

Fire Authority

7 September 2023



Membership:

Councillors: Galley (Chairman), Lambert (Vice-Chair), Asaduzzaman, Azad, Dowling, Evans, Geary, Goddard, Maples, Marlow-Eastwood, Muten, Osborne, Redstone, Scott, Theobald, Ungar and West

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 at 10.30 am

Quorum: 6

Contact:	Abigail Blanshard 07950 877168, democraticservices@esfrs.org
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Agenda

220. 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.

221. Apologies for Absence

222. 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

223. To consider any public questions

224. To receive any petitions

225. Non-confidential Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To approve the non-confidential Minutes of the last meeting held on

15 June 2023

226. 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 Fire Authority to adopt without debate the recommendations and resolutions contained in the relevant reports for these items which have not been called.

- 227. Revenue and Capital Budget 2023/24 and Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28 Monitoring at Month 4** **15 - 40**
Report of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer
- 228. 2024/25 to 2028/29 Strategic Service Planning and Medium Term Financial Plan** **41 - 54**
Report of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer
- 229. Financial Regulations Update** **55 - 92**
Report of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer
- 230. 2022/23 Annual Performance Outcome Report** **93 - 146**
Report of the Assistant Director Planning & Improvement
- 231. Amendment to Calendar of Meetings 2023-2024** **147 - 148**
Report of the Democratic Services Manager

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

Date of Publication: 30 August 2023

Information for the public

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

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Agendas and minutes of meetings are available on the East Sussex Fire & Service website: www.esfrs.org.

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FIRE AUTHORITY

Minutes of the meeting of the FIRE AUTHORITY held at Council Chamber, County Hall, East Sussex County Council, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes at 10.30 am on Thursday, 15 June 2023.

Present: Councillors Galley (Chairman), Lambert (Vice-Chair), Asaduzzaman, Azad, Dowling, Evans, Geary, Hollidge, Maples, Marlow-Eastwood, McNair, Muten, Osborne, Redstone, Scott, Ungar and West

Also present: D Whittaker (Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive), D Norris (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), M Matthews (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), A Ghebre-Ghiorghis (Monitoring Officer), D Savage (AD Resources/Treasurer), L Ridley (AD Planning & Improvement), H Scott Youldon (AD Operational Support & Resilience), J King (AD People Services), M Lloyd (AD Safer Communities), L Woodley (Deputy Monitoring Officer), E Curtis (Communications & Marketing Manager), R Smith (Democratic Services Officer) and A Blanshard (Democratic Services Manager)

144 Declarations of Interest

There were none

145 Election of Chairperson

The Fire Authority considered the report of the Monitoring Officer inviting the Fire Authority to elect a Chairperson and to request, once elected that they advise on their preferred title.

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

The Standing Orders of the Fire Authority required a Chairperson to be elected from its Members as the first items of business at the Annual meeting.

Councillor Lambert nominated Councillor Roy Galley to be the Chairperson of the Fire Authority, seconded by Councillor Redstone. The Fire Authority voted with 11 For, and 6 Abstentions.

RESOLVED – That the Fire Authority:

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

146 Election of Vice-Chairperson

The Fire Authority considered the report of the Monitoring Officer inviting them to elect a Vice-Chairperson for the forthcoming year and, once elected to ask the Vice Chairperson to advise of their preferred title.

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

The Authority were reminded that Standing Order 9.3 asks them to consider that, unless the Fire Authority specifically determines otherwise, the Vice-Chairperson should be a Member from the other constituent authority to that of the newly elected Chairperson.

Councillor Galley proposed Councillor Carolyn Lambert, seconded by Councillor Osborne.

Councillor Scott proposed Councillor Amanda Evans, seconded by Councillor Muten.

Both nominees were invited to give a brief statement as to why they felt they were the best candidate for the role. As the position was contested a recorded vote was held with each member declaring their choice for the role. The results were as follows:

Cllr Evans	6 votes	(Cllrs Asaduzzaman, Evans, Maples, Muten, Scott, West)
Cllr Lambert	11 votes	(Cllrs Azad, Dowling, Galley, Geary, Hollidge, Lambert, Marlow-Eastwood, McNair, Osborne, Redstone, Ungar)

RESOLVED – That the Fire Authority:

- i. appointed Councillor Carolyn Lambert as Vice-Chairperson of the Authority; and
- ii. the Vice-Chairperson advised that their preferred title was that of ‘Vice-Chair.’

147 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Goddard and Theobald. Councillors McNair and Hollidge had been appointed to attend as substitutes for this meeting.

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

The Chairman of the Fire Authority introduced all Members and Officers in attendance.

Following the Brighton & Hove City Council elections the Chairman welcomed the newly appointed Members of the Fire Authority, namely Cllr Mohammed Asaduzzaman, Cllr Ty Goddard and Cllr Trevor Muten.

The Chairman also welcomed back Cllr Amanda Evans, Cllr Carol Theobald and Cllr Pete West who have been reappointed by Brighton & Hove City Council.

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The Fire Authority recorded its condolences following the sudden and sad death of Councillor Barry Taylor, a well-respected Councillor who had been a dedicated Fire Authority Member for ten years. All those present stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

The Chairman formally recorded the thanks of the Fire Authority to former colleagues from Brighton & Hove City Council, namely Cllr Les Hamilton, Robert Nemeth and Steph Powell. The Authority thanked them for their dedicated service during their time as Members of the Fire Authority. We are grateful for their contributions to the Fire Authority's work and wish them well in the future.

149 To consider any public questions

There were none

150 To receive any petitions

There were none

151 Non-confidential Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

152 Callover

Members reserved the following items for debate:

- 216 Political Representation on the Panels of the Fire Authority
- 218 Treasury Management – Stewardship Report for 2022/23
- 219 Medium Term Financial Plan Tranche 4 Update Report

RESOLVED – The Fire Authority agreed that all other reports on this Agenda be approved in full.

153 Political Representation on the Panels of the Fire Authority

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

The Fire Authority was required to keep under review the allocations of seats on Committees and other bodies to ensure, so far as practicable, that they reflected the political groups on the Authority. The rules governing this representation were outlined in the report. Following the Brighton and Hove City Council elections there continued to be four political groups on the Fire Authority but there had been a change in size:

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Conservatives	8
Labour	5
Liberal Democrat	3
Green	2

The Panels are the Authority's committees set up in accordance with Standing Order 41 and their terms of reference are shown in the Constitution. The size of each Panel is not constituted and could be agreed by the Fire Authority. To ensure that each Panel was properly representative of the overall membership of the Fire Authority it was agreed that the size of each Panel be increased to 7 Members from the current 6, to allow for representative membership of each Panel.

The Membership of each Panel was confirmed to the meeting, and it was agreed that the Authority would elect a Chairperson to the Scrutiny & Audit and Policy & Resources Panels and to the Pension Board at this meeting. The remaining Panels will elect a Chairperson as the first item of business when they hold their first meeting.

There were two nominations for the Chairperson of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel:

Councillor Geary was nominated by Cllr Galley, seconded by Cllr Azad
Councillor Scott was nominated by Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Lambert

As the position was contested a recorded vote was held with each Member declaring their choice for the role. The results were as follows:

Cllr Geary	8 votes	(Cllrs Azad, Dowling, Galley, Geary, Hollidge, Marlow-Eastwood, McNair, Redstone)
Cllr Scott	9 votes	(Cllrs Asaduzzaman, Evans, Lambert, Maples, Muten, Osborne, Scott, Ungar, West)

Cllr Scott was duly appointed as Chairperson of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel.

Councillor Evans was nominated as Chairperson of the Policy & Resources Panel by Cllr Galley, seconded by Cllr Lambert. The nomination was uncontested and passed by the Authority with 15 Members voting For and 2 abstaining.

	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrats	Green
SCRUTINY & AUDIT (7)	3 Azad Geary Theobald	2 Evans Scott (Ch)	1 Osborne	1 West
POLICY & RESOURCES (7)	3 Galley Redstone <i>Vacant tbc</i>	2 Evans (Ch) Goddard	1 Ungar	1 Maples

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

HUMAN RESOURCES (7) <i>(Chair to be appointed at first meeting)</i>	3 Azad Geary Marlow-Eastwood	2 Scott Vacant tbc	1 Lambert	1 West
URGENCY (7) <i>(Chair to be appointed at first meeting)</i>	3 Dowling Galley Geary	2 Asaduzzaman Muten	1 Lambert	1 Maples
PRINCIPAL OFFICER APPOINTMENTS PANEL (5)	2 Galley (Ch) Theobald	1 Evans	1 Lambert	1 Maples
PENSIONS BOARD (4)	Redstone (Ch), Dowling, 2 vacancies tbc			

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

Health & Safety	- Cllrs Dowling & Muten
Assurance & Peer Review	- Cllr Geary
Inclusion & Diversity	- Cllr Asaduzzaman
IT	- Cllr Redstone
Environment & Sustainability	- Cllr West
Estates	- Cllr Theobald

RESOLVED – That the Fire Authority:

- i. confirmed the Panel arrangements and political representation as set out in the report and authorised the Monitoring Officer to make and publish the consequential amendments to the constitution;
- ii. agreed (with no Member voting against) that the political balance provisions shall not apply to the membership of the Principal Officer Appointments Panel; and
- iii. appointed the Chairperson of the Scrutiny & Audit (Councillor Scott) and Policy & Resources (Councillor Evans) Panels in accordance with Standing Order 41.13. The Authority agreed that the remaining Panels (Human Resources and Urgency) would appoint a Chairperson at their first meeting under Standing Order 41.14.

154 Fire Authority and Panel Meetings 2023-2024

The Fire Authority received the report of the Democratic Services Manager informing Members of the dates of meetings of the Fire Authority and Panels for the remainder of 2023 and 2024.

RESOLVED – The Fire Authority noted the dates of meetings of the Fire Authority and Panels for the next 18 months.

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155 Treasury Management - Stewardship Report for 2022/23

The Fire Authority received the report of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer (ADR/T), the Annual Treasury Management Stewardship Report is a requirement of the Fire Authority's reporting procedures and informed Members of Treasury Management performance and compliance with Prudential Indicators for 2022/23. The ADR/T confirmed that the Authority had complied with its approved Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators for the year.

The Authority were reminded that the Bank of England (BoE) Base Rate had increased on eight consecutive occasions, rising from 0.75% in April 2022 to a closing rate of 4.25% by March 2023. The BoE had taken this action to help mitigate inflationary pressures during the year. The average rate of interest received in 2022/23 through Treasury Management activity was 2.19%. This reflected the Fire Authority's continued prioritisation of security and liquidity over yield.

The ADR/T added that no new borrowing had been undertaken and two loans totaling £0.481m were repaid during the year. Decisions on investment had been taken in the context of the prevailing economic climate, the current approved capital programme and the requirement to fund it over the medium term. No investment in longer duration funds had been made during the year. The economic climate was evolving rapidly, and opportunities were being explored to secure investment returns within the accepted risk parameters set out in the Authority's agreed strategy.

During the year the Authority had invested in Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) funds that meet its policy criteria for security and liquidity and offer comparable or better returns than similar or non ESG funds.

Members referred to para. 3.7.2 of the report and asked for some context on the global supply chain disruption and whether this considered Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the climate crisis. The ADR/T confirmed that it did and that all these issues were reflected on the Corporate Risk Register and the impacts were wider than those of a Treasury Management nature. They had all had a significant impact on the international supply chains and the Service had undertaken analysis of them. There had been noticeable impacts on the cost of fleet, utilities, fuel, catering and wood for Live Fire Training. Also, the Estates elements of the Capital Programme had been affected with regards to the cost of both labour and supplies.

The ADR/T explained that the Finance team were undertaking budget forecasting, including the impact of supply chain and inflation for both 2023/24 and 2024/25. They would continue to monitor supply chain issues on both business as usual and investments.

The Authority were informed that this was also being monitored nationally and the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) were coordinating a survey on supply chain risk to the fire sector and were feeding back to the Home Office, in an effort to influence the settlement for 2024/25.

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Members asked whether the inflationary pressures on the cost of materials would mean a review of Capital Projects. The ADR/T confirmed that there were challenges to the Estates Strategy that the Fire Authority had approved 3 years ago. The Estates Team was reviewing the remaining estates capital projects to reflect both increased costs and the request from SLT to develop options to reduce the overall cost of the Estates Strategy. The key drivers would continue to include management of contaminants, provision of gender appropriate facilities, sleeping facilities and reduction in running costs / CO2. At individual project level inflationary pressures were picked up as we progressed through RIBA Gateways. The renovation of Preston Circus and updating of live fire training provisions were the biggest commitments. The Estates team continued to meet with local workgroups and the FBU to discuss any changes to individual projects.

The ADR/T added that when the 2024/25 budget had been set the funding gap was £721,000 but had the potential to increase to between £1m and £1.5m following pay awards and other emerging pressures. The Service remained committed to addressing the key objectives of the Estates Strategy to ensure that Fire Stations were fit for purpose. Members asked about reviewing the use of reserves. The ADR/T reminded the Authority that they review the use of reserves on an annual basis as part of setting the budget and that they had committed the majority to be used for Estates, Fleet and IT projects. The Authority's reserves were reducing significantly and were expected to be below £5m in the next year which left very little wriggle room. The Authority were reminded that they had decided to use £633,000 of reserves to balance this year's budget.

RESOLVED – The Fire Authority agreed to note the Treasury Management performance for 2022/23.

156 Medium Term Financial Plan Tranche 4 Update Report

The Fire Authority received the report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) providing Members with a brief initial overview of the options analysis that had been carried out through the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Tranche 4 (the East Review) and to inform them that a wider list of potential savings would need to be considered in relation to the forecast potential shortfall in funding for 2024/25. The financial environment remained both uncertain and challenging. The current funding settlement was for one year only with limited policy guidance available for 2024/25 it was expected that a further one-year settlement for 2024/25 would be announced in December.

At the time the MTFP was agreed by the Authority the potential funding gap for 2024/25 was forecast at £721,000. Since then, a two year Grey Book pay offer of 12% (over 2023/24 and 2024/25) had been agreed and a Green Book pay offer of £1,925 had been rejected, both were above the Authority's budgeted figure. Further work to assess the future financial position continued but the current assessment was that the Fire Authority should plan to identify savings options of between £1m -£1.5m for delivery by April 2023.

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The ACFO reminded Members that Tranches 1-3 were targeted to deliver savings of £923,000, there was high confidence that Tranches 1 and 2 would deliver £293,000 but it was too early to say if Tranche 3 would be able to deliver targeted savings of £630,000.

The Authority had agreed that to bridge any funding gap it would consider a wider set of options for Tranche 4, these were set out at para. 3.7 of the report. The ACFO explained that these were high level at this stage and that there would be more information provided to the Policy & Resources Panel, probably at its meeting on 20 July 2023 with the Fire Authority being asked to make decisions when it met later in the year, as it was essential that they have a plan in place in order to meet the deadline of April 2024. The ACFO added that the list of options would not require public consultation and that the East options were the least preferred at this stage but until the final funding for 2024/25 was determined they could not be ruled out.

Members asked how confident Officers were that savings would be achieved and how confident they were that they would meet the deadlines. The ADR/T responded that they were following the normal budget setting process, and that a provisional outturn report for 2022/23 and a budget monitoring report setting out the position at Month 2 would be presented to the Policy & Resources Panel in July. Whilst there was no further information on Government funding provisions, officers were working with other local authorities to improve forecasting and continued to lobby MPs.

The ADR/T added that the financial risks remained the same as they had for the past couple of years with a reliance on a one-year settlement and one off specific grants. There was some suggestion that the Government may not continue to provide the Protection Surge Grant at the same level or in the same form. The ADR/T would provide updates in July and September, but it was unlikely that there would be any certainty until December.

The CFO echoed the update provided by the ADR/T particularly how difficult it was to run an emergency service when reliant on one-year settlements and one-off grants. Officers were trying to create as much assurance and safeguarding as possible to avoid too great a shock to the organisation, but it was not a good position to be in. The CFO hoped that Members would support the continued lobbying of MPs, impressing on Government and the Home Office how much the sector needed longer-term settlements. It was agreed that even a two-year settlement would provide more stability.

A discussion followed and Members agreed that one-year settlements were not sustainable, and the sector needed to be adequately funded on a national level. There were concerns about the ongoing and increasing impact of global warming on the Fire sector. The risks faced by the Service were not just greater, they were changing.

The CFO agreed that these were of concern but reminded the Authority that of the Revenue Budget around 80% was spent on salaries and therefore pay, pensions and absence management must be focused on. Also, the costs relating to fleet and estates in particular fuel, maintenance, and utilities. The

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

focus of lobbying to MPs would be one-year settlements and the continuity of the protection grant, this was critically important.

RESOLVED – The Fire Authority agreed to:

- i. note the increase in estimated savings that may be required to balance the 2024/25 budget, from £721,000 forecast last year to up to £1,500,000; and
- ii. note that the progress under the Medium Term Financial Plan Tranche 4 on the wider options analysis will be presented to a future meeting of the Policy & Resources Panel and to future meeting of the Fire Authority once further work on updating the MTFP for 2024/25 has been carried out.

The meeting concluded at 12.02 pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

2023

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EAST SUSSEX FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Meeting: Fire Authority

Date: 7 September 2023

Title of Report: Revenue and Capital Budget 2023/24 and Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28 Monitoring at Month 4 (end July).

By: Duncan Savage, Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer

Lead Officer: Alison Avery, Finance Manager

Background Papers: Fire Authority Service Planning processes for 2023/24 and beyond – Revenue Budget 2023/24 and Capital Asset Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28

Revenue and Capital Budget 2022/23 and Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 – Provisional Outturn

- Appendices:**
1. Revenue Budget 2023/24 Objective
 2. Savings Programme 2023/24
 3. Grants and Spending Plans 2023/24
 4. Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28
 5. Estates & Engineering Capital Budgets 2023/24
 6. Reserves 2023/24
 7. ITG Strategy 2023/24

Implications (please tick ✓ and attach to report)

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

PURPOSE OF REPORT To report on the findings of the Month 4 monitoring undertaken on the Revenue and Capital Budget 2023/24 and Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY This is the second report to Members for the 2023/24 financial year and highlights the findings from the Month 4 monitoring undertaken on the Revenue Budget 2023/24 and 5 year Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28, approved by the Authority in February 2023.

A net revenue overspend to the sum of £193,000 has been identified, as summarised in Appendix 1. This is due to the following pressures:

- Wholetime overtime within Groups (£652,000)
- On-call within Groups (£232,000)
- Wholetime pay within Groups (£215,000)
- Green book pay award (150,000)
- CRM savings (£104,000)
- Payroll posts due to budget error (£98,000)
- Firelink contract uplift (£79,000)
- Unfunded pensions (£76,000)
- Procurement savings (£66,000)

These are offset by:

- Treasury Management income (£500,000)
- Corporate contingency (£479,000)
- IT project delays (£178,000)
- Additional funding (£159,000)
- CRM & Airbus licences (£81,000)
- Communications vacancies (£61,000)

There are a number of other small variances which contribute to the overspend.

Safer Communities are forecasting an overspend of £1.093m. The Service must maintain a significant focus on delivering the plan to reduce this pressure to ensure it does not impact the 2024/25 revenue budget.

Further work is required to review the forecast and management action is required in reviewing staffing and overtime forecasts.

Performance against the Savings Programme is summarised in Appendix 2 and detailed in section 5.

Performance against grants and spending plans is summarised in Appendix 3 and detailed in section 5.

Revenue and Capital programme risks are detailed in section 3, focusing specifically on areas that are subject to further investigation and the outcome could result in significant additional pressures in the current and future financial years.

The original 2023/24 Capital Budget and five year Capital Strategy of £28,280,000 was approved by the Fire Authority on 9 February 2023. The Capital Strategy has been

increased to £28,793,000 to include slippage of £975,000 and allocation of spend in advance of £462,000 from 2022/23.

The current year Capital Budget was approved by the Fire Authority at £8,421,000 and updated to £8,934,000 (Property £5,665,000 and Fleet and Equipment £3,279,000) including slippage of £975,000 brought forward from 2022/23, allocation of spend in advance of £462,000 from 2022/23.

Officers have reviewed the capital plans for 2023/24 and report slippage on delivery of projects to the value of £2,387,000 (26.7%) and spend in advance of £172,000. In addition underspend of £102,000 is expected against capital schemes. Detailed information is contained within section 8. The Estates and Engineering Capital Projects 2021/22 are detailed in Appendix 4.

A further review of the capital programme is underway to assess the deliverability of the current programme.

The position on reserves shows an opening balance of £14,460,00. The forecast net drawdown from reserves is £7,277,000, a reduction of £16,000 compared to the planned drawdown of £7,293,000. This results in an estimated closing balance of £7,183,000, as detailed in section 9 and summarised in Appendix 5. This would reduce further if reserves are used to cover the inflation related risks described elsewhere in this report. Work is ongoing to review likely drawdown of reserves (including grants brought forward) for the rest of the current year on both Revenue and Capital projects.

