CORE BRIEF	

PURPOSE OF REPORT To report on the 2021/22 Revenue Budget and the Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26 provisional outturn.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY This is the sixth report to Members for the 2021/22 financial year and highlights the Provisional Outturn on the Revenue Budget 2021/22 and the 5 year Capital Programme, approved by the Authority in February 2021 and the revised Capital Budget approved February 2022. It should be noted the provisional outturn is based on currently available information and is subject to External Audit.

The provisional outturn is a net revenue underspend of £20,000 which is a reduction in underspend of £244,000 from the position identified in the last report to this Panel of SLT of £264,000 underspend, as summarised in Appendix 1.

The underspend can be largely be attributed to underspends in relation to:

- IT consultancy, software and licences (£406,000)
- Maintenance & improvement work (£370,000)
- Support staff vacancies across the service (£219,000)
- Training (£194,000)
- Income from Vehicle sales (£84,000)
- Engineering maintenance & equipment (£79,000)
- On-call pay (£69,000)

offset by the following:

- Overtime (including training) (£425,000)
- Hired & contracted services within Estates (£244,000)
- Wholtime staff costs, due to being over establishment (£208,000)
- Unbudgeted Support staff pay award (£118,000)
- Firefighter recruitment (£98,000) – costs incurred ahead of budget plan
- Cleaning & utilities (£90,000)
- Training Centre staff costs (£75,000)
- Ill health retirements (£79,000)
- Consultancy and Equipment within Training (£69,000)
- Unachieved and unallocated savings (£75,000)

There are a number of smaller overspends and underspends across the Service.

The movement of £322,000 from the position reported at P11 can largely be attributed to:

- An increase in overtime and on-call costs (£178,000)
- An increase for overtime for part time workers adjustment (£25,000)
- Increases where mis-codings meant that spend was not correctly included within the forecast (£117,000)
- Increase due to funding (£85,000)

- A reduction in forecast Occupational Health recharges (£56,000)

Actual savings achieved were £356,000 compared to the Savings Programme of £504,000, with the gap of £148,000 funded by underspends across the Service. £98,000 relates to IRMP implementation, for which a re-baselined financial profile has been approved by the Fire Authority and Safer Communities savings of £50,000 which were not delivered in year due to an extended timeline for delivery of some phases of the CRM project. Performance against the Savings Programme is summarised in Appendix 2 and detailed in section 4.

Performance against grants and spending plans is summarised in Appendix 3 and detailed in section 5. £3 million is carried forward in earmarked reserves and spending plans are being developed for future years. The main components are:

- ESMCP Infrastructure Grant (£1.425m)
- S31 Grant - Business Rates Retention (£0.906m)
- Protection Grants (£0.232m)
- ESMCP – LTR Regional Grant (£0.163m)

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 additional pressures in future financial years.

The original 2021/22 Capital Budget and five year Capital Strategy of £23,294,000 was approved by the Fire Authority on 11 February 2021. The Fire Authority on 10 February 2022 approved the original 2022/23 and five year Capital Strategy, and in doing so, revised the 2021/22 Capital Budget and five year Capital Strategy 2021/22 to 2025/26 to the level of £25,327,000.

The current year Capital Budget was approved by the Fire Authority at £6,105,000 and updated to £2,682,000 (Property £429,000 and Fleet and Equipment £2,253,000) including slippage of £364,000 brought forward from 2020/21, £71,000 IRMP related pool cars and vehicles, £85,000 for alterations to Seaford and £3,910,000 slippage to 2022/23.

The provisional capital outturn is an underspend of £788,000. Slippage amounts to £933,000 (Estates £145,000 / Fleet & Equipment £788,000) and Estates have incurred spend in advance of £203,000. Fleet & Equipment are additionally reporting underspend of £64,000, offset by a small overspend within Estates of £6,000. Detailed information is contained

within section 7 and summarised in Appendix 5. The Fleet and Equipment Capital Projects 2021/22 are detailed in Appendix 6.

The position on reserves shows an opening balance of £22,961,000 including the net revenue underspend 2020/21 brought forward of £386,000. The provisional net drawdown from reserves is £3,778,000, a reduction in drawdown of £6,194,000 compared to the planned drawdown of £9,972,000. This results in a provisional closing balance of £19,183,000. The reduction can largely be attributed to slippage of the capital programme, where drawdown was £4,118,000 lower than anticipated. However there were a number of other movements, as detailed in section 8 and summarised in Appendix 7.

There is a reduction in the interest receivable on the Authority's cash investments of £18,400,000 compared to previous years, due to the Bank of England (BoE) lowering its' base rates to invigorate the economy due to the impact of Covid-19. During the year, however, the BoE base rate increased from 0.1% to 0.75% which resulted in interest income of £58,000 being earned, a surplus of £18,000 when compared to the budget. Interest payments on fixed rate loans of £10,298,000 are unaffected.

RECOMMENDATION

Policy and Resources Panel is recommended to note:

- (i) the provisional 2021/22 Revenue Budget outturn;
- (ii) the provisional Capital Programme outturn, including the slippage amount and spend incurred in advance;
- (iii) the net drawdown from reserves during the year;
- (iv) the savings delivered in 2021/22;
- (v) cash balances invested at year end and borrowing repaid;

Policy and Resources Panel is recommended to approve:

- (vi) approve the outturn underspend of £20,000 is transferred to the Improvement & Efficiency reserve
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Original Revenue Budget 2021/22 and Capital Strategy 2021/22 to 2025/26 was approved at the meeting of the Fire Authority on 11 February 2021.

- 1.2 This is the sixth report to Members for the 2021/22 financial year and highlights the provisional outturn on the Revenue Budget 2021/22 and Revised Capital Budget 2021/22 and Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26. It should be noted the provisional outturn is based on currently available information and is subject to External Audit.

	This P&R (Provisional Outturn) £'000	Last P&R (Month 11) £'000	Movement £'000
Revenue (see section 2)	(20)	(264)	244
Capital in year (see section 7)	(788)	(551)	(237)

- 1.3 The Revenue Budget approved by the Fire Authority in February 2021 was a net expenditure requirement of £40,704,000
- 1.4 The provisional outturn is a net underspend of £20,000 which is a reduction in underspend of £244,000 to that previously reported (£264,000 underspend) which is reflected in the Revenue Budget 2021/22 objective summary at Appendix 1 and detailed in section 2.
- 1.5 The savings requirement 2021/22 was £504,000. The total savings delivered totalled £356,000 (71%). IRMP implementation has been reprofiled and savings have underachieved by £98,000, there will be an ongoing impact on IRMP savings into 2022/23 (which is reflected in the latest MTFP). Safer Communities savings of £50,000 linked to the introduction of new processes through the CRM project were not delivered in the current financial year (but are now expected in 2022/23).
- 1.6 The grants available total £7.32m, including grants brought forward from previous years, of which a total of £4.3m was spent in the current year. Grant returns for the year have been submitted, as summarised in Appendix 3 and detailed in section 5.
- 1.7 The five year Capital Strategy 2021/22 to 2025/26 was approved by the Fire Authority in February 2021 at £23,294,000. The Fire Authority on 10 February 2022 approved the original 2022/23 and five year Capital Strategy, and in doing so, revised the 2021/22 Capital Budget and five year Capital Strategy 2021/22 to 2025/26 to the level of £25,327,000. The revised five year Capital Programme is projected to underspend by £58,000 as detailed in section 7 and summarised in Appendix 3.
- 1.8 The Capital Budget for 2021/22 was approved by the Fire Authority at £6,105,000 and updated to £2,682,000 including slippage of £364,000 brought forward from 2020/21, IRMP related vehicles, equipment and estates work of £156,000 and £3,910,000 slippage to 2022/23. The provisional outturn is underspend of £788,000 and includes slippage of £933,000, spend in advance of £203,000 and underspend of £58,000 is reported on completed projects (Fleet & Equipment £64,000 offset by overspend within Estates of £6,000), as detailed within section 7 and summarised in Appendices 4 and 5.

1.9 A number of Revenue Budget and Capital Programme risks are set out in section 3 and these will continue to be monitored throughout 2022/23. 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 provisional outturn is an overall underspend of £20,000 (previously £264,000 underspend). This is an adverse variation of £244,000 from the forecast position reported at P11. This is summarised across divisions in Appendix 1 and detailed explanations are provided below.

2.2 **People Services:** The provisional outturn is an overspend of £223,000 as follows:

2.2.1 **HR:** The provisional outturn is a £40,000 overspend (previously forecast £96,000 overspend). The overspend can be attributed to DCFO recruitment (£25,000) and the staff pay award (£16,000). The reduction in overspend of £56,000 relates entirely to Occupational Health based on revised information provided by our collaboration partners, the forecast reported at P11 was based on a worst case scenario. £60,000 has been transferred to the People Strategy reserve in relation to spends not incurred in 2021/22 on staff survey (£10,000), HR Intelligence (£10,000) and appraisals (£40,000).

2.2.2 **Health & Safety:** The provisional outturn is an underspend of £2,000 (previously forecast £2,000 overspend). This is due to a number of small overspends and underspends within the department and incorporates £4,000 staff pay award. The movement of £4,000 from the previously reported position can be attributed to the equipment spend.

2.2.3 **Training:** The provisional outturn is an overspend of £185,000 (previous forecast £116,000 overspend). The overspend relates to firefighter recruitment (£98,000), overtime (£113,000), staff (£75,000) including £9,000 for staff pay award, equipment (£42,000), consultancy (£26,000), loss of income (£9,000) and catering (£19,000), offset by underspend on training (£194,000) and other small variances across the department (£3,000). The variance from the position reported at P11 is due to staff costs which had not correctly been captured in the forecast. The cost of firefighter recruitment has been incurred earlier than expected and funded from service underspend during 2021-22, budgets in 2022-23 will be adjusted accordingly. £10,000 has been transferred to the People Strategy reserve in relation to grievance training which was funded from existing budgets.

2.3 **Resources/Treasurer:** The provisional outturn is an underspend of £585,000 as follows:

2.3.1 **AD Resources/Treasurer:** The provisional outturn is an overspend of £13,000 (previous forecast £2,000 overspend). This relates to an overspend in pay, due to the pay award and incorrect budgets for NI and pension contributions and an overspend on legal services.

2.3.2 **Estates:** The provisional outturn is an underspend of £99,000 (previous forecast £29,000 overspend). Underspends on staff (£34,000), maintenance & improvement works (£370,000), rents & rates (£51,000) and offset by overspends on utilities (£54,000), cleaning costs (£26,000), underachieved income (£19,000), hired and contracted services (£244,000) and small overspends across the department (£12,000). The outturn was difficult to forecast accurately at P11 due to the number of outstanding commitments on the system.

Net Business Rates rebates totalling £293,200 have been transferred to the capital programme reserve to support potential pressures on the Estates capital scheme costs as a result of supply chain disruption and the requirement to install temperature management solutions in our 5 wholetime stations.

2.3.3 **ITG:** The provisional outturn is an underspend of £405,000 (previous forecast £378,000 underspend). There are a number of underspends, including on consultancy and various software & licences, primarily due to delays in rollouts and changes as a result of P21.

2.3.4 **Finance:** The provisional outturn is an underspend of £60,000 (previous forecast £62,000 underspend). The underspend can be attributed to audit fees (£54,000) and other expenses (£8,000), offset by other small overspends across the department.

2.3.5 **Procurement:** The provisional outturn is an underspend of £34,000 (previously forecast £7,000 underspend). Underspends relate to uniform (£25,000) and a 0.5 Category Assistant vacancy, offset by pay award and pension pressures.

2.4 **Planning and Improvement:** The provisional outturn is an underspend of £43,000 as follows:

2.4.1 **Communications:** The provisional outturn is an overspend of £27,000 (previously forecast £17,000). The overspend can be attributed to pay (£16,000), including maternity cover, a shortfall against the pension contribution budget & staff pay award and printing costs (£9,000). The increase in overspend can largely be attributed to printing where spend of £9,000 hadn't been captured in the previous forecast.

2.4.2 **Performance:** The provisional outturn is an underspend of £7,000 (previously forecast £9,000 underspend) in relation to consultancy (£10,000), subscriptions (£4,000) offset by pension contributions (£7,000).

2.4.3 **PMO:** The provision outturn is an underspend of £44,000 (previously forecast £25,000 underspend) in relation to vacancies within the department offset by agency staff costs.

2.4.3 **Cost of Democracy:** The provisional outturn is an underspend of £19,000 (previous forecast £14,000 underspend). This relates to vacancies within the department (£6,000), members' allowances, conferences & travelling, room hire (£5,000) and other small underspends across the department.

2.5 **Safer Communities:** The provisional outturn is an overspend of £463,000 (previous forecast £197,000 overspend). This is shown across Areas in the table below:

Area	Budget	Provisional outturn	Variance	Month 11 Variation	Variance Change
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
AD Safer Communities	114	141	27	(4)	31
Flexible Crewing Pool	250	0	(250)	(250)	0
IRMP	142	135	(7)	(37)	30
Central	5,378	5,589	211	140	71
West	7,598	7,975	377	343	34
East	5,486	5,553	67	25	42
Protection	1,724	1,632	(92)	(121)	29
Prevention	909	1,039	130	101	29
Total Safer Communities	21,601	22,064	463	197	266

- 2.5.1 **AD Safer Communities:** The provisional outturn is an overspend of £27,000 (previous forecast £4,000 underspend). The overspend is due to an adjustment made in relation to a past liability relating to overtime for part-time workers (£35,000) offset by an underspend on AD pay (£9,000), with other small variances across the budget. The additional spend since P11 can largely be attributed to the overtime for part-time workers adjustment.
- 2.5.2 **Flexible Crewing Pool:** The provisional outturn is an underspend of £250,000 as the IRMP crewing pool positions were not recruited to during 2021/22, this is offset by staffing overspends elsewhere within Safer Communities.
- 2.5.3 **IRMP:** The provisional outturn is an underspend of £7,000 (previous forecast £37,000 underspend). The underspend relates to staff costs for the IRMP implementation team. The reduction of £30,000 relates to the amount set aside as funding for a Project Manager, which has been returned to the Improvement & Efficiency reserve for use in 2022/23.
- 2.5.4 **East, Central and West Groups:** The provisional outturn across the groups is an overspend of £655,000 (previous forecast £508,000 overspend). The overspend can be attributed to posts being over-establishment during the year as well as additional overtime costs being incurred due to challenges in crewing due to absences. These are offset by underspends in relation to on-call and equipment. The outturn position is £147,000 greater than that forecast at P11 as the forecast did not previously take into account that overtime and on-call operational and ancillary costs are paid in arrears.
- 2.5.5 **Protection:** The provisional outturn is an underspend of £92,000 (previous forecast £121,000 underspend). This is attributable to vacancies within the department, which are now filled and offset in part by an underachievement of £10,000 on Primary Authority income against the agreed target of £19,000. The movement from P11 forecast is due to costs incorrectly posted against the Protection grant not being included in the forecast.

- 2.5.6 **Prevention:** The provisional outturn is an overspend of £130,000 (previous forecast overspend £101,000). Overspend relates their un-achievable saving for CRM (£50,000 – as detailed in Appendix 2) and staff costs (£65,000) including recruitment of additional temporary staff to cover maternity leave and long term sick leave. The increase from the P11 forecast is largely due to £25,000 of the CRM saving being coded to the incorrect budget. A £5,000 donation received for Cadets has been transferred to an earmarked Cadets reserve.
- 2.6 **Operational Support & Resilience:** The provisional outturn is an underspend of £123,000 as follows:
- 2.6.1 **AD OSR:** The provisional outturn is an overspend of £1,000 (previously forecast £1,000 overspend). Overspend on overtime for FBU representatives (£6,000) is offset by underspends in relation to pay (£4,000) and equipment (£1,000).
- 2.6.2 **Engineering:** The provisional outturn is an underspend of £114,000 (previously forecast £189,000 underspend). This relates to additional income for vehicle sales (£84,000), maintenance (£17,000) and equipment as the budget is based on an obsolete equipment replacement programme (£79,000). These are offset by an overspend of £28,000 on fuel as prices have risen by 21% in past year and £11,000 for support staff pay award. The outturn was difficult to forecast accurately at P11 due to the number of outstanding commitments on the system.
- 2.6.3 **Ops P&P:** The provisional outturn is an underspend of £23,000 (previously forecast £23,000 underspend). The underspend position relates to staffing, due to delays in recruiting (£12,000), hydrants (£5,000) and specialist training & equipment (£26,000) offset by the Logistics & Control Support Team (previously Resource Management Team) receiving 10% allowances from 1 September (£14,000) and the staff pay award (£6,000).
- 2.6.4 **Control Room:** The provisional outturn is an overspend of £13,000 (previously forecast £12,000 overspend). The overspend can be attributed to overtime costs. This overspend is largely offset by a transfer of £12,000 from the mobilising reserve, reported separately within the transfer to/from reserves section.
- 2.7 **CFO:** The provisional outturn is an overspend of £6,000. (previously forecast on budget). Overspend on staff costs (£15,000) due to staff pay award and DCFO overlap in December is offset by underspends on accommodation, allowances and subsistence (£9,000).
- 2.8 **Treasury Management:** The provisional outturn is a net surplus of £22,000. This relates to interest received and bank charges. Interest rates on investments reduced significantly following the reduction in the Bank of England base rate due to Covid-19, and the budget was reduced accordingly. However the rate increased from 0.10% to 0.75% through the year therefore delivering additional income. Levels of cash for investment were also higher due the reduced drawdown from reserves.
- 2.9 **Non Delegated Costs:** The provisional outturn is an overspend of £91,000 (previous forecast £90,000 overspend). Overspend of £78,000 relates to ill health retirements (IHRs), where costs are spread over three financial years. Overspend of £25,000

relates to Procurement savings, which whilst achieved weren't allocated to budget areas during the year. These are offset by underspends of £12,000 in relation to compensation and unfunded pensions.

- 2.10 **Corporate Contingency:** This budget is intended to provide some flexibility for SLT to manage in-year budget pressures and was set at £341,000 for 2021/22. The total amount available increased to £407,000 during the year following approvals by SLT. Approved pressures total £355,000 resulting in £52,000 remaining in contingency, as detailed in section 6.
- 2.11 **Transfer to and from Reserves:** The provisional outturn is an overspend of £895,000 (previously forecast to be on budget). £906,000 S31 grant, with income reported in funding, has been transferred to reserves, with £12,000 transferred from reserves, largely offsetting the overspend reported within Control Room.
- 2.12 **Financing:** The provisional outturn is additional funding of £873,000. £901,000 relates to S31 grant, with additional income received relating to 2020/21, offsetting the pressure expected in 2021/22, a further £906,000 expected for 2021/22 is included within the transfer to reserves for release in 2022/23. £22,000 additional was received in respect of business rates. There were pressures of £24,000 for the council tax and business rate TIG grants and £27,000 in relation to collection fund deficit, when compared to budgets set.

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

- 3.1 **Covid 19:** Covid 19 continued to impact on the Authority's finances during 2021/22 where the impact on both the Business Rate and Council Tax Collection Funds was felt, with partial compensation from Government grants. £133,585 was drawn down from the Covid 19 reserve to cover costs incurred during the year mainly overtime and purchase of PPE. Additional grant funding of £59,408 was received towards the end of the financial year.
- 3.2 **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 2024/25 onwards. The Authority will be directly liable for the cost of any Injury to Feelings claims and any additional administrative costs of implementing the remedy. The Government has also recently announced that it will not fund non scheme costs including unauthorised tax charges and scheme sanction charges in the current tax year. Further legal action from those affected by the pause in processing cases under the Immediate Detriment Framework is also expected. A Pensions Administration Reserve of £190,000 is held at year end.
- 3.3 **Pay Award 2021/22:** Negotiations concluded between unions and pay awarding bodies resulting in 1.5% pay award for staff on gold and grey book terms and conditions, at a cost of £257,000 and has been fully funded from general fund reserve. A pay award of 1.75% was agreed for green book staff at a cost of £118,000 funded through service underspends.