There is an increase in the interest receivable on the Authority's cash investments of £20,680,000 due to the Bank of England's increase in base rate. Interest receivable is projected at £650,000, resulting in a surplus of £500,000 when compared to the budget. Interest payments on fixed rate loans of £9,817,000 are unaffected.

RECOMMENDATION

Fire Authority is recommended to note:

- (i) the risks to Revenue Budget and the projected overspend,
- (ii) the risks to the Capital Programme,
- (iii) the ITG strategy position
- (iv) the reduced net forecast drawdown from reserves,
- (v) the grants available and spending plans,
- (vi) the monitoring of savings taken in 2023/24; and
- (vii) the current year investments and borrowing

1 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Original Revenue Budget 2023/24 and Capital Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28 was approved at the meeting of the Fire Authority on 9 February 2023.

1.2 This is the second report to Members for the 2023/24 financial year and highlights the findings from Month 4 (end July) monitoring undertaken on the Revenue and Capital Budget 2023/24 and Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28. It should be noted the review is based on currently available information and the result may change as new information emerges during the year.

	This CFA (Month 4)	Last P&R (Month 2)*	Movement
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Revenue (see section 2)	193	371	(178)
Capital in year (see section 7)	(2,318)	(1,519)	(799)

1.3 The Revenue Budget approved by the Fire Authority in February 2023 was a net expenditure requirement of £40,057,000.

1.4 A net revenue overspend to the sum of £193,000 has been identified at Month 4 (end July) and is reflected in the Revenue Budget 2023/24 objective summary at Appendix 1 and detailed in section 2.

1.5 The savings requirement 2023/24 is £1,295,000. The current position shows we have delivered or are on course to deliver £1,230,000 (95%) of savings. There are two savings at risk, which also relate to prior year savings, as detailed in section 5.

1.6 The grants available total £4.0m, including grants brought forward from previous years, as summarised in Appendix 3 and detailed in section 5.

1.7 The five year Capital Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28 was approved by the Fire Authority in February 2023 at £28,280,000. The Capital Strategy has been increased to £28,793,000 to include slippage of £975,000 and allocation of spend in advance of £462,000 from 2022/23. The 5 year Capital Programme is projected to underspend by £102,000 as summarised in Appendix 4 and detailed in section 8.

1.8 The Capital Budget for 2023/24 was approved by the Fire Authority at £8,421,000 and updated to £8,934,000 including slippage of £975,000 brought forward from 2022/23, allocation of spend in advance of £462,000 from 2022/23.

1.9 A number of Revenue Budget and Capital Programme risks are set out in section 3 which will be monitored throughout the year. The updated position

on Contingency, Reserves, Borrowing and Investments is provided at sections 6, 8 and 9 respectively.

2 REVENUE BUDGET COMMENTARY

2.1 The Revenue Budget is projected to overspend by £193,000. This is summarised across divisions in Appendix 1 and detailed explanations are provided below.

2.2 Within the revenue forecast is an amount of £150,000 for the green book pay award sitting outside of the directorate areas.

This pressure relates to a forecast pay award of 6% in comparison to the budgeted amount of 4%.

2.3 **People Services:** Expected overspend of £177,000, as follows:

2.3.1 **HR:** Expected underspend of £27,000 (previous forecast to budget). The underspend can be attributed to staff vacancies (£35,000), NHS prescriptions (£3,000), training (£3,000) and consultants fees (£4,000) offset by pressures due to maternity leave cover (£5,000), finders fees (£7,000) and interview expenses in relation to the Direct Entrant post (£2,000).

2.3.2 **AD Admin Support:** Expected underspend of £25,000 (previous forecast 35,000 underspend). The underspend relates to a vacancy, with the movement since P2 relating to the length of the vacancy.

2.3.3 **Service Training Centre and Workforce Development:** An overspend of £118,000 is expected (previous forecast £73,000 underspend). The overspend can be attributed to pressures in instructor overtime (£90,000), on-call training overtime (£64,000), agency costs for admin cover (£4,000), equipment (£3,000) and catering (£2,000), offset by an underspend due to vacancies (£40,000).

The movement since P2 can be attributed to Instructor overtime (£90,000), on-call training overtime (£24,000), offset by a reduction in the pay forecast of £101,000. In addition the £175,000 budget for Firefighter recruitment, which will not be utilised this year has been transferred to contingency. The movement is significant because a full forecast was not undertaken at P2 due to Finance capacity at that time.

2.3.4 **Payroll:** An overspend of £84,000 is expected (previous forecast £98,000 overspend). The pressure is caused by an error in the budget for Pensions posts (£98,000) and finders fees (£11,000), offset by underspends relating to vacancies across 2 roles (£25,000).

The P2 forecast only reported the budget error and the other variances are the reason for the movement.

2.3.5 **Occupational Health:** Expected overspend of £27,000 (previous forecast to budget). The overspend relates to medical fees with an increased usage this year.

2.4 **Resources/Treasurer:** Expected underspend of £125,000, as follows:

2.4.1 **AD Resources/Treasurer :** An overspend of £2,000 is expected in relation to pay as budgets include a 1% vacancy factor.

2.4.2 **Estates:** An underspend of £11,000 is expected (previously forecast £120,000 underspend). Underspend of £11,000 relates to a part time vacancy within the department as an individual has reduced their working hours. It is expected a pressure of £24,000 in relation to the additional environmental cleaning contract will be covered by underspends elsewhere within the department.

The movement since P2 can be attributed to the individual reducing their working hours. The previous forecast related to an underspend on utilities, this budget has now been transferred to contingency.

2.4.3 **ITG:** Currently expecting an underspend of £113,000 (previous forecast £5,000 underspend). The underspend relates to project delays in Paging & Alerting, Health & Safety Management system and EDRMS (£92,000), delay in the rollout of MLL WAN services (£86,000) and a reduction in CRM and Airbus licences (£81,000). These are offset by pressures for Firelink charges, where inflation of 13.5% has been applied (£79,000), additional Webex licences (£18,000), additional SIM cards for portable devices, caused by CRM tablets and increased mobile working (£18,000), assumed reduction in printing not realised (£10,000), staff vacancy factor not realised (£5,000) and other pressures across the department (£16,000).

The increase in underspend of £108,000 since P2 can be attributed to additional project delays (£36,000), reduction in CRM and Airbus licences (£81,000), offset by additional pressures across the department (£9,000).

2.4.4 **Procurement:** An overspend of £3,000 is expected (previously forecast £50,000 overspend). A pressure of £ £44,000 relates to the PPE where there has been an inflationary increase of 14.3%. This is offset by underspends of £15,000 against the consultancy budget and £32,000 relating to staff pay with a part-year vacancy and the impact of pay being lower than budgeted.

The movement since P2 can be attributed to a reduction for PPE (£25,000), Consultancy (£15,000), staffing due to vacancies and pay rates (£13,000), offset by pressure relating to back dated pay rises (£45,000).

2.5 **Planning & Improvement:** A forecast underspend of £64,000 is expected as follows:

2.5.1 **Communications:** An underspend of £60,000 is expected (previously forecast £93,000 underspend). Underspend of £61,000 relates to vacancies within the team, offset by pressure of £1,000 across a number of categories.

The additional costs of £33,000 can be attributed to staffing (£25,000) due to cover required for parental leave and support required in the run up to the annual awards ceremony and two additional licences (£8,000).

2.5.2 **Cost of Democracy:** An underspend of £4,000 is expected (previously forecast £3,000 underspend). An overspend of £4,000 on staffing offset by underspends on members allowances (£5,000) and travelling (£2,000).

2.6 **Safer Communities:** An overspend of £1,093,000 is expected with the variance detailed below.

Significant focus needs to be maintained on the Safer Communities action plan to reduce the forecast pressure for 2023/24 and to ensure that the position doesn't impact on the 2024/25 budget. These actions include:

- Fixed term contracts being reviewed by workforce planning to ensure they are only used when absolutely necessary and considered in conjunction with overtime risks of not doing so to minimise the pressure
- Performance measures need to be reported to ensure highly effective monitoring and approval of requests for overtime
- Overtime is closely monitored through the year, managers should be sighted on overtime dashboard reporting
- Review outstanding CRM savings to identify amount deliverable
- The annual leave, sickness and light duties policies are reviewed
- Occupational health contract is reviewed to ensure the process is conducive to ensuring staff return to work at the earliest opportunity

Finance are attending Group meetings on a monthly basis and are working with Station Managers to support their financial understanding and provide more detailed analysis of their station expenditure.

2.6.1 **AD Safer Communities:** An overspend of £104,000 is expected (as per P2 forecast). This pressure relates savings as detailed in Section 5.

2.6.2 **Safer Communities Contingency:** There is currently an underspend reported of £40,000 (as per P2 forecast). This underspend relates to the on-call budget held as a contingency outside of the Groups.

It is recommended this budget is moved to the Groups in 2023/24 to offset the pressure in on-call due to the unbudgeted pay awards.

2.6.3 **Groups:** The Groups are reporting an overspend of £1,098,000 (previous forecast overspend £963,000).

The forecast for the Groups includes the IRMP changes, although there are a number of moves still in progress. Finance and HR are working closely to ensure changes are reflected within the forecast. It is expected OP&P will recruit a further 2 Crew Managers into the Flexible Resource Pool, however

these are not currently forecast within OP&P as it is anticipated they may be sourced from Safer Communities.

Whilst the grey book pay award increases have been allocated to the budget for wholetime staff and funded from the corporate contingency, no allocation has been made for on-call within the 2023/24 budget, which totals £178,000. Whilst re-profiled last financial year, the on-call budget does not appear to be current activity and spend patterns across the stations and further work is required to re-allocate these budgets.

It is unclear how the new crewing model will affect the reliance on overtime. The current forecast is based on the old model and is extrapolated based on the overtime profile from 2022/23. The overtime budget has not been increased to take into account the grey book pay award.

In July 2023 there were a total of 15 individuals on light duties, 18 individuals on long term sick and a total of 14 FTCs.

West: An overspend of £636,000 is expected. Overspend of £162,000 relates to wholetime pay, with an average over-establishment of 5 during the year. Additionally £278,000 overspend is due to overtime with a further £179,000 relating to on-call spend.

Central: An overspend of £229,000 is expected. Overspend of £25,000 relates to wholetime pay, with an average over-establishment of 0.5 during the year. Additionally £234,000 overspend is due to overtime and this is offset by an underspend of £37,000 relating to on-call spend.

East: An overspend of £258,000 is expected. Overspend of £28,000 relates to wholetime pay, with an average over-establishment of 1 during the year. Additionally £140,000 overspend is due to overtime with a further £90,000 relating to on-call spend.

- 2.6.4 **Prevention:** An underspend of £24,000 is expected (previous forecast £50,000 underspend). An underspend of £62,000 relates to vacancies within the department. These are offset by an overspend of £18,000 relating to Cadets, £10,000 overtime for Home Safety Visits and £5,000 for Soloprotect service charge which supports lone working. There are a number of other variances within the department.

The movement since P2 can be attributed to an increase for staff (£7,000), with the extension of an FTC, along with the increases for Home Safety Visits and Soloprotect. The overspend for cadets has reduced by £1,500.

- 2.7 **Operational Support & Resilience:** A forecast underspend of £6,000 is expected as follows:

- 2.7.1 **AD OSR:** An overspend of £6,000 is expected (previous forecast £7,000 overspend). The overspend can be attributed to FBU overtime for which there is no budget.

2.7.2 **Engineering:** An overspend of £31,000 is expected (previous forecast £24,000 overspend). Overspend of £16,000 relates to the current staffing structure, with a further £15,000 overspend across a number of categories. The Engineering team are working to bring their spend within budget.

There has been an increase of £7,000 since the P2 report. The forecast for fuel has increased by £29,000 with fuel prices increasing over the last two months, this is offset by other movements.

2.7.3 **Ops P&P:** An underspend of £68,000 is expected (previous forecast £33,000 underspend). Underspend of £83,000 relates to vacancies within the team largely due to two vacant FRP posts, offset by pressures in relation to hydrants (£11,000) and water rescue (£3,000).

It is expected OP&P will recruit a further 2 Crew Managers into the Flexible Resource Pool, however these are not currently forecast as it is anticipated they may be sourced from Safer Communities.

The forecast for hydrants is based on the year to date spend, however the current commitments total £232,000 and there is a risk that if work is completed more quickly than anticipated then this would have an adverse impact on the forecast position. The position is being reviewed with the Hydrants team on a bi-monthly basis.

2.7.4 **Control Room:** An overspend of £25,000 is expected (previous forecast £25,000 overspend). This is based on the latest forecast received from Surrey, with the overspend largely relating to the grey book pay award, which was agreed at higher rate than the Service had budgeted for. A further update is expected from Surrey before the P6 report.

2.8 **CFO:** An overspend of £37,000 is expected (previous forecast £32,000 overspend). Overspend of £43,000 relates pay and is mainly due to the gold book pay award backdated to 1 January 2022. Additionally underspend of £6,000 is expected across a number of non-pay budgets.

The movement since P2 can be attributed to pay award forecasting.

2.9 **Treasury Management:** This budget is reporting an underspend of £571,000 (previous forecast £450,000 underspend). The interest receivable for cash investments is expected to overachieve by £500,000 due to rising interest rates, with a further underspend of £70,000 relating to interest payable to reflect current borrowing plans, primarily due to the scale of slippage in the Capital Programme.

The movement since P2 can be attributed to an additional £50,000 for interest receivable as interest rates continue to rise and £70,000 reduction in interest payable.

2.10 **Non-Delegated Costs:** An overspend of £142,000 is expected (previous forecast £117,000 overspend). £76,000 overspend is due to unfunded

pension costs, with £66,000 attributable to Procurement savings which have yet to be allocated across service budgets.

The movement since P2 can be attributed to unfunded pensions costs.

- 2.11 **Corporate Contingency:** A contingency budget of £479,000 is currently supporting the underspend position. An overview of the contingency budget is included at section 7.
- 2.12 **Financing:** Current information indicates that the Service will receive additional funding of £159,000 (previous forecast was an under-achievement of £41,000).

Based on forecasts from Local Government Futures it is expected an additional £74,000 will be received for Business Rates, with a further £86,000 received in relation to council tax surpluses.

3 REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME RISKS

- 3.1 **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 2025/26 onwards. The Government has also confirmed that it will not fund non scheme costs including unauthorised tax charges and scheme sanction charges in the current tax year. A Pension Administration reserve is held to fund costs resulting from remedy implementation. It is expected the balance of this reserve as at 31 March 2024 will be £111,000, with £105,000 committed in 2023/24 as funding for Pensions posts.
- 3.2 **Pay Award 2023/24:** The budget provided for 4% pay awards across gold, grey and green book staff.
 - 3.2.1 Gold book pay awards backdated to January 2022 are included within the reported forecast position.
 - 3.2.2 Grey book staff have been awarded 7% from 1 July 2022 and 5% from 1 July 2023, which is included within the forecast position.
 - 3.2.3 Green book staff have been offered £1,925, this offer has been rejected. The forecast position includes a pay award of 6%, although this is not a confirmed position.
- 3.3 **Worldwide Supply Chain Issues:** The impact of worldwide supply chain disruption is impacting construction projects across the nation. The dwindling supplies along with increased costs and long delivery times being experienced by the construction industry are impacting on the Capital Programme. Thus far the Estates team has worked 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, but this approach may not be sustainable. 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 is currently carrying out a review of the remaining capital programme as part of the MTFP savings review. A report will be made to SLT in September, but we are seeing significant inflationary pressures across all projects, especially on larger schemes such as Preston Circus.

3.4 **Inflationary Contract Increases:** In addition to utilities and fuel additional budget provision was allocated for maintenance and term contracts (£70,000), legal services (£4,000) and catering (£6,000). A standard 2% inflationary budget increase was included for all non-pay totalling £181,000. This there is a risk pressures will arise across non pay spend budgets that cannot be absorbed. This position will continue to be monitored with input from Procurement.

3.5 **Royal Albion Hotel Fire:** The full costs in relation to the fire at the Royal Albion hotel in Brighton are not yet included within the forecast as claims will only become apparent following August payroll.

4 **MANAGING REVENUE BUDGET PRESSURES**

4.1 As risks crystallise the resulting pressures will be included within the revenue budget forecast. A number of areas require further analysis to identify further pressures or opportunities.

4.2 SLT have agreed the following controls are put in place for 2023/24:

- Workforce Planning Group will be used as a mechanism to:
 - Approve recruitment to all vacancies
 - Approve the use of agency staff
 - Have oversight of overtime spend (with a particular focus on Safer Communities & Training)
 - Review and agree forecasts for operational (grey book) strength.
- Management of discretionary spend to be a key focus, with Finance Business Partners working with budget managers to review opportunities to manage underspends on non-pay spend in 2023/24 with particular focus on areas such as training, estates maintenance and equipment (IT and Engineering).

The Finance team to review corporate opportunities to manage generic spend e.g. agency staff, conferences, catering, accommodation/venue hire, printing etc.

5 **SAVINGS PROGRAMME 2023/24**

5.1 Appendix 2 summarises the net savings requirement 2023/24 of £1,295,000. Work is in ongoing with Service managers to identify and report actual delivery of savings compared to budgeted savings.

- 5.2 Current projections show we have delivered or are on course to deliver £1,230,000 (95%) of savings.

Procurement savings of £81,000 (£15,000 2023/24 and £66,000 prior year) are at risk and further work is required to understand if these can be delivered.

A pressure of £104,000 within Safer Communities (£50,000 2023/24 and £54,000 prior year) relating to CRM will be removed as part of budget setting for 2024/25. The CRM project resulted in a reduction in 4 posts, however these budget reductions were not allocated correctly against CRM at the time. There will be a further review through Tranche 3 to identify any further efficiencies.

6 GRANTS 2023/24

- 6.1 The Government has awarded grants for use on specific purposes and your 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 financial year and others that require development of spending plans. The amount available is £3.982m, as summarised in Appendix 3.

- 6.2 The latest grants are detailed below:

6.2.1 **Surge Protection Grant Funding:** – this is specifically to deal with inspections for high rise buildings and other high-risk buildings. The grant conditions have been received. A further allocation of £358,079 has been awarded for 2023/24. A spend plan has been developed to utilise this grant and it is expected £98,000 will be drawn down from the £125,645 brought forward from 2022/23.

6.2.2 **Accreditation & RPL Grant Funding:** £22,737 is carried forward from 2022/23 for the purposes of accrediting fire protection officers and fire safety engineers. It is anticipated this grant will be utilised over the next two years.

6.2.3 **Fire Fighter Pension Scheme:** this is used towards the shortfall in employer's pension contributions.

6.2.4 **New Dimensions:** £47,667 is carried forward from 2022/23 and additional £27,430 grant relates to 2023/24. A spending plan has been developed and it is expected £54,231 will be spent this year, with the balance of £20,866 carried forward to 2024/25.

6.2.5 **Responding to New Risks:** £31,355 is carried forward from 2022/23, and additional £6,500 grant relates to 2023/24. A spending plan has been developed and it is expected £37,111 will be spent this year, with the balance of £744 carried forward to 2024/25.

7 **CONTINGENCY 2023/24**

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 2023, the Fire Authority agreed a contingency of £533,000 for the 2023/24 financial year. This included the general 2% inflation provision of £181,000 which has not been allocated out to relevant non pay spend budgets.

7.2 A total of £390,000 was allocated from the contingency to cover the wholetime pay award.

An additional £336,000 has been transferred to contingency in respect of budget allocations which are no longer required in 2023/24.

The contingency budget currently has a balance of £479,000 and this is supporting the overspend position.

	£'000
Opening Balance 1 April 2023	533
Allocation to cover grey book pay award for wholetime	(390)
Transfer of utilities budget - over-provision of inflation	120
Transfer of wholetime recruitment - budget not required 23/24	175
Transfer of MTFP consultation - budget not required 23/24	41
Amount Remaining end July	479

8 **CAPITAL PROGRAMME COMMENTARY**

8.1 The original 2023/24 Capital Budget and five year Capital Strategy of £28,280,000 was approved by the Fire Authority on 9 February 2023. The Capital Strategy has been increased to £28,793,000 to include slippage of £975,000 and allocation of spend in advance of £462,000 from 2022/23.

8.2 The Capital Programme is funded by: Capital Receipts Reserve £520,000, Capital Programme Reserves £13,895,000, Internal Borrowing of £555,000 and New Borrowing £13,721,000 as shown in the table below. Overall, the revised 5 year Capital Programme is forecasted to come in £102,000 underspent.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Estates	4,680	2,849	4,347	3,151	1,090	16,117
Fleet & Equipment	3,741	2,529	1,741	1,928	2,224	12,163
Original Approved Programme	8,421	5,378	6,088	5,079	3,314	28,280
Slippage from 2022/23	975					975
Spend in Advance from 2022/23	(462)					(462)
Slippage to 2024/25	(2,387)	2,387				0
Spend in Advance from 2024/25	172	(172)				0
Underspend	(102)					(102)
Updated Capital Programme	6,617	7,593	6,088	5,079	3,314	28,691
Funded by:						
Capital Receipts Reserve	520	0	0	0	0	520
Capital Programme Reserve	4,895	1,500	2,000	2,500	3,000	13,895
Internal Borrowing	555					555
New Borrowing / Need to Borrow	647	6,093	4,088	2,579	314	13,721
Updated Capital Programme	6,617	7,593	6,088	5,079	3,314	28,691

8.3 **Capital Funding** – 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.