- 3.3.1 There was no allowance made for an increase in all pay conditions in the budget following the Government's call for a pay freeze which causes an estimated ongoing funding issue of around £460,000 (full year) which has been resolved as part of the MTFP 2022/23+ process.
- 3.4 **Potential Capital Project Cost Increases:** The impact of worldwide supply chain disruption is impacting on construction projects across the nation. The dwindling supplies along with increased costs and long delivery times being experienced by the construction industry could impact on the Capital Programme. The Estates team are working to understand the potential financial impact and it is likely that this will become evident as we move planned projects through procurement to delivery during 2022/23.
- 3.5 **Utilities and Fuel Inflationary Increases:** There have been considerable inflationary rises in utilities and fuel costs, which have been exacerbated by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. These budgets will continue to be monitored closely with Estates and Engineering colleagues to ensure any pressure caused as a result is reported as early as possible.

4. SAVINGS PROGRAMME 2021/22

- 4.1 Appendix 2 summarises the net savings requirement 2021/22 of £504,000.
- 4.2 The provisional outturn shows that we have delivered £356,000 (71%) of savings. The IRMP implementation project has been re-profiled and planned savings have underachieved by £98,000 whilst delays to the CRM project mean that administrative savings in Community Safety totalling £50,000 will also not be achieved this year as detailed in Appendix 2. These were funded in year by service underspends.

5. Grants and Fees & Charges Income Compensation Scheme

- 5.1 The Government has awarded grants for specific purposes and these have been spent in accordance with grant conditions. These include grants awarded in year, brought forward from previous years where the spending plans cover more than one financial year and others that require development of spending plans. Actual grant spend in 2021/22 was £4.253m against grants held of £7.276m, leaving a balance carried forward in reserves on £3.023m at year end.
- 5.2 The latest grants are detailed below:
- 5.2.1 **Covid-19:** – This is to alleviate an increase in expenditure and shortfall in income relating to Covid-19. £170,000 has been brought forward in a grants reserve, of which £133,585 was utilised this year. A further £59,408 was received towards the end of the year and has been carried forward in a grants reserve.
- 5.2.2 **Surge Protection Grant Funding:** – this is specifically to deal with inspections for high rise buildings and other high-risk buildings and a wider investment in protection capacity in advance of new legislation. 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 further allocation of £421,366 has been awarded. A project group has been set up and delivery plans drawn up to ensure full use of the grant. A total

of £471,515 was spent in 2021/22. The Service's plan for increasing capacity within its Protection function will require funding beyond that available through the Grant available. A further £0.3m is forecast to be required (in 2022/23 & 2023/24) and has been provided from the Business Rate Pool Reserve.

- 5.2.3 **Grenfell Infrastructure Fund:** £46,607 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. £42,000 was spent in year leaving £5,000 held in a reserve.
- 5.2.4 **Fire Fighter Pension Scheme:** this is used towards the shortfall in employer's pension contributions and £1.7m has been received.
- 5.2.5 **Government Income Compensation Scheme for Fees and Charges:** In 2020/21, the Government launched a compensation scheme which provided for net budgeted fees and charges income loss due to the impact of Covid19 in accordance with the scheme principles. A claim for April to June 2021 has been submitted, with payment received in March 2022. This is credited direct to the relevant cost centres and is not included in Appendix 3.

6. CONTINGENCY 2021/22

- 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 2021, the Fire Authority agreed a contingency of £341,000 for the 2021/22 financial year.
- 6.2 This increased by £66,000 following transfers of underspends in relation to fuel, transport, travel and subsistence due to Covid-19. This brought the total contingency amount available within 2021/22 to £407,000.
- 6.3 Commitments approved to date total £355,000, leaving a contingency balance of £52,000 as detailed in the table below:

		£'000
Opening Balance 1 April 2021	Lead	341
Fuel and Transport Underspend agreed by SLT in August		39
Travel & Subsistence Underspend agreed by SLT in November		27
Available		407
Extension of Pension Adviser to 31/12/2021	JK	61
Pensions awareness training	JK	2
Finance Improvement Plan Resource	DS	62
HVP move to Seaford	DS	85
Extention of Pension Advisor to 31/03/2022	JK	30
GMP Data Transfer	DS	15
Transfer to Pension Admin Reserve for unfunded pension costs	DS	100
Total Commitments		355
Amount remaining end March 2022		52

7. CAPITAL PROGRAMME COMMENTARY

- 7.1 The original 2021/22 Capital Budget and five year Capital Strategy of £23,294,000 was approved by the Fire Authority on 11 February 2021. The Fire Authority on 10 February 2022 approved the original 2022/23 and five year Capital Strategy, and in doing so, revised the 2021/22 Capital Budget to £2,682,000 and five year Capital Strategy 2022/23 to 2026/27 to the level of £25,183,000.
- 7.2 The Capital Programme is funded by: Capital Receipts Reserve £6,425,000, Capital Programme Reserves £4,787,000, Revenue Contributions to Capital £1,815,000, BR Pilot Economic Reserve £86,000, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) £289,000, Internal Borrowing £28,000 and New Borrowing £11,325,000 as shown in the table below. Overall, the revised five-year Capital Programme is forecasted to come in underspent by £21,000, as summarised in Appendix 4.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Fleet and Equipment	2,253	3,522	2,105	1,763	1,599	11,242
Estates	429	3,729	3,719	2,878	2,779	13,534
Original Approved Programme	2,682	7,251	5,824	4,641	4,378	24,776
Underspend	(21)	0	0	0	0	(21)
*Slippage into 2022/23	(767)	767	0	0	0	0
Updated Capital Programme	1,894	8,018	5,824	4,641	4,378	24,755
Funded by:						
Capital Receipts Reserve	1,773	4,279	373	0	0	6,425
Capital Programme Reserve	0	3,287	500	500	500	4,787
Revenue Contributions to Capital	7	452	452	452	452	1,815
BR Pilot Economic Reserve	86	0	0	0	0	86
CIL	0	0	289	0	0	289
MRP / Internal Borrowing	28	0	0	0	0	28
New Borrowing / Need to Borrow	0	0	4,210	3,689	3,426	11,325
Updated Capital Programme	1,894	8,018	5,824	4,641	4,378	24,755

- 7.3 **Capital Funding** – the sale of the old Fort Rd site in Newhaven to Lewes District Council proceeding with a 10% deposit received in 2020/21. The outstanding balance is not expected to be received until 2022/23 and is likely to be £75,000 lower than the original offer due to issues within planning permission. The Service has also been successful in its bid for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding from Lewes District Council. £289,000 has been awarded which will part fund the planned enhancements at Barcombe and Seaford Fire Stations, reducing the need for future borrowing.
- 7.4 The **Capital Budget 2021/22** was approved by the Fire Authority at £6,105,000 and updated to £2,682,000 (Property £429,000 and Fleet and Equipment £2,253,000) including slippage of £364,000 brought forward from 2020/21, £71,000 IRMP related pool cars and vehicles, £85,000 for alterations to Seaford and £3,910,000 Slippage to 2022/23.
- 7.5 The provisional 2021/22 capital outturn is an underspend of £788,000. This comprises slippage of £933,000, spend in advance of £203,000 and underspend of £58,000 on completed works as detailed in Appendix 5.
- 7.5.1 The Estates provisional 2021/22 capital outturn is an overspend of £64,000. Slippage of £145,000 will be carried forward and spend in advance of £203,000 will be offset against future budget. An overspend of £6,000 relates to a small number of retentions for completed works.
- 7.5.2 The Fleet provisional capital outturn is an underspend of £852,000 as detailed in Appendix 6. This comprises of slippage of £933,000 due to worldwide supply chain issues and underspend of £65,000 in related to completed purchases.

8. RESERVES 2021/22

- 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 was £22,961,000 including the net underspend 2020/21 of £386,000 brought forward in an earmarked reserve.
- 8.3 The net drawdown from reserves totals £3,799,000 compared to the original planned net drawdown of £9,972,000. This is a net reduction in drawdown of £6,173,000 resulting in a provisional closing balance at 31 March 2022 of £19,161,000 as summarised in the table below and detailed over individual reserves in Appendix 7.

	Balance at 1 April 2021	Original Planned Net Transfers	Actual Net Transfers	Net change	Closing Balance at end March 2022
	£'000	2021/22 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2021/22 £'000	£'000
Earmarked Reserves	14,972	(4,663)	(1,999)	2,664	12,973
General Fund	1,960	210	(47)	(257)	1,913
Total Revenue Reserves	16,932	(4,453)	(2,046)	2,407	14,886
Total Capital Reserves	6,028	(5,519)	(1,773)	3,746	4,255
Total Usable Reserves	22,960	(9,972)	(3,819)	6,153	19,141

- 8.4 The net changes are explained in section 8.5 below.
- 8.5 The main reasons for the overall net reduction in forecast drawdown from reserves of £6,194,000 are as follows:
- 8.5.1 **Earmarked Reserves – Decrease of £2,664,000**
- £568,000 – additional income from share of Business Rates Pool, based on the latest pool monitoring
 - £50,000 – decision not to fund Demand Reduction Manager
 - £371,000 – Transfer into the Capital Programme Reserve in respect of the net business rates rebate and contribution from contingency to fund additional work at Seaford to house the High Volume Pump
 - (£42,000) – use of grant funding brought forward on eligible expenditure according to grant spending plans (Covid-19, Protection, Council Tax and Business Rates Guarantee Scheme, New Dimensions etc.)
 - £713,000 – delayed drawdown to future years on ESMCP readiness reserve
 - £272,000 - reduced commitments on the Improvement and Efficiency Reserve

- (£1,542,000) - re-profiling of projects linked to P21 funded from the Mobilising Strategy Reserve
- (£228,000) - use of provisional net underspend 2020/21 brought forward in Carry Forward reserve on in-year priorities
- £120,000 – allocation of CRM funding from Protection grant to IT Strategy reserve
- £909,000 – reduced drawdown of ITG Strategy reserve
- £70,000 – return to People Strategy reserve in relation to Appraisals, Grievance training, HR Intelligence and Staff Survey not required / delayed to future years
- £347,000 – drawdown not required from Sprinklers Reserve following review of use
- £143,000 – Contribution from contingency/underspend and additional grant to the Pension Admin reserve towards unfunded future costs
- £906,000 – Transfer into the S31 Business Rates Retention Reserve – grant due in 2021/22 but to be received and applied in 2022/23
- £5,000 – Transfer of donation to Cadets Reserve

8.5.2 **General Fund Reserve – Increase of (£257,000)**

- (£257,000) due to the financing of 1.5% pay award for staff on gold and grey book terms and conditions.

8.5.3 **Capital Reserves – Decrease of £3,746,000**

- (£364,000) – due to the slippage in capital schemes brought forward from 2020/21 for completion in 2021/22 (refer to capital section 7 above).
- (£71,000) – inclusion of IRMP related pool cars and equipment (refer to capital section 7 above).
- £4,160,000 – due to slippage of capital projects into 2022/23
- £21,000 – due to expected underspend on capital projects.

9. **BORROWING AND INVESTMENT**

- 9.1 As at end March, the Authority held cash balances of £18,400,000 which are invested in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy, as follows:

Counterparty	Duration	Amount	Interest Rate
		£m	%
Aberdeen Cash Money Market Fund	Overnight Access	4.000	0.51
DB Money Market Fund	Overnight Access	4.000	0.50
Aviva Money Market Fund	Overnight Access	1.400	0.51
Barclays	95 Day Notice	4.000	0.80
Santander	95 Day Notice	4.000	0.55
Standard Chartered	Fixed to 25/05/22	1.000	0.29
Total Investments		18.400	

- 9.2 During the financial year, the Bank of England increased the base interest rate from 0.10% to 0.75% (increases in December, February and March). The rate had been significantly reduced to 0.10% previously in order to invigorate the economy due to the impact of Covid-19. We are seeing an impact as Banks increase their rates on investments, resulting in slightly higher levels of interest receivable. Interest income of £58,000 was earned at an average interest rate of 0.26%, £18,000 above the budgeted level of £40,000. The interest income budget was reduced from £75,000 to £40,000 for 2021/22 to reflect the planned reduction in funds available for short term investment and the reduction in interest rates.
- 9.3 The Authority has borrowing totalling £10,298,000 and there is no impact on the interest payable, as these are subject to fixed interest rate deals.

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Revenue Budget 2021/22 – Objective Summary

	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Provisional Outturn	Variance	Variance	Variance Month 11 Reported to P&R	Variance From Last Reported
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	%	£'000	
Peoples Services	3,813	3,894	4,117	223	5.7	214	9
Resources/Treasurer	7,855	7,690	7,105	(585)	(7.6)	(416)	(169)
Planning and Improvement	1,222	1,241	1,198	(43)	(3.5)	(31)	(12)
Total Deputy Chief Fire Officer	12,890	12,825	12,420	(405)	(3.2)	(233)	(172)
Safer Communities	21,462	21,601	22,064	463	2.1	197	266
Operational Support	4,739	4,611	4,488	(123)	(2.7)	(199)	76
Total Assistant Chief Fire Officer	26,201	26,212	26,552	340	1.3	(2)	342
CFO Staff	781	782	788	6	0.8	0	6
Treasury Management	875	968	946	(22)	(2.3)	(15)	(7)
Non Delegated costs	(1,348)	(1,271)	(1,181)	90	7.1	90	0
Corporate Contingency	341	130	78	(52)	(40.0)	(52)	0
Covid-19	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	(597)	(1,038)	(1,037)	1	(0.1)	0	1
Transfer to Reserves	1,561	2,096	2,990	894	42.7	0	894
Total Corporate	1,613	1,667	2,584	917	55.0	23	894
Total Net Expenditure	40,704	40,704	41,556	852	2.1	(212)	1,064
Financed By:							
RSG	(3,226)	(3,226)	(3,226)	0	0.0	0	0
Council Tax	(28,303)	(28,303)	(28,303)	0	0.0	0	0
Business Rates	(7,801)	(7,801)	(7,823)	(22)	(0.3)	0	(22)
Covid-19 Local Tax Support Grant	(474)	(474)	(474)	0	0.0	0	0
S31 Grants	(833)	(2,142)	(3,043)	(901)	(42.1)	(75)	(826)
CT & BR TIG Grant		(80)	(56)	24			24
Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit	(68)	1,322	1,349	27	2.0	24	4
Total Financing	(40,704)	(40,704)	(41,576)	(872)	(2.1)	(52)	(821)
Total Over / (Under) Spend	0	0	(20)	(20)	0.1	(264)	242

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Savings Programme 2021/22

Division	Team	Responsible Officer	Business Area Lead Name	Description	Savings 2021/22 £'000	Projection 2021/22 £'000	A/Risk £'000	R.A.G Rating Select Status	Business Area Lead Comments
							0	Delivered	Given continued Covid lockdown until late July and likelihood that home working and virtual meetings / training will continue as part of new working arrangements then ongoing reductions in travel and subsistence costs should be deliverable across the Service.
All	All	All	All	Travel & subsistence (one year only)	(10)	(10)	0	Delivered	
All	All	All	All	Stationery contract savings	(10)	(10)	0	Delivered	Reduced budgets subject to regular monitoring
RT	Estate	Duncan Savage	Nicky Bouch	Estate Strategy revenue maintenance savings	(40)	(40)	0	Delivered	Savings targets under review by Estate Manager. If targeted savings cannot be delivered through efficiencies will aim to manage through underspend in revenue maintenance budget.
RT	Estate	Duncan Savage	Nicky Bouch	Cancellation of HQ shuttlebus service	(10)	(10)	0	Delivered	Shuttlebus service ceased in 2020/21
RT	Corporate	Duncan Savage	Duncan Savage	Reduce Corporate Contingency (one year only)	(100)	(100)	0	Delivered	Reduced contingency reported to SLT and monitored through monthly reporting.
RT	ITC	Duncan Savage	Ken Pearce	IT Strategy - delay some projects from 21/22 to 22/23 (one year only)	(100)	(100)	0	Delivered	Delayed projects agreed through budget setting.
RT	Procurement	Duncan Savage	Clare George / All	Category Strategy Savings	(25)	(25)	0	Delivered	Savings will be delivered through year as procurements are concluded. Procurement Manager to provide analysis of areas targeted.
PS	Training	Doug Marshall	Chris Saker	STC Catering contract savings	(6)	(6)	0	Delivered	
PS	Training	Doug Marshall	Chris Saker	Abatement cost savings	(5)	(5)	0	Delivered	Tr 1 saving on contract met then Tr 2 reduction in ingredient costs
SC	Business Safety	Julie King	George O'Reilly	Abatement cost savings	(5)	(5)	0	Delivered	
SC	Community Safety	Julie King	David Kemp	Community Safety - Adaptation contract income target (net of contract costs)	(15)	(15)	0	Delivered	
SC	Community Safety	Julie King	David Kemp	Community Safety Restructure	(75)	(54)	(25)	Part Delivered	This overall saving is linked to a number of smaller savings that have been identified, some have been realised
SC	Community Safety	Julie King	David Kemp	Reduction in administration costs in Safer Communities	(25)	0	(25)	Not Delivered	This saving is linked to the introduction of the HSV part of the CRM project.
SC	All OPS	Mark Matthews	Fleur Wilks	Savings arising from the implementation of RMP 2020-2025 including operational policy and practice	(146)	(48)	(98)	Part Delivered	Subject to regular governance and scrutiny at RMP Board and Strategic Board. Re-basing of budget in progress taking account of timing differences and policies.
QR	Emergency Planning	Hannah Scott-Youlton	Paul Baker	Abatement cost savings	(5)	(5)	0	Delivered	
QR	Engineering	Hannah Scott-Youlton		Fuel (one year only)	(15)	(15)	0	Delivered	Reduced budgets subject to regular monitoring
				Total Gross Savings	(614)	(466)	(148)		
				Use of BR Pooling to support service delivery (fall-out of 2020/21 saving - one year only)	50	50		Delivered	
	Central Finance	Duncan Savage		Engineering - cutting equipment purchased early (fall out of 2020-21 saving - 1 year only)	50	50		Delivered	
QR	Engineering	Hannah Scott-Youlton		Total Net Savings	(504)	(366)	(148)		

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Grants and Spending Plans 2021/22

Grants Requiring Claims	Lead AD	*Grant Brought Forward 1 April 2021	Grant 2021/22	Total Available Grant	Spent 2021/22	**Balance Remaining
		£	£	£	£	£
COVID - 19	Duncan Savage	170,032	59,408	229,440	133,585	95,855
ESMCP - LTR Regional	Hannah Scott-Youldon	309,000	0	309,000	145,561	163,439
**ESMCP - Infrastructure	Hannah Scott-Youldon	1,425,000	0	1,425,000	0	1,425,000
Grenfell Infrastructure Fund	Hannah Scott-Youldon	46,607	0	46,607	42,098	4,509
Surge Protection Grant Funding - Protection Uplift	Matt Lloyd	277,957	421,366	699,323	471,515	227,808
Surge Protection Grant Funding - Accreditation & RPL Grant Funding	Matt Lloyd	22,737	0	22,737	-	22,737
Surge Protection Grant Funding -BRR	Matt Lloyd	76,773	-	76,773	76,773	-
		2,328,105	480,774	2,808,880	869,532	1,939,347
Grants - No Claims Requirement	Lead AD	*Grant Brought Forward 1 April 2021	Grant 2021/22	Total Available Grant	Spent 2021/22	Balance Remaining
		£	£	£	£	£
BR losses 75% grant	Duncan Savage	4,364	41,500	45,864	15,288	30,576
CT losses 75% grant	Duncan Savage	85,118	39,592	124,710	41,570	83,140
Section 31 Business Rates Retention	Duncan Savage	1,309,000	906,000	2,215,000	1,309,000	906,000
Firelink	Duncan Savage	0	216,100	216,100	216,100	0
New Dimensions	Hannah Scott-Youldon	26,000	27,430	53,430	21,691	31,739
Pensions Grant	Duncan Savage	0	1,735,000	1,735,000	1,735,000	0
Pensions Admin Grant	Jules King		43,515	43,515	43,515	0
Responding to New Risks	Hannah Scott-Youldon	24,000	9,645	33,645	1,125	32,520
Total		1,448,482	3,018,782	4,467,264	3,383,289	1,083,975
Overall Total Grants		3,776,587	3,499,556	7,276,144	4,252,821	3,023,322
Notes:						
* the grants brought forward are held in earmarked reserves (Appendix 7)						
** the grants balance remaining are held in earmarked reserves (Appendix 7)						

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Appendix 4

Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26

Capital Programme Expenditure 2021-22 to 2026-27	Total Budget	Total Previous Years	Actual Spend 2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Remaining Spend	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Property										
Shared Investment Schemes										
Integrated Transport Project	1,000		5	195				800	1,000	-
Heathfield	280	8	10			19	243		272	-
Uckfield	494	7	-				100	387	487	-
Lewes	577	5	2				240	330	572	-
Preston circus	3,287	87	40	1,335	1,825				3,200	-
Total Shared Investment Schemes	5,638	107	57	1,530	1,825	19	583	1,517	5,531	-
Strategic Schemes										
- Replacement Fuel Tanks	492	332	38	122					160	-
- Partner contribution	(292)	(292)								-
- Replacement fuel tanks net cost	200	40	38	122	-	-	-	-	160	-
Design Guide	355	355	-							-
Hove	490		63	427					490	-
Roedean	493		22	471					493	-
Eastbourne	550		25	325	200				550	-
Bohemia Road	485		21	100	364				485	-
Security	386	60	3	223	100				326	-
Sustainability	171	21	30	10	80	30			150	-
MPTH	399	399								-
Eastbourne MPTH	259		8	251					259	-
Training Centre MPTH	308		8		300				308	-
Hove MPTH	278		8	270					278	-
Bohemia Road MPTH	258		8		250				258	-
FTU	4,000		48		472	2,500	980		4,000	-
Total Strategic Schemes	8,630	875	282	2,199	1,766	2,530	980	-	7,757	-
General Schemes										
General Schemes	826	826	6						6	6
Seaford CIL	296		10		5	281			296	-
Seaford CIL partner Contribution	(133)					(133)			-	133
Barcombe CIL	392		5		95	292			392	-
Barcombe CIL Partner Contribution	(156)					(156)			-	156
The Ridge	508					20	488		508	-
Hailsham	184		19			1	164		184	-
Rye	532		5			15	512		532	-
Battle	163		5				52	106	163	-
Herstmonceux	50							50	50	-
Bexhill	200							200	200	-
Seaford HVP Alterations	85		85						85	-
Total General Schemes	2,947	826	135	-	100	320	1,216	356	2,127	6
Total Property	17,215	1,808	474	3,729	3,691	2,869	2,779	1,873	15,415	6
Vehicle Cameras	118		118						118	-
Grant Funds	(118)		(118)						-	118
Telemetry	70			70					70	-
Aerials	2,036	695	(5)	743	593				1,331	(10)
Aerial Rescue Pump	22	22								-
Fire Appliances	7,374	1,377	1,701	891	850	835	819	862	5,958	(39)
Ancillary Vehicles	2,892	480	138	1,396	391	368	112		2,405	(7)
Cars	1,964	281	256	377	57	272	506	206	1,674	(9)
Vans	1,800	915	63	45	179	288	162	148	885	-
Equipment	70		35		35				70	-
Total Fleet and Equipment	16,228	3,770	2,188	3,522	2,105	1,763	1,599	1,216	12,393	(64)
Total Expenditure	33,443	5,578	2,662	7,251	5,796	4,632	4,378	3,089	27,808	(58)

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Capital Budget 2021/22

Capital Programme Expenditure	Total Budget 2021/22	Spend 2021/22	Variance	Variance due to slippage	Variance due to spend in advance	Variance due to Underspend/ Overspend	% Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Property							
Shared Investment Schemes							
Integrated Transport Project	5	0	(5)	(5)			0.0
Heathfield	10	1	(9)	(9)			(90.0)
Lewes	2	1	(1)	(1)			(50.0)
Preston circus	40	35	(5)	(5)			(12.5)
Total Shared Investment Schemes	57	37	(20)	(20)	0	0	(35.1)
Strategic Schemes							
- Replacement Fuel Tanks	38	118	80		80		210.5
- Partner contribution							0.0
- Replacement fuel tanks net cost	38	118	80	0	80	0	210.5
Design Guide							
Hove	61	64	3		3		4.9
Roedean	22	45	23		23		104.5
Eastbourne	25	74	49		49		196.0
Bohemia Road	21	28	7		7		33.3
Security	3	7	4		4		133.3
Sustainability	30	-	(30)	(30)			(100.0)
Eastbourne MPTH	8	7	(1)	(1)			(12.5)
Training Centre MPTH	8	7	(1)	(1)			(12.5)
Hove MPTH	8	7	(1)	(1)			(12.5)
Bohemia Road MPTH	8	8	0	0			0.0
FTU	20	48	28		28		140.0
Total Strategic Schemes	252	413	161	(33)	194	-	63.9
General Schemes							
Seaford CIL	10	3	(7)	(7)			(70.0)
Barcombe CIL	5	4	(1)	(1)			(20.0)
Hailsham	10	19	9		9		90.0
Rye	5	3	(2)	(2)			(40.0)
Battle	5	1	(4)	(4)			(80.0)
Seaford HVP Alterations	85	7	(78)	(78)			(91.8)
General Schemes		6	6			6	100.0
General Schemes	120	43	(77)	(92)	9	6	(64.2)
Total Property	429	493	64	(145)	203	6	14.9
Vehicle Cameras	118	0	(118)	(118)			(100.0)
Grant Funds	(118)	0	118	118			(100.0)
Aerials	5	(5)	(10)			(10)	(192.1)
Fire Appliances	1,740	1,187	(553)	(514)		(38)	(31.8)
Ancillary Vehicles	145	(7)	(152)	(145)		(7)	(104.5)
Cars	265	220	(45)	(36)		(9)	(17.1)
Vans	63	5	(58)	(58)			(91.5)
Equipment	35	0	(35)	(35)			(100.0)
Total Fleet and Equipment	2,253	1,401	(852)	(788)	0	(64)	(37.8)
Total	2,682	1,894	(788)	(933)	203	(58)	(29.4)

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Engineering Capital Budget

	Total Budget 2021/22	SAP Spend	Variance	Variance %	Underspend / Overspend	slippage
	£	£	£	%		
Aerial Appliances						
Aerial Ladder Platform GX04BMY STN 76	5,000	(4,607)	(9,607)	(1.9)	(9,607)	
Fire Appliances						
Appliances 19/20 GX05ABZ	9,000	(909)	(9,909)	(1.1)	(9,909)	
Appliances 2018/19 GX55AAE		3,208	3,208	0.0	3,208	
Replace GX56NWP	285,600	275,256	(10,344)	(0.0)	(10,344)	
Replace GX57EUK	285,600	274,798	(10,802)	(0.0)	(10,802)	
Replace GX57EUR	285,600	274,798	(10,802)	(0.0)	(10,802)	
Replace GX57EUN	291,300	119,861	(171,439)	(0.6)		(171,439)
Replace GX57EUP	291,300	119,861	(171,439)	(0.6)		(171,439)
Replace GX57EUT	291,300	119,861	(171,439)	(0.6)		(171,439)
Ancillary Vehicles						
Replacing Y87GNJ GP Truck Stn 84						
Animal Rescue GX51 UBM	145,000	(4,490)	(149,490)	0.0	(4,490)	(145,000)
Wildfire Vehicle 2019/20 GX53AZU		(2,032)	(2,032)	0.0	(2,032)	
Cars 21-22						
GX15JUY	28,700	27,571	(1,129)	(0.0)	(1,129)	
GX15JVA	28,700	27,571	(1,129)	(0.0)	(1,129)	
GX15JVC	28,700	27,571	(1,129)	(0.0)	(1,129)	
GX15JVD	28,600	27,571	(1,029)	(0.0)	(1,029)	
GX15JVE	28,600	27,571	(1,029)	(0.0)	(1,029)	
GX15JVF	28,600	27,571	(1,029)	(0.0)	(1,029)	
GX15JVG	28,600	27,571	(1,029)	(0.0)	(1,029)	
GX15JVH	28,600	27,571	(1,029)	(0.0)	(1,029)	
IRMP Pool Cars 1	18,000		(18,000)	0.0		(18,000)
IRMP Pool Cars 2	18,000		(18,000)	(1.0)		(18,000)
Vans						
Vans 20/21 - GX15 JJK SSO van	5,000	5,359	359	0.1	359	
Vans 20/21 - Station Van (76 Shift)	17,000		(17,000)	(1.0)		(17,000)
GU16LVH	41,600		(41,600)	(1.0)		(41,600)
Equipment (Operational IRMP)	35,000		(35,000)	(1.0)		(35,000)
Total Fleet and Equipment	2,253,400	1,401,532	(851,868)	(0.4)	(62,951)	(788,917)

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Reserves 2021/22

Description	Opening Balance	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22	Closing Balance	Lead AD
	01/04/2021	Original Planned Transfers In	Original Planned Transfers Out	Original Planned Transfers Net	Actual Transfers In	Actual Transfers Out	Actual Transfers Net	Net Change	at end March 2022	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Earmarked Reserves										
Business Rate Pool Reserve	319	0	(50)	(50)	568	(58)	510	560	829	Duncan Savage
Business Rates Retention Pilot - economic development	86	0	(86)	(86)	0	(86)	(86)	0	0	Duncan Savage
Business Rates Retention Pilot - financial stability	112	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	112	Duncan Savage
Capital Programme Reserve	2,209	500	0	500	871	0	871	371	3,080	Duncan Savage
Covid-19	170	0	0	0	59	(133)	(74)	(74)	96	Duncan Savage
ESMCP ESFRS readiness	1,425	0	(713)	(713)	0	0	0	713	1,425	Hannah Scott-Youlton
ESMCP Regional Programme	309	0	(307)	(307)	0	(146)	(146)	161	163	Hannah Scott-Youlton
Improvement & Efficiency	545	286	(300)	(14)	286	(27)	259	273	804	Duncan Savage
Insurance	249	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	249	Duncan Savage
ITG Strategy	4,137	565	(2,016)	(1,451)	744	(1,107)	(363)	1,088	3,774	Duncan Savage
Mobilising Strategy	2,425	0	(846)	(846)	70	(2,458)	(2,388)	(1,542)	37	Duncan Savage
People Strategy	40	0	(40)	(40)	70	(40)	30	70	70	Julie King
Sprinklers	640	0	(347)	(347)	0	0	0	347	640	Hannah Scott-Youlton
BRR - Protection Uplift - Accreditation & RPL	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	Matt Lloyd
BRR - Protection Uplift - Building Risk Review	77	0	0	0	0	(77)	(77)	(77)	0	Matt Lloyd
BRR - Protection Uplift - Grenfell / Infrastructure	47	0	0	0	0	(42)	(42)	(42)	5	Hannah Scott-Youlton
BRR - Protection Uplift - Protection	278	0	0	0	0	(50)	(50)	(50)	228	Matt Lloyd
Business Rate Tax Income Guarantee Scheme (75%)	4	0	0	0	42	(15)	27	27	31	Duncan Savage
Council Tax Income Guarantee Scheme (75%)	85	0	0	0	40	(42)	(2)	(2)	83	Duncan Savage
New Dimensions Grant	26	0	0	0	6	0	6	6	32	Hannah Scott-Youlton
Pensions Administration	47	0	0	0	143	0	143	143	190	Julie King
Responding to New Risks	24	0	0	0	9	0	9	9	33	Hannah Scott-Youlton
S31 Business Rate Retention Reliefs	1,309	0	(1,309)	(1,309)	906	(1,309)	(403)	906	906	Duncan Savage
Carry Forwards	386	0	0	0	0	(228)	(228)	(228)	158	Duncan Savage
Cardets	0	0	0	0	5	0	5	5	5	Matt Lloyd
Total Earmarked Reserves	14,972	1,351	(6,014)	(4,663)	3,819	(5,818)	(1,999)	2,664	12,973	
General Fund	1,950	210	0	210	210	(257)	(47)	(257)	1,913	Duncan Savage
Total Revenue Reserves	16,932	1,561	(6,014)	(4,453)	4,029	(6,075)	(2,046)	2,407	14,886	
Capital Receipts Reserve	6,028	472	(5,991)	(5,519)	0	(1,773)	(1,773)	3,746	4,255	Duncan Savage
Total Capital Reserves	6,028	472	(5,991)	(5,519)	0	(1,773)	(1,773)	3,746	4,255	
Total Usable Reserves	22,960	2,033	(12,005)	(9,972)	4,029	(7,848)	(3,819)	6,153	19,141	

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EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Meeting Policy and Resources Panel

Date 21 July 2022

Title of Report Revenue and Capital Budget 2022/23 and Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27

By Duncan Savage – Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer

Lead Officer Alison Avery - Finance Manager

Background Papers Fire Authority Service Planning processes for 2022/23 and beyond – Revenue Budget 2022/23 and Capital Asset Strategy 2022/23 to 2026/27

Appendices Appendix 1: 2022/23 Funding
 Appendix 2: 2022/23 Budget Pressures
 Appendix 3: 2022/23 Savings
 Appendix 4: 2022/23 Grants
 Appendix 5: 2022/23 Reserves

Implications (please tick ✓ and attach to report)

Any implications affecting this report should be noted within the final paragraphs of the report

CORPORATE RISK		LEGAL	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
FINANCIAL	✓	POLITICAL	
HEALTH & SAFETY		OTHER (please specify)	
HUMAN RESOURCES		CORE BRIEF	

PURPOSE OF REPORT To report on the 2022/23 Revenue Budget and the Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY This is the first report to Members for the 2022/23 financial year.

Whilst a full forecast has not been undertaken at P2 this report identifies emerging risks and pressures in relation to the 2022/23 revenue and capital budgets. At this early stage it is difficult to give a definitive forecast but based on current information the Authority could face net unfunded pressures of between £1.005m (lower range) and £2.473m (higher range).

range). Pressures on both pay and prices are outside of the Authority's control and the former may not crystallise until later in the year when pay settlements are agreed. The situation will be regularly monitored and reported to SLT and the Fire Authority throughout the year.

There are a range of options open to the Authority to address the risks and pressures including use of revenue budget contingency, reserves and reductions in planned investment and spend controls (including vacancy management / recruitment freezes).

RECOMMENDATION

Policy and Resources Panel is recommended to note:

- (i) the current assessment of risk facing the Authority in 2022/23;

and to approve:

- (ii) the proposed changes to the Engineering capital programme.
-

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Original Revenue Budget 2021/22 and Capital Strategy 2022/23 to 2026/27 was approved at the meeting of the Fire Authority on 10 February 2022.
- 1.2 This is the first report to Members for the 2022/23 financial year.
- 1.3 The Revenue Budget approved by the Fire Authority in February 2022 was a net expenditure requirement of £41,766,000
- 1.4 The savings requirement 2022/23 is £778,000.
- 1.5 The five year Capital Strategy 2022/23 to 2026/27 was approved by the Fire Authority in February 2022 at £25,181,000. This was subsequently increased to £27,197,000 to include additional elemental Estates work missed from the original programme of works and additional budgets to allow temperature control in sleeping pods.
- 1.6 The Capital Budget for 2022/23 was approved by the Fire Authority at £7,250,000. This was subsequently increased by £721,000 to £7,971,000.

2. REVENUE BUDGET PRESSURES AND RISKS

- 2.1 A full forecasting process has not been completed at P2, however a number of pressures and risks in relation to the 2022/23 revenue budget have been identified

and are detailed below. A full report will be provided to the Senior Leadership Team in July for P3 and subsequently at September Fire Authority now that the new finance structure is fully staffed (save for one Finance Business Partner role which is currently covered by an agency placement) and is able to engage with budget managers.

- 2.2 **Safer Communities:** The 2021/22 provisional outturn position within Safer Communities was an overspend of £463,000, largely relating to being over establishment and the use of overtime to cover crewing challenges.
 - 2.2.1 Due to Immediate Detriment the number of grey book staff currently retiring is much lower than anticipated. This coupled with the 22 firefighter recruits means the Service is currently over-establishment. If all 22 new recruits remained supernumerary until 31 March 2023 then this could result in a pressure of up to £750,000. However this should allow the Service to reduce the number of grey book fixed term contracts and spend on overtime.
 - 2.2.2 The Finance team have developed forecasting and monitoring packs and these will provide budget holders with greater visibility of their budgets than previously. Finance will be providing training to and working closely with Group Managers across Safer Communities to support them in managing their budgets.
 - 2.2.3 Further detailed analysis is being undertaken within Finance and HR in relation to pay, with the support of budget managers, to understand the potential financial impact for the Service.
- 2.3 **Training:** The training department outturn position in 2021/22 was an overspend of £87,000, excluding firefighter recruitment costs, but with some significant variances within this overall figure. Finance will be working closely with Training to understand the reason for the overspend and ensure controls are in place to ensure this does not occur again in 2022/23.
- 2.4 **2022/23 Pay Awards:** The budget provided 2% for pay awards across gold, grey and green book staff. However, with high inflation rates, there is pressure from representative bodies for significantly higher pay awards.
 - 2.4.1 There have been suggestions that local authorities should forecast based on a 4% pay settlement – if, as an example, this was applied across all staff groups the additional cost / pressure would be £410,000.
 - 2.4.2 The impact of pay awards will be higher if operational strength is over-establishment.
- 2.5 During the budget setting process the 10% allowances for the Crewing Pool were not included in error, this causes a pressure of £34,000 (full year). The actual pressure will depend on the go-live date of the pool.
- 2.6 **Utilities and Fuel Inflationary Increases:** There have been considerable inflationary rises in utilities and fuel costs, which have been exacerbated by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

- 2.6.1 Utilities: An additional pressure of £85,000 over and above the standard 2% inflationary factor was included in the budget for 2022/23. However, the current forecast is indicating overspend in the region of £260,000.
- 2.6.2 Fuel: Prices are currently an average of 35% higher than in the first quarter of 2021/22, indicating potential overspend of £97,000.
- 2.7 **Inflationary Contract Increases:** The Procurement team are working to review the contractual spend with key suppliers and the potential for inflation to impact non-pay spend.
- 2.7.1 In addition to utilities, additional budget provision was allocated for timber (£40,575) and catering (£13,000).
- 2.7.2 A standard 2% inflationary budget increase was included for all non-pay, totalling £227,000. However, spend is expected to be in excess of this and may result in potential additional exposure of between £325,000 (if non pay inflation is averaged at 5%) and £868,000 (if non pay inflation is averaged at 10%).