8.4 The **Capital Budget 2023/24** was approved by the Fire Authority at £8,421,000 and updated to £8,934,000 (Property £5,655,000 and Fleet and Equipment £3,279,000) including slippage of £975,000 brought forward from 2022/23 and allocation of spend in advance of £462,000 from 2022/23.

8.5 A review of the 2023/24 capital budget by officers has identified slippage to the value of £2,387,000 (26.7%) and spend in advance of £172,000. There is additional underspend of £102,000 expected, as summarised in Appendix 4.

A further review of the capital programme is underway to assess the deliverability of the current programme based on capacity of the internal teams and external contractor appointments. It is anticipated there will be further slippage of programmes and this will reduce the need for borrowing, whilst interest rates are high.

8.5.1 The Estates / Property underspend is £2,236,000, of which £2,283,000 is slippage due to the reprioritisation and reprofiling of works and £47,000 relates to spend in advance. Work has been delayed in relation to Preston Circus, the four MPTH, Security, Sustainability, Training Towers, Bay Doors, Floors and IT Building works.

The slippage has increased by £737,000 since P2, including £400,000 on Preston Circus, £274,000 on Bay Doors, Floors & IT works, £55,000 on Security and £59,000 on Sustainability.

8.5.2 The Fleet underspend is £81,000. There is slippage of £102,000 largely relating to a decision to pause the purchase of pool cars whilst a review is undertaken, with a further £35,000 relating to IRMP equipment. Spend in advance of £125,000 relates to the water carrier, where budget was previously slipped to 2024/25 during budget setting. Underspend of £102,000 relates to five vehicle purchases and equipment.

The forecast spend has reduced by £62,000 since P2, which can be attributed to slippage for both IRMP equipment projects (£70,000), offset by an additional spend on an ancillary vehicle.

9 **IT STRATEGY 2023/24**

9.1 A review of the 2023/24 IT Strategy forecasts indicates a total of £2.403m will be drawn down from the reserve this year, against an original plan of £5.268m. The main slippages relate to Process Digitisation (£530,000), ESN (£1.425m), Health & Safety system (£123,000), Pagers and Alerters (£428,000) and Telephony (£270,000). The full breakdown can be seen in Appendix 7.

10 **RESERVES 2023/24**

10.1 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).

10.2 The opening balance of reserves at 1 April 2023 is £14.460m.

10.3 The forecast net drawdown from reserves totals £7,200,000 compared to the original planned net drawdown of £7,293,000. This is a net reduction in drawdown of £93,000 resulting in an estimated balance at 31 March 2024 of £7,260,000 as summarised in the table below and detailed over individual reserves in Appendix 5.

	Balance at 1 April 2023	Original Planned Net Transfers	Forecast Net Transfers	Net change	Balance at 31 March 2024
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Earmarked Reserves	12,384	(7,086)	(6,999)	87	5,385
General Fund	1,556	319	319	0	1,875
Total Revenue Reserves	13,940	(6,767)	(6,680)	87	7,260
Total Capital Reserves	520	(526)	(520)	6	0
Total Usable Reserves	14,460	(7,293)	(7,200)	93	7,260

10.4 Work continues with budget managers to confirm the planned use of revenue and capital reserves in 2023/24.

10.5 The main reasons for the overall net reduction in forecast drawdown of £16,000 are as follows:

Earmarked Reserves – Decrease of £87,000

- £192,000 – changes to drawdown from Business Rates Pool Reserve based on P4 budget monitoring forecast for Protection spend and changes to contribution for 2022/23
- (£75,000) – increased drawdown from Mobilising reserve
- £86,000 – Additional transfer into the Improvement & Efficiency Reserve
- £11,000 – reduced drawdown from the Capital Programme Reserve
- £57,000 – reduced drawdown from the Carry Forward Reserve
- (£6,000) – increased drawdown from cadets reserve
- £6,000 – reduced drawdown in respect of grant balances carried forward
- (£184,000) – increased drawdown from the ITG strategy reserve

Capital Reserves – Decrease £6,000

- £6,000 – due to balance of Capital Receipts Reserve being lower than anticipated when the budget was set and additional capital receipts received during 2023/24.

11 BORROWING AND INVESTMENT

11.1 As at end July, the Authority held cash balances of £20,680,000 which were invested in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy, as follows:

Counterparty	Duration	Amount	Interest Rate
		£m	%
Aberdeen Cash Money Market Fund	Overnight Access	3.000	4.96
Deutsche Cash Money Market Fund	Overnight Access	3.000	4.92
Aviva Cash Money Market Fund	Overnight Access	3.000	4.96
Federated Cash Money Market Fund	Overnight Access	0.680	4.91
Barclays	95 Day Notice	4.000	5.05
Goldman Sachs	Fixed to 06/12/23	2.000	5.23
Standard Chartered ESG	Fixed to 10/08/23	1.000	4.27
Standard Chartered ESG	Fixed to 05/01/24	1.000	5.81
Natwest	Fixed to 02/08/23	2.000	2.61
Natwest	Fixed to 03/05/24	1.000	4.82
Total Investments		20.680	

11.2 The Bank of England base rate rose to 5.0% in June from 4.5% in the previous month. We are continuing to see an impact as Banks increase their rates on investments, resulting in higher levels of interest receivable. Latest modelling indicates the income of around £650,000 can be achieved, £500,000 above the budgeted level of £150,000.

- 11.3 The current forecast of a reduction in reserves of £7.277m means that the Service will need to monitor its liquidity and cashflow closely during the year and this may involve giving notice on some of its existing investments. Finance continues to work with the ESCC Treasury Management team to improve cash-flow monitoring.
- 11.4 The Authority has borrowing totalling £9,817,000 and there is no impact on the interest payable, as these are subject to fixed interest rate deals.
- 11.5 Based on the current forecast position it is expected additional borrowing of £647,000 will be required to fund the capital programme. Borrowing would incur ongoing revenue costs for MRP (at 4%) and interest (PWLB rate 5.10%). To minimise the impact short term borrowing will be considered initially as interest rates should be lower.

Revenue Budget 2023/24 – Objective Summary

	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Projected Outturn	Variance	Variance	Variance Month 2 Reported to P&R	Variance From Last Reported
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	%	£'000	£'000
People Services	4,200	4,038	4,214	176	4.4	(10)	186
Resources/Treasurer	9,093	8,974	8,848	(126)	(1.4)	(78)	(47)
Planning and Improvement	1,555	1,472	1,408	(64)	(4.4)	(97)	33
Total Deputy Chief Fire Officer	14,847	14,483	14,470	(13)	(1)	(185)	172
Safer Communities	22,862	23,309	24,402	1,093	4.7	937	155
Operational Support	4,942	4,915	4,909	(6)	(0.1)	23	(29)
Total Assistant Chief Fire Officer	27,805	28,224	29,311	1,087	5	960	126
CFO Staff	844	844	881	37	4.4	32	5
Treasury Management	755	755	185	(571)	(75.6)	(450)	(121)
Non Delegated costs	(1,052)	(1,053)	(910)	142	(13.5)	117	27
Corporate Contingency	533	479	0	(479)	(100.0)	(143)	(336)
Transfer from Reserves	(636)	(262)	(262)	0	0.0	0	0
Transfer to Reserves	1,961	1,587	1,587	0	0.0	0	0
Total Corporate	2,405	2,350	1,479	(871)	(185)	(444)	(426)
Green book pay award	0	0	150	150	0.0	0	150
Total Net Expenditure	45,057	45,057	45,410	353	(182)	329	(128)
Financed By:							
RSG	(3,662)	(3,662)	(3,661)	1	(0)	0	0
Council Tax	(31,093)	(31,093)	(31,093)	0	0	0	0
Business Rates	(7,776)	(7,776)	(7,827)	(51)	1	150	(201)
Service Grant Allocation	(408)	(408)	(408)	(0)	0	0	(0)
Covid-19 Local Tax Support Grant	(56)	(56)	(56)	0	0	0	0
S31 Grants	(2,063)	(2,063)	(2,086)	(23)	1	(23)	(0)
Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit	0	0	(86)	(86)	0	(86)	0
Total Financing	(45,057)	(45,057)	(45,217)	(159)	0	41	(201)
Total Over / (Under) Spend	0	0	193	193	0	371	(329)

Savings Programme 2023/24

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Description	Savings 23/24	Projection 22/23	At Risk	R.A.G Rating
	£'000	£'000	£'000	Select Status
Reduce contingency - one year only - reversal	48	48		
IT Projects to be reprofiled - reversal	33	33		
Procurement savings	(25)	(10)	(15)	
Insurance - installation of CCTV on fleet	(15)	(15)		
Telent contract savings	3	3		
CRM Benefits realisation	(50)		(50)	
IRMP savings	(49)	(49)		
Finance Business Partner	(60)	(60)		
Finance Support Services Contract	(35)	(35)		
Insurance - removal of PA cover	(23)	(23)		
EIRS	(27)	(27)		
Trustmarque 0365 EA Agreement	(20)	(20)		
Astrium	(8)	(8)		
BT	(22)	(22)		
ITG Training	(3)	(3)		
SEE Phase 4	(30)	(30)		
Finance and Improvement	(30)	(30)		
Additional Rates Savings	(106)	(106)		
Licences	(4)	(4)		
Consultant Fees	(20)	(20)		
E-recruitment	(4)	(4)		
Firewatch Benefits realisation	25	25		
HR travel and licences	(9)	(9)		
NHS recharges	(4)	(4)		
VDU eye tests	(2)	(2)		
Occupational health psychology	(8)	(8)		
Occupational health medical fees	(10)	(10)		
Officers subsistence	(1)	(1)		
EDI training	(10)	(10)		
Car allowance	(4)	(4)		
External training	(160)	(160)		
Engineering Fitting Out	(30)	(30)		
Engineering Heavy Rescue Equipment	(52)	(52)		
Control IT SLA	(199)	(199)		
Budget Error - CRM	(54)	(54)		
Additional Availability Allowance	(20)	(20)		
NI reduction	(230)	(230)		
Support Staff Pay Vacancy Factor	(80)	(80)		
Total Net Savings	(1,295)	(1,230)	(65)	

Grants and Spending Plans 2023/24

Grants Requiring Claims	Lead AD	*Grant Brought Forward 1 April 2022	Grant 2023/24	Total Available Grant	Claim Quarter 1	Claim Quarter 2	Claim Quarter 3	Claim Quarter 4	Balance Remaining
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
ESMCP - LTR Regional	Hannah Scott-Youldon	59,725	-	59,725	No claims will be made during 2023/24				59,725
**ESMCP - Infrastructure	Hannah Scott-Youldon	1,425,000	-	1,425,000	No claims expected during 2023/24				1,425,000
Accreditation & RPL Funding	Matt Lloyd	22,737	-	22,737	-	-	-	-	22,737
Surge Protection Grant Funding - Protection Uplift	Matt Lloyd	125,645	358,079	483,724					483,724
		1,939,347		1,991,186	-	-	-	-	1,991,186
Grants - No Claims Requirement	Lead AD	Balance Remaining	Grant 2023/24	Total Available Grant	Comments				Balance Remaining
		£		£					
COVID - 19	Duncan Savage	71,656	-	71,656	Available to spend on Efficiency & Productivity				71,656
Firelink	Duncan Savage	0	143,420	143,420	Used to fund Airwave costs in 2023/24				143,420
New Dimensions	Hannah Scott-Youldon	47,667	27,430	75,097	Plan to spend £54,231 in 2023/24				20,866
Pensions Grant	Duncan Savage	0	1,734,984	1,734,984	Used in 2023/24				1,734,984
Responding to New Risks	Hannah Scott-Youldon	31,355	6,500	37,855	Plan to spend £37,111 in 2023/24				744
Total		1,083,975	1,083,975	1,991,356					1,900,014
Overall Total Grants		3,023,322	1,083,975	3,982,542					3,891,200
Notes:									
* the grants brought forward are held in earmarked reserves (Appendix 7)									

Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28

Capital Programme Expenditure 2022-23 to 2027-28	Total Budget	Total Previous Years	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Remaining Spend	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Property									
Shared Investment Schemes									
Integrated Transport Project	800					800		800	-
Roedean Betterment	25		25					25	-
Bohemia Road Betterment	95		95					95	-
Fort Road - RIBA Stages 1-2	99	21	78					78	-
Preston Circus	3,287	394	1,243	1,650				2,893	-
Total Shared Investment Schemes	4,306	415	1,441	1,650	-	800	-	3,891	-
Strategic Schemes									
- Replacement Fuel Tanks	492	450	42					42	-
- Partner contribution	(292)	(292)						-	-
- Replacement fuel tanks net cost	200	158	42	-	-	-	-	42	-
Design Guide	356	356						-	-
Hove	525	521	4					4	-
Roedean	482	53	429					429	-
Eastbourne	587	97	490					490	-
Bohemia Road	524	46	478					478	-
Security	386	95	291					291	-
Sustainability	171	22	119	30				149	-
MPTH	399	399						-	-
Eastbourne MPTH	259	26	233					233	-
Training Centre MPTH	308	34	274					274	-
Hove MPTH	278	24	254					254	-
Bohemia Road MPTH	257	26	231					231	-
Live Fire Training	4,000	49	34	437	2,500	980		3,951	-
Total Strategic Schemes	8,732	1,906	2,879	467	2,500	980	-	6,826	-
General Schemes	830	830						-	-
Phase 1 General Costs	36	30	6					6	-
Seaford CIL	296	3	12	281				293	-
Seaford CIL partner Contribution	(133)			(133)				(133)	-
Barcombe CIL	392	4	14	374				388	-
Barcombe CIL Partner Contribution	(156)			(156)				(156)	-
The Ridge	408			20	388			408	-
Hailsham	184	19	8	10	147			165	-
Rye	532	12	36	17	467			520	-
Battle	163	1			56	106		162	-
Herstmonceux	279					50	229	279	-
Bexhill	460					200	260	460	-
Heathfield	280	9	9	19	243			271	-
Uckfield	495	8			100	387		487	-
Lewes	577	6			241	330		571	-
Pevensey	181					30	151	181	-
Forest Row	197					30	167	197	-
Mayfield	203					30	173	203	-
Broad Oak	30						30	30	-
Burwash	30						30	30	-
Wadhurst	50						50	50	-
Seaford HVP Alterations	94	94						-	-
Total General Schemes	5,428	1,016	85	432	1,642	1,163	1,090	4,412	-
Bay Doors, Floors, IT	1,515	7	795	300	205	208		1,508	-
Training Towers	279	1	278					278	-
Temperature Control in Sleeping Pods	195	18	177					177	-
Total Property	20,455	3,363	5,655	2,849	4,347	3,151	1,090	17,092	-
Vehicle Cameras	150		150					150	-
Grant Funds	(117)		(117)					(117)	-
Breathing Apparatus	1,000					500	500	1,000	-
Aerials	2,228	908	1,320					1,320	-
Aerial Rescue Pump	22	22						-	-
Fire Appliances	8,636	4,158	562	904	887	932	1,122	4,407	(71)
Ancillary Vehicles	2,831	774	799	1,037	153		77	2,066	9
Cars	2,262	861	102	286	531	261	215	1,395	(6)
Vans	2,358	1,018	323	302	170	235	310	1,340	-
Equipment	70		35					35	(35)
Rounding Adj	2		2					2	-
Total Fleet and Equipment	16,228	7,741	3,176	2,529	1,741	1,928	2,224	11,598	(103)
Total Expenditure	36,683	11,104	8,831	5,378	6,088	5,079	3,314	28,690	(103)

Capital Programme 2023/24

Estates Capital Programme Expenditure 2023/24

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Project	Total Budget	Forecast	Variance	Variance	Underspend/ Overspend	Spend in Advance	Slippage	P2 Variance	Movement
	2023/24 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2023/24 %	2023/24 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Roedean Betterment	25	25	-						
Bohemia Road Betterment	95	60	(35)				(35)		(35)
Fort Road - RIBA Stages 1-2	78	123	45	58%		45		21	24
Preston Circus	1,243	645	(598)	-48%			(598)	(198)	(400)
Total Shared Investment Schemes	1,441	853	(588)		-	45	(633)	(177)	(411)
Replacement Fuel Tanks (incl. Partner contribution)	42	42	-						
Design Guide:									
Hove	4	-	(4)	-100%			(4)	(19)	15
Roedean	429	429	-	0%				1	(1)
Eastbourne	490	490	-						-
Bohemia Road	478	478	-	0%		-		1	(1)
Security	291	236	(55)				(55)		(55)
Sustainability	119	60	(59)				(59)		(59)
MPTH:									-
Eastbourne MPTH	233	13	(220)	-94%			(220)	(233)	13
Training Centre MPTH	274	19	(255)	-93%			(255)	(274)	19
Hove MPTH	254	20	(234)	-92%			(234)	(254)	20
Bohemia Road MPTH	231	23	(208)	-90%			(208)	(231)	23
Live Fire Training	34	34	-						-
Total Strategic Schemes	2,879	1,844	(1,035)		-	-	(1,035)	(1,009)	(26)
Phase 1 General Costs	6	6	-	0%			-	(6)	6
Seaford CIL (Incl. Partner contribution)	12	-	(12)	-100%			(12)		(12)
Barcombe CIL (Incl. Partner contribution)	14	-	(14)	-100%			(14)		(14)
Hailsham	8	-	(8)	-100%			(8)		(8)
Rye	36	38	2	6%		2			2
Heathfield	9	9	-	0%					-
Total General Schemes	85	53	(32)	(0)	-	2	(34)	(6)	(26)
Total Bay Door, Floor, IT Building Works	795	492	(303)	-38%			(303)	(29)	(274)
Total Training Towers	278	-	(278)	-100%			(278)	(278)	-
Total Temperature Control for Sleeping Pods	177	177	-						
Total	5,655	3,419	(2,236)	-40%	-	47	(2,283)	(1,499)	(737)

Reserves 2023/24

Description	Opening Balance	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24	Projected Closing Balance	Lead AD
	01/04/2023	Original Planned Transfers In	Original Planned Transfers Out	Original Planned Transfers Net	Forecast Transfers In	Forecast Transfers Out	Forecast Transfers Net	Net Change	as at 31 March 2024	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Earmarked Reserves										
Business Rate Pool Reserve*	1,093	0	(200)	(200)	(8)	0	(8)	192	1,085	Duncan Savage
Business Rates Retention Pilot - financial stability	80	0	(80)	(80)	0	(80)	(80)	0	0	Duncan Savage
Capital Programme Reserve	3,895	1000	(4,906)	(3,906)	1000	(4,895)	(3,895)	11	0	Duncan Savage
Covid-19	71	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	71	Duncan Savage
ESMCP ESFRS readiness	1,425	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,425	Hannah Scott-Youlton
ESMCP Regional Programme	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	Hannah Scott-Youlton
Improvement & Efficiency	521	0	(214)	(214)	83	(211)	(128)	86	393	Duncan Savage
Insurance	249	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	249	Duncan Savage
ITG Strategy	3,509	592	(2,199)	(1,607)	592	(2,383)	(1,791)	(184)	1,718	Duncan Savage
Mobilising Strategy	75	0	0	0	0	(75)	(75)	(75)	0	Duncan Savage
People Strategy	312	0	(130)	(130)	0	(130)	(130)	0	182	Julie King
Sprinklers	440	0	(440)	(440)	0	(440)	(440)	0	0	Hannah Scott-Youlton
BRR - Protection Uplift - Accreditation & RPL	23	0	(12)	(12)	0	(12)	(12)	0	11	Matt Lloyd
BRR - Protection Uplift - Protection	126	0	(96)	(96)	0	(98)	(98)	(2)	28	Matt Lloyd
Business Rate Tax Income Guarantee Scheme (75%)	16	0	(16)	(16)	0	(16)	(16)	0	0	Duncan Savage
Council Tax Income Guarantee Scheme (75%)	41	0	(42)	(42)	0	(42)	(42)	0	-1	Duncan Savage
New Dimensions Grant	48	0	(32)	(32)	0	(27)	(27)	5	21	Hannah Scott-Youlton
Pensions Administration	216	0	(105)	(105)	0	(105)	(105)	0	111	Julie King
Responding to New Risks	31	0	(33)	(33)	0	(30)	(30)	3	1	Hannah Scott-Youlton
Carry Forwards	147	0	(173)	(173)	0	(116)	(116)	57	31	Duncan Savage
Cadets	6	0	0	0	0	(6)	(6)	(6)	0	Matt Lloyd
Total Earmarked Reserves	12,384	1,592	(8,678)	(7,086)	1,667	(8,666)	(6,999)	87	5,385	
General Fund	1,556	319	0	319	0	319	319	0	1,875	Duncan Savage
Total Revenue Reserves	13,940	1,911	(8,678)	(6,767)	1,667	(8,347)	(6,680)	87	7,260	
Capital Receipts Reserve	520	0	(526)	(526)	56	(576)	(520)	6	0	Duncan Savage
Total Capital Reserves	520	0	(526)	(526)	56	(576)	(520)	6	0	
Total Usable Reserves	14,460	1,911	(9,204)	(7,293)	1,723	(8,923)	(7,200)	93	7,260	

*The balance of the Business Rates Pool is largely made up of accruals. Cash will only be released once all councils accounts have been audited and some of these remain outstanding for the last two years

ITG Strategy

Project	Total Budget	Forecast	Variance	Variance
	2023/24 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2023/24 %
CRM	296	296	0	
EDRMS	592	62	(530)	-90%
ESN (ESMCP)	1425	0	(1,425)	-100%
Finance System Improvement / Replacement	272	272	0	
FireWatch Retained Pay Integration	55	0	(55)	-100%
Fleet & Asset Replacement System	111	111	0	
GDPR File Cleanse	46	46	0	
iLearn & FireWatch Integration	35	35	0	
Increase Flexible working capabilities	25	25	0	
Information Security	75	75	0	
Integrated Health & Safety System	123	0	(123)	-100%
One to many video STC Cisco Room Kit	15	15	0	
Pagers and Alerters	434	6	(428)	-99%
Performance Management System (Phase 2,3,4)	9	9	0	
BI Mobilising Reporting (P21)	3	3	0	
BI Mobilising Reporting system Phase 2 (inphase)	20	20	0	
PSN Compliance	134	100	(34)	-25%
Total Business Projects	3670	1075	(2,595)	-71%
IP Telephony Strategy	350	80	(270)	-77%
IT outsource re-tender	117	117	0	
Laptop Lifting	250	250	0	
Lewes HQ Network Lifting	30	30	0	
Migrate Lifeboat to Sharepoint Online	65	65	0	
MS Roadmap	244	244	0	
Mobile Phone and Device Strategy / replacement	60	60	0	
Upgrade TomTom Bridge	100	100	0	
WAN strategy	382	382	0	
Total IT Projects	1598	1328	(270)	-17%
Total Projects Budget	5268	2403	(2,865)	-54%

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EAST SUSSEX FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Meeting: Fire Authority

Date: 7 September 2023

Title of Report: 2024/25 to 2028/29 Strategic Service Planning and Medium Term Financial Plan

By: Duncan Savage, Assistant Director Resources / Treasurer

Lead Officer: Alison Avery, Finance Manager

Background Papers

Revenue and Capital Budget 2023/24 and Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28 Monitoring at Month 4 (end July).

Bank of England Quarterly Monetary Policy Report August 2023.

Fire Authority Service Planning processes for 2023/24 and beyond – Revenue Budget 2023/24 and Capital Asset Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28.

Appendices

1. Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28.
2. Illustrative update for 2024/25 Revenue Budget planning.
3. Illustrative update for 2024/25 Revenue Budget planning – Additional Inflationary Pressures.

Implications (please tick ✓ and attach to report)

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

PURPOSE OF REPORT To provide an update on the Authority’s financial planning position in advance of the start of the Service Planning and Budget Setting process for 2024/25 onwards.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY Whilst the main purpose of this report is to set the financial context for the service planning process, the fundamental aim of the process is to determine how best to deliver the Authority’s Purpose and Commitments, the Integrated Risk

Management Plan (IRMP) and the targets and priorities that underpin them, within the context of the current estimate of available financial resources for the period 2024/25 to 2028/29.

Close alignment of business and resource (including finance) planning is necessary to ensure that the Authority can continue to deliver its corporate strategy and IRMP outcomes more effectively. A review of Strategies and their action plans (in terms of priority, deliverability and affordability) will feed into the Star Chamber process.

This report would normally set out a full review of the Authority's existing five year Medium Term Finance Plan (MTFP). However given the continued level of uncertainty not just regarding the future of local government funding but also inflationary pressures on costs (both pay and prices) we have set out an assessment of the 2024/25 revenue budget only. A full review of the MTFP will be presented to the Authority in December 2023 and February 2024.

The Government carried out a comprehensive spending review (CSR) covering a three year period from 2022/23 but only provided a one year settlement in both 2022/23 and 2023/24. Whilst the Government's Finance Policy Statement sets out the principles it will adopt for the 2024/25 settlement this can only be regarded as indicative at this stage.

The fire sector will make a strong submission to settlement process but the timetable is unclear and it is unlikely that the outcome will be known until later in the autumn with the provisional settlement expected in late December. Given next year is the last year of the current CSR period and the likelihood of national elections then we expect a further one year settlement which will not aid planning over the medium term.

Nationally the sector remains reliant on significant one-off funding for investment in protection services and payment of employer's pension contributions, and locally forecasting of future income from Council Tax and Business Rates remains limited. This makes planning for the 2024/25 budget and beyond extremely difficult.

Whilst inflation has fallen, it is not expected to return to the Bank of England's 2% target level until Q2 of 2025 (April – June). The Grey book pay award was settled at 3% higher than the provision in the MTFP (over two years) and the Green book pay settlement for 2023/24 has not yet been agreed, with a risk of industrial action. There is a significant risk that pay settlements for both 2023/24 and 2024/25 will be

materially above the inflation provided for in the MTFP at 4% for 2023/24 and 2% for 2024/25.

In this uncertain context this report seeks to identify the potential scale of the financial challenge facing the Authority primarily in setting its budget for the next financial year. It updates a number of the assumptions that underpin the current MTFP where that is possible, highlighting emerging pressures and potential risks. The revised financial planning assessment indicates a potential funding gap of up to £2.145m in 2024/25, depending on the level of inflation provided for. This does not include any net pressure resulting from the Star Chamber process which will run through September and October. It also assumes that pressures on the 2023/24 budget will be managed out.

The Authority will need to continue to drive, through the service and budget planning process, identification of pressures and new bids for funding, and savings (including cashable efficiencies) sufficient to provide the Authority with options to balance the budget in 2024/25 and beyond. However it is clear that if the scale of the potential financial challenge facing the Authority is as set out in this paper that efficiencies alone will not be sufficient to bridge the funding gap. The Authority will therefore need to consider a wider range of options. An update on the development of savings options (Tranches 1-4) is set out within the report. In summary officers have identified potential savings of up to £2.011m (£1.186m ongoing and £0.825m one-off).

This will enable the Authority, as far as is possible, to make informed choices about both balancing its budget over the medium term and delivering efficient and effective services once the position for 2024/25 and beyond is clearer.

The Authority and the wider fire sector continue to lobby for additional council tax flexibility of up to £5 which would provide additional income of £0.569m over the 2.99% currently modelled.

RECOMMENDATION

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- (i) note the report and its assessment of the potential funding gap for 2024/25;
- (ii) consider and comment upon the risks set out in section 4.6 and the assumptions set out in the report;
- (iii) consider their policy preferences for Council Tax, should the Government set the referendum threshold

higher than the 2.99% currently included in the MTFP;
and

- (iv) consider their preference for inflation provision for both pay and non-pay in 2024/25.

1 MEDIUM TERM SERVICE PLANNING

- 1.1 Whilst the main purpose of this report is to set the financial context for the service planning process, through an update of the MTFP, the fundamental aim of the process is to determine how best to deliver the Authority's Purpose "to make our communities safer", its supporting commitments, its IRMP 2020-25, and the targets and priorities that underpin them, within the available resources. This process has become even more important in recent years in the light of the sustained pressure on public sector funding and the consequent need to deliver significant savings over the period of the MTFP.
- 1.2 Members and officers will need to ensure that the service planning process, which is driven through our purpose and commitments and the IRMP, delivers sustainability in the medium term for both the revenue and capital budgets, and the Service as a whole. Officers continue to develop the service planning process to ensure that strategic planning and resource allocation processes (including financial planning / budget setting) are better aligned, ensuring that agreed policy priorities and key outcomes are properly resourced and can be delivered more efficiently and effectively. As a result of this any proposed new pressures, savings and investments will be included in future reports for Member approval.

2 ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

- 2.1 Global CPI has been slowing, mainly driven by developments in energy prices, although food and goods price inflation has eased a little. Services inflation remains strong across advanced economies. UK GDP growth is estimated to have averaged around ¼% per quarter in the first half of 2023 with indicators pointing to underlying growth to continue at a similar pace in the second half of 2023. The unemployment rate rose to 4% in May and is forecast to rise to just under 5% by Q3 2026.
- 2.2 CPI inflation fell to 7.9% in June, remaining significantly above the Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC) 2% target. CPI is expected to continue to fall to 6.9% in Q3 and to 4.9% by the end of the year and reach the 2% target by Q2 2025. Interest rates are expected to rise from their current rate of 5.25% to a peak of just over 6% and average just under 5.5% over the three-year forecast period.

3 NATIONAL FUNDING ISSUES

- 3.1 There is considerable uncertainty in the national funding arena. Following the end of the previous four year funding settlement in 2019/20 the Government has approved four one year settlements (for 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24). Whilst these have been more positive for the fire sector nationally

than had been anticipated with small real terms increases in the settlement funding assessment (SFA) they have not enabled effective planning over the medium term. In 2023/24 this Authority received the equal lowest increase in Comprehensive Spending Power (CSP) of any English fire authority (6.6%) and was only one of three CFAs that needed to receive CSP Minimum Guarantee grant.

- 3.2 Whilst the Government's Finance Policy Statement indicates the principles it will adopt for the 2024/25 settlement this can only be regarded as indicative and there is no commitment to continue to offer £5 council tax flexibility to fire and rescue services. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement is not expected to be announced until late December when budget plans are close to being finalised ready for Authority consideration in early February. At this stage we have assumed a slightly better outcome than in the MTFP i.e. an increase in the Settlement Funding Assessment (revenue support grant and business rate income) of 6.9% in cash terms, based on expected CPI at September 2023.
- 3.3 Ministers have previously indicated that local government should not expect to see additional funding to address inflationary pressures nor any pay award above the 2% provided for in most fire authority budgets. Given the split of fire funding across both the Home Office (HO) and Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, the sector continues to compete against other policy commitments e.g. for policing and the Border Force and local government more generally.
- 3.4 The fire fighters pension grant was provided in 2019/20 in order to mitigate most of the increase in the employer contribution rate following the most recent valuation process. This one-off grant was extended into 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24. It is again expected that the grant will roll into the base budget from 2024/25 at current funding levels, which is welcome as it provides more certainty but it does subject the funding to annual settlement fluctuations. The current MTFP assumes that funding continues at the current level of £1.734m.
- 3.5 Whilst there is uncertainty on the cost and funding of the remedy resulting from the Sargeant 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 2025/26 onwards. It is critical that the Government commits to fund the likely significant increase in employer's contribution rates resulting from the impact of remedy. The MTFP makes no allowance for any such increase. A Pension Administration reserve is held to fund costs resulting from remedy implementation. It is expected the balance of this reserve as at 31 March 2024 will be £111,000.
- 3.6 The Authority has received a fourth tranche of one-off grant of £0.358m to fund continued investment in Protection capacity in 2023/24. The Protection grant has been included in the MTFP at cash flat on a permanent basis as previously agreed. We expect that the Home Office will seek to roll the Protection Surge grant into the baseline from 2024/25. The Authority continues to lobby for a fairer distribution of the grant so that it reflects the risk and workload from the very high levels of both high and medium risk buildings within East Sussex. The current

grant is insufficient to meet the costs of meeting the Authority's new statutory and regulatory responsibilities.

- 3.7 There has been no provision for capital or transformation grants within the fire sector since 2015/16. The fire sector CSR submission highlighted the need for new capital funding to replace end of life national resilience assets for which there is no local provision. The cost of replacing those assets current allocated to this Authority is estimated at approximately £1m.

4 LOCAL POSITION

4.1 Medium Term Finance Plan

- 4.1.1 The MTFP was previously updated when the 2023/24 Budget was set in February 2023. At that stage there was a requirement to find savings of £721,000 to provide a balanced budget for 2024/25. Given the level of uncertainty about future funding we modelled two scenarios from 2025/26 which highlighted the potential need to make further savings of between £0.323m (higher range funding scenario) and £0.947m (lower range funding scenario) by 2027/28.

- 4.1.2 Given the level of uncertainty (as noted earlier) we have not updated the MTFP but provided an illustration of the potential scale of the financial challenge in achieving a balanced budget for 2024/25. A full MTFP will be presented in December 2023 and February 2024. The Authority must also consider the risks set out in paragraph 4.6 below when considering its financial planning.

4.2 Expenditure

- 4.2.1 The level of pay award for the Fire & Rescue Service will be determined nationally through the National Joint Council (NJC). Since the 2023/24 budget was approved the Grey Book pay award was agreed at 12% over two years, 3% higher than provided for in the MTFP. Local Government Employers have offered a flat rate increase of £1,925 to each employee. This is above the 4% included for 2023/24 and has been rejected by representative bodies. For the purpose of this report we have modelled an average increase of 6% for Green book staff for 2023/24. The MTFP models 2% pay awards from 2024/25, the additional pressure of agreed and expected pay awards in 2023/24 is £1.185m, as shown in Appendix 2. Given the forecast that CPI will reduce but remain above the 2% target rate for 2024/25 we have modelled a 4% pay award for all staff (at an additional cost of £528,000) as shown in Appendix 3. The Authority is asked to consider its preference for the level of pay award inflation to be included in the MTFP for 2024/25. Officer's recommendation is to make provision at 4%.

- 4.2.2 The MTFP currently provides 2.00% price inflation on goods and services in 2024/25 onwards in line with the Bank of England's target. Each 1% increase in prices is equivalent to £126,000. We are working with budget managers and with the procurement team to assess the level of indexation on our major contracts and understand the likely impact of inflation on our costs for 2023/24 and 2024/25. The Authority is asked to consider its preference for the level of

non-pay inflation to be included in the MTFP for 2024/25. Officer's recommendation is that it should be increased to 3% but continue to be held centrally as in 2023/24.

4.2.3 To provide Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with flexibility in managing budget in-year there is a Corporate Contingency included in the Revenue Budget and MTFP. This is set at £544,000 for 2024/25 and includes £181,000 relating to the centrally held inflation provision for 2023/24. This balance will be reviewed as part of the budget setting process.

4.3 **Emerging Pressures**

4.3.1 Emerging pressures have been identified through the financial position reported to Policy & Resources Panel in July and subsequent budget monitoring. However for the purposes of this report we have assumed that these will be resolved and will not place additional pressure on the 2024/25 budget.

4.4 **Capital Strategy**

4.4.1 The 5 year Capital programme is being reviewed and this will be completed through the Star Chamber process. The key threats and opportunities from a financial perspective identified so far include:

- Opportunities:
 - Potential to reduce / defer replacement of light fleet.
 - Potential to adopt alternative approaches to achieving management of contaminants in Day Crewed and On-Call Fire Stations, thereby reducing cost.
 - Slippage of capital programme in 2023/24 reducing the need to borrow and therefore revenue costs in 2024/25.
 - Reprofiling of remaining estates capital programme over a longer period e.g. 10 years rather than 5 years.
 - Use of Business Rates Pool Reserve to fund Capital Programme thereby reducing need to borrow (it is important to note that current balance of c£1.0m will only become available to spend once billing authorities' accounts for 2020/21 – 2022/23 are audited).

- Threats:
 - Significant inflation on estates capital projects that cannot be managed out through value engineering.
 - Addition of new projects e.g. Fort Road.
 - increase in borrowing costs due to rise in PWLB rates.

The view at this stage is that the overall cost of the capital programme and its revenue implications are likely to increase over the 5 years of the MTFP. Further work especially on profiling is required to establish the revenue impact for 2024/25.

4.5 **Reserves and Balances**

- 4.5.1 Reserves and balances are held in accordance with the Authority's agreed policy. The planned use of reserves and balances will be reviewed as part of the service planning process in light of the savings requirement, any changes to the Capital Strategy, the outcome of grant funding bids to Government and the need to fund the costs of up-front investment to support the delivery of savings proposals.
- 4.5.2 The level of reserves held is expected to reduce significantly over the next five years from £14.6m at the beginning of 2023/24 to £4.6m by 2027/28 comprising primarily an unallocated risk provision of £2.4m and other reserve balances of £2.2m. This position will be affected if it is necessary for the Authority to use its balances to fund spending pressures in 2023/24 or to balance its budget in 2024/25. The continued use of reserves to fund in year pressures or to balance its revenue budget is not sustainable.
- 4.5.3 The General Reserve balance is forecast to be £1.875m at the end of 2023/24, which is 4.16% of the 2023/24 revenue budget. This is below the Authority's policy minimum of 5%. The current MTFP includes provision to return it to its policy minimum level by 2025/26.

4.6 Risks

- 4.6.1 There is a range of risks that have the potential to impact on the Authority's ability to deliver its budget plans over the medium term to which Members must give consideration, primarily:
- Our ability to identify and deliver the savings required to balance the budget over the medium term;
 - The significant costs likely to arise from the remedy to the successful legal challenge to the transitional arrangements for the FPS 2015 (increased employers contributions, compensation and administrative costs) and a number of other pensions cases, and a lack of clarity on whether the Government will fund those costs;
 - Increased reliance on borrowing to fund future capital investment from 2023/24 onwards and the resulting impact on the revenue budget;
 - Lack of clarity about the financial impact of the national Emergency Service's Mobile Communication Programme;
 - The potential for pay awards to exceed the provision in the budget;
 - The potential for non-pay inflation to exceed the provision made in the revenue budget and the capital programme;
 - Uncertainty about future governance and funding including:
 - the last year of the current three-year Comprehensive Spending Review and the period from 2025/26 onwards
 - the impact of any changes to the funding formula
 - for the impact of any changes to the business rates system
 - The outcome of national elections expected in 2024 and any change to policy or funding for the fire service;
 - The impact of local growth and additional housing, road and commercial risks;

- Any further development of local devolution proposals;
- the outcomes of the White Paper, including the potential role of Police & Crime Commissioners and any impacts locally to fire service governance in Sussex;
- Outcomes for the fire service nationally and locally from the HMICFRS inspection process including the ongoing process of cultural change and strengthening of inclusion and diversity;
- The impact of the Building and Fire Safety Acts on fire service responsibilities and the resultant cost of compliance/delivery;
- The financial implications of climate change both through service delivery (response to extreme weather events) and the need to meet the national target for net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

4.7 **Financing**

Council Tax Increase

4.7.1 It is assumed the Authority will increase council tax by 2.99% in 2024/25.

4.7.2 There is no commitment to extend the flexibility to increase council tax by the higher of 2.99% or £5, as granted in 2023/24. An increase of £5 equates to 4.79% and this would result in an additional £568,676 in 2024/25. The Authority is asked to consider its policy preferences for Council Tax should the flexibility be extended to 2024/25. The Authority and the fire sector nationally continue to lobby for the £5 flexibility to be extended to 2024/25 allowing local decisions to be made on funding based on risk.

Council Tax Base

4.7.3 In the MTFP, we have assumed that growth in Council Tax base will be 1.00% year on year from 2024/25. There is limited information from billing authorities currently and it is possible that the current economic conditions and impact on households may lead to further proposals for changes to Local Council Tax Reduction Schemes (LCTRS) which would counterbalance any increase in taxbase above the current forecast. Eastbourne and Wealden are both reviewing their LCTRS. For that reason we have not proposed any change to the current forecast.

Council Tax and Business Rates Collection Funds

4.7.4 At this early stage we do not have sufficient information to assess collection rates for 2023/24 and the impact on the collection fund for 2023/24 but given the current economic conditions we have assumed a small deficit of £0.2m. We are working with the billing authorities and other major preceptors in East Sussex to improve financial monitoring and forecasting.

Business Rates

4.7.5 Business rates income is updated to reflect the latest assessment of 2023/24 income and the planning assumption that Settlement Funding Assessment will

increase by 6.9%. We have assumed that S31 Business Rate grant will continue into 2024/25 with an increase of 6.9%.

4.8 **Savings Plans and Efficiency Strategy**

4.8.1 Between 2010/11 and 2022/23 the Authority has made savings of approximately £11.2m. In 2017 the Authority determined to take a more holistic and strategic approach to delivering efficiencies that moved beyond previous approaches that had focussed on delivering savings necessary to balance the revenue budget. Officers remain committed to delivering on this approach, but it is clear that the enabling activities, for example CRM, Firewatch and Business Intelligence projects, as well as partnership projects such as Integrated Transport Function (ITF) have required increased investment and longer delivery times to put in place. Alongside delivery activity SLT and project boards continue work to identify and deliver improved return on investment and increased cashable efficiencies.

The MTFP presented in February 2023 indicated the need to make savings of £721,000 to balance the budget for 2024/25. Tranches 1-3 were identified and targeted to deliver savings of £923,000 as follows:

Tranche 1	£185,000	Remove 3 RDSO posts
Tranche 2	£108,000	Remove on-call at Lewes & Crowborough and increase wholtime crewing from 9 to 10
Tranche 3	£630,000	Structural review & related ways of working, Reduction of Estate and Departmental savings (non-staff related)

There is a high degree of confidence that Tranches 1 and 2 will deliver the target savings of £293,000. However, at this stage it is too early to say with confidence the £630,000 targeted savings from Tranche 3 will be fully delivered by April 2024.