3. REVENUE BUDGET OPPORTUNITIES

- 3.1 Whilst the full forecasting process has not been completed there are a number of areas where an underspend/additional income is expected based on the current known information.
- 3.2 **Business Rates Rebate:** The Estates team successfully challenged the business rates payable for sites across the Service's estate. The reductions for the 2022/23 financial year allow Estates to deliver their savings of £45,000 and additional underspend of £132,000 on rates will be reported.
- 3.3 **Interest Receivable:** Additional interest income of between £150,000 and £180,000 is expected as detailed in section 10.
- 3.4 **Funding:** Current information indicates that the Service will receive additional funding of £399,000 as shown in Appendix 1.
- 3.4.1 When the budget paper was presented to the Fire Authority in February the exact position regarding business rates income was unknown. Updated information from Local Government Futures based on billing authorities NNDR1 forms indicates additional income of £393,000.
- 3.4.2 An additional £27,000 will be received from Council Tax and Business Rates Covid-19 Tax Income Guarantee following confirmation of final amounts last financial year.
- 3.4.3 This additional income is offset by a pressure of £40,000 in Council Tax as an incorrect tax base was provided by one billing authority during the budget setting process.

4. MANAGING REVENUE BUDGET PRESSURES

- 4.1 Whilst there is still significant work to be completed to understand the expected outturn forecast, the early analysis indicates pressures in 2022/23 could be between £1,005,000 and £2,473,000, as detailed in Appendix 2.
- 4.2 There are opportunities to support this pressure from the budgeted contingency (section 7) and reserves (section 9). However, when a more robust forecast is available it may be necessary to implement further controls on spend, including managing underspends and vacancies / recruitment.

5. SAVINGS PROGRAMME 2022/23

- 5.1 Appendix 3 summarises the net savings requirement 2022/23 of £778,000.
- 5.2 A full review of savings delivery is yet to be undertaken, however the following is known at this point:
- 5.2.1 Savings of £25,000 for Firewatch were duplicated and will not be achieved. Other savings are also at risk including Education Team (£40,000), RDSO (£50,000) and Project management consolidation (£25,000).
- 5.2.2 The impact of Immediate Detriment on retirements may have an impact on the delivery of IRMP savings. A workshop will be held to review the expected impact on IRMP savings and this will be reported when available.

6. GRANTS 2022/23

- 6.1 The Government has awarded grants for use on specific purposes and officers will ensure these are delivered in accordance with grant conditions. These include grants awarded in year, brought forward from previous years where their spending plans fall over more than one financial year and others that require development of spending plans. The grants are summarised in Appendix 4.
- 6.2 The latest grants are detailed below:
- 6.2.1 **Covid-19:** £95,855 has been carried forward following Covid-19 grant funding. No further spend is expected to be coded for Covid-19 and as such this should be used towards something that improves efficiency or productivity.
- 6.2.2 **Surge Protection Grant Funding:** it has been confirmed a further £358,079 will be received in 2022/23. Work is underway to understand the impact of planned costs for 2022/23 and the coming financial years. Costs totalling £300,000 across 2022/23 and 2023/24 have been budgeted to be funded by a drawdown from the Business Rates Pool reserve.
- 6.2.4 **Fire Fighter Pension Scheme:** this is used towards the shortfall in employer's pension contributions.
- 6.2.5 **Firelink:** this grant has been confirmed as £191,277 indicating a pressure against the IT budget of £65,823. This reflects the Home office's decision to reduce the

grant by 20% per annum from 2022/23 to reduce the costs of the existing Airwave solution in advance of its replacement by the Emergency Services Network in 2028. Officers will assess if there are any options to reduce costs to mitigate the impact of this loss of income.

7. CONTINGENCY 2022/23

7.1 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 2022, the Fire Authority agreed a contingency of £298,000 for the 2022/23 financial year.

8. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

8.1 **Estates:** The impact of worldwide supply chain disruption is impacting on construction projects across the nation. The dwindling supplies along with increased costs and long delivery times being experienced by the construction industry could impact on the Capital Programme. The Estates team are working to understand the potential financial impact and it is likely that this will become evident as we move planned projects through procurement to delivery during 2022/23. There are two potential impacts, firstly increases in the cost of projects and secondly slippage of projects and spend into future years (which could in itself lead to additional increased costs). The Estates team will work with stakeholders to bring tender costs back within budget through value engineering where possible on those projects which the Authority committed to following the phase 1 review of the Estates Capital Programme. The Phase 2 review which is considering all projects at Day Crewed and On Call stations will need to assess the impact of increased costs and affordability before it feeds into the next round of budget setting.

8.2 **Engineering:** Supply chain disruption is also having an impact on the delivery of the Engineering capital programme. Lead times have increased by 45% for HGV chassis and doubled for light vehicles in comparison to pre-pandemic. Engineering have explored the option of using other manufacturers for light commercial fleet, but the lead time for these has tripled.

8.3 The Finance team will work closely with the Estates and Engineering teams to identify slippage as early as possible and a formal request for slippage will be made mid-year.

Variation to Engineering Capital Programme

8.4.1 In September 2020 SLT approved the following in relation to special vehicles:

1. The replacement of Newhaven Operational Support Unit (OSU)
2. The introduction of Hazardous Material Response Vehicle
3. The introduction of a dedicated Fire Investigation (FI) Vehicle.

Approval was also given to allocate £200,000 of capital funding for the replacement of the OSU, but no capital allocation was made for the Hazardous Material Vehicle or the Fire Investigation Vehicle.

8.4.2 In May 2022 options were presented to the IRMP Strategic Board on how to fund these vehicles, within the current capital programme so that the delivery of the related IRMP work package would not be delayed.

8.4.3 The Strategic Board agreed with the option that the £200,000 allocated to replace the OSU at Newhaven, is repurposed to fund the HazMat Vehicle, FI Vehicle and that the OSU is replaced with an alternative vehicle (based on a Van) with budget allocated as below:

£65,000 – OSU
 £70,000 – Fire Investigation
 £65,000 – HazMat vehicle

8.4.4 The Strategic Board requested that SLT approve the option and that, following advice from the Treasurer, that Policy and Resources Panel ratify the decision in line with the requirements of Financial Regulations.

9. **RESERVES**

9.1 The Fire Authority maintains Reserves in order to assist 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).

9.2 The opening balance at 1 April is £19,161,000 including the provisional net underspend 2021/22 of £20,000 brought forward in an earmarked reserve.

9.3 The forecast net drawdown from reserves totals £11,944,000 compared to the original planned net drawdown of £11,780,000. This is a net increase in drawdown of £164,000 resulting in an estimated balance at 31 March 2023 of £7,197,000. As summarised in the table below and detailed over individual reserves in Appendix 5.

	Balance at 1 April 2022	Original Planned Net Transfers	Forecast Net Transfers	Net change	Month 2 Balance at 31 March 2023
	£'000	2021/22 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2021/22 £'000	£'000
Earmarked Reserves	12,973	(7,763)	(7,927)	(164)	5,046
General Fund	1,913	0	0	0	1,913
Total Revenue Reserves	14,886	(7,763)	(7,927)	(164)	6,959
Total Capital Reserves	4,255	(4,017)	(4,017)	0	238
Total Usable Reserves	19,141	(11,780)	(11,944)	(164)	7,197

9.4 The approved budget for 2022/23 already utilised £432,000 to balance the revenue budget with drawdowns from Business Rates Pool (£200,000) to support Protection, Sprinklers (£200,000) and Business Rates Retention Pilot – financial stability (£27,000).

9.5 In terms of managing any pressures in year the reserves that are available / are not currently committed against defined spend plans are:

- General Balances = £1.913m
- Financial Stability Reserve = £0.080m

- Improvement & Efficiency = £0.525m
- Sprinklers = £0.440m

10. **BORROWING AND INVESTMENT**

10.1 As at end May, the Authority held cash balances of £17,600,000 which are invested in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy, as follows:

Counterparty	Duration	Amount	Interest Rate
		£m	%
Aberdeen Cash Money Market Fund	Overnight Access	4.000	0.88
Deutsche Money Market Fund	Overnight Access	2.600	0.83
Barclays	95 Day Notice	4.000	1.05
Santander	95 Day Notice	4.000	0.99
Standard Chartered ESG	Fixed to 05/07/22	2.000	1.11
Standard Chartered ESG	Fixed to 05/10/22	1.000	1.46
Total Investments		17.600	

10.2 The Bank of England continues to increase the base rate, which is currently at 1.25%, its highest rate for 13 years. We are seeing the impact as banks increase their rates on investments, resulting in slightly higher levels of interest receivable. It is expected interest receivable could be in the region of £150,000 to £180,000 overachievement against the budget of £20,000. However the amount receivable will depend both on the interest rate and the balances available to invest. The budget has been reduced over the previous years due to the impact of interest rates falling and to reflect a planned reduction in funds available to invest short term.

10.3 The Authority has borrowing totalling £10,298,000 and there is no impact on the interest payable, as these are subject to fixed interest rate deals.

2022/23 Funding

	Original Budget	Forecast	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
RSG	(3,325)	(3,325)	0
Council Tax	(29,288)	(29,248)	40
Business Rates	(7,764)	(7,494)	270
Service Grant Allocation	(535)	(535)	0
Covid-19 Local Tax Support Grant	(29)	(56)	(27)
S31 Grants	(1,125)	(1,440)	(315)
Transfer from Reserves	(836)	(906)	(70)
Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit	1,136	839	(297)
Total Financing	(41,766)	(42,165)	(399)

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2022/23 Budget Pressures

	Lower Range	Higher Range	Report
	£'000	£'000	Section
Pressures:			
Grey book pay	500	750	2
Pay Awards	410	810	2
Crewing Pool	34	34	2
Utilities	260	260	2
Fuel	97	97	2
Non-pay	325	868	2
Savings at Risk	25	270	5
Firelink grant	65	65	6
Opportunities:			
Rates reduction	(132)	(132)	3
Investment Interest	(180)	(150)	3
Additional Funding	(399)	(399)	3
Budget Gap	1,005	2,473	

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2022/23 Savings

Division	Team	Responsible Officer	Description	2022/23 £'000
RT	Estates	Duncan Savage	Estates Strategy revenue maintenance savings.	(45)
All	All	All	Travel & subsistence	16
OSR	Engineering	Hannah Scott-Youlton	Fuel	15
PS	HR	Jules King	Firewatch Project	(25)
PS	Training	Jules King	STC Catering contract savings	(6)
RT	ITG	Duncan Savage	IT Strategy - delay some projects from 21/22 to 22/23	100
RT	Procurement	Duncan Savage	Category Strategy Savings	(25)
SC	All ops	Matt Lloyd	IRMP Savings	(130)
PS	Training	Jules King	Catering contract	(6)
PS	Training	Jules King	Deep cleaning contract	(2)
PS	Training	Jules King	First Aid training	(9)
PS	Training	Jules King	IOSH training	(3)
PS	Training	Jules King	CMI leadership	(2)
OSR	Engineering	Hannah Scott-Youlton	C-trak extension	(5)
OSR	AD	Hannah Scott-Youlton	Equipment	(8)
OSR	Ops P&P	Hannah Scott-Youlton	External Training	(1)
OSR	Ops P&P	Hannah Scott-Youlton	Equipment	(1)
OSR	Ops P&P	Hannah Scott-Youlton	Hydrants Repairs	(2)
OSR	Ops P&P	Hannah Scott-Youlton	Subscription (Services)	(4)
SC	Groups	Matt Lloyd	RDSO Post	(50)
SC	Community Safety	Matt Lloyd	Education Team	(40)
SC	All	Matt Lloyd	Advert & Publicity	(43)
P&I	PMO	Liz Ridley	Consolidation of Project Management capacity	(25)
P&I	Comms	Liz Ridley	External Printing	(10)
P&I	Comms	Liz Ridley	Stationery	(1)
P&I	Comms	Liz Ridley	Postage	(4)
P&I	P&I	Liz Ridley	Advert & Publicity	(1)
P&I	P&I	Liz Ridley	Car Allowances	(1)
P&I	P&I	Liz Ridley	Consultants Fees	(10)
P&I	P&I	Liz Ridley	Officer Subsistence	(1)
P&I	Dem Services	Liz Ridley	Subscriptions	(1)
P&I	Dem Services	Liz Ridley	Member conferences	(1)
RT	Finance	Duncan Savage	Non pay budgets	(10)
RT	Procurement	Duncan Savage	Accommodation & conference fees	(2)
RT	ITG	Duncan Savage	Password Management	(15)
RT	ITG	Duncan Savage	CAM Management	(3)
RT	ITG	Duncan Savage	Talent Contract	(63)
Central	Contingency	Duncan Savage	Reduce contingency (one year only)	(48)
RT	ITG	Duncan Savage	Control - IT	(218)
RT	ITG	Duncan Savage	IT Strategy - delay some projects from 22/23 to 23/24	(33)
SC	Prevention	Matt Lloyd	CRM	(55)
			Total Net Savings	(778)

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2022/23 Grants

Grants Requiring Claims	Lead AD	*Grant Brought Forward 1 April 2022 £	Grant 2022/23 £	Total Available Grant £
COVID - 19	Duncan Savage	95,855	-	95,855
ESMCP - LTR Regional	Hannah Scott-Youldon	163,439	0	163,439
**ESMCP - Infrastructure	Hannah Scott-Youldon	1,425,000	0	1,425,000
Grenfell Infrastructure Fund	Hannah Scott-Youldon	4,509	0	4,509
Surge Protection Grant Funding - Protection Uplift	Matt Lloyd	227,808	358,079	585,887
		1,939,347	358,079	2,274,689
Grants - No Claims Requirement	Lead AD	Balance Remaining £	Grant 2022/23 £	Total Available Grant £
Firelink	Duncan Savage	0	191,227	191,227
New Dimensions	Hannah Scott-Youldon	31,739	27,430	59,169
Pensions Grant	Duncan Savage	0	1,734,984	1,734,984
Responding to New Risks	Hannah Scott-Youldon	32,520	9,645	42,165
Total		1,083,975	1,963,286	2,027,545
Overall Total Grants		3,023,322	2,321,365	4,302,234
Notes:				
*the grants brought forward are held in earmarked reserves (Appendix 7)				
**Responding to New Risks grant yet to be advised				

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2022/23 Reserves

Description	Opening Balance	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	Projected Closing Balance	Lead AD
	01/04/2022	Original Planned Transfers In	Original Planned Transfers Out	Original Planned Transfers Net	Forecast Transfers In	Forecast Transfers Out	Forecast Transfers Net	Net Change	at Month 2	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Emarked Reserves										
Business Rate Pool Reserve	829	0	(200)	(200)	0	(200)	(200)	0	629	Duncan Savage
Business Rates Retention Pilot - financial stability	112	0	(27)	(27)	0	(27)	(27)	0	85	Duncan Savage
Capital Programme Reserve	3,080	500	(3,209)	(2,709)	500	(3,209)	(2,709)	0	371	Duncan Savage
Covid-19	96	0	(64)	(64)	0	0	0	64	96	Duncan Savage
ESMCP ESFRS readiness	1,425	0	(30)	(30)	0	(30)	(30)	0	1,395	Hannah Scob-Youlton
ESMCP Regional Programme	163	0	(83)	(83)	0	(163)	(163)	(80)	0	Hannah Scob-Youlton
Improvement & Efficiency	804	0	(279)	(279)	0	(279)	(279)	0	525	Duncan Savage
Insurance	249	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	249	Duncan Savage
ITG Strategy	3,774	592	(3,188)	(2,596)	592	(3,188)	(2,596)	0	1,178	Duncan Savage
Mobilising Strategy	37	0	(425)	(425)	0	(37)	(37)	388	0	Duncan Savage
People Strategy	70	0	(15)	(15)	0	(30)	(30)	(15)	40	Julie King
Sprinklers	640	0	(200)	(200)	0	(200)	(200)	0	440	Hannah Scob-Youlton
BRR - Protection Uplift - Accreditation & RPL	23	0	0	0	0	(23)	(23)	(23)	0	Matt Lloyd
BRR - Protection Uplift - Grenfell / Infrastructure	5	0	0	0	0	(5)	(5)	(5)	0	Hannah Scob-Youlton
BRR - Protection Uplift - Protection	228	0	(46)	(46)	0	(228)	(228)	(182)	0	Matt Lloyd
Business Rate Tax Income Guarantee Scheme (75%)	31	0	0	0	0	(15)	(15)	(15)	16	Duncan Savage
Council Tax Income Guarantee Scheme (75%)	83	0	(29)	(29)	0	(41)	(41)	(12)	42	Duncan Savage
New Dimensions Grant	32	0	0	0	0	(32)	(32)	(32)	0	Hannah Scob-Youlton
Pensions Administration	190	0	(147)	(147)	0	(190)	(190)	(43)	0	Julie King
Responding to New Risks	33	0	0	0	0	(33)	(33)	(33)	0	Hannah Scob-Youlton
S31 Business Rate Retention Refunds	906	0	(836)	(836)	0	(906)	(906)	(70)	0	Duncan Savage
Carry Forwards	178	0	(77)	(77)	0	(178)	(178)	(101)	0	Duncan Savage
Cadets	5	0	0	0	6	(11)	(5)	(5)	0	Matt Lloyd
Total Emarked Reserves	12,879	1,092	(8,866)	(7,783)	1,088	(9,026)	(7,927)	(184)	5,048	
General Fund	1,913	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,913	Duncan Savage
Total Revenue Reserves	14,888	1,092	(8,866)	(7,783)	1,088	(9,026)	(7,927)	(184)	6,969	
Capital Reserves	4,255	0	(4,017)	(4,017)	0	(4,017)	(4,017)	0	238	Duncan Savage
Total Capital Reserves	4,255	0	(4,017)	(4,017)	0	(4,017)	(4,017)	0	238	
Total Usable Reserves	19,143	1,092	(12,872)	(11,780)	1,088	(13,043)	(11,944)	(184)	7,187	

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EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Panel: Policy & Resources

Date: 21 July 2022

Title: Fire Authority Response - Home Office White Paper
“Reforming Our Fire & Rescue Service”

By: Councillor Roy Galley, Chairman & Group Leader
Conservative Group
Councillor Carolyn Lambert, Vice Chair & Group Leader
Liberal Democrat Group
Councillor Amanda Evans, Group Leader Labour Group
Councillor Wendy Maples, Group Leader Green Group

Lead Officer: Abigail Blanshard, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Background Papers: Reforming our Fire & Rescue Service – Home Office White Paper
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service>

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Proposed White Paper Responses
Appendix 2 – Reforming our Fire & Rescue Service – Home Office White Paper

Implications:

CORPORATE RISK		LEGAL	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
EQUALITY IMPACT	✓	POLITICAL	✓
FINANCIAL		OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	
HEALTH & SAFETY		CORE BRIEF	
HUMAN RESOURCES			

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To provide the Policy & Resources Panel the opportunity to consider and approve the proposed response of East Sussex Fire Authority which has been collectively drafted by the four Group Leaders.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: On the 18 May 2022, the Home Office launched its consultation for the long anticipated White Paper setting out the proposed reforms to the Fire and Rescue sector.