4.8.2 The 2024/25 savings requirement now stands at £1,502,000, before any decision about increases to further inflation provision for 2024/25, as shown in Appendix 2. Increasing pay and non-pay inflation to 4% and 3% respectively increases the savings requirement to £2,145,000 as shown in Appendix 3.

At the Fire Authority meeting in February 2023, it was agreed that any residual shortfall in the MTFP would be reconciled through a refreshed set of Tranche 4 proposals. This refreshed set of proposals builds on those reported to the Fire Authority June 2023.

The list of potential savings options for 2024/25 now includes:

- Deferral of planned WT FF trainee course (c £175,000 one-off);
- A review of planned revenue investments in IT and People Strategies – initial work through Strategic Change Board indicates that this is likely to involve recycling of funding to other priority projects, thereby mitigation pressures, rather than delivering savings;

- Reduction in Workforce Transition budget – to date less than £100,000 in ongoing spend has been committed and therefore a one-off reduction of up to £200,000 may be possible, but this is dependent on the progress of the work on culture and the impact of one-off costs from Tranche 3 proposals;
- Vacancy management (c£250,000 one-off) based on an initial assessment of posts currently vacant that could be held vacant pending the outcome / full implementation of Tranche 3;
- I&E reserve removal of planned top-up in 2024/25 (£200,000 one-off);
- East option 1: Bohemia Road and The Ridge run as a single watch on 2/2/4 (-4 Watch Managers) (c£263,000 ongoing) or East Option 2: Self-rostering at The Ridge only (-4 Firefighters) (c£212,000 ongoing).

The total potential savings all tranches equals up to £1.186m on-going and up to £0.825m one-off.

In addition the level of contingency and non-pay inflation provision can be reviewed once the outcomes from Star Chamber are known. The levels of reserves and balances held will also be reviewed.

In the context of the 5 year MTFP any one off savings will need to be replaced with ongoing savings in future years in order to ensure the budget can be balanced over the medium term.

Officers are also considering the removal of top up funding for protection (c£300,000 over 3 years), this removes local subsidy for Protection Surge Grant and will increase the amount of uncommitted funding in the Business Rates Pool Reserve to fund the Capital Programme (see 4.4).

- 4.8.3 Proposals will be developed through the budget setting and service planning process and reviewed for impact and deliverability through Star Chambers before presentation to SLT in November. These proposals will be reported to the Authority in December 2023 and February 2024 for review and approval.

Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/24 - 2027/28

INCREASE COUNCIL TAX BY £5 IN 2023/24

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Gross Revenue Service Budget	45,881	45,358	45,831	46,804	47,689
Less					
Specific grants	(2,236)	(2,205)	(2,157)	(2,109)	(2,109)
Other income	(236)	(244)	(249)	(253)	(257)
Total income	(2,472)	(2,449)	(2,406)	(2,362)	(2,366)
Net Service Budget	43,408	42,908	43,426	44,441	45,323
Capital financing costs less interest receivable	751	1,026	1,337	1,670	1,727
Capital expenditure from the Revenue Account	0	0	0	0	0
Transferred from reserves	(1,062)	(211)	(5)	(5)	(5)
Transferred to reserves	1,961	2,944	3,192	3,592	3,842
Total Net Expenditure	45,058	46,667	47,950	49,699	50,887
Net Budget brought forward	41,766	45,058	46,667	47,950	49,699
Unavoidable cost pressures					
Pay inflation	605	647	649	657	670
Price inflation	246	255	259	264	270
Total inflation	852	903	908	921	940
Changes in Capital Financing	15	225	261	293	57
Budget commitments	4,124	941	21	532	191
Savings approved	(1,295)	(1,095)	92	3	0
Reserve Funding	(404)	636	0	0	0
Total Net Expenditure	45,058	46,667	47,950	49,699	50,887
Sources of Funding	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Locally Retained Business Rates	2,397	2,529	2,580	2,631	2,684
Business Rate Top Up	5,379	5,670	5,783	5,899	6,017
Business Rates Baseline	7,776	8,199	8,363	8,530	8,701
Revenue Support Grant	3,662	3,863	3,940	4,019	4,099
Service Grant Allocation	408	301	307	313	319
Settlement Funding Assessment	11,846	12,363	12,610	12,862	13,120
Section 31 Grant Business Rates adjustment	2,063	2,165	2,208	2,252	2,298
Collection Fund (Deficit) / Surplus	0	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)
Release of S31 Reserve					
Covid-19 Collection Fund Deficit 75% compensation CT & BR	56	0	0	0	0
Collection Fund (Deficit) / Surplus (Adjusted)	56	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)
local council tax support grant					
Council Tax Requirement	31,093	32,339	33,313	34,315	35,347
Total Resources Available	45,058	46,667	47,932	49,230	50,564
Additional Savings Required / (surplus)	(0)	0	18	468	323
Additional Savings Required - Lower Range			222	880	947

The MTFP position for 2024/25 assumes £721,000 savings will be delivered through Tranches 1-4

Illustrative update for 2024/25 Revenue Budget planning

	2024/25
	£'000
Net Existing Budget Requirement (February 2023 MTFP)	46,667
New Pressures:	
Wholetime - modelled to include Grey book pay award, with 2% for 2024/25	650
Control Room- modelled to include Grey book pay award, with 2% for 2024/25	9
Principal Officers - modelled to include Gold book pay award with 4% for 2023/24 and 2% for 2024/25	23
Support Staff - modelled to include 6% for 2023/24 and 2% for 2024/25	235
On-call - modelled to include Grey book pay award, with 2% for 2024/25	244
Net Additional Pressures	1,162
New Savings:	
IRMP	(106)
Net Additional Savings	(106)
Refreshed MTFP Net Budget Requirement	47,723
Sources of Funding (February 2023 MTFP)	46,667
Additional funding:	
Business Rates Baseline	161
Revenue Support Grant	51
Service Grant	13
S31 Grant Business Rates Adjustment	50
Additional Funding	275
Refreshed MTFP Net Budget Requirement	46,942
Additional Savings required	781
Existing February 2023 MTFP Savings Requirement	721
Refreshed MTFP Forecast Savings Requirement	1,502

Illustrative update for 2024/25 Revenue Budget planning – Additional Inflationary Pressures

	2024/25		2024/25
	£'000	£'000	£'000
	As Appendix 2	Additional Inflationary Pressures	Revised
Net Existing Budget Requirement (February 2023 MTFP)	46,667		46,667
New Pressures:			
Wholetime	650	312	962
Control Room	9	3	12
Principal Officers	23	4	27
Support Staff	235	153	388
On-call	244	45	289
Non-pay inflation		126	126
Net Additional Pressures	1,162	643	1,805
New Savings			
IRMP	(106)		(106)
Net Additional Savings	(106)	0	(106)
Refreshed MTFP Net Budget Requirement	47,723	643	48,472
Sources of Funding (February 2023 MTFP)	46,667		46,667
Additional funding:			
Business Rates Baseline	161		161
Revenue Support Grant	51		51
Service Grant	13		13
S31 Grant Business Rates Adjustment	50		50
Additional Funding	275	0	275
Refreshed MTFP Net Budget Requirement	46,942	0	46,942
Additional Savings required	781	643	1,424
Existing February 2023 MTFP Savings Requirement	721		721
Refreshed MTFP Forecast Savings Requirement	1,502	643	2,145

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Meeting: Fire Authority

Date: 7 September 2023

Title of Report: Financial Regulations Update

By: Duncan Savage, Assistant Director Resources / Treasurer

Lead Officer: Alison Avery, Finance Manager

Background Papers

Review of the Constitution of the Fire Authority – Members Code of Conduct and associated Guidance, Procedure and Officer Delegations, December 2021

Review of the Constitution of the Fire Authority; Agenda Item 129; Meeting of the Fire Authority, 2 September 2021

Finance Improvement Plan (SLT August 2021)

The Constitution of the East Sussex Fire Authority ii) Review of the Constitution of the Fire Authority; Agenda Item 75; Meeting of the Fire Authority, 11 June 2020 iii)

Financial Regulations Update (SLT May 2022)

Appendices:

1. Delegated Financial Management Update
2. Updated Financial Regulations

Implications (please tick ✓ and attach to report)

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

PURPOSE OF REPORT To seek approval for the update of the Authority’s Financial Regulations which form part of its Constitution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY The Service recognises the key role that the finance function plays in delivering against its purpose and commitments especially in making best use of its resources.

A need to review and modernise the Authority’s Constitution was identified in 2020. This review which involved officers as

well as elected members, was organised into several phases with the review of Financial Regulations contained within phase 3.

Senior Leadership also approved the updating of financial regulations, scheme of delegation and other key finance policies and guidance as part of the Finance Improvement Plan in August 2021.

This report sets out the Financial Regulations including the delegated financial management scheme which are updated for legislative changes, post titles and have been redesigned to provide greater transparency and clarity on approval values, approval limits system and reporting requirements to support the vision for greater financial devolution across the Authority.

These revisions are being implemented alongside the delivery of the MBOS Project which will replace the current SAP R3 ERP system with Oracle Fusion as our mainline of business system for finance, procurement and payroll. As part of this project we will be rolling out workflow approvals and moving away from paper-based approvals processes.

The majority of changes to Financial Regulations will be implemented once approved by the Authority. However, changes to approval levels for orders, invoices and contracts will only be implemented once planned financial and procurement governance training has been completed and MBOS goes live (section 4).

A further update to the financial regulations may be required post implementation of MBOS to respond to the requirements of adopting the new functionality within Oracle Fusion and new ways of working which should become clearer in due course.

There are no direct financial implications identified to implementing the updated financial regulations, although it will significantly increase the approval levels the Authority has in place.

RECOMMENDATION

The Authority is recommended to:

- i. approve the update to the Authority's Financial Regulations including the delegated financial management scheme (Appendix 2); and
- ii. approve the approach to implementation as set out section 4 of the report.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The East Sussex Fire Authority ('the Authority') must ensure that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and that public money is properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. While all fire authorities are required to make effective arrangements for the governance of their affairs, including for the delegation of their powers, combined fire authorities differ from local authorities in that they are not required by law to publish a written Constitution.
- 1.2 It has been noted that the arrangements which different fire authorities have put in place for the lawful exercise of their functions differ. Some fire authorities have made arrangements which resemble those of their constituent authorities. Others have adopted lighter-touch arrangements, and/or have chosen not to describe their arrangements as 'a Constitution'. While some authorities publish all of their arrangements in full, other fire authorities publish only parts of the rules and procedures they have put in place to regulate the discharge of their functions.
- 1.3 The ambition of the East Sussex Fire Authority is to ensure that the arrangements it has put in place to carry out its functions lawfully are as detailed and as comprehensive as they need to be, while being as clear and accessible as possible. To this end, the Authority is committed to reviewing its constitutional arrangements regularly to make sure that they are up to date and that they accurately reflect custom and practice as well as any specific legal requirements. The Authority has also made a commitment to publishing its Constitution in full as a means of promoting accountability and engagement.
- 1.4 The Authority's constitutional arrangements have developed over time. A need to review and modernise the Authority's Constitution was identified in 2020, and an officer project group was set up to initiate that review process. The first stage of the review was officer led and involved reviewing the Fire Authority's constitutional arrangements against those at selected other fire authorities, as well as those at its two constituent authorities. This first stage was a light touch review which aimed to identify in the first instance any simple changes which might simplify user access to the Constitution and encourage engagement with the Fire Authority's decision-making. As a result of this first stage, some key proposals were identified which were presented to, and formally approved by, the Authority in June 2020.
- 1.5 As part of stage 2, a Working Group of Members was convened to provide input into proposals to review and update other sections of the Constitution, including substantive changes to the Authority's 'Contract Standing Orders' and 'Rules of Procedure'. The outcomes from this stage of the review were presented to, and formally approved by, the Authority in September 2021.
- 1.6 At the same meeting of the Authority, it was noted that a further stage 3 review would be undertaken to review the Member Code of Conduct and associated guidance to take into account recent emerging practice from Brighton & Hove City Council while building into arrangements reference to the recently published Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services. Input from the Working Group of Members was sought and the outcome of the work subsequently

carried out by officers was presented to, and formally approved by, the Authority in December 2021.

1.7 At the December 2021 meeting of the Authority, it was also noted that it had not been possible to complete the necessary reviews of all sections of the Constitution. A further substantive review - of the Authority's Financial Regulations - would be completed in due course and the outcomes brought to a future meeting of the Authority.

1.8 The review and update of the Authority's Financial Regulations, including scheme of financial management delegations to officers, is now completed and presented in this report.

2 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

2.1 The current financial regulations have been reviewed and refreshed, taking account of the following, and are attached at Appendix 2:

1. Legislative changes
2. Job titles
3. Streamlines categories for approval where relevant
4. Approval levels aligned with Oracle Fusion ERP system
5. Approval values increased for specific delegations and to key postholders
6. Shifts burden of approvals from CFO & CE to other key posts (POs and ADs)
7. Expansion of delegations to posts in readiness for budget devolution
8. Greater clarity on types of budget transfers and respective approvers
9. Greater clarity on contract variations and reporting requirements.

2.2 The update to the scheme of financial management delegations is detailed in section 3 below and summarised in Appendix 1.

2.3 A further update to the financial regulations may be required post implementation of MBOS to respond to the requirements of adopting the new functionality within Oracle Fusion and new ways of working which should become clearer in due course. This includes the mechanics of identifying postholders who will be subject to the wider delegation of financial management responsibilities within the Service and ensuring appropriate training and guidance is provided to achieve success.

3 DELEGATED FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SCHEME – UPDATE (Appendix 1)

3.1 The delegated financial management scheme is summarised in Appendix 1. For each type of delegation, alongside the proposed scheme is the current delegation, and together with the narrative describing the changes below, these should enable a quick comparison and easy understanding of what has been updated.

3.2 **Ex-Gratia payments (Tables 1 & 1.1)**

- 3.2.1 The current delegations require the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive to approve ex-gratia payments (up to £1,000) and Fire Authority for all payments above £1,000.
- 3.2.2 The proposal retains the two categories but increases the approval levels (up to £5,000 and above £5,000).
- 3.2.3 It also expands the delegations to enable Principal Officers (CFO/CE, DCFO, ACFO) after consultation with the AD Resources / Treasurer and the Monitoring Officer to approve ex gratia payments up to £5,000.
- 3.2.4 All payments above £5,000 require Fire Authority approval.
- 3.3 Debt Write-offs (Tables 2 & 2.1)**
- 3.3.1 Currently there are three categories for write-off and the burden for approving debt write-off is on the CFO/CE (up to £1,000), CFO/CE plus ADR/T (£1,000 to £2,000) and above £2,000 requires Fire Authority approval.
- 3.3.2 The proposal streamlines the approval into two categories and increases the approval level (up to £5,000 and above £5,000).
- 3.3.3 It also expands the delegations to enable Principal Officers (CFO/CE, DCFO, ACFO) after consultation with the AD Resources / Treasurer and the Monitoring Officer to approve write-offs up to £5,000.
- 3.3.4 All payments above £5,000 require Fire Authority approval.
- 3.4 Stock Write-offs (Tables 3 & 3.1)**
- 3.4.1 The current and proposed delegations for stock write-offs are the same as debt write-offs detailed above in section 3.3.
- 3.5 Payments in Advance**
- 3.5.1 The current delegations are quite narrow in that except for conferences or similar arrangements, no payments in advance can be made without the agreement of the Assistant Director Resources / Treasurer.
- 3.5.2 The proposal introduces greater flexibility to enable payments in advance of goods or services being received within the following limits: Assistant Director up to £1,000, Finance Manager up to £10,000 and with the agreement of the Assistant Director Resources / Treasurer for £10,000 and over.
- 3.6 Approval Levels (and values) for Purchase Orders, Invoices and Contracts (Tables 4 & 4.1)**
- 3.6.1 There are currently four levels of approval. However, you will note that the approval values at levels 1 & 2 are relatively low (up to £10,000 and £10,001 to £25,000 respectively) and given the price increases since the financial regulations were last written, this means that the bulk (£25,001 and over) of the approvals fall to Principal Officers (CFO/CE, DCFO, ACFO).

3.6.2 The proposal increases the levels of approval from four to five which enables the financial delegation to ESFRS staff who are closer to the spend (e.g. Station Managers up to £20,000 and group managers up to £50,000) and increases the approval value for Assistant Directors (from £25,000 to £250,000) and Principal Officers and ADR/T (from over £25,000 to over £250,000).

3.6.3	Level 1	up to £5,000	Station Managers, Support Staff equivalent and other staff at the discretion of the AD Resources / Treasurer
	Level 2	£5,001 to £20,000	Station Managers, Support Staff equivalent and other staff at the discretion of the AD Resources / Treasurer
	Level 3	£20,001 to £50,000	Group Manager and Support Staff equivalent
	Level 4	£50,001 to £250,000	Assistant Directors
	Level 5	over £250,000	Principal Officers and AD Resources / Treasurer

3.6.4 The proposed 5 levels of approval align with the capability in the new Oracle Fusion ERP system to perform workflow approvals and the value of approvals align broadly to those of East Sussex County Council.

3.6.5 The AD Resources / Treasurer has discretion over the assignment of authority within Levels 1 and 2 to ensure that approvals reflect different structural models and budget management arrangements. This may mean that not all Station Managers and Support Staff equivalents are granted approval at each level and / or for every budget. In some circumstances staff at lower grades may be granted delegated authority where the AD Resources / Treasurer is satisfied that suitable controls are in place.

3.6.6 Work to identify posts and postholders that sit within each of the 5 approval Levels has been completed in order that they can be built into the Oracle Fusion system ready for the target Go Live date of w/c 6 November 2023.

3.7 **Approval Levels for Budget Transfers / Virements (Tables 5.1 & 5.2)**

3.7.1 Whilst the current two categories of budget transfers have been retained (non-staffing and staffing), these have been further developed to provide clarity as follows:

3.7.2 **Non-Staffing (Table 5.1)**

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Permanent transfers | these refer to year on year changes. |
| 2. Non- permanent transfers | these refer to in year changes only. |

3.7.3 The approval requirements are designed to ensure relevant officers are engaged based on whether the budget transfers are:

1. Within a functional area,
2. Between functional areas but **within** Assistant Director remit or
3. Between functional areas **and** Assistant Director remits

3.7.4 The approval values are increased to enable Budget Managers, Finance, and Assistant Directors to approve requests up to £100,000 and Senior Leadership Team over £100,000.

3.7.5 **Staffing and Policy Changes / Restructures (Table 5.2)**

3.7.6 All staffing budget transfers, whether permanent or non-permanent, require SLT approval as now.

3.7.7 In addition, the following is proposed for budget transfers that result in policy change / restructures:

1. £250,000 to £500,000 – these should be reported to Policy and Resources Panel and Fire Authority **retrospectively**.
2. Over £500,000 – these require Policy and Resources Panel and Fire Authority Approval **in advance**.

3.8 **Contract Variations (Table 6)**

3.8.1 The approval and reporting requirements for all contract variations are made clearer depending on the value / percentage of the variation.

3.8.2 The proposal details when Assistant Director or Senior Leadership approval is required and whether this is in advance of any cost increase or retrospectively.

3.8.3 The proposal maintains the percentage variation for approvals required from the Authority from 10%. The proposal also requires approval from the Authority before any cost increases are incurred (previously retrospectively), other than in exceptional circumstances.

4 IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 The majority of changes to Financial Regulations will be implemented once approved by the Authority. However, changes to approval levels for orders, invoices and contracts will only be implemented once planned financial and procurement governance training has been completed and MBOS goes live. If the planned go live for MBOS is delayed from w/c 6 November then the Assistant Director Resources / Treasurer will determine the date at which the changes in approval levels for orders, invoices and contracts will be implemented and this may include a phased approach.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications identified to implementing the updated financial regulations. The training will be delivered by the Finance Team and any additional cost funded by the resources already approved for the MBOS Project. This training is essential in order to ensure that budget managers / approvers fully understand their accountabilities and to minimise the risk of financial loss through fraud, error or mismanagement.

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DELEGATED FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SCHEME UPDATE

(1) Current Approval levels for Ex-Gratia Payments	
Up to £1,000	Over £1,000
Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive	Fire Authority

(1.1) Proposed Approval levels for Ex-gratia Payments	
Up to £5,000	Over £5,000
Principal Officer after consultation with the AD Resources/Treasurer and the Monitoring Officer	Fire Authority

(2) Current Approval Levels for Debt Write off		
Up to £1,000	£1,000 to £2,000	Over £2,000
Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive plus AD Resources/Treasurer	Fire Authority

(2.1) Proposed Approval Levels for Debt Write off	
Up to £5,000	Over £5,000
Principal Officer after consultation with the AD Resources/Treasurer and the Monitoring Officer	Fire Authority

(3) Current Approval Levels for Stock Write off		
Up to £1,000	£1,000 to £2,000	Over £2,000
Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive plus AD Resources/Treasurer	Fire Authority

(3.1) Proposed Approval Levels for Stock Write off	
Up to £5,000	Over £5,000
Principal Officer after consultation with the AD Resources/Treasurer and the Monitoring Officer	Fire Authority

(4) Current Approval Levels for Purchase Orders, Invoices and Contracts			
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
up to £10,000	£10,001 to £25,000	£25,001 to £200,000	Over £200,001
Budget Manager	Head of Service or Service Assistant Director	Principal Officers	Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Fire Officer

(4.1) Proposed Approval Levels for Purchase Orders, Invoices and Contracts				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
up to £5,000	£5,001 - £20,000	£20,001 - £50,000	£50,001 to £250,000	Over £250,000
Station Managers Support Staff equivalent Other staff as determined by the AD Resources/ Treasurer	Station Managers, Support Staff equivalent Other staff as determined by the AD Resources/ Treasurer	Group Managers Head of Service and other Support Staff equivalent	Assistant Directors	Principal Officers AD Resources /Treasurer

(5) Current Approval Levels for Budget Transfers / Virements		
Non staff Permanent up to £25,000	Non staff Permanent £25,001 +	Permanent transfers of staffing
Finance Manager & Budget Manager	Director of Financial Services	SLT

(5.1) Proposed Approval Levels for Approvals for Budget Transfers / Virements – Non Staffing			
	Non staff Permanent and Non-permanent	Non staff Permanent and Non-permanent	Non staff Permanent and Non-permanent
	Up to £25,000	£25,001 to £100,000	Over £100,000
Within a Functional Area	Finance Business Partner & Budget Manager	Finance Manager & Budget Manager	SLT

Between Functional Areas but within Assistant Director Remit	AD & Finance Manager	AD & AD Resources/ Treasurer	SLT
Between Functional Areas and Assistant Director Remits	Both ADs	Both ADs and AD Resources/ Treasurer	SLT

(5.2) Proposed Levels for Budget Transfers / Virements – Staffing and Policy Change / Restructures

Staffing	Policy Change / Restructures	Policy Change / Restructures
All	£250,000 to £500,000	Over £500,000
SLT	Reported to Policy & Resources Panel retrospectively	Requires Policy & Resources Panel approval in advance

(6.1) Proposed Contract Variations

Cumulative Variance	Action
Less than £10,000 or 5%, whichever is the greater	Service Manager to provide retrospective notification to Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer and relevant Assistant Director. Where costs cannot be contained within budget prior approval of Senior Leadership Team is required.
Between £10,000 and £25,000 or 5% and 10%, whichever is the greater	Report to Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer and relevant Assistant Director to seek approval, before any cost increases are incurred. Where costs cannot be contained within budget prior approval of Senior Leadership Team is required.
Between £25,000 and £50,000 or 10% and 15%, whichever is the greater	Report to Senior Leadership Team to seek approval before any cost increases are incurred.
Over £50,000 or 15%, whichever is the greater	Approval required from the Policy & Resources Panel before any cost increases are incurred, other than in exceptional circumstances when the delay incurred would, in the opinion of the Chief Fire Officer & Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer, be impractical in which case this must be reported retrospectively.

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**Section D 3
Financial Regulations**

SECTION D 3

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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Responsible Officer	First Section Issue Date	Section Amended/Updated	Review Date
Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer	September 2023	All	September 2025



Introduction

East Sussex Fire Authority (“the Authority”) has been established as a body corporate in accordance with the Combination Scheme (“The Scheme”), attached to the East Sussex Fire Services Combination Order 1996. Under paragraph 7 of the Scheme, the Authority has appointed a Treasurer, to ensure that proper arrangements are made for the administration of the Authority's financial affairs.

In accordance with the Treasurer's role, these Regulations outline the system of financial administration to be operated by the Authority and its fire & rescue service, East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. All references in these Regulations to the Authority include East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. The role of Treasurer is currently combined with the post of Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer, hence this reference is used throughout the document.

Where reference is made to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) this means those postholders who are full members of SLT i.e. Principal Officers and Assistant Directors acting both collectively and individually.

Local Government Acts and other regulations or codes of practice are quoted in these Financial Regulations where they are applicable in accordance with The Scheme or have been adopted by the Authority.

These Regulations outline the system of financial administration to be operated by the Authority and it shall be the responsibility of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive to ensure that they are observed.

Where the Authority has delegated powers to the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive these shall be exercised in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

Financial Regulations shall be deemed to be part of Standing Orders insofar as they relate to the conduct of business in the meetings of the Authority and its Panels.

The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall consult with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer in respect of any matter within their responsibilities which may affect the finances of the Authority before any provisional or other commitment is made, or before reporting thereon to the Authority and its Panels.

In these Financial Regulations, references to an employee of the Authority shall include any officer of the Authority and references to an officer of the Authority shall include references to an employee of the Authority, unless, in either case, the context requires otherwise.



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1 GENERAL

- 1.1 The purpose of these Financial Regulations is to provide a framework of control, responsibility and accountability for the proper administration of the Authority's financial affairs and to enable the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer and other officers to carry out their statutory duties.
- 1.2 In addition, Financial Regulations have an important role in establishing a sound system of corporate governance for the Authority and supporting its Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Policy. All officers have individual and collective responsibility for ensuring that the fundamental principles of openness, integrity and accountability are established and maintained through compliance with Financial Regulations.
- 1.3 For the purposes of Section 112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer is responsible for the proper administration of the Authority's financial affairs. Furthermore, under Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer is required to report where they believe the Authority or an officer is likely to make a decision or take a course of action which would lead to unlawful expenditure or is likely to cause a loss or deficiency, or where the Authority's expenditure is likely to significantly exceed the available resources. To enable the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer to carry out these duties the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and officers with delegated authority must provide such information as requested within any timescale set for the provision.
- 1.4 The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall be the chief financial adviser to the Authority and shall keep the Authority informed of the financial implications of all new policies and changes of policy.
- 1.5 Copies of notifications from Government Departments including consents, approvals, regulations, circulars, letters, etc. in any way relating to finance shall be forwarded by the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive immediately to the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer
- 1.6 Notices of all meetings and copies of all agenda, reports and minutes of the Fire Authority and its Panels shall be sent to the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer as soon as they are available.
- 1.7 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and members of the Senior Leadership Team shall consult the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer on any matter containing financial implications for either the Revenue Budget or Capital Programme before reporting thereon to the Authority. Any report must, where the Assistant Director



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Resources/Treasurer considers it appropriate, include their views as well as those of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive.

- 1.8 Financial Regulations endorse the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy statement "The Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Financial Administration in Local Government" in respect of the role of the Chief Finance Officer.
- 1.9 Nothing in these Regulations shall prevent the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, in consultation with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer incurring expenditure essential to meet the needs of an emergency or disaster subject to their action and any resulting costs being reported to the Policy & Resources Panel at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.10 All payments to and out of the Fire Service Account shall be made under the direction of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.
- 1.11 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall consult the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer and the Monitoring Officer prior to the Authority entering into any formal legally binding partnership arrangement, including a joint venture or a pooled budget or where the Authority becomes an Accountable Body. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall ensure that adequate and appropriate technical and financial appraisal of all partners is undertaken and ensure that adequate accounting and governance arrangements are established, including internal audit access, in consultation with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.
- 1.12 Where the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive arranges for staff to exercise powers delegated to them in accordance with a scheme of authorisation, a record including appropriate documentation of such authorisation shall be maintained. Those staff to whom authorisation is given shall be responsible for establishing sound systems of internal control and ensuring compliance with Financial Regulations.
- 1.13 These Financial Regulations are subject to Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015 or subsequent) issued by Government under S23 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. Accounts and Audit Regulations establish statutory provisions for accounting arrangements, for audit arrangements and for financial control within the Authority.

2 CONTROL OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION AND SYSTEMS

- 2.1 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and members of the Senior Leadership Team shall conform with and follow the Authority's IT Strategy and will seek advice from the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer on the introduction of new systems and



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processes, especially to ensure that both adequate controls are in place and value for money is achieved.

- 2.2 Any proposal to purchase or develop an IT system (whether hardware, software or communications equipment) shall be the subject of a business case in an approved form and in accordance with the Authority's IT Strategy. In the same manner, such proposals will also be subject to post implementation review.
- 2.3 Minimum standards of control for any new system or development of an existing system that involves a financial operation or produces output that may influence such an operation must be agreed with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.
- 2.4 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall be responsible for the control of systems in operation within the Authority and the security and privacy of data necessary to accord with the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). When accessing systems external to the Authority, the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive will also be responsible for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed.
- 2.5 The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer must be consulted on the development of any financial systems whether computerised or manual at the earliest practicable stage and the approval of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer is required prior to implementing such systems.

3 ACCOUNTING

- 3.1 The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer has overall responsibility for the operation of financial processes within the Authority and shall ensure that adequate controls are in place. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and members of the Senior Leadership Team shall ensure compliance with all financial controls and processes within their areas of the Service.
- 3.2 Accounting systems, financial accounts and supporting records shall be determined by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations and other Accounting Codes and Standards. It shall be the responsibility of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer to ensure that such accounts and systems are kept up to date either through the staff under the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer's control or other appointed agents.
- 3.3 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining full and accurate records sufficient to process the necessary financial and statistical information to enable them each to report fully and accurately on the finances of the Authority.



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3.4 Where it is a requirement of an awarding body, or where the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer requires it, before claims for grant or reimbursement are submitted to any government department or other body, they shall be sent to the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer for examination and certification.

3.5 Bids for external funding shall be prepared in accordance with guidelines issued by, or in consultation with, the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer. Where required, before applications are submitted to any government or other body, they shall be sent to the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer for examination and to confirm that financial implications have been fully assessed.

4 AUDIT

4.1 The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Authority's accounting records and its systems of internal control in accordance with proper practices as set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations. The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall submit an Internal Audit Strategy and Plan and an Internal Audit Report to the Authority annually for approval, following consultation with the Senior Leadership Team.

4.2 The agents for carrying out internal audit shall have the authority to:

- i. enter any Authority premises or land at any reasonable time, without prior notice;
- ii. have access at all times to all records and documents (including email and correspondence) relevant to the business of the Authority as maintained by the Authority or third parties on its behalf including (but not limited to) external contractors and consultants;
- iii. require and receive any information and explanations considered necessary to the audit;
- iv. require any employee or agent of the Authority to account for assets under their control.

4.3 Immediately an employee suspects an irregularity affecting income, expenditure, cash, stores or any other resources of the Authority, including any suspected cases of money laundering, it is the employee's duty to report the matter to the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer. The Assistant Director People Services and the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall agree what action should be taken to investigate and report on the suspected irregularity, including reporting the matter to the police.



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- 4.4 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall be responsible for ensuring that all employees are informed of the Fire Authority's Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy, the Code of Conduct for Employees and the Whistleblowing Policy, and that copies of the appropriate documents are provided to all new employees.

5 BUDGET PROCEDURES

- 5.1 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall jointly prepare annual estimates for both revenue and capital expenditure for presentation to the Authority at such time and for such period as may be determined by the Authority. The estimates shall be in a form agreed by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer and shall be in accordance with any criteria set by the Authority.
- 5.2 Each year, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall report on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy (or otherwise) of the Authority's reserves to the Authority when they consider the budget and setting the Council Tax.
- 5.3 The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall prepare a Medium Term Financial Plan setting out the Authority's government and local funding, directorate budgets and any other known funding, commitments or pressures for the next five years, or such other minimum period as may be prescribed by the Authority.
- 5.4 It is the responsibility of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer to advise the Authority on prudent levels of reserves, having regard to assessment of the financial risks facing the Authority. This duty is set out in Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003. The Authority's Reserves Policy will be reviewed annually and approved when the budget is set.
- 5.5 As a Precepting authority, the Authority shall comply with the statutory timetable for issuing precepts to Billing Authorities. The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer, duly authorised by the Authority, shall issue the appropriate precept to each Billing Authority.
- 5.6 As part of the approved budget, a contingency provision may be approved each year by the Authority. Once approved, allocations will only be made from the contingency provision with the specific approval of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.
- 5.7 Where a scheme of delegated financial management has been developed and approved by the Authority, detailed estimates shall be prepared in accordance with the scheme. These are as set out in Section 21.



6 BUDGETARY CONTROL

6.1 Revenue Budget

- 6.1.1 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall be responsible for managing and directing resources to achieve the objectives of the budget. This will involve monitoring of expenditure and income and the regular review of performance. Where budgets are delegated to members of the Senior Leadership Team and other officers (“budget managers”) they are charged with the same responsibilities.
- 6.1.2 No expenditure shall be incurred which is not covered by an approved budget. If the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, or another officer to whom a budget has been delegated, is of the opinion that a budget will be or is likely to be overspent then they must advise the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer and jointly investigate and put forward to the Policy & Resources Panel a financial proposal for dealing with the overspend.
- 6.1.3 Budget transfers (virements) may be made in accordance with the procedures set out in Section 21.
- 6.1.4 Earmarked income received for a specific purpose may only be spent for the purpose it was received. In addition, the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer must be satisfied that the proposal will not incur additional commitments for future years. Where commitments do arise, the approval of the Policy & Resources Panel must be obtained.
- 6.1.5 During each financial year, the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall submit revenue budget monitoring statements, including forecasts for the full financial year, to the Policy & Resources Panel in a format and at such intervals as the Panel may determine.
- 6.1.6 The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer will report on the outturn of expenditure and income to the Policy & Resources Panel as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year.
- 6.1.7 The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall certify that the Statement of Accounts has been prepared in accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations and that the statement represents fairly the financial position of the Authority.



6.2 Capital Programmes

- 6.2.1 Capital expenditure will be considered as part of the capital programme where items fall within Government or statutory definitions or exceed a minimum threshold value. The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer will periodically review the minimum threshold value below which projects cannot be charged to capital.
- 6.2.2 Capital projects shall be incorporated in a Capital Programme having regard to the Prudential Code for Capital Finance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy. The Capital Programme shall be considered by the Authority, in conjunction with the annual revenue budget process, detailing the phasing of expenditure on such projects and the full year revenue cost associated with each project, and having regard to the level of available resources and the Prudential Code.
- 6.2.3 The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer, will determine the resources available for the Capital Programme, taking into consideration the availability of reserves and balances, funding from other bodies and the affordability of borrowing.
- 6.2.4 No expenditure shall be incurred on capital projects which are not included in the approved capital programme and no contracts entered into or tender accepted unless the Authority is satisfied that the necessary borrowing powers or other resources, and if applicable, Government approvals have been received.
- 6.2.5 The Capital Programme may be varied with the agreement of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer, if no additional unfunded commitments for future years are incurred, in the following circumstances where:
- i. budget provision is transferred to capital expenditure financed from the revenue account (CERA) up to a maximum of 5% of the Revenue Budget in any financial year;
 - ii. where earmarked capital receipts and grants or other specific funding are spent for the purpose they were received, provided that capital resources are enhanced by the amount received and that the capital receipts are received either before the payments are made, or within the same financial year.



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All other variations to the Capital Programme must be approved by the Policy & Resources Panel.

- 6.2.6 The Fire Authority's Capital Programme and Project Management processes must be followed for all Capital Schemes.
- 6.2.7 Any significant alteration to the size, content or specification of a scheme which increases the cost by more than 10% must have the prior approval of the Policy & Resources Panel. Variations within 10% of a scheme's budget can be agreed by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer, where funding has been identified (as outlined in 6.2.5 above) and must be reported to the Policy & Resources Panel in a timely manner.
- 6.2.8 If a tender price is higher than the estimated total cost by 10% of the scheme and would result in the capital provision being exceeded then, with the exception of major Government approved projects, provision may be transferred from one approved project to another with the approval of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, in consultation with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer. If such a transfer is not possible then the approval of the Policy & Resources Panel must be obtained before the tender is accepted.
- 6.2.9 Once a contract for a Capital Scheme has been entered into, the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer and Monitoring Officer must be consulted in relation to any proposed contract variation which would render the contract substantially different in scope and cost and approval sought as set out in the financial limits Section 21.
- 6.2.10 During each financial year, the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer, shall submit capital programme monitoring statements, including forecasts for the full financial year, to the Policy & Resources Panel in a format and at such intervals as the Authority may determine.
- 6.2.11 The final cost of each capital scheme chargeable against the capital programme shall be reported by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer to the Policy & Resources Panel. If the final cost exceeds the provision in the capital programme by 10% or more, as soon as possible after completion together with explanations for variances from the estimated cost.
- 6.2.12 The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer will report on the outturn of capital expenditure to the Policy & Resources Panel as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year.



6.3 Personnel Budget

- 6.3.1 Within the total financial estimate provision approved by the Authority, the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall be entitled to vary the numbers and composition of staffing in order to meet service requirements provided such variations do not commit the Authority to increased expenditure in future years.
- 6.3.2 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive must adhere to all approved personnel policies and consider all Government guidance which relate to human resources, personnel management and training.
- 6.3.3 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall ensure that personnel information is maintained in a form necessary to comply with the Authority's Human Resource Management and related personnel policies and practices and to ensure that any system(s) used to process personnel data or remunerations is properly maintained in accordance with these Financial Regulations.

7 ORDERS FOR SUPPLIES, WORKS AND SERVICES

- 7.1 Official purchase orders in a form agreed with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall be issued for all supplies, works and services required by the Authority except:
- i. Purchases made via purchase card and in compliance with the purchase card user policy;
 - ii. Items of a minor nature paid for via petty cash; and
 - iii. VAT only invoices.
- 7.2 Official purchase orders must not be issued for purchases of a private nature for employees.
- 7.3 It is the responsibility of all managers to ensure that the most favourable terms for price, delivery and quality have been obtained having regard to the Authority's Procurement Strategy, Procurement Standing Orders and any other policies or manual notes regarding procurement.
- 7.4 The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall maintain a list of all officers authorised to approve purchase orders and invoices in line with the Financial Limits set out in Section 21 of the Financial Regulations.
- 7.5 In the case of urgency, oral orders may be given provided they are recorded by prompt completion of an official purchase order.



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- 7.6 Orders, which shall be serially numbered, shall indicate clearly the nature and quantity of the supplies, works or services to be supplied and details of agreed or estimated prices, relevant discounts and delivery terms. When the account has been passed for payment the order shall be marked accordingly.
- 7.7 Where orders are to be transmitted electronically, the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall approve the necessary arrangements made to safeguard the interests of the Authority.
- 7.8 Where orders are by purchase cards, the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall approve the necessary arrangements made to safeguard the interests of the Authority.

8 CONTRACTS

- 8.1 All contracts and agreements entered into shall comply with European Commission Directives and United Kingdom Legislation relating to public procurement, conform to the Authority's Procurement Standing Orders, and must be covered by an approved budget. If there is no appropriate standard form, the officer responsible for the contract or agreement shall ensure that a form suitable for the Authority's purpose is used.
- 8.2 Prior to the letting of a contract the relevant Director or Assistant Director shall ensure that an adequate technical and financial appraisal of the tenderers is undertaken in a form approved by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.
- 8.3 A register of formal contracts entered into and a record of payments made thereunder together with details of the final account and certificate of completion shall be kept in a form approved by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer for all contracts valued at £5,000 or more.
- 8.4 Where the contract requires that interim and final payments shall be made on certificate, that certificate shall be:
- i. In a form agreed with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.
 - ii. Signed personally by an officer in line with the Financial Limits set out in Financial Regulations
 - iii. Issued in sufficient time to enable payment to be made within the time specified.
- 8.5 Such documents as may be necessary shall be made available to the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer to enable them or their appointed agents, to audit a contract. If contracts are supervised and managed by persons other than officers of the Authority, the agreement with that person (or persons) shall provide that all



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documents relating to a contract shall be available for inspection by officers of the Authority if required.

- 8.6 Where during the currency of a contract valued at £100,000 or more, it becomes apparent that expenditure against the contract will exceed the contract value by £25,000 or 10%, whichever is the greater, other than as a result of a price fluctuation clause, the relevant Director / Assistant Director shall present a full report to the Policy & Resources Panel, as soon as possible. Where a contract period is likely to be exceeded, so as to significantly affect service provision, the relevant Director / Assistant Director shall present a full report to the Policy & Resources Panel, as soon as possible, giving reasons for the delay and making any recommendations as to claims after consultation with the Monitoring Officer and Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.
- 8.7 Any variation to a contract for building or civil engineering work will be authorised in writing by an employee, or, where employed, a consultant, in accordance with the approved scheme of authorisation of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive.
- 8.8 When the final certificate of completion of any contract is issued by the appropriate officer, private architect, engineer or consultant a copy shall be produced to the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer together, if required, with a detailed statement of account and other relevant documents.
- 8.9 Leasing or contract hire arrangements for vehicles, plant or equipment may be undertaken by the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive or other officers with delegated authority provided that the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer is satisfied that the method of finance is appropriate for the asset concerned and that the best terms available have been secured.