The White Paper covers a package of proposals for the reform of fire and rescue services in England. The proposals cover three principal areas: People,

Professionalism and Governance. Views are being sought on the specific proposals and the wider package of reforms presented.

The full White Paper (Appendix 2) was circulated on its publication to all Fire Authority Members to allow for detailed scrutiny. The Group Leaders were then asked to submit their comments and initial responses on behalf of their groups. Democratic Services compiled a combined document setting out the consultation questions and the collated responses to allow the Group Leaders to consider in depth at a Working Group meeting on 23 June 2022.

The Working Group created a draft collective response for the Fire Authority. Further consultation followed and those Group Leaders who were available met after the Members' Seminar to update the response to include new suggestions received. Group Leaders are satisfied that the responses, attached at Appendix 1, represent a collaborative and collective response

The Fire Authority must submit its consultation response before the deadline of 11:59pm on 26 July 2022 in order for it to be considered.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Policy & Resources Panel:

- i. consider whether any additions or amendments should be made to the draft response at Appendix 1;
 - ii. approve the draft response at Appendix 1, or as modified pursuant to recommendation i) above; and
 - iii. authorise the Senior Democratic Services Officer to submit the final response by 26 July 2022.
-

ESFRA Response

Reforming our Fire & Rescue Service White Paper - Consultation Questions:

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	X			

The key point regards flexibility and to some extent FRSs already have this under their IRMPs which are based on local risk. Additionally, FRSs have duties under the Civil Contingencies Act and are key members of Local Resilience Forums. However, it is critical that there is consistency and clarity to ensure effective funding, independent inspection and the opportunity to benchmark. There are also concerns regarding future risks emerging from Climate Change – for example there is no statutory requirement for FRSs to respond to Flooding and the numbers of wildfires are increasing.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	X			

FRSs already provide an active role in this area we are rightly proud of our record in ESFRS on prevention work. However, there needs to be greater clarity as very few FRS benefit from direct funding for this work. So the specifics and definition of what is meant by “an active role” should be clearer. Obviously in a national health emergency, such as a pandemic, the FRS already play a role through the Local Resilience Forums. FRS all contribute to reduction in alcohol harm & smoking cessation through Home Safety Visits. The sweeping and unfair description of ‘unduly neglected protection and prevention work’ is both untrue in our case, and unhelpful in encouraging further improvement.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	X			

This service has a specific Business Continuity plan for industrial action with a degradation plan. It is accepted that without additional funding, enactment of this plan this would result in some degradation of our current levels of service and attendance times.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		X		

Q5: Please provide the reasons for your response.

The National Joint Committee in its current form means only LGA members and the trade unions are in the room for pay negotiations. A comprehensive review of the arrangements with the alternative options set out would be helpful and provide greater transparency in order to form a view.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	X			

Q7: Please provide the reasons for your response.

Consistency would be helpful, but care must be taken when setting entry requirements to ensure inclusivity. Professional advice from education professionals for the fulfilment of national role maps would be helpful. For the avoidance of doubt, we feel that “degree entry” would be inappropriate for Firefighters. There is evidence that it has not served Policing well since its introduction for PCs. It is essential that even if a minimum entry requirement is introduced there should still be some local flexibility with regards to qualifications and skills requirements rather than it be rigid.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		X		

Not enough information has been provided for an opinion on this, therefore it would appear to be a premature proposal. We understand NFCC are introducing direct entry schemes in 2023 and believe those should be evaluated first.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	X			

Q10: Please provide reasons for your response.

A broad variety of pathways and development will be required dependant on the previous experience of leaders to ensure efficiency. Leadership development should be available to all operational and support staff, whatever area/entry level/ rank people are at.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		X		

Not enough information – it depends on what the programme was, what experience candidates have, how much it would cost and who would pay?

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	X			

Central to this there needs to be an annual evaluation of data collection methods and choice of data collected. Where data is (badly) structured without the opportunity for appropriate analysis, it can become a pointless exercise. Who would oversee and host the repository and the data choices?

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

Good benchmarking is required both cross sector and inter sector – we should be able to compare data across the country, with devolved administrations to spot trends and also seek open data for collaboration with key partners.

Research is fundamental to ensure maturity and future development of data development.

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

- Collaborating

- Commissioning
- Conducting
- Collating

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
X				

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

Accessible information and comparative data are necessary when working in collaboration. Continuing to work with university research groups in a timely way to ensure useful research is brought into practical use in a timely way. This should consider how fire and rescue service activity is contributing to wider achievements.

Practical and national research hubs that are correctly resourced are vital to ensure research is also accessible beyond the immediate or commissioning group and to avoid valuable evidence and research failing to be fed into (compared, collated and evaluated) wider knowledge groups. Collaboration with other organisations on certain subjects, such as on climate change and biodiversity research should also be done to address practical mitigation/adaptation and the process for implementation, e.g. Centre for Alternative Technology.

Tapping into other sector and international research – particularly with the future direction of climate change impacts is important.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		X		

Preference would be to ensure that the current NFCC Code of Ethics is adhered to rather than to make it statutory, which seems heavy handed. Keep it to a professional code.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
			X	

There are other ways of embedding ethical values rather than making it statutory and a huge amount of work has been done in our service on the Leadership and Behavioural Framework to clarify expectations. Why would it being statutory be

more effective? The key to dealing with breaches of ethics is ensuring a robust disciplinary policy and procedures are in place.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
			X	

We do not believe it should be a statutory code

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
			X	

It is the job of a CFO to ensure that the relevant disciplinary policy and procedures are upheld within the service – we disagree with this being statutory code.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		X		

Q21: Please give the reasons for your response.

There is little evidence that swearing an oath results in a reduction in unacceptable performance and behaviour. If there is to be an oath, we believe it should take the form of an oath of service to the Public and the community served rather than to the Crown (Fire is not a crown service like the Police). In this context it would be more appropriate to be a professional oath rather than contractual. It is possible that it may encourage pride in service. We considered a parallel to the Hippocratic Oath taken by doctors to be more fitting to the FRSs which is more of a humanitarian service sector.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	X			

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	X			

It would depend on the content of the oath and full consultation with all stakeholders. Applying it retrospectively may present issues, as staff are already employed.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
			X	

An oath would be too high level to be used as a disciplinary tool – Code of Ethics and conduct and disciplinary policies are more appropriate to be used for this purpose.

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

- Leadership
- Data
- Research
- Ethics
- Clear Expectations

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
X				

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

The framing of this appears to be based on a presumption that there is a lack of professionalism within the majority of the sector. We do not agree. Efficiency and alternative funding is a priority for the sector (if that is included under the banner of Leadership, that is fine). Cross Sector support for the new professional coaching and mentoring framework as part of Leadership development is welcomed.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		X		

Q28: Please provide your reasons for your response

We would require further clarity on the role of current FS college v. a new 'independent' one. It could be a tool to encourage wider diversity within the profession. Clarity is needed on the definition of 'independent' – will it be industry led/government led/ or a private company? Needs to be collegiate and collaborative. It is a potential risk. Where will the cost of the college fall? The suggestion seems to be that the College would have potentially no cost but it is difficult to see how this would work, cost free, in practice.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
				X

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

Please provide the reasons for your response.

This would create a democratic deficit and lack of cross-party buy-in. The FRS is well trusted by the public and in part that is because the FRA are representative of our varied local communities. Local councillors know their local communities well and this could not be replicated by a single elected individual. If the current Governance model is working and the service performance is good, then why would it be changed, there are other priorities.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		X		

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
				X

See comments to Q30

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

Yes	No
	X

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

Why the white paper suggests the removal of Combined Fire Authorities is not clear or evidenced, nor is it reflected in performance and the findings of the HMICFRS.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	X			

Q36: Please provide the reasons for your response.

Strengthening does not necessarily mean changing, if the Home Office wished to see elected Executive models, then that could be designed in a revision of Combined Fire Authority Constitutions.

Irrespective of any changes to governance, clarifying the legal basis for the Fire & Rescue Service would be helpful in terms of standardising and codifying the statutory framework – by way of example, CFAs do not benefit from the general power of competence under the Localism Act, whereas County Fire Services do. Also there is no clear statutory power for most Combined Fire Authorities to dispose of land, as the standard land disposal power available to local authorities in section 123 Local Government Act 1972 does not apply to CFAs. However, it is noted that the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority (Combination Scheme) Order 2020 incorporates that provision.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		X		

In the case of Combined Fire Authority, it seems inappropriate to be proposing the removal of a model that is already high achieving. For the benefit of efficiency it is not the coterminosity of the “county” boundary that is key but the coterminous delivery of Service provision in order to deliver efficiency and effectiveness. There is no issue geographically within Sussex in terms of coterminosity of boundaries – what the actual issue is relates to the fact that the two FRS within the wider area are under two different, but well-functioning models

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
X				

Q39: Please provide the reasons for your response.

Important to ensure money for fire and rescue is not diverted to other services. A minimum three-year funding settlement is also required to allow for planning and stability rather than one off grants.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		X		

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

There is joint accountability for many of these listed responsibilities. Clear accountability is key. Setting Response standards should be an operational matter in our view.

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

Q43: What factors should we consider when giving chief fire officers operational independence?

Please provide the reasons for your opinions.

Operational decisions made by the CFO must not conflict with Budget or strategy including responsiveness to the climate crisis. Good governance requires that the CFO ensures that the political leadership of the service is kept well informed in order to ensure transparency and democratic accountability.

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

More research is needed on this and more information to understand the implications for Fire. We would wish to see specifics of how Corporation Sole work in other organisations/ sectors.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	X			

Need to understand better the remit of the proposed “Executive leadership” – need to know where they overlap/integrate e.g. CRMP is both strategy and operational delivery, so it would seem to be a joint responsibility.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
X				

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
X				

Q48: Please provide the reasons for your response.

Noting that there are strategic elements of the delivery of Operations and its not as clear cut as simply presented in this paper
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END



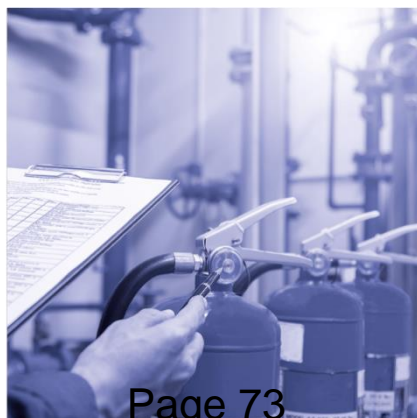
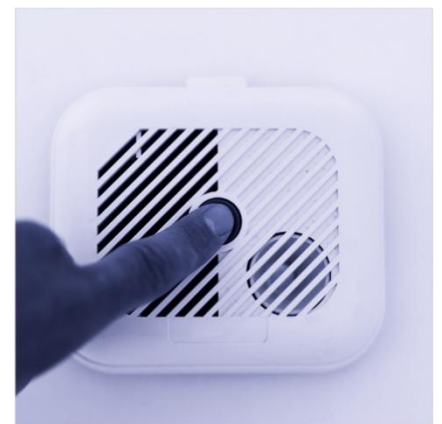
Home Office

Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service

Building professionalism, boosting performance and strengthening governance

May 2022

CP 670





Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service

**Building professionalism, boosting performance
and strengthening governance**

Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for the Home Department
by Command of Her Majesty

May 2022



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About this consultation

To: This white paper and consultation covers a package of proposals for the reform of fire and rescue services in England. The proposals cover three principal areas of the reform vision: People, Professionalism and Governance. Views are sought on the specific proposals and the wider package of reforms presented.

Duration: From 18/05/22 to 26/07/22

Enquiries (including requests for the paper in an alternative format) to: **Email:** firereformconsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk

Or

Fire Reform Consultation
Fire Strategy & Reform Unit
4th Floor, Peel Building
2 Marsham Street,
London
SW1P 4DF

How to respond: There are three thematic sections in this consultation. Each section is divided into topical chapters which provide background information to the lead question(s).

Respondents can answer as many or as few questions as they wish. You do not have to comment on every section or respond to every question in each section but can focus on where you have relevant views and evidence to share. If you wish to respond to all questions, you do not have to complete the whole form at once.

Please send your response by 11:59pm on 26 July 2022

Please respond to the questions in this consultation online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service>

Alternatively, you can send in electronic copies to: firereformconsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk; or,

Alternatively, you may send paper copies to:
Fire Reform Consultation
Fire Strategy & Reform Unit
4th Floor, Peel Building
2 Marsham Street,
London
SW1P 4DF

Additional ways to respond: If you wish to submit other evidence, or a long-form response, please do so by sending it to the email address or postal address above.

Response paper: A response to this consultation exercise is due to be published at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service>

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Ministerial Foreword

Home Secretary



I never cease to be impressed by the dedication of our fire and rescue professionals. As Home Secretary, I have always regarded the police as the first public service but I have come to realise that the fire and rescue service plays an equal part. Together they provide vital pillars of support in the mission to keep the public safe which is the first duty of any government.

It has been a challenging period for us all. Despite the difficulties that we have faced, I have been immeasurably proud to witness the efforts of fire and rescue services in responding to the needs of our communities throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Fire and rescue professionals have taken on a number of the responsibilities that the emergency demanded. From driving ambulances, supporting the vulnerable, to managing food and distribution hubs and administering vaccinations, fire and rescue services have been ready, willing and able to play a critical role in protecting communities. I would also like to acknowledge the important role on call firefighters provide in keeping their communities safe. Looking beyond our borders, I was proud to be able to offer the expertise of our fire and rescue services to help their Greek colleagues in the fight against horrific wildfires in the summer of 2021.

We are immensely grateful for their efforts. We should strip away any barriers that hold our fire professionals back and provide them with the support they deserve.

Our fire and rescue services protect communities and save lives. It is imperative that they are fully supported to respond to the changing risks they face. This means building on the response to the pandemic, learning from major public inquiries, and responding to the challenges identified by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in relation to leadership, culture and collaboration.

Nonetheless, there is a compelling case for reform of our fire and rescue services. Both of Sir Thomas Winsor's HMICFRS State of Fire reports have concluded that significant reform is needed. The need to improve the emergency response of fire and rescue services to a major incident is compelling. The fire at Grenfell Tower was a national tragedy resulting in the greatest loss of life in a residential fire since World War 2. The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report made 46 recommendations for the London Fire Brigade (LFB), all fire and rescue services, other emergency services, building owners and the government. The government has committed to implementing all 46 recommendations in the most practical and proportionate way possible. An independent report (known as the Kerslake report) into the Manchester Arena bombing found that the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service was "bought to a point of paralysis" as their response was delayed for two hours. The need to improve fire protection is also clear. Dame Judith Hackitt's review into building safety, alongside the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, has highlighted its importance.

Now the government must take action to enable fire and rescue services to perform and fulfil their core functions of prevention, protection, response and resilience effectively in a way that responds to the local needs, the changing risks and challenges faced, and that enables collaboration with other emergency services on a range of public safety challenges. This white paper sets out this government's vision for fire reform.

Fire Minister



The white paper concerns the reform and strengthening of fire and rescue services in England. This builds on fire and building safety system reform in recent years and the government response to the fire at Grenfell Tower. Our vision for the reform seeks to drive change and improvement in three key areas: People, Professionalism and Governance.

People

Our reform proposals seek to introduce changes that will allow fire professionals to further develop their skills and thrive in their work. We want to clarify the role of fire and rescue services and of the firefighter, unlock talent and improve diversity within services, take action to ensure that we are supporting the creation of a positive culture, and further develop schemes to consistently identify and nurture talent. Finally, we will commission an independent review into the current pay negotiation process and consider if it is fit for a modern emergency service.

Professionalism

Our reform proposals seek to modernise the fire and rescue service, to enable greater professionalism and to ensure that we are recruiting and training our fire and rescue services to be the best that they can be. We want to increase professionalism by moving from a Fire Standards Board (which sets clear expectations for the sector) to the creation of a College of Fire and Rescue. We want to develop a mandatory 21st century leadership programme for progression to senior roles, set clearer entry requirements for recruitment, and put in place a statutory code of ethics and a fire and rescue service oath.

Governance

Our reform proposals seek to strengthen governance arrangements across the sector. Out of 44 fire and rescue authorities, 38 operate a committee structure. We want to transfer fire functions to a single, elected – ideally directly elected – individual who would hold their operationally independent Chief Fire Officer to account. This person could be: a mayor who could delegate day-to-day oversight to a deputy mayor; or a council leader who could delegate to a cabinet member or a police, fire and crime commissioner. This effective political oversight would maintain and enhance public accountability.

Fire professionals put their lives on the line to protect and serve their communities. It is only right that they have our full support. This Fire Reform white paper is the first step towards reforms that will achieve this profoundly essential public interest objective.

Building on Success

The Case for Change

The government intends, through this White paper, consultation and future legislation to strengthen fire and rescue services across England.

Our ambition is to develop services with communities at their heart that provide excellent support and development for their teams. This will be underpinned by clear decision-making processes and operational leaders who are empowered to plan and respond quickly to new challenges held to account by a single executive leader, ideally a directly elected politician. We want to ensure that services play to their strengths in responding to emergencies, as well as sharpen their focus on their prevention and protection functions. This will allow service leaders and their professional teams to face the future with confidence, reduce the risk of harm, and help keep people safe.

Fire and rescue is already a highly skilled profession. We want to support staff further, ensuring that they are given the opportunities, development, and oversight to match their status. Our fire and rescue professionals and our communities deserve nothing less.

Fire and Rescue Reform to Date

The proposals in this white paper build on a legacy of reform of fire and rescue services introduced by the Home Office over recent years. Changes have been designed to make services and those working within them more able to work efficiently and effectively, and to adapt to the public safety challenges and emergencies we face, both now and in the future.

The reforms of the past five to ten years have seen the establishment of an independent inspection regime to report to the public on the efficiency and effectiveness of fire and rescue services, stronger national coordination amongst operational leaders, increased government funding for service improvement, and the development of clear and consistent expectations of fire and rescue services. We have supported fire and rescue services as they serve the most vulnerable in communities. We have done this by increasing both the focus and funding for fire protection, nationally and locally, by helping services across England to respond to the lessons highlighted by the Grenfell Tower tragedy, and by continuing to promote fire prevention, including through the national Fire Kills campaign.

We have also strengthened the governance of fire and rescue services by legislating to enable police and crime commissioners (PCCs) to take on responsibility for services, with the intention of improving their transparency, collaboration and accountability.

While meaningful national and local reform has taken place, recent inspections and inquiries have established that there is further to go to ensure both employees and the public are getting the support and service they should expect. That is why the government proposes to introduce a comprehensive reform programme, as set out in this white paper.

Stepping Up During the Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a huge challenge for all emergency services, and we are proud of how fire and rescue employees across the country stepped up to support their communities.

Last January, HMICFRS highlighted how services continued to respond to fires and other emergencies, while also supporting communities through one of the most difficult periods in our country's history. Most services were involved in proactive work through their local resilience forums (LRFs) – from supporting strategic coordination of the multi-agency response, driving ambulances and joining multi-agency teams responding to deaths in the community, to delivering food and medicines to the vulnerable and using their skills to help others to work safely.

However, the report also highlighted the barriers services face to becoming more effective and efficient, including the challenges posed by a sluggish national negotiation system for pay and conditions, between unions and employers. For example, during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, service leaders were not able to deploy their staff to support communities in a timely manner. Instead, a series of national agreements (the 'tripartite agreement') had to be painstakingly negotiated before fire and rescue professionals could act. In the pandemic this process slowed down – and in some places, stopped – services fully supporting their communities.

Following the end of the restrictive national agreements, services were freed up to safely provide an even greater range of support to their communities. Chief fire officers were able to work with local partners to take a leading role in testing and vaccine logistics, and in administering vaccinations in many areas. This work is rightly a source of pride for service leaders and fire and rescue professionals who, empowered to make operational decisions and risk assessments at a local level, were able to step up to serve their communities.

Shining a Light Through Independent Inspection

Independent, expert, objective and fearless inspection is essential to the promotion of improvement. On the basis of rigorous analysis of evidence and professional judgment, it establishes where policies and practices are working well, so they can be adopted everywhere, and it explains to services, elected representatives and the public where things are not as they should be. Its analysis and the reasons for its conclusions and recommendations for improvement are fully explained, so that services, the public and others can see and easily understand them.

Since 2018, every service in England has been inspected at least twice. Her Majesty's Chief Fire and Rescue Inspector, Sir Thomas Winsor, has produced three annual State of Fire and Rescue reports that have provided clear assessments of the state of the sector and highlighted where reform is needed. They have been significant catalysts for our proposals to further strengthen services.

The inspectorate found that while the fire and rescue services have many commendable strengths, the system needs national and local reform. Based on the inspectorate's reports, it is clear that the strength of fire and rescue services is rooted in their operational response. When the public dial 999, services will respond with highly skilled and committed crews. While response is the most urgent function of a fire and rescue service, some services have unduly neglected vital protection and prevention work. And while some services have taken steps to improve productivity, more could and should be done to ensure that they are making the best use of public resources in ways that always put communities first.

Sir Thomas recognised that in recent years some reform and innovation has been implemented, but improvements have been sporadic. To date, the inspectorate has made six national recommendations. These include: improving the governance of services by granting chief fire officers operational independence to enable flexibility; providing greater clarity on the precise scope of the role of the fire and rescue service, improving the transparency and effectiveness of the negotiation mechanism for pay and conditions; and putting in place measures to improve the culture in fire and rescue services.

Lessons from Grenfell

The fire at Grenfell Tower, on 14 June 2017, is an indelible tragedy in the history of our country. The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report (GTI phase 1) made 46 recommendations for the London Fire Brigade, all fire and rescue services, other emergency services, building owners and the government. The government has worked alongside service leaders to ensure that action is being taken across the country, supported by legislative change and significant additional funding to drive improvement. The reforms set out in this white paper will complement the work already underway to strengthen fire safety and protection - building the capacity and capability within services that our communities deserve.

Last April, the government secured the passage of the Fire Safety Act 2021. The Act establishes that the scope of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) applies to the structure, external walls and flat entrance doors. On 17 March 2021, the government published its response to the fire safety consultation which set out proposals to strengthen fire safety in all regulated buildings in England. Further changes will be introduced through the government's Building Safety Bill, which will enable the establishment of a Building Safety Regulator, as part of the overhaul of building and fire safety regimes for higher-risk buildings. Furthermore, the government held a consultation from 8 June to 19 July 2021 to seek people's views on proposals relating to the complex issue of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs). While there was considerable support for the idea of PEEPs, the consultation also raised operational challenges to implementing PEEPs in high rise residential buildings which typically would have no staffing or very limited staffing. Concerns include the practical challenges of ensuring safety when evacuating using the stairs, both for the vulnerable persons with the PEEPs and for other residents using the same stairwell; and the operational impact on firefighters using the same space. Further, there are concerns that, if extra staff are needed to make PEEPs work, it would result in disproportionately increased costs for residents. We intend to shortly propose a collection of initiatives that

together seek to achieve our policy aim of enhancing the safety of residents in high rise residential buildings whose ability to self-evacuate may be compromised in a way that is proportional and implementable. While this package would not directly implement the PEEPs-related recommendations in the GTI Phase 1 report, we are confident that it will satisfy the principles of improved fire safety of vulnerable persons behind the recommendations. The government intends shortly to lay regulations that implement the majority of the recommendations made by the Inquiry's Phase 1 report which require a change in the law.

The need to strengthen fire protection is clear. Dame Judith Hackitt's review into building regulations and fire safety, the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, other fires and HMICFRS inspection findings have highlighted its importance. That is why we provided £30 million in additional funding during 2020/21 and have continued to provide further funding this financial year. This funding supports services to review or inspect every high-rise residential building in England by the end of 2021 and strengthen the response to risks in other buildings, including residential buildings under 18 metres, care homes and hospitals. £7 million of this funding helped services to implement Grenfell recommendations through new training, equipment (such as smoke hoods) and technology to support communications and control room systems. In addition, we have commissioned research to support the development of national guidelines on evacuations from high-rise buildings.

A Clear Role for Fire and Rescue Services

The role of the fire and rescue authority (FRA) is set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. However, the work of fire and rescue services has evolved over the years. The built environment has become more complex and the nature of the risk facing communities has changed. The vulnerability of occupants is having a tangible impact on how services manage and respond to risk. Prevention, legislation, regulation, innovation and better building and product design have mitigated some longstanding public safety risks, and communities are safer as a result. This major public service success story does not get the recognition it deserves.

Historically, services have managed their resources to meet foreseeable risks to the public. But cumbersome industrial relationships have limited chief fire officers' ability to flexibly use their resources to truly meet changing risk, for example, by changing working patterns to respond to changing demand. Services need to plan for instances where they may need to simultaneously respond to large scale emergencies and a range of smaller incidents. Furthermore, staff need to be trained to respond to incidents safely, adapting to the ever-changing nature of malicious risks, such as terrorist incidents. The challenge, then, is to ensure flexibility so that fire and rescue professionals can fully serve their communities in partnership with other services. Crucially, local flexibility must be available to operationally independent service leaders to make the best use of their people and assets, balancing innovation with the core functions established in statute.

The Way Forward - Strengthening our Fire and Rescue Service

The case for strengthening fire and rescue services is clear. We want to improve the offer to professionals and the public, ensuring that services can adapt and change.

Our Vision

We want to see services providing excellence in their core prevention, protection, response, and resilience functions, responding to local needs in line with national expectations and guidance. Services will be helped to make the best use of the resources available to them, with the ability to come together quickly and respond safely to local and national emergencies, based on good data and evidence. Services need to be more able to adapt to changing threats and risks, working flexibly with other local partners.

Chief fire officers will be skilled leaders and managers, with clear responsibility to run and manage their services effectively and efficiently, in order to meet their local risk. Strong political, executive oversight will ensure services are properly accountable to the communities they serve and run in the public interest.

Twenty-first century fire and rescue services will embrace an ethical culture that attracts and retains talented people, values diversity and reflects the communities they serve. Their employees will be well supported and trained to do their jobs. At the same time, services will embrace learning, use data and evidence to inform their decision-making, and share best practice and innovation.

Employment arrangements across the sector need to be modernised. They need to be more transparent and should recognise staff for their skills and competence and not just for time served. The interests of all parties will be fairly represented during discussions on pay, terms and conditions and other workplace matters.

People, Professionalism and Governance

Our reform agenda seeks to drive improvement in three essential areas: well-trained and supported **people**; high levels of **professionalism**; and strong and effective **governance**.

On **People**, it is vital that fire and rescue services create an environment where they get the best out of their people. Staff should feel confident that they will be supported to reach their full potential, with accessible development opportunities and structured learning available. As recommended by HMICFRS, the role of fire and rescue services needs clarification with greater local flexibility for firefighters and staff to add value; the proposals in this white paper seek to address this recommendation, amongst others. Furthermore, fire and rescue professionals should be supported by a professional pay negotiation process. The current National Joint Council has strayed beyond its original scope and into negotiation of operational response, which should be a matter for operational leaders.

On **Professionalism**, this white paper examines how we can continue to support fire and rescue professionals to help them better protect their communities. Our reform plans set out

our ambition for an independent College of Fire and Rescue focussed on the following five areas:

- Research
- Data
- Leadership,
- Ethics
- Clear expectations for fire and rescue services

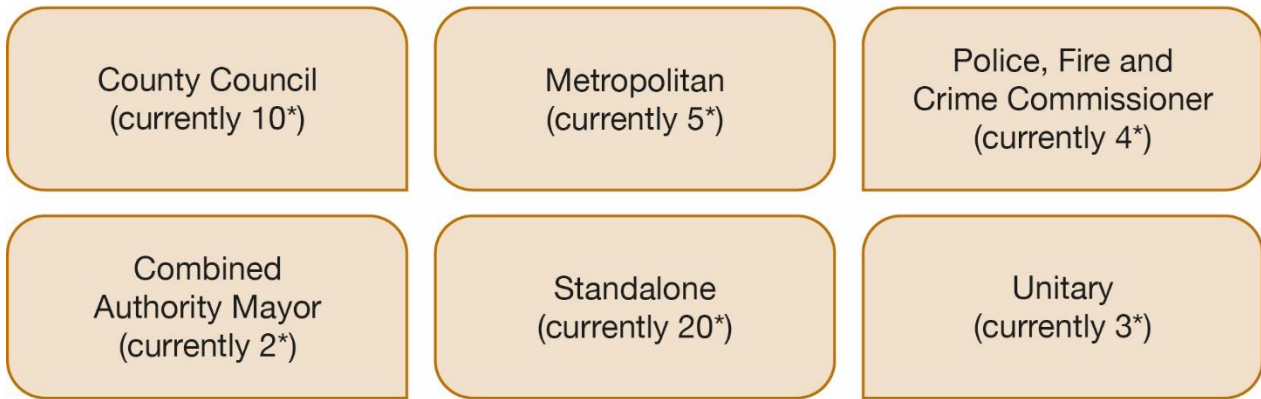
Subject to the response to the consultation, this College of Fire and Rescue could be located at an existing body such as a training provider, fire and rescue service or other professional body. This could include the Fire Service College (FSC) at potentially no cost, for example, given its historic links to government. The FSC is one of a number of training providers, all with a similar market share, available to fire and rescue services. We would like to hear from potential hosts to understand where the proposed college could be located given the potential benefit to both the host and the college of co-location. The proposed college should take on the functions carried out currently by the Fire Standards Board, which sets out clear expectations for the sector. Development opportunities for staff should include support for progression to leadership roles and development schemes to identify and nurture talent. Further, we want to examine the opportunity to support a consistently positive culture within services through the creation of a statutory code of ethics and a fire and rescue service oath.

On **Governance**, the lack of executive oversight in most FRAs and the variation and inconsistency between governance models have hampered accountability and transparency for the public. A review of the role of PCCs found that simplifying and strengthening the governance regime for fire services across England is critical to unlocking the wider reforms that are needed. We are setting out criteria for good governance and our ambition is to move governance to an executive leader, such as a combined authority mayor, a police, fire and crime commissioner (PFCC), or a county council leader. These options are illustrated in Figure 1. They, as ‘the Occupant’, would be able to delegate some or all of their day-to-day responsibilities to a deputy mayor, deputy PFCC or council cabinet member respectively. We also intend to implement HMICFRS’s recommendation to confer operational independence on chief fire officers. This will enable the chief fire officer to have direction and control over their resources to meet the executive leader’s priorities. We propose – whether in primary legislation or statutory guidance – to clearly define the role and responsibilities of both the executive leader and chief fire officer with clear demarcation between the two. Effective governance will ensure a publicly accountable figure can set clear priorities and hold the chief fire officer firmly to account for their performance in order to best deliver for the public.

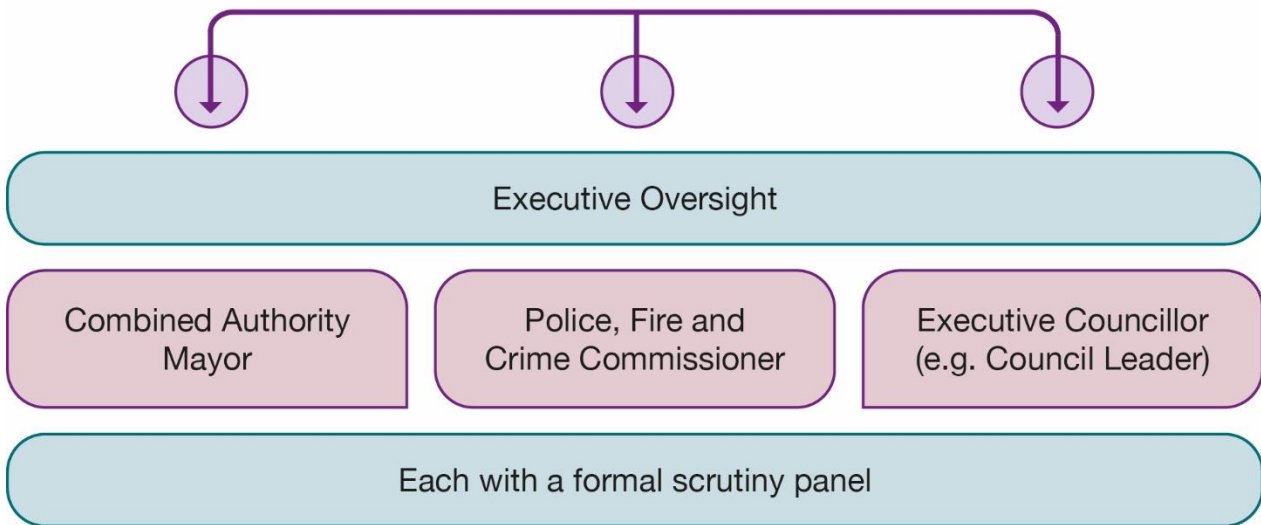
This could be alongside making chief fire officers corporations sole, thereby making them the employers of fire professionals.

We believe that these governance changes will enable effective executive oversight to hold an operationally independent chief fire officer to account with appropriate support and challenge. The executive would be required to produce a strategic fire and rescue plan listing their priorities while the chief fire officer would focus on their operational requirements to meet those priorities. Finally, we do not wish to lose the skills and experiences of existing councillors on the fire and rescue authority who could be used to scrutinise the decisions of this individual.

Current Types of Fire and Rescue Authority



Proposed reform



*fire and rescue authorities as at 1 January 2022

People

The biggest asset available to fire and rescue services is the people who work for them. Their dedication and skill, and the respect they command from their communities, make them a crucial part of the public safety system. We are committed to ensuring that fire and rescue employees are representative of the communities they serve and are equipped with the skills they need to reduce risk, save lives, and meet the challenges of the future.

However, current working practices are highly inflexible and, in some services, no longer reflect the range of incidents faced. In his 2020 State of Fire and Rescue report, Sir Thomas Winsor recognised that for services to better serve the public, they need to be able to adapt and do things differently. He noted substantial barriers to change and efficiency and recommended that the government takes an active role in clarifying fire fighters' true responsibilities and improves the mechanism for establishing pay and conditions.

The Role of Fire and Rescue Services

The principal role of fire and rescue services is to keep the public safe through prevention, protection and response work. The statutory functions of fire and rescue authorities are set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. Furthermore, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 sets out their role as Category 1 responders in response to civil emergencies. This includes their increasingly significant role in local resilience forums, civil protection and in incidents where there is the threat of serious damage to human welfare or the environment.

The Cabinet Office's Integrated Review 2021 put an increasing focus on building national resilience and commits the government to consider strengthening the roles and responsibilities of Local Resilience Forums in England alongside a wider National Resilience Strategy. Fire and rescue services and senior fire officers play key roles in the operation and leadership of LRFs in preparing for emergencies and in responding to emergencies in multi-agency Strategic Coordination Groups.

The Cabinet Office's National Resilience Strategy Call for Evidence closed in September 2021. The Home Office has consulted with the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC), to ensure the fire sector continues to play a strong role in both national and local community resilience, across the resilience cycle.

In carrying out their functions, services must work with the public and businesses to reduce incidents of fire and ensure that appropriate measures are in place to mitigate their impact. Firefighters need to be prepared, equipped with the right skills and expertise to attend, assess the risk and respond to a range of incidents, across the complex, built environment and national infrastructure. They are supported, where necessary, by expert fire safety inspectors and engineers.

HMICFRS inspections have highlighted that operational response is a key strength of services but reported that there is considerable variation in how prevention and protection work is carried out, understood and prioritised. The most effective services have protected and extended their reach in this area, and we will continue to work with the NFCC on the development and implementation of prevention and protection programmes.

Modern Working Practices

Just as society continues to change, so have public safety challenges to which services must respond: from the increased risk from terrorism and environmental challenges, to pandemics and the increasing demands on local authorities, given that people are living longer and vulnerability is better understood. The role of services, and of those who work for them, needs to continuously evolve. Fire and rescue services provide a skilled, capable and engaged workforce that is ready, willing and able to step into these challenges in the Community Risk Programme. It is right that the public can expect them to be deployed to assist their communities as the need arises.

However, the barriers to doing so were seen during the sector’s ongoing response to Covid-19, where the determination of fire and rescue staff to assist their communities was not always matched by flexible and modern employment practices. The national negotiation mechanism established by the National Joint Council has been recognised by inspectors and others as a barrier to a rapid and flexible response. These barriers have meant services have struggled to adapt and communities have not always been well served in the process. For example, previous collaborations with health partners have floundered in some places and in Greater Manchester, a team formed to respond to marauding terrorist attacks in the city withdrew their labour because of a dispute, leaving the community unacceptably vulnerable. While this capability has been restored through a local agreement that costs more taxpayer money, the government is clear that under current arrangements there is a role for services and their employees to respond to terrorism in all its forms.

Chief fire officers should be empowered to safely make decisions on the basis of risk and resources. While it is right that all relevant trade unions have a role to play in discussions on terms and conditions and the health and safety of their members, this must not come at the expense of safe and sensible progress and efficiency when communities need action.

We will work with fire and rescue leaders to ensure that services can fully support their communities. The need to identify emerging issues and continually assess risk extends to prevention and protection functions where services should ensure that they adapt to meet emerging issues and levels of risk, with their activity tailored to those they target.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Public Safety

Fire and rescue services play an important role in assisting communities with health and crime prevention and reduction. Services have already demonstrated their ability to support wider public safety. For example, StayWise is an NFCC-led partnership initiative that supports blue light and educational professionals in the provision of safety messaging to children. Some services have collaborated with local partners to help prevent crime and support their communities. For instance, a multi-agency partnership involving Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, local councillors, Northumbria Police, a local housing company and Sunderland City Council led to the formation of SARA (Southwick Altogether

Raising Aspirations). SARA brings together partners to help the most vulnerable members of the community – from supporting those with mental health problems, helping victims of crime and working in schools to divert and dissuade vulnerable teenagers from a life of crime.

Other activity ranges from identifying and referring those at risk of domestic abuse, modern slavery and hate crime, to diverting young people away from trouble through fire cadets and other schemes. The new Serious Violence Duty in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, which proposes to bring together local agencies to prevent and reduce serious violence, will also apply to fire and rescue authorities.

As discussed later, as well as considering the merging of fire and policing governance under democratically elected combined authority mayors or police, fire and crime commissioners, we would also seek to strengthen the emergency service response to local issues and promote greater collaboration between agencies to support public safety needs.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Business Continuity

The first duty of any government is to keep the public safe. Unlike the police, firefighters and control staff can strike, which inevitably puts the public and non-striking fire professionals at risk. While we do not propose removing the freedom for staff to choose to participate in industrial action, we believe that public safety needs to be ensured.