9 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

- 9.1 All payments for supplies works and services should be supported by an invoice or proper account. An authorised officer will check these in the directorate concerned before certification. Payments in advance of receipt of goods or services can be made within financial limits detailed in Section 21.

Certification by authorised officers means:

- i. That the expenditure has been properly incurred, that there is relevant budget provision or other authority to spend; and that payment is lawful and in accordance with the Authority's policy and instructions and complies with the Authority's Standing Orders and other regulations.



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- ii. That the supplies, works and services have been received or carried out, examined as to quantity and quality and approved.
 - iii. That appropriate entries have been made in inventories or stores records.
 - iv. That the prices, discounts and other allowances are correct.
 - v. That the account is arithmetically correct in accordance with the procedures issued by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.
 - vi. That the account has not previously been paid.
- 9.2 All payments shall be made under arrangements agreed with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.
- 9.3 The authorised officer shall not be the person who ordered or received the supplies and no officer shall certify an invoice or claim for reimbursement of expenditure to themselves. The officer checking the correctness of an invoice shall not also authorise its payment.
- 9.4 Where payment of accounts by electronic means is proposed, the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer must approve the system and certification procedures.
- 9.5 Where payment of accounts is by purchase cards, the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer must approve the system and certification procedures.
- 9.6 Where invoices are paid and retained under a delegated financial management scheme, it shall be the responsibility of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive to ensure that invoices, vouchers and other records are retained and stored in a secure way and are readily available for inspection by authorised persons.
- 10 PAYMENT OF SALARIES, WAGES AND PENSIONS**
- 10.1 The payment of all salaries, wages, pensions, compensation and other emoluments to all employees or former employees shall be made under arrangements approved by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.
- 10.2 Managers shall notify the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer, or their appointed agents, as soon as they are aware and in such a form as the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer may require of all matters affecting such payments, in particular:
- i. Appointments, resignations, retirements, suspensions, dismissals, secondments or other transfers.
 - ii. Absences from duty for sickness or other reason, apart from paid leave.
 - iii. Changes in remuneration, including normal increments and pay awards and agreements of general application.



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- iv. Information necessary to maintain records of service for, inter alia, superannuation, income tax, and national insurance.
- 10.3 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall ensure that the appointment of all employees is made in accordance with the policies of the Authority, the approved budgets, grades and rates of pay.
- 10.4 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall maintain a record of authorised officers, and their signatures, able to certify relevant pay documents and time records on the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive's behalf in a form agreed with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer. Copies of the complete record shall be deposited with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.

11 INCOME

- 11.1 The arrangements for the collection of and accounting for, all income due to the Authority shall be agreed with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.. An officer authorised to raise an account shall not be permitted to amend or cancel accounts raised by that officer.
- 11.2 The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall be notified promptly of all money due to the Authority including details of contracts, leases or agreements and shall make suitable arrangements for:
- i. The recording of all sums due to the Authority.
 - ii. The prompt collection, custody and deposit of all cash due.
- 11.3 Any amounts received by officers, or the Authority's appointed agents, shall be banked intact, in accordance with any timescales and arrangements approved by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer. Personal cheques may not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Authority. On handing cash to another person, all officers shall ensure that they receive a suitable written acknowledgement.
- 11.4 Officers, or the appointed agents, banking money must enter on the paying-in-slip the amount of each cheque and sufficient information to identify the transaction and enter on the reverse of each cheque sufficient detail to identify the service area or establishment.
- 11.5 Every sum received by an officer or the appointed agents, of the Authority shall be acknowledged immediately by the issue of an official receipt, ticket or licence - except in the case of amounts received by cheque - or other arrangement approved by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.



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- 11.6 All receipt forms, books, tickets and other such items shall be ordered and issued by the Authority subject to the arrangements for their control being agreed with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.
- 11.7 No payment to the Authority will be accepted in cash if it exceeds £2,000 and if attempted it should be reported under Regulation 4.3 above.
- 11.8 The write-off of debts may be carried out as detailed in Section 21 financial limits. A record of debts written off shall be maintained by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.
- 11.9 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall, at least once a year, review all fees and charges for supplies, works or services provided by the Authority. The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall be consulted before any proposal is submitted to the Authority for the introduction, revision or implementation of scales of fees and charges for supplies, works and services.

12 BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

- 12.1 The Authority shall approve all banking contract terms and conditions. All other arrangements with the Authority's bankers shall be agreed by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer including:
- i. The authorisation to operate such accounts, including Post Office accounts.
 - ii. Bank accounts for imprest holders and delegated financial management schemes.
 - iii. The provision of credit card / purchase card facilities.
 - iv. The ordering and safe custody of all cheques, including Post Office payment forms.
- 12.2 Cheques drawn on the Authority's main banking accounts, including Post Office accounts, shall bear the facsimile signature of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer or be signed by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer or officers authorised by the Authority. For the purposes of this Financial Regulation, any officer holding or acting up as holder of the following posts shall be deemed to be authorised (CFA 06/2022: Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer, Finance Manager, Principal Accountant Treasury & Taxation (East Sussex County Council), Principal Accountant Financial Accounting (East Sussex County Council). Cheques over the value of £500,000 must be signed by two signatories.



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12.3 Where payments are to be transmitted electronically, the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall approve the necessary arrangements made to safeguard the interests of the Authority.

12.4 All Authority funds shall be banked to the corporate accounts of the Authority or such other accounts in the name of the Authority approved by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer. No other account shall be used for transacting or transferring Authority funds.

13 TREASURY MANAGEMENT, BORROWING AND INVESTMENTS

13.1 Approval of the capital programme by the Authority shall constitute authority to borrow in respect of projects to be financed from loan provided any appropriate guidance from the Government is followed.

13.2 The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall report annually to the Authority and make recommendations on the following:

- i. The overall borrowing limit.
- ii. The short term borrowing limit.
- iii. The maximum proportion of borrowing which may be at variable interest rates.
- iv. Other financial indicators as required by the Prudential Guidance.

13.3 The Authority will authorise the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer to borrow all monies and to arrange the temporary investment of funds within the approved borrowing limit and in accordance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy. Borrowing or lending or investing of monies not within the Treasurer's delegated powers will not be permitted without the approval of the Authority.

13.4 All loans and investments shall be made in the name of the Authority.

13.5 All securities, the property of, or in the name of the Authority or its nominees shall be held in safe custody under arrangements approved by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.

13.6 The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer or the Authority's bankers shall be the Authority's registrar of stocks, bonds and mortgages as appropriate. Proper records of all borrowing of money by the Authority shall be maintained as approved by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.



Section D 3 Financial Regulations

- 13.7 At or before the start of the financial year the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall report to the Fire Authority on the strategy for treasury management it is proposed to adopt for the coming financial year.
- 13.8 The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall report to the Authority by 30 September of the succeeding financial year on the activities of the treasury management operation, the exercise of delegated treasury management and the treasury management relating to the previous financial year.
- 14 SECURITY OF ASSETS**
- 14.1 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall ensure that property security is maintained at all times for all vehicles, buildings, furniture, equipment, stocks, stores, cash, etc. under the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive's control. Maximum limits for cash held shall be agreed with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer and must not be exceeded.
- 14.2 Inventories shall be kept of all items of moveable furniture, equipment, vehicles and plant. Where appropriate, security marking shall be used, in accordance with the appropriate policies. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive in consultation with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall prescribe the value and type of items to be included in an inventory. In consultation with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer, the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall maintain an asset register in such form to record sufficient details to meet the requirements of capital accounting practice.
- 14.3 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive is responsible for the receipt, care, safe custody and issue of stocks and stores. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall supply the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer with such information, as the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer requires in relation to stores for the financial records of the Authority.
- 14.4 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall arrange for periodic independent checks and verification of stocks and recorded stores, at least once a year. The write-off of stocks may be carried out as detailed in Section 21 financial limits. The appropriate record of such actions shall be maintained by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.
- 14.5 Stocks shall generally be maintained at minimum levels consistent with operational requirements. A certificate of the value of stocks held as at 31 March each year shall be provided to the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.



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- 14.6 Where equipment or materials become unusable or obsolete, the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive may arrange for it to be written off in accordance with arrangements agreed with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer. Where equipment or materials have a scrap value or resale value, disposal shall be at the best price obtainable following the procedure for disposal, issued by the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive in consultation with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer. Leased vehicles, plant or equipment may not be disposed of without the prior approval of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer. This Financial Regulation shall not operate to prevent the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive from exercising the powers delegated to them to approve the donation to appropriate causes of time expired appliances and/or equipment that have no material value.
- 14.7 The Authority's property shall not be removed otherwise than in accordance with the ordinary course of business or used otherwise than for the Authority's purpose except in accordance with the specific instructions by the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive.
- 14.8 Keys to safes and similar receptacles must be carried on the person of those responsible at all times. The loss of any such keys must be reported immediately to the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.

15 ESTATES

- 15.1 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall be responsible for maintaining a register of all properties owned by the Authority, recording the location, extent, plan reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable, and purpose for which the property is held.
- 15.2 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall have custody of all title deeds under secure arrangements agreed with the Monitoring Officer and shall supply to the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer and Monitoring Officer all information required by them in accordance with their duties. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive may arrange for the Monitoring Officer to discharge this Regulation.

16 INSURANCES

- 16.1 The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall put in place all necessary insurance cover and negotiate all claims, in consultation with other officers where necessary.
- 16.2 Members of the Senior Leadership Team shall notify the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer immediately of:
- i. all new risks and liabilities which may require to be insured;



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- ii. any alteration which may affect existing insurance;
- iii. any loss, damage, claim or event which might give rise to a claim by or against the Authority;
- iv. any acquisition or disposal of interests in property which involves an amendment to insurance cover.

16.3 All appropriate employees of the Authority shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance.

16.4 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall consult with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer and the Monitoring Officer in respect of the terms of any indemnity which the Authority is requested to give.

16.5 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall ensure that employees, and anyone covered by the Authority's insurances, do not admit to liability or offer to pay compensation that may prejudice the assessment of liability in respect of any insurance claim.

16.6 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive shall co-ordinate and facilitate risk management policies and procedures, and conduct reviews of risk in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.

17 EX-GRATIA PAYMENTS

17.1 Ex-gratia payments may be made as detailed in Section 21 financial limits subject to the Authority being satisfied that there are sufficient powers to make the payment in any particular case. The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall maintain a complete record of ex-gratia payments made.

18 TRAVELLING, SUBSISTENCE, FINANCIAL LOSS AND ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE

18.1 All claims by employees for payment of car allowances shall be submitted to the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer in a form (manual or electronic) and at such intervals as approved by them. Payment of car allowances, and other travelling and subsistence allowances, will be made upon receipt of the appropriate form, duly certified by an authorised officer and to be paid in accordance with arrangements set out in Section 9 (Payment of Accounts) or Section 10 (Payment of Salaries, Wages and Pensions).



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- 18.2 Payment to Members and co-optees of the Authority who are entitled to claim any allowance under the Authority's Member Allowance Scheme shall be made by the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive in accordance with the provisions of the Scheme.
- 18.3 Certification of a claim shall be taken to mean that the journeys were authorised and the expenses properly and necessarily incurred and that the allowances are properly payable by the Authority in accordance with the Member Allowance Scheme or any other policy relating to travel and expenses that the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer shall issue.

19 VOLUNTARY FUNDS

- 19.1 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that all voluntary funds held, where money and/or assets are handled by an employee in the course of their employment or office, which have not been issued by the Authority, are properly administered and that they are audited under arrangements agreed with the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer. Where cash is held in a bank account or building society account or such similar arrangements a record must be maintained accordingly by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer.

20 VALUE ADDED TAX (VAT) AND INCOME TAX

- 20.1 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and members of the Senior Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring the correct financial management of VAT and Income Tax, in respect of both income and expenditure, following guidance issued by the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and members of the Senior Leadership Team should seek financial advice from the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer on any VAT or Income Tax issues particularly where new initiatives for the delivery of services are being considered by the Authority.
- 20.2 The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer is responsible for the Authority's VAT returns and Income Tax to HM Revenue and Customs. All communication with HM Revenue and Customs for the Authority shall be co-ordinated through the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer or a delegated officer.

21 FINANCIAL LIMITS

21.1 Ex-gratia payments may be made following approval as detailed in Table 1 below:

Table 1 - Approval levels for Ex-gratia Payments	
Up to £5,000	Over £5,000
Principal Officer after consultation with the AD Resources/Treasurer and the Monitoring Officer	Fire Authority

21.2 Debt write-off may be actioned following approval as detailed in Table 2 below:

Table 2 - Approval Levels for Debt Write off	
Up to £5,000	Over £5,000
Principal Officer after consultation with the AD Resources/Treasurer and the Monitoring Officer	Fire Authority

21.3 Stock write-off may be actioned following approval as detailed in Table 3 below:

Table 3 - Approval Levels for Stock Write off	
Up to £5,000	Over £5,000
Principal Officer after consultation with the AD Resources/Treasurer and the Monitoring Officer	Fire Authority

21.4 Payments in advance of goods or services being received can be made as follows: Assistant Director up to £1,000, Finance Manager up to £10,000 and with the agreement of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer for £10,000 and over.



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21.5 Purchase Orders, invoices and contracts may be approved as detailed in Table 4 below:

Table 4 - Approval Levels for Purchase Orders, Invoices and Contracts				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
up to £5,000	£5,001 - £20,000	£20,001 - £50,000	£50,001 to £250,000	Over £250,000
Station Managers Support Staff equivalent Other staff as determined by the AD Resources/Treasurer	Station Managers Support Staff equivalent Other staff as determined by the AD Resources/Treasurer	Group Managers Head of Service and other Support Staff equivalent	Assistant Directors	Principal Officers AD Resources /Treasurer

The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer has discretion over the assignment of authority within Levels 1 and 2 to ensure that approvals reflect different structural models and budget management arrangements. This may mean that not all Station Managers and Support Staff equivalents are granted approval at each level and/or for every budget. In some circumstances staff at lower grades may be granted delegated authority where the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer is satisfied that suitable controls are in place.

21.6 All staffing budget transfers (virements), whether permanent (year on year changes) or non-permanent (in year changes only), require SLT approval. Budget transfers that result in a policy change or restructure require the approval of Authority either in advance or retrospectively as detailed in Table 5 below.



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Staffing	Policy Change / Restructures	Policy Change / Restructures
All	£250,000 to £500,000	Over £500,000
SLT	Reported to Policy & Resources Panel retrospectively	Requires Policy & Resources Panel approval in advance

21.7 Budget transfers (virements) for non-staffing budget headings either on a permanent (year on year changes) or non-permanent (in year changes only) basis may be approved as detailed in Table 6 below.

The approval requirements are designed to ensure relevant officers are engaged based on whether the budget transfers are:

1. Within a functional area;
2. Between functional areas but **within** Assistant Director remit; or
3. Between functional areas **and** Assistant Director remits.

	Non staff	Non staff	Non staff
	Permanent and Non-permanent	Permanent and Non-permanent	Permanent and Non-permanent
	Up to £25,000	£25,001 to £100,000	Over £100,000
Within a Functional Area	Finance Business Partner & Budget Manager	Finance Manager & Budget Manager	SLT
Between Functional Areas but within Assistant Director Remit	AD & Finance Manager	AD & AD Resources/ Treasurer	SLT



**Section D 3
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Between Functional Areas and Assistant Director Remits	Both ADs	Both ADs and AD Resources/ Treasurer	SLT
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21.8 The approval and reporting requirements for in year contract variations are as detailed in Table 7 below:

Table 7 - Contract Variations	
Cumulative Variance	Action
Less than £10,000 or 5%, whichever is the greater	Service Manager to provide retrospective notification to Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer and relevant Assistant Director Where costs cannot be contained within budget prior approval of Senior Leadership Team is required.
Between £10,000 and £25,000 or 5% and 10%, whichever is the greater	Report to Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer and relevant Assistant Director to seek approval, before any cost increases are incurred. Where costs cannot be contained within budget prior approval of Senior Leadership Team is required.
Between £25,000 and £50,000 or 10% and 15%, whichever is the greater	Report to Senior Leadership Team to seek approval before any cost increases are incurred.
Over £50,000 or 15%, whichever is the greater	Approval required from the Policy & Resources Panel before any cost increases are incurred, other than in exceptional circumstances when the delay incurred would, in the opinion of the Chief Fire Officer & Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer, be impractical in which case this must be reported retrospectively.

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EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Date: 7 September 2023

Title of Report: 2022/23 Annual Performance Outcome Report

By: Liz Ridley, Assistant Director – Planning & Improvement

Lead Officers: Sharon Milner, Planning & Intelligence Manager
 Marcus Whiting, Performance Analyst

Lead Member: Cllr Nuala Geary

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

1. Annual Performance Outcome Report 2022/23
2. Every Contact Counts 2022-2023

Implications (please tick ✓ and attach to report)

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

PURPOSE OF REPORT To present the annual performance results for 2022/23.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY This report provides the Fire Authority with details of East Sussex Fire Rescue Service’s performance for the period April – March 2022/23.

The year end results for 2022/23 demonstrate an improvement of performance across a number of areas with twelve indicators showing an improvement in performance against the previous year and nine showing a decline.

RECOMMENDATION The Fire Authority is asked to consider the performance results and progress towards achieving the Service’s purpose and commitments as contained in Appendix 1.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report summarises the 2022/23 performance outcomes for East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. The report aims to provide a single view of information which

allows Elected Members, Auditors and members of the public to hold the Service's senior managers and staff to account in terms of the provision and performance of their Fire & Rescue Service for 2022/23.

- 1.2 The report provides a comparison against last year's performance, whether the target was achieved, where one has been set, and the direction of travel from the previous year for example, improved, stayed the same or declined.
- 1.3 East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service results are compared against the results for Fire and Rescue Services in the rest of England on a scale of best to worst performance based on the 2021/22 national data sets which are the latest available.
- 1.4 The report highlights an increase in performance against the previous year with 57% of indicators showing an improvement or have met the target as opposed to 50% the previous year. Although due to the ongoing COVID restrictions in 2021/22 only 16 indicators were reported against at this time, against 21 in the latest year.

2 MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 The Fire Authority set five priority areas for the Service to concentrate on. This report provides detailed commentary against those areas.

The Fire Authority priorities areas are:

1. Reducing accidental dwelling fires.
2. Undertake 10,000 home safety visits of which 95% to be delivered to vulnerable members of our community.
3. Reducing sickness.
4. Reducing attendance at false alarm calls.
5. Increasing inspections in high-risk premises.

2.2 Priority 1 - Reducing accidental dwelling fires

- 2.2.1 Accidental dwelling fires have been a priority area for the Service for a number of years. Accidental dwelling fires have reduced by 52.5% from 2000/01 overall and have plateaued in more recent years. However, in 2022/23 ESFRS recorded the lowest number of accidental dwelling fires ever with 412. This is a further 4.8% reduction against the previous year when 433 were reported. 55% (53% in previous year) of the accidental dwelling fires occurred in the kitchen, with cooking appliances responsible for 178 (78%) of these.

2.3 Priority 2 - Undertake 10,000 home safety visits (HSVs) of which 95% to be delivered to vulnerable members of our community

- 2.3.1 In 2022/23 the community safety teams and operational crews undertook 10,483 home safety visits. This has exceeded the Service target of 10,000 in the year and is 8% more than the 9,461 undertaken in the previous year. 92.9% of these were to vulnerable members of our community which is a small decline from 2021/22 when 95.1% were provided (for vulnerable members of our community).

2.4 **Priority 3 - Reducing the number of absences of our employees due to sickness**

2.4.1 Sickness absence is another priority area for the Service and performance has slightly improved against the previous year, with 10.2 shifts lost against 10.5 in 2021/22.

2.4.2 Of the 10.2 shifts lost per employee at the end of 2022/23 54.6% of sickness is classed as Long Term (more than 28 days) previously 70%, 19.4% of sickness is classed as Medium Term (8 to 27 days) previously 12% and 26.0% of sickness is classed as Short Term (previously 18%). By the end of 2022/23 Wholetime and Logistics Control support had lost 10.4 shifts per employee, and support staff 8.8.

2.4.3 The Service has continued to focus on sickness absence with the HR Strategic Committee and the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee undertaking a deeper review of sickness at ESFRS. The cause of absence still fluctuates between staff groups but the two main categories of reported sickness are musculoskeletal related (40% of reported sickness) and mental health related (40% of reported sickness). This situation continues to be affected by the increases in NHS waiting times that staff are experiencing and particularly the lack of availability of support for mental health issues / referrals.

2.4.4 It is suspected that the ageing workforce is now starting to impact sickness levels. However, as the majority of the Service's operational workforce can still retire aged 50-55 the impact may become much more significant in future years when the retirement age of operational staff is 60. The Service has also seen an increase in complex cases, whereby people are presenting with multiple or simultaneous issues.