Fire and rescue services are ‘Category 1 responders’ under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This requires them to carry out specific civil protection duties, which chief fire officers must bear in mind when considering their business continuity plans. Requirements for business continuity are also set out in the fire and rescue service National Framework for England. The Home Office will work closely with the NFCC to ensure that each service has a robust business continuity plan that considers a range of challenges, including the impact of industrial action. Working with the NFCC, the National Resilience Assurance Team and HMICFRS, we will commission that the plans are independently assured. As outlined later in this white paper, the operational independence of chief fire officers plays a crucial role in allowing them to manage risk within their service.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 is also under review, alongside the wider National Resilience Strategy and includes the duties on fire and rescue services in relation to civil emergencies and in collaboration with key local partners. As part this review, we will consider strengthening the basis on which all Category 1 and 2 responders cooperate and support local resilience structures, with FRS services being central to this.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Pay Negotiation

Everyone is entitled to be treated fairly. When it comes to public sector pay, those who provide public services, and those who pay for them, deserve no less. The process for determining pay should be open to scrutiny, so that all concerned can understand the decisions that are made.

The effectiveness of the National Joint Council (NJC) – the body that oversees decisions on firefighter pay and terms and conditions – has long been questioned. Adrian Thomas, in his review of conditions of service in 2015, concluded that it needs to be modernised and in the State of Fire and Rescue 2020 report, Sir Thomas Winsor called for fundamental reform. The negotiation of annual firefighter pay awards is a closed process until after any decisions is effectively made, with the views and agreement of only one union being sought and considered. HMICFRS have made recommendations on the current pay negotiation structure, including a suggestion to review its current operation and effectiveness. We welcome this recommendation and will consider how best to take it forward as part of our package for reform. The independent review would consider whether the current pay negotiation process is dynamic enough to respond to changing priorities. It could consider evidence from other employment models and sectors.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q5: Please provide the reasons for your response.

Nurturing New and Existing Talent

There is more to do nationally to stimulate the debate about talent and to ensure that services open and modern employers who value diversity and nurture talent. Fire and Rescue professionals deserve development and support to achieve their full potential. Inconsistent identification and management of talent limits the scope to specialise and professionalise, and means that high-potential individuals may be overlooked.

HMICFRS found that services need to do more to support future leaders, and that diversity in senior leadership positions is even more limited than in the wider workforce. They also found that services often do not actively manage talent, relying on traditional models of development and progression, often linked to time served.

Some services have talent and development schemes, but there are no standardised national progression routes or consistent levels of education or experience required for entry into roles, in contrast to comparable public services including health and policing. We seek views on whether we should explore clearer, consistent entry requirements for fire service roles, so that a consistent approach is applied across the country. In doing this, we need to consider the impacts not only on professionalising services, but also any unintended consequences on the recruitment and retention of people from the widest possible talent pool. Consistent entry requirements, along with consistently applied personal development and progression, could be key to developing the management and leadership cadre of the future.

We want to ensure that fire and rescue is open to the best and brightest. As well as a focus on developing the talent already working in the fire services, there have been positive recent steps to bring in people with experience from other sectors at a range of levels. The NFCC leadership hub is leading a project on direct entry schemes at station and area manager level, as well as developing a coaching and talent-focused culture. This is a welcome development and should be supported by all services. We will also explore the potential to learn from national talent and recruitment schemes such as Teach First, Police Now, Unlocked and the civil service’s Fast Stream scheme model to establish high-potential development programmes. Such schemes could be open to both new entrants and existing staff and would offer a structured development programme. Skills could be tested and extended through placements in a range of roles and projects.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q7: Please provide the reasons for your response.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Professionalism

The vision in this white paper is for fire and rescue services to continue to be a vital asset to our communities, and a great public sector profession with a focus on continuous improvement and professional development. Services will continue to attract talented people who understand the communities they are serving. This will be supported with clear and consistent expectations and training opportunities that build on the effective use of data and evidence. To realise this vision, we need to have the right support structures at the head of the profession to ensure that the improvement cycle functions well, with clear expectations, strong implementation, and a robust inspection regime.

Leadership of the Profession to Date

The National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC) was established in 2017 with the goal of supporting operational leaders to transform services, thereby maximising effectiveness and partnership working. The independently chaired Fire Standards Board (FSB) was created in 2019 to produce and maintain a suite of national professional standards for fire and rescue services. Eight fire standards have now been published, ranging from operational matters such as community risk management planning to issues related to culture and ethics. Fire standards are intended to drive consistency and have a positive impact on the performance and professionalism of services, supporting continuous improvement and setting clear expectations for the service the public should receive. HMICFRS have regard to these expectations in their inspections.

This first wave of reform has clearly moved the fire and rescue profession forwards and government has provided significant financial support, totalling over £15 million over the last four years. The NFCC has provided leadership that the sector was lacking and is in the process of carrying out a significant programme of work. We want to explore how we can build on this success to further support professionals and strengthen fire and rescue services across five key areas of leadership, data, research, ethics and clear expectations.

Leadership

In several reports and inspections, leadership has been found to be problematical. Twenty years ago, an independent review (the Bain Report, 2002) reported “a lack of leadership throughout the service at the political, institutional and operational levels”. The report also detailed the need for senior staff to receive “more training in general and personnel management,” that “a proportion of officers should come from outside the Service” and the importance of sector organisations to provide “a body of expertise on technical matters and business processes.” By 2019, inspections identified that only 12 out of 45 services were ‘good’ at developing leadership and capability.

Effective leadership is not only about strengthening the role of the chief fire officer, but about building capability, embedding values and nurturing talent within services. Indeed, there are many accomplished individuals in the current leadership cadre, but there is no current structure or assessment that ensures that this is consistent. The work of chief fire officers is vital and could become even more complex and challenging if they are provided with operational independence, as recommended by HMICFRS.

Senior operational leaders require a range of skills. They must take on-the-spot decisions in highly pressurised circumstances, which can be matters of life or death. The aftermath of

such decisions can also present leadership challenges both in terms of public confidence and achieving organisational learning. Fire and Rescue leaders are also required to manage complex organisations through change, building positive and inclusive teams as well as taking account of contextual issues such as industrial relations.

A 21st Century Leadership Offer

In December 2020, the Home Office surveyed chief, deputy and assistant fire officers' views on leadership in three domains of command, leadership and organisational management. Around four in ten (42%) thought that services were 'not very' or 'not at all' effective at both identifying and developing high potential or talent and while most were at least 'fairly satisfied' nearly 70% said they would value a mandatory and standardised training programme for senior leaders.

In some sectors, a standardised assessment to reach levels equivalent to assistant chief officer and above provides greater national consistency, transparency and clarity. A new, statutory leadership programme designed for the challenges of the 21st century could allow for a standardised approach in how services identify and prepare the leaders of tomorrow. Officers completing the course should also find it easier to move between leadership roles in fire and rescue services. The police Strategic Command Course provides a model we wish to explore. As with policing, we will need to consider how direct entrants would be able to demonstrate comparable experience and competence gained outside fire services, particularly in relation to command, and how the skills and competence required could be developed in a fair and consistent way.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q10: Please provide reasons for your response.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Smarter Use of Data

Data is a vital asset in helping services to deploy resources and manage services more effectively and professionally. While there are undoubtedly services where data is being used well, in his State of Fire and Rescue report in 2019, Sir Thomas Winsor identified that

“the sector is missing opportunities to use data and technology effectively” and lacks an overall national strategy to bring consistency and promote innovation.

We have provided funding to the NFCC for them to help set a common direction for services and to consider how best to provide central digital and data support. We want to explore how best to offer further data support to fire and rescue services. This could include improving national data analytics capability and developing data-focused training for those working with data in services and a consistent approach to structuring data. In addition, this could include setting expectations for data governance and for securing data-sharing agreements.

Central to this should be the capacity and capability of fire and rescue services to cooperate with other responding organisations under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and share data, when appropriate with local and national partners, including LRFs. This will support activity across the resilience cycle including preparation, response and recovery to ensure we make the best use of the data we have.

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Research

It is vital that the work of services is supported by the best available evidence and research to ensure that services can effectively serve their communities. The current landscape, with a variety of organisations pursuing research activities, presents the risk that research is not co-ordinated to an optimal degree. Further, many individuals in services who conduct research work are doing so alongside other pressing roles.

We want to explore whether central fire and rescue research personnel, working closely with services, could help to ensure that research carried out within the physical and social sciences is effectively prioritised, co-ordinated, quality assured, and disseminated.

A central fire and rescue research capability could undertake the following activities:

- **collaborating** – providing a permanent set of skilled analysts to collaborate with others, including services, to promote good quality research that will provide benefits to services
- **commissioning** – commissioning other organisations to conduct research on behalf of the central fire and rescue research function when national-level research is appropriate
- **conducting** – directly undertaking research, including reviews of existing evidence, using staff permanently housed within the central fire and rescue research function
- **collating** – identifying emergent issues, opportunities, and ongoing fire-related research undertaken across services, academia, industry and other organisations, ensuring that priorities are being addressed and learning is being shared to avoid duplication of effort

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

- Collaborating
- Commissioning
- Conducting
- Collating

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Clear Expectations

A hallmark of professionalism is the creation and implementation of clear expectations. While local flexibility is important, robust and consistent national standards help improve the quality of service provided to the public.

Currently, the independently chaired FSB is tasked with creating and maintaining fire standards (the documents through which the FSB sets clear expectations for services) for fire and rescue services. Eight fire standards have now been published, ranging from operational matters such as community risk management planning to issues related to culture and ethics. A 9th fire standard on safeguarding is due to be published imminently. The FSB is supported in this work by the NFCC’s Central Programme Office. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England requires services to implement these standards. HMICFRS will have regard to them in their inspections.

We want to build on the successes of the FSB and ensure we continue to set clear expectations. We want to ensure effective implementation in support of the fire and rescue

profession. We also want to consider how best to ensure that there is a continued close link between these common expectations and the guidance that supports their implementation, including National Operational Guidance.

Ethics and Culture

We want to see fire and rescue services where everyone is welcome, treated with respect and able to thrive. The need for more consistent application of a robust ethical framework is clear. HMICFRS found in their 2019 State of Fire report that “the culture in some services is toxic”, that 20 out of 45 services required improvement and that a further three were inadequate.

Code of Ethics

In response to the HMICFRS recommendation, the Local Government Association, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, and the NFCC developed a core code of ethics that all services should embed in their work. This is a positive first step, but we want to consider whether more is needed to ensure we have a consistently positive culture in all fire and rescue services.

The current code has no legal status but is supported by a fire standard (the documents through which the Fire Standards Board sets clear expectations for services) which requires services ‘adopt and embed’ the code. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, to which fire and rescue authorities must have regard, provides that all authorities must adhere to these clear expectations. The duty on fire and rescue services to adhere to the core code is therefore indirect and we are seeking views on whether to place a code on a statutory footing (a ‘statutory code’) to ensure its application in every service. This could involve the creation of powers in legislation, when parliamentary time allows, to create and maintain a statutory code. These powers could enable a statutory code to be created or amended via secondary legislation. If follow the outcome of this consultation the government proceeds with this proposal, the core code could be subject to review before being placed on a statutory basis.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

If a statutory code were to be created, a duty would need to be placed on services to follow it. We are consulting on this duty being placed on chief fire officers who, under proposals outlined in the governance section of this document, could be operationally independent and therefore best placed to ensure their services act in accordance with the statutory code. We believe fire and rescue authorities would retain an important role in holding chiefs accountable for the discharge of their duties to ensure they and their services adhere to the code. However, we do not propose that the statutory code would apply to elected representatives in fire and rescue authorities.

We do not believe that the duty to adhere to the statutory code should be placed on individual employees of authorities as this would not address the need for a service’s policies, as well as its people, to adhere to the statutory code. The need for individuals to adhere to ethical values is considered below in relation to the fire and rescue service oath.

We are consulting on the enforcement of the statutory code – and the related oath – being an employment matter for chiefs to determine within their services, in accordance with the proposal for operational independence contained elsewhere in this document.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Fire and Rescue Service Oath

We are also consulting on introducing a fire and rescue service oath (‘the Oath’) in England. The Oath would be a promise to uphold the principles in the statutory code while undertaking tasks on behalf of fire and rescue authorities, to help address the cultural challenges identified above and provide a positive expression of the role services can play in their communities. A mandatory duty to take the Oath would need to be placed on all FRA employees although it would not apply to the elected representatives in the authority as separate ethical standards arrangements are already in place. As is the case with police officers and PCCs, the Oath would be specified and provided for in legislation. We consider that a requirement for all FRA employees to consciously affirm ethical principles through an Oath would make it more likely that the principles would be adhered to. We think this would be preferable to a voluntary option because it would provide a more consistent approach across all services.

As noted above, the core code may be subject to review before being placed on a statutory basis, if that option is pursued. However, by way of example, an Oath based on the core

code may include affirming such principles as acting with integrity, and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion. As we anticipate the Oath and the statutory code to be intrinsically linked, subject to the outcome of this consultation, we will continue to work closely with interested parties on the content and process associated with the statutory code and Oath.

If a breach of the Oath occurred, we believe it would be most appropriate for it to be dealt with by each service as an employment matter. Managers should exercise their professional judgment, reflecting service disciplinary procedures and the circumstances of the individual case. We consider that, in the absence of congruent criminal offence, it would be disproportionate for breach of the Oath alone to be a criminal offence.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q21: Please give the reasons for your response.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Professionalism Summary

We consider that action in these five key areas of improvement could help facilitate further professionalisation of fire and rescue services. Drawing on responses to this consultation, we intend to continue building capacity and capability across these five areas of leadership, data, research, ethics and clear expectations. It will be vital to make efficient use of resources in supporting services. We will therefore seek to prioritise those areas of delivery that are most beneficial in strengthening services and protecting the public.

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

- Leadership
- Data
- Research
- Ethics
- Clear Expectations

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Independent Strategic Oversight

We believe there could be an opportunity for an independent body to build on the foundations laid and continue to drive forward the further professionalisation of services.

A key benefit of creating an independent professional body could be to provide an organisation independent of fire and rescue services and at arm's length from government to lead the continuing development of the fire and rescue profession. It could comprise and be led by staff working in the organisation as their primary role and providing a dedicated resource to support services rather than by those who also must undertake pressing operational roles. This would help it carry out important activities not currently conducted on a sustainable basis. While we see benefits to independence, it would be vital for any new organisation to work with services, employers, the NFCC, the unions, HMICFRS and others, to ensure that work is fully informed by the views of the sector.

A College of Fire and Rescue

We therefore want to explore our ambition for the creation of a College of Fire and Rescue (CoFR) to be the independent body to support our fire and rescue professionals to best protect their communities. Through providing a permanent body of independent expertise and sharing the outputs of its various proposed strands of work, the independent CoFR could provide a vital aid to services in implementing the reforms outlined in this white paper.

Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service: Government Consultation

We will carefully consider the creation and appropriate remit of a CoFR using the views gathered through this consultation. We would want to ensure we prioritise areas of work that add greatest value to services, making best use of available resources. We are therefore seeking views on which of the five opportunities for further professionalisation should be priorities for the proposed independent CoFR.

By way of example, the proposed independent CoFR could have the following remit:

- on **Leadership**, developing and maintaining courses such as Leadership Programmes and direct entry schemes
- on **Data**, providing a home for a strategic centre of data excellence
- on **Research**, housing a central research function to ensure that research is prioritised, conducted effectively, and shared
- on **Clear Expectations**, taking on responsibility for the creation of fire standards, building on the work of the Fire Standards Board
- on **Ethics**, the proposed independent body could be provided with powers to create and maintain the proposed statutory code of ethics and fire and rescue service oath, and also keep practical implementation of the code and Oath under review

The remit outlined above could help ensure that these vital activities are conducted in a sustainable and independent manner by an organisation dedicated to undertaking this work. Placing multiple strands of work in the same organisation focused solely on their delivery would allow each strand to be supported by the others. Taking the examples above, a CoFR could allow expectations of services to be informed by the latest research and help leadership programmes to be imbued with strong ethical principles.

We also want to make sure that the proposed independent CoFR has the power to effect further improvement in fire and rescue services. We therefore wish to consider whether it should be given legislative powers to support its work. These could mirror the powers held by the College of Policing under the Police Act 1996, as amended by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014, or could involve the extension to the College of Fire of the powers held by the Secretary of State under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. For example, legislative powers provided to the CoFR could include the power to issue statutory codes of practice with the approval of the Secretary of State.

It should be noted that the remit of the NFCC extends significantly beyond the functions outlined above. Therefore, if the independent College of Fire were to be created, a strong co-operative working relationship with the NFCC would be vital in achieving the aims of both organisations.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q28: Please provide your reasons for your response

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Governance

Governance Structures

There are 44 FRAs across England operating under a range of different governance models. We believe this variation in the operation of models is unhelpful and leads to problems in relation to accountability and transparency.

Unlike FRAs overseen by PFCCs or combined authority mayors, the majority of authorities still operate a committee structure comprising many members (in the case of one authority, nearly 90). This can slow decision making and impair accountability. And across most of England, the public do not have a direct say in who is responsible for their fire service. In most areas, while members are elected (for example, as a councillor), they are not directly elected with a clear mandate in relation to fire.

Public awareness of FRAs and their members is not high. Our public polling as part of the review of PCCs found that the majority (89%) could not name a member of their FRA. In contrast, the awareness of PCCs (including police, fire and crime commissioners) is growing since the first candidates were elected in 2012. In the same polling, nearly two thirds (65%) of the public in these areas said they were either aware of their commissioner, or aware that they were responsible for policing (this figure is in line with other recent estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales). The 2021 PCC elections saw a significantly increased turnout – provisionally up 6.5 percent more than in 2016 - and more than double that of the 2012 elections. This shows the model is maturing and public awareness is growing.

After considering the conclusions of the PCC review, and reviewing inspection and other reports, the government view is that oversight of fire services needs to change. Our preferred governance model is one that meets the following criteria:

- there has a single, elected – ideally directly elected – individual who is accountable for the service rather than governance by committee
- there is clear demarcation between the political and strategic oversight by this individual, and the operationally independent running of the service by the chief fire officer
- that the person with oversight has control of necessary funding and estates
- decision-making, including budgets and spending, is transparent and linked to local public priorities

Therefore, to strengthen governance across the sector, we believe there is a strong case to consider options to transfer governance to an elected individual.

We seek views on this approach and who the most appropriate person may be. Options will need to be discussed options with each local area. There are a number of options for who this person could be. These include a directly elected combined authority mayor or a PCC. Each is a single directly elected individual who can provide the accountable leadership that we envisage, enabling the public to have a say in who oversees their local service. But there may be other options, including retaining fire in county council's under a designated leader. We seek views on who else could provide this executive leadership.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Please provide the reasons for your response.

The Mayoral Model

An option to achieve directly elected oversight of fire could be through the combined authority mayoral model. The government would like to see more combined authority mayors exercising public safety functions.

As set out in the Home Secretary’s response to the PCC review (2021) and the Levelling Up white paper, combined authority mayors could also take on public safety functions where boundaries allow.

Of the eight existing MCAs without fire and rescue functions currently, four (Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, Sheffield City Region, West Midlands and West Yorkshire) are already coterminous with fire and rescue boundaries. Subject to this consultation, we will explore options for transferring the fire functions directly to the MCAs for exercise by the mayors in these areas at the earliest opportunity. The four remaining existing MCAs (Liverpool City Region, North of Tyne, Tees Valley and West of England) are not currently coterminous with fire and rescue boundaries and so, subject to this consultation, we will need to consult with those in the local areas to establish the way forward.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Police and Crime Commissioners

Another option could be to transfer responsibility to a police, fire and crime commissioner. In 2017, measures were introduced through the Policing and Crime Act 2017 to enable PCCs to take on oversight of their local fire services.