2.4.5 Actions to improve sickness levels continue as follows:

- The HR team have regular meetings with the Occupational Health team to ensure patterns and emerging trends are realised and acted upon.
- The Service has moved to a new provider for physiotherapy and will monitor and evaluate the impact of this.
- The Service has invested in mental health first aiders (MHFAs).
- There has been a renewed provision of manual handling training to reduce the number of injuries.
- There are quarterly complex case meetings to address and support individuals affected.
- A pilot of the Benenden Health care scheme to support staff has been approved.

2.5 **Priority 4 - Reducing attendance at false alarms**

2.5.1 44.0% (4,601) of our total incidents in 2022/23 were to false alarms of these 31.2% (3,266) were from automatic fire detector systems. This is an improvement against the previous year as 233 less incidents were attended from automatic fire detector systems (previously 3,499).

2.5.2 From 1 April 2022 ESFRS no longer attends Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS) from automatic fire alarms in commercial premises between the hours of 09:00 and

17:00, Monday to Friday. An unwanted fire alarm signal is where an automatic fire alarm (AFA) system activates and initiates a response from the fire service and on attendance it is found to be a false alarm.

2.5.3 The results of this change were monitored throughout 2022/23 and in January 2023 the Scrutiny & Audit Panel agreed to a nil-response to attending low risk commercial premises AFA incidents. The service will continue to attend AFAs at high-risk sites that includes COMAH and heritage sites.

2.5.4 The service will also continue to attend schools and colleges when they are closed over the evenings, weekends and school holiday periods.

2.5.5 A task force has been stood up to implement these changes and will go live later in 2023/24.

2.6 **Priority 5 - Inspections of high risk premises completed**

2.6.1 This priority area was introduced in 2017/18 and deemed critically important following the Grenfell Tower fire on 14 June 2017.

2.6.2 The protection inspection team completed 506 audits and the operational crews 1,523 business safety visits during 2022/23.

2.7 **Compliments and complaints**

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

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

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

2.7.3 There were 36 complaints received in 2022/23, the same as in the previous year. Of the complaints, six were considered justified, two partially justified and seven unjustified. A further twenty-one were logged for recording purposes.

2.7.4 Upon analysis, employee conduct/behaviour were the highest causes for complaints in 2022/23. On a positive note the majority of complaints received were proven to be unjustified after a full investigation.

2.7.5 During the year we received 138 "thank you" letters from various members of the public as opposed to 105 received in the previous year. Compliments are circulated to staff and Members through the service brief on a weekly basis and

cover all aspects of our service provision including home safety visits, incidents attended, school visits, education events etc.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Complaints received	31	36	36
Compliments received	91	105	138

2.7.6 The Scrutiny & Audit Panel had previously requested more detail around compliments that are received in the Service. To support this from April 2022 compliments are collated against the following category headings:

- Incidents – Responding to Emergencies
- Community Safety (Home Safety Visits, Education, Fire bike and Fire cadets for example)
- Volunteers

2.7.7 Further detail regarding compliments can also be found in Appendix 2 Every Contact Counts 2022/23. This impact report gives a flavour of the communications that the Service has received from members of the public and our own staff whilst also highlighting the work undertaken to support our local community in a wide variety of ways.

2.8 The performance outcome summary is set out in Appendix 1 attached as a separate document.

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East Sussex
Fire & Rescue Service

Annual Performance Outcome Report 2022/23

SEPTEMBER 2023

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1. Introduction

This report provides details of East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service's (ESFRS) performance for the period April – March 2022/23.

It provides a transparent, single view of information which allows Elected Members, Auditors and members of the public to hold the Service's senior managers and staff to account in terms of the provision and performance of their Fire & Rescue Service for 2022/23.

Our purpose is, 'to make our communities safer'

Our purpose states what we are here for as a Fire and Rescue Service. It sets out our destination which guides our strategy development.

We have four commitments which describe what we want to achieve for our communities in order to make them safer we will:

Deliver high performing services

Educate our communities

Develop a multi-skilled, safe and valued workforce

Make effective use of our resources

Our Values describe how we expect people to behave when carrying out their work.

- **We are PROUD of the service we provide**
- **We are ACCOUNTABLE for our actions**
- **We show INTEGRITY in our work**
- **We RESPECT our colleagues and members of the community**

2. Summary of Achievement

The table below provides a key summary of our achievement against targets, or where no target is set, our achievement against the previous year's result in our priority areas, and non-priority areas for 2022/23.

Our priority areas for 2022/23 were:

- ✔ **Reducing accidental dwelling fires**
- ✔ **Increasing the number of home safety visits that we complete with the more vulnerable members of our community**
- ✔ **Reducing the number of absences of our employees due to sickness**
- ✔ **Reducing false alarm calls, especially in properties with a previous history of this**
- ✔ **Increasing inspections in high-risk premises**

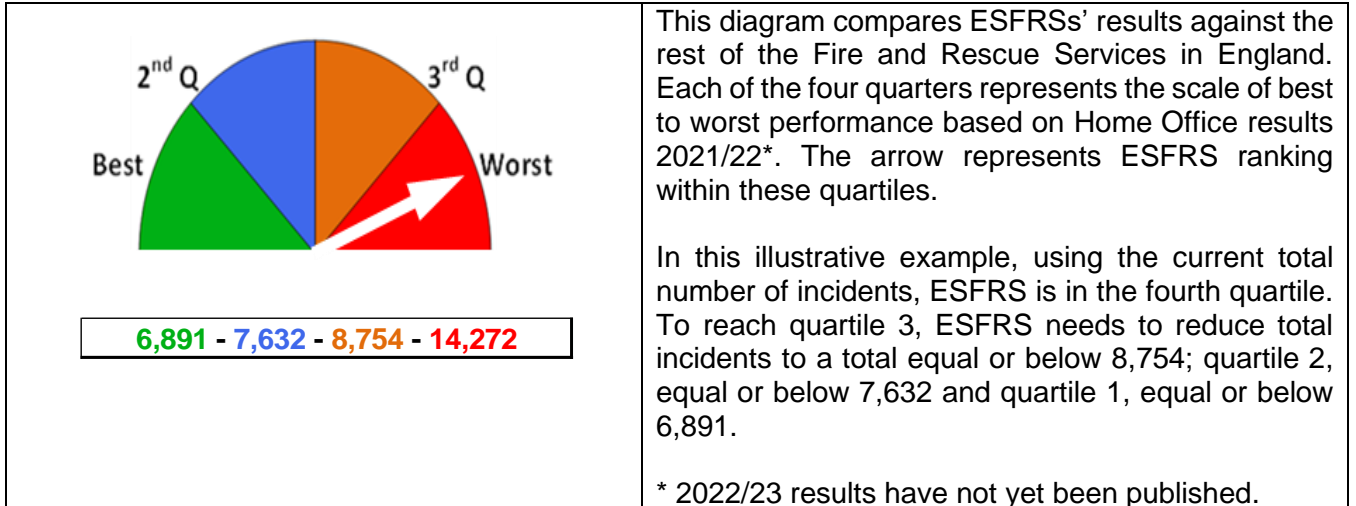
Indicator group	✔ Indicators where the target has been met or performance exceeded the previous year	✘ Indicators where target has not been met or performance declined against the previous year
Priority Areas	5 (83%)	1 (17%)
Non-priority areas	7 (47%)	8 (53%)
All Indicators	12 (57%)	9 (43%)

As can be seen from the above table, in 2022/23, 5 from 6 (83%) of the indicators that support the priority areas have improved in performance; 7 from 15 non-priority areas indicators (47%); and 12 from 21 (57%) of all indicators improved from the previous year.

- ✔ **Achieved**
- ✘ **Not achieved**

3. Performance Results 2022/23

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



Our Purpose: We make our communities safer



4.1 Commitment 1: Delivering high performing services

We will do this by:

Indicator No.	How will we measure performance?	2021/22 Year end result	National Quartile Position 2021/22	Year end result 2022/23	Direction of travel from Year end 2021/22 result
8	Total number of incidents attended	10,562	<p>6,891 - 7,632 - 8,754 - 14,272</p>	10,452	Improved
9	Number of deaths in primary fires	4	<p>2 - 3 - 5 - 10</p>	2	Improved
10	Number of injuries in primary fires	13	<p>24 - 35 - 44 - 60</p>	27	Declined
1 Priority	No of accidental dwelling fires	433	<p>296 - 332 - 367 - 486</p>	412	Improved
11	Number of primary fires	967	<p>812 - 922 - 1,048 - 1,600</p>	1,012	Declined
12	Number of deliberate fires	664	<p>484 - 601 - 1,122 - 6,558</p>	724	Declined
13	No of Industrial and Commercial fires	114	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	125	Declined
14	70% of the first arriving appliances at any incident from an 'On-Station response' within 10 minutes	77.5%	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	77.6%	Improved
15	70% of the first arriving appliances at any incident from an 'On-Call response' within 15 minutes	73.2%	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	73.5%	Improved

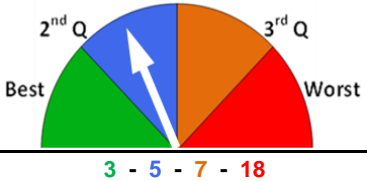
4.2 Commitment 2: Educating our communities

We will do this by:

Indicator No.	How will we measure performance?	2021/22 Year end result	National Quartile Position 2021/22	Year end result 2022/23	Direction of travel from Year end 2021/22 result
2a Priority	% of Home Safety Visits to vulnerable people	95.1%	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	92.9%	Declined Alternative delivery method and face to face
2b Priority	Undertake 10,000 Home Safety Visits	9,461	 <p>2nd Q Best 3rd Q Worst</p> <p>9507 - 5591 - 3428 - 273</p>	10,483	Improved Face to face resumed 19 July 2021
5 Priority	Inspections of high risk premises completed	470	 <p>2nd Q Best 3rd Q Worst</p> <p>880 - 733 - 476 - 100</p>	506	Improved Alternative delivery method / face to face resumed 19 July 2021
17	Business safety audits completed by Station crews	995	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	1,523	Improved Alternative delivery method / face to face resumed 19 July 2021
18	Number of business safety engagement events	27	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	108	Improved Alternative delivery method / face to face resumed 19 July 2021
19	Number of attendees at business safety engagement events	247	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	1,191	Improved Alternative delivery method / face to face resumed 19 July 2021

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

We will do this by:

Indicator No.	How will we measure performance?	2021/22 Year end result	National Quartile Position 2021/22	Year end result 2022/23	Direction of travel from Year end 2021/22 result
3 Priority	The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness not to exceed 7.5 per employee	10.5	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	10.2	Improved
20	Number of RIDDOR incidents	5	 <p>3 - 5 - 7 - 18</p>	8	Declined
21	Number of workplace reported accidents / injuries	149	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	194	Declined

4.4 Commitment 4: Making effective use of our resources

We will do this by:

Indicator No.	How will we measure performance?	2021/22 Year end result	National Quartile Position 2021/22	Year end result 2022/23	Direction of travel from Year end 2021/22 result
4 Priority	A 32% reduction of automatic fire alarms (AFA) from the base year result of 2009/10	-26.4%	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	-31.8%	Improved
22	% of AFA mobilised calls to properties covered by the RRO that were classified as a primary fire	1.0%	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	2.3%	Declined
5	% of accidental dwelling fires confined to room of origin	90.1%	This is an ESFRS indicator only, no National data is available for comparison	90.0%	Declined

5. Detailed Performance Analysis

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

These key indicators include:

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

This analysis has looked at the following:

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

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





5.1 Primary Fires

Performance April-March 2022/23: 1,012 Fires

Increased ✘ by 4.7% (45) since 2021/22 from 967 to 1,012 fires.

Decreased ✔ by 36.0% (569) since the 2009/10 baseline of 1,581.

Main Types of Primary Fires

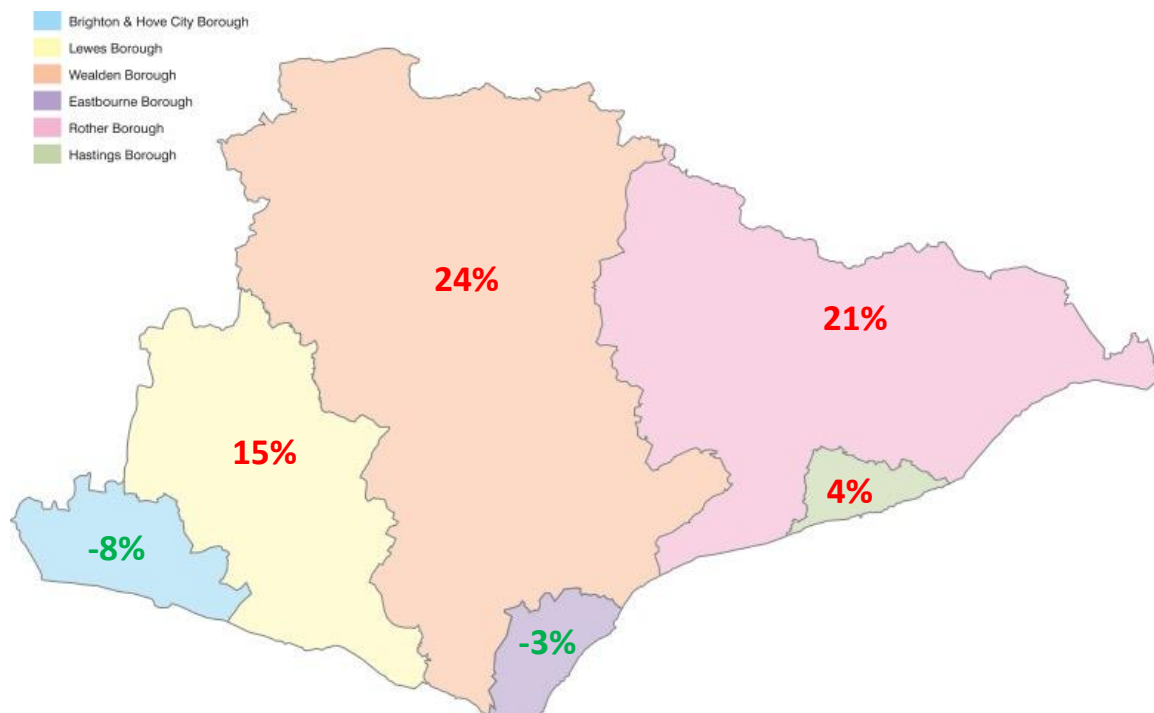
<p>43% (436) Dwelling Fires</p> 	<p>22% (227) Vehicle Fires</p> 	<p>12% (125) Industrial/ Commercial Fires</p> 	<p>22% (224) Other/ Outdoor Fires</p> 
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Main Cause of Fires

22.4% (227) were Deliberate.

77.6% (785) were Accidental or Not known (main causes: Cooking with 121 incidents; Fault in equipment or appliance, 110; Overheating, unknown cause, 108; Faulty fuel supply - electricity, 95; Combustible articles too close to the heat source (or fire), 94; Careless handling, 84; Accumulation of flammable material; 50.

Primary Fires % change from 2021/22 to 2022/23 by Geographical Area



Borough	2021-22	2022-23	% Difference
B&H	333	305	-8%
Hastings	160	167	4%
Wealden	136	168	24%
Eastbourne	125	121	-3%
Lewes	112	129	15%
Rother	101	122	21%

Additional information for decreases or increases in Primary Fires from 2021/22 to 2022/23

Wealden had the largest proportional and total increase in Primary Fires with 24% and 32 respectively.

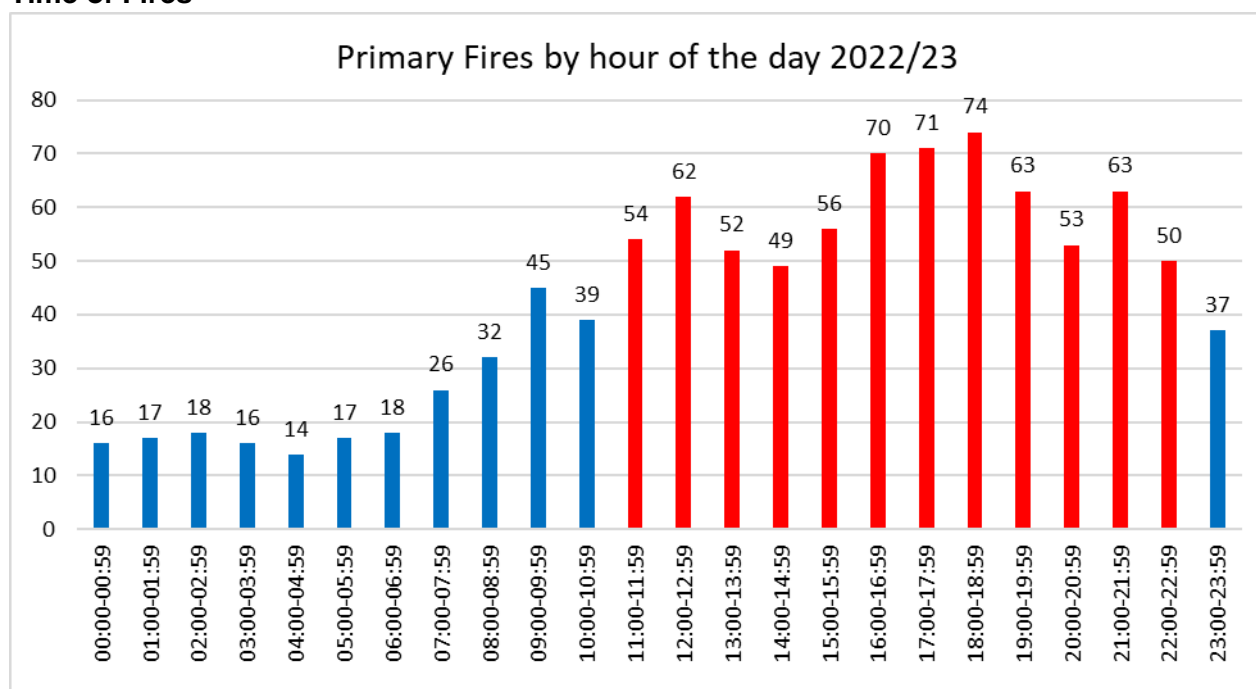
Brighton & Hove had the largest total decrease of Primary Fires with 28 and the largest proportional decrease with 8%. A breakdown of the total Primary Fires in Brighton & Hove was as follows: 141 (46%) were in Dwellings; 71 (23%) in Vehicles; 49 (16%) were Other/Outdoor Fires: and 44 (14%) were in Non-domestic Premises. Since 2021/22, Primary Fires have increased by 12 in Other/outdoor properties and by 6 in vehicles but have decreased by 39 on Dwellings and 7 in Non-domestic Premises.

Main firefighting action by ESFRS fire crews at Primary Fires

Main firefighting actoin at Primary fires 2022/23	Total
Hosereel	394
None - No firefighting	326
Small means	138
Portable extinguishers	51
Foam	34
Main branch/Jet (J)	32
None - Burned out (Allowed to burn under control)	16
Other methods	14
Not stated / not known	5
Non-portable/ fixed sources	2
Total	1,012

32.2% of the Primary Fires attended in 2022/23 required 'No firefighting' by the attending crews and a further 20.3% were dealt with by 'small means', 'Portable extinguishers' or were 'Allowed to burnout' under the supervision of the crew. (Small means includes methods such as using a bucket of water, disconnecting a fuel supply or removing an item from a heat source for example.)

Time of Fires



Between 11:00 and 22:59 there were 717 Primary Fires (71%). The total for this 12-hour period if averaged out for the full day would be 506. Therefore, there are an extra 211 fires (21%) occurring during this peak time throughout the year. Compared to 2021/22, this peak period has shifted forward by 1 hour but with reduced numbers between 00:00 to 05:59: 98 down from 119.

5.2 Accidental Dwelling Fires

Performance April - March 2022/23: 412

Reduced ✓ by 4.8% (21) since 2021/22 from 433 to 412 fires.

Reduced ✓ by 27.6% (157) since the 2009/10 baseline of 562

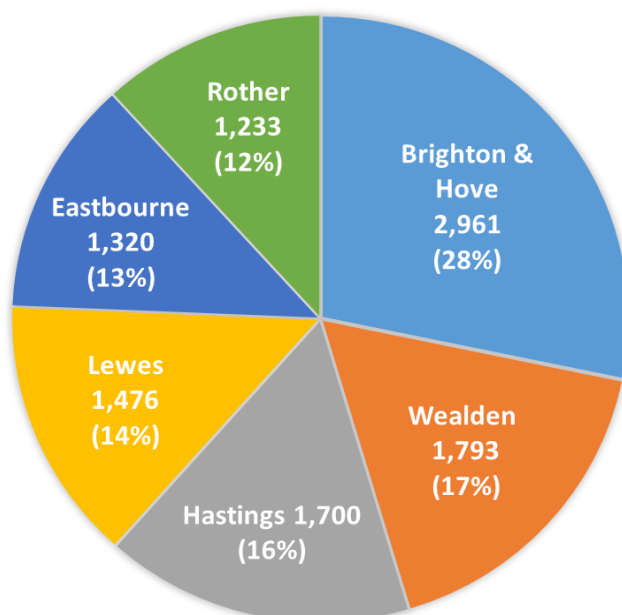