It is for each commissioner to determine whether they want responsibility for fire. If so, they need to produce a proposal for the Home Secretary that demonstrates how a governance transfer meets the statutory tests of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, and that it does not have a detrimental impact on public safety. To date, four areas have made the transition to a police, fire and crime commissioner.

The PCC review considered how PCCs' accountability could be strengthened, and their role expanded in line with the government's manifesto commitment, and considered the benefits of directly elected oversight of fire services. Those interviewed from both policing and fire in the review were broadly supportive of the benefits of bringing policing and fire governance together under a directly elected individual, particularly to maximise the benefits of emergency services collaboration and strengthen accountability and transparency to the public. To achieve a more consistent approach to fire governance, many were strongly in favour of mandating governance change across England, rather than the current bottom-up piecemeal approach.

We have seen the immense value in what PFCCs in the four areas who have responsibility for fire have provided, including strengthened local accountability, enhanced collaboration and improvements in what their fire services provide the public. The business cases for the first four PFCCs estimated savings of between £6.6 million to £30 million over the first ten years. In Northamptonshire, the financial autonomy provided by the commissioner enabled the service to recruit new firefighters and replace equipment and facilities, thereby improving the support it provides to people and businesses. In North Yorkshire, the 'Enable' service brings together police and fire back-office staff to work as one team, under one roof, improving efficiency and affordability for all. The enhanced collaboration driven by commissioners is not only improving organisational efficiency but is saving lives. In Staffordshire, the commissioner agreed a missing persons support protocol between Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Staffordshire Police and West Midlands Ambulance Service in which 90% of relevant incidents attended by fire and rescue crews were lifesaving or injury preventing.

The PCC review crystalised our proposals on fire service governance which the Home Secretary set out in her Written Ministerial Statement of March 2021. We therefore seek views on whether this is another acceptable option.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Other Options, such as an executive councillor

We recognise, reflecting the circumstances of each local area, that it may be preferable for somebody a different option other than a PCC or mayor to be given responsibility. This may be where a fire service is currently part of a county council or local boundaries aren't aligned. We are therefore filling to consider other options, although any option will need to meet our

criteria for good governance as listed above, in particular the need for clear executive – rather than committee – leadership.

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

Yes	No

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

As part of any governance change, we could take the opportunity to strengthen and clarify the legal basis against which fire and rescue authorities operate. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires fire authorities to make provision to provide ‘core functions’ (for example, fire safety, firefighting, rescuing people from road traffic accidents, functions in emergencies). While the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England provides a little more in terms of defining the role of authorities, further work could be done to define their scrutiny and oversight function.

In transferring responsibility to a single individual, we could also put good governance principles in statute. For example, legislation could expressly set out the role and function of the FRAs including its oversight and scrutiny functions, specifying how transparency objectives should be met, and clarifying the relationship between political oversight and operational decision making. If not in statute, this could also be included in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q36: Please provide the reasons for your response.

Should we decide to bring forward governance change and transfer governance from existing fire and rescue authorities, we do not want to lose the skills and expertise built up by FRAs. And regardless of who the executive leader is, each would need a body to scrutinise their decision making. Part 2 of our PCC review is assessing the current scrutiny arrangements for PCCs in more detail and how they could be improved. In the light of this, we will consider carefully what may be the appropriate arrangements for fire, including the findings from Part 2 of our PCC review which considered how the current scrutiny arrangements for PCCs could be improved.

Boundaries

In order to transfer fire governance to an elected official, the boundaries of the fire and rescue service and the police force/combined authority/county council must align. This is to ensure that there is a consistent electoral mandate across the whole of the area concerned. Across most of England, the boundaries for fire and rescue services and police forces/combined authorities (where present) are coterminous, making the transfer of governance to combined authority mayors and PCCs practicable. In areas where there is more than one fire and rescue service within a police force area (for example, Sussex Police covers the area of both East Sussex and West Sussex fire and rescue services) a transfer of functions is still possible as the PCC can take responsibility for each fire and rescue service that falls within their area. We would not seek to combine services unless there was local appetite to do so.

However, in other parts of the country such as the south-west of England, fire and police boundaries do not align. This means the transfer of fire governance to someone like a PCC would not be practicable unless steps were taken to bring about coterminous boundaries. We will discuss options for these areas with interested parties to determine how to achieve the necessary change.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Fire Funding

We are aware that any governance change will have funding implications. This will be particularly acute in services that are part of a county council or unitary authority. Should any governance transfer be made, we will need to assess that impact, for example on staff, assets and revenue transferred, and council tax precept. We are keen to ensure that both the financial sustainability for all local authorities and the operational capabilities of fire services are maintained throughout, including during any transition period. The government's aim is that we will keep council tax bills low and this will not be adversely affected by our governance proposals.

Where fire is part of a county or unitary authority, we have seen that fire and rescue does not always receive the resources it might otherwise be allocated due to competing priorities within the parent authority. As a result, fire and rescue can see its budget reduced mid-year to meet pressures elsewhere in its parent authority. The fire and rescue service also must compete with other parts of the local authority for capital funding to replace essential equipment. Subject to the results of this consultation, should fire stay within a county council or unitary authority rather than be transferred to a PCC or mayor, we propose taking steps to ring-fence the operational fire budgets within all county councils and unitary authorities who run fire services. This will enable the executive leader and chief fire officer to have certainty at the start – and throughout – the financial year over what resources they have available to them in order to meet the requirements of their local plan.

On conclusion of this consultation, we will work with national and local government representatives to consider these issues further. Should any changes to governance be given effect, we will consider options to ensure that authorities in all their forms continue to take effective decisions on their service provision ahead of any governance change.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q39: Please provide the reasons for your response.

A Balanced Leadership Model

Chief fire officers, properly held to account for performance by stronger governance, must also be able to make operational deployments and use their resources in the most efficient and effective ways to meet known and foreseeable risks. Yet in many cases, they are required to engage in prolonged negotiation at both the national and local levels on matters that should be within their operational responsibility.

In their first inspections, HMICFRS found that the lack of clear operational independence of chief fire officers created a barrier to services becoming more effective and efficient, and they found examples where chiefs were prevented by their authorities from implementing operational changes. HMICFRS recommended that the Home Office should take steps to give chiefs operational independence, including issuing clear guidance on the demarcation between governance and operational decision making. We agree with this recommendation and will legislate to do so when parliamentary time allows. While good governance, accountability and robust political decision-making is critical, it should be for the chief fire officer to determine the operational deployment of their staff.

We want to move to a consistent position where the political, executive leader of the fire and rescue authority will be responsible for their fire service and will be accountable – ultimately at the ballot box – for the service’s performance. This will be alongside the chief fire officer being accountable for operational decisions, with the two working effectively together to ensure the best service to the public.

The table below illustrates the possible demarcation of responsibility between the political (executive) leader and the chief fire officer. For example, the chief fire officer would make decisions in relation to the appointment and dismissal of staff, and the configuration, deployment and organisation of fire service resources. They would also make decisions to balance competing operational needs aligned to the strategic priorities set by the executive leader, to which they must have regard; including operational decisions to reallocate resources to meet immediate and ongoing demand and allocate staff to specific duties to reduce risk and save lives. We will work with those in the fire sector and local government to define this further ahead of making the required legislative changes.

Task	Responsible
<u>Setting priorities</u>	<u>Executive leader</u>
<u>Budget setting</u>	<u>Executive leader</u>
<u>Setting precept</u>	<u>Executive leader</u>
<u>Setting response standards</u>	<u>Executive leader</u>
Opening and closing fire stations	Executive leader*
<u>Appointment and dismissal of chief fire officer</u>	<u>Executive leader</u>
<u>Appointment and dismissal of other fire service staff</u>	<u>Chief fire officer</u>
<u>Allocation of staff to meet strategic priorities</u>	<u>Chief fire officer</u>
<u>Configuration and organisation of resources</u>	<u>Chief fire officer</u>
<u>Deployment of resources to meet operational requirements</u>	<u>Chief fire officer</u>
<u>Balancing of competing operational needs</u>	<u>Chief fire officer</u>
<u>Expenditure up to certain (delegated) levels</u>	<u>Chief fire officer</u>

*Opening and closing of fire stations could be a joint decision; operationally fire chiefs could be responsible for decisions on moving teams, whilst ultimate political and executive responsibility lies with the executive leader.

There will be a bright, clear line demarcating the nature and extent of the chief fire officer's operational independence against the role of the executive leader. We will consider best practice in local government to develop this, as well as learning from the relationships between PCCs and their chief constables. We could consider producing something akin to the Policing Protocol to clarify roles and responsibilities and provide safeguards.

To support that, the declaration of the acceptance of office of PCCs and mayors could be extended to respect the operational independence of chief fire officers in the same way it presently applies to the independence of police officers.

At all times, the strengthened governance model of an executive leader will hold the chief to account for their decisions and performance.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

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

Q43: What factors should we consider when giving chief fire officers operational independence?

Please provide the reasons for your opinions.

Legal Entity of Chief Fire Officers

When considering the role of chief fire officers in the context of transferring governance to a PCC, the extent of operational independence granted to them becomes even more relevant.

In the PCC model for policing governance, chief constables have operational independence from their commissioner in relation to the running of their police forces. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 provides that a police force and its civilian staff are under the direction and control of the chief constable. The 2011 Act also makes each chief constable a corporation sole. That means that the chief constable is a legal entity in their own right, occupying a single incorporated office. It makes the chief constable the employer of all those who work for the police force, and gives them legal authority over certain decisions and functions.

We therefore will consider whether to legislate to make chief fire officers corporations sole. This could clarify their role and responsibilities, and make them the employers of all fire personnel. This would mirror the arrangement in policing, although we will ensure these new arrangements are appropriate for fire. Subject to the views of the consultation, should we decide to proceed, we recognise specific arrangements may need to be put in place for chief fire officers employed by fire and rescue services run by county-councils and unitary authorities due to how closely fire professionals and assets are embedded in those organisations. We will work with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and others in local government to consider this further.

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

Clear Distinction Between Strategic and Operational Planning

Fire and rescue authorities are required by the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England to publish an Integrated Risk Management Plan (or similar for mayors and PFCCs). Put simply, the plan should assess all foreseeable fire-and-rescue related risks the service may face, and list how they will be met or responded to.

We are seeking views on how best to clarify the distinction between strategic and operational planning. We believe there should be a clear distinction between a strategic fire and rescue plan established by the fire authority and for which it is responsible, that sets priorities for the service on behalf of the public, and an operational plan which would become the responsibility of the chief fire officer and would deal with how strategic priorities will be met and risks mitigated.

Regardless of whether we require a new strategic plan, we propose to change the title of the operational plan to ‘the Community Risk Management Plan’. This better reflects the focus that these plans should have on risks to communities and more closely aligns to the newly established Community Risk Fire Standard introduced by the Fire Standards Board.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q48: Please provide the reasons for your response.

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About you

Please use this section to tell us about yourself

Full name	
Job title or capacity in which you are responding to this consultation exercise (for example, member of the public)	
Date	
Company name/organisation (if applicable)	
Address	
Postcode	
If you would like us to acknowledge receipt of your response, please tick this box	<input type="checkbox"/> (please tick box)
Address to which the acknowledgement should be sent, if different from above	

If you are a representative of a group, please tell us the name of the group and give a summary of the people or organisations that you represent.

Contact details and how to respond

Please respond to this consultation online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service>

Alternatively, you can send in electronic copies to:

firereformconsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk

Alternatively, you may send paper copies to:

Fire Reform Consultation
Fire Strategy & Reform Unit
4th Floor, Peel Building
2 Marsham Street,
London
SW1P 4DF

Complaints or comments

If you have any complaints or comments about the consultation process you should contact the Home Office at the above address.

Extra copies

Further paper copies of this consultation can be obtained from this address and it is also available online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service>

Alternative format versions of this publication can be requested from:
firereformconsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk

Publication of response

A paper summarising the responses to this consultation will be published online at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service>

Representative groups

Representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent when they respond.

Confidentiality

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Home Office.

The Home Office will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Impact Assessment

The Government is mindful of its duty to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and the need to assess the potential impact of any proposal on those with protected characteristics. In each part of the consultation, we invite views and evidence on the potential impact of the proposals and the package of proposals as a whole on such persons.

The impact assessment for this consultation can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service>

Consultation principles

The principles that government departments and other public bodies should adopt for engaging stakeholders when developing policy and legislation are set out in the consultation principles.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Meeting: Policy & Resources Panel
Date: 21 July 2022
Title of Report: Provision of Occupation Health Service
By: Assistant Director People Services
Lead Officer: Julie King, Assistant Director People Services

Background Papers: None

Appendices: None

Implications

CORPORATE RISK	✓	LEGAL	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
FINANCIAL	✓	POLITICAL	
HEALTH & SAFETY		OTHER (please specify)	
HUMAN RESOURCES		CORE BRIEF	
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT			

PURPOSE OF REPORT To consider the future arrangements for the provision of Occupational Health and Wellbeing Services within East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS) entered an in-house Collaborated Occupational Health, Fitness and Wellbeing Service in 2018. The main aims of the Collaboration were to improve the quality of service, clinical governance and service resilience.

The collaboration agreement was for an initial 3 years, with a one-year extension agreed to by the Service and runs from 8 August 2021, with the expiry date of 8 August 2022.

A new collaboration agreement and service specification has been developed that clearly sets out how the partnership will operate in future.

Alternative options for the provision of these services have been considered but none are assessed to provide the same scope and quality of service as that provided through the current collaboration.

RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is recommended to:

- a) Agree to extend the collaboration for a further 5 years from 8 August 2022, with an option for a one-year extension, with the option to utilise the 6-months' notice period if the standard of service is not found to be adequate.
 - b) Note the performance improvement measures for the collaboration.
 - c) Note the granting of a waiver under the Authority's Procurement Standing Orders
 - d) Delegate authority to the Assistant Director People Services to take all actions necessary to put in place the new Collaboration Agreement.
-

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 1 July 2018, Surrey Police, Sussex Police, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) went live with an in-house Collaborated Occupational Health, Fitness and Wellbeing Service. The main aims of the Collaboration were to improve the quality of service, clinical governance and service resilience.
- 1.2 The collaboration agreement was for an initial 3 years, with a one-year extension agreed to by the Service and runs from 8 August 2021, with the expiry date of 8 August 2022. Over the course of the agreement, end of year performance reports have been shared with SLT.
- 1.3 Regular performance reports are provided by the Head of Occupational Health and Wellbeing for the collaboration that are circulated via e-mail. In addition, performance reports are provided and presented at the quarterly Occupational Health managers meetings. The Collaboration Board comprises of two duly authorised and sufficiently senior representatives of each Party, this is currently the Assistant Director People Services and the HR/OD Manager

2. LEGAL ASSESSMENT

- 2.1 Counsel's opinion was sought on the original collaboration agreement and this confirmed that under Regulation 12(7) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the

Hamburg exception, a competitive procurement process for these services was not required.

- 2.2 Given the value of spend over the life of the proposed extension of the Collaboration Agreement, in line with the requirements of Procurement Standing Order 4.1 the Treasurer has agreed a waiver from the requirement to conduct a competitive process following consultation with the Deputy Monitoring Officer, Procurement Manager and the relevant Member (in this case the Members of this Panel).

3. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT SERVICE

- 3.1 The current collaboration has provided effective Occupational Health and Wellbeing Services to the Fire Authority with a focus on:

- Driving quality and efficiency
- Ensuring greater assurance of clinical governance for the Service
- Enhancing wellbeing and reducing staff absence
- Enabling ESFA to discharge its statutory functions more effectively
- Ameliorate the impact of reduced budgets and meet savings targets

- 3.2 Connected to, but not part of the collaboration agreement, are the other contracts that are in place that also make up the overall OH provision. These contracts are reviewed as part of the contracts review between Procurement and People Services. These contracts are:

- Ascenti - physiotherapy service
- Psych Health - specialist trauma related service
- MCL Medics - Employee Assistance Programme
- Medigold - Doctor service that is used particularly with ill health retirements

- 3.3 There are alternative models of delivering this service and these were explored to establish if there was a better alternative to the current model:

- Bring in-house – some fire authorities do have in-house Occupational Health services, however this approach brings with it a range of risks primarily around lack of resilience and access to specialist skills. There have been a number of challenges in recruiting to key roles including Occupational Health advisors and physiotherapists.
- Fully externalise – it is possible to source a number of the services currently provided through the collaboration from the private sector. However, we have not identified a provider that would offer such an integrated service and it is unlikely that the outsourcing of Occupational Health and Wellbeing alone would be an attractive proposition and deliver a cost-effective solution.

- 3.4 It is accepted that there are always areas for additional focus and improvement and the parties are focused on continuing to build on the success of the collaboration. This will include supporting the ongoing wellbeing services within ESFRS and to work specifically on a reduction in sickness. Within ESFRS, there is a quarterly complex case review meeting that is attended by the geographical Group Managers along with medical and

fitness professionals and this will be developed further to assist with the focus on sickness reduction.

- 3.5 Part of this future work will also include consideration of an employee healthcare scheme such as the Benenden Scheme that is in place in other services which could further bring benefits of supporting staff remaining in the workplace or reducing time off work through sickness or light duties.
- 3.6 The Health and Wellbeing lead for the collaboration provides monthly updates and includes performance against a suite of KPI's. These include the waiting times for the different types of appointments and the average time for the next available appointment. There is also opportunity for staff to provide feedback on service provision and performance management meetings, where appropriate, with service providers.

4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The Service is currently undergoing a significant programme of work on the IRMP and significant investment in IT and Estates. This sits alongside a continuing programme to evolve the Service's culture.
- 4.2 Any switch of Occupational Health and Wellbeing provider/collaboration would require not just the transition of services but also the procurement and implementation of a new Occupational Health, Wellbeing Service and System. This is assessed as being an 18-24 month project requiring significant financial investment and has the potential to divert the current function from supporting transformation and business as usual across the Service.

5. FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

5.1

Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Spend				
<i>Internal</i>	63	95	99	52
<i>Third Party</i>	118	102	96	99
<i>Collaboration costs</i>	44	72	95	96
Annual Total Spend	225	269	290	247
Budget	310	305	318	293
Variance	(85)	(36)	(28)	(46)

- 5.2 The table above shows the total collaboration spend against each year since 2018/19 and includes the spend against three separate spend categories associated with the Occupational Health provision. These are internal costs; third party spend and the collaboration costs. It is difficult to calculate exactly how much will be spent for 2022/23 as there are some services that are on a pay as you go basis, primarily the third-party

contracts which depend on caseload volumes. The overall budget for 2022/23 is £306,000 and based on historic spend patterns should be sufficient to cover future costs. The Authority has made additional budget provision for OH services in 2018/19 and 2021/22 of approximately £55,000 to allow investment in this essential service. In relation to the overall financial commitment to the collaboration (Surrey FRS and Surrey/Sussex Police) as contained within the agreement for 2022/23 is £70,487 and estimated at £360,000 over the initial five year term.

6. CORPORATE RISK

- 6.1 ESFA and ESFRS cannot operate without the provision of an Occupational Health and Wellbeing provision and the current collaboration agreement and agreed service specification will provide a solid basis for the partnership to continue to improve the services.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Whilst there are alternative options for the provision of Occupational Health services, at this stage none are assessed to provide the same scope and quality of service as that provided through the current collaboration. It is therefore recommended that a new collaboration agreement is approved for five years with an option to extend by one further year.

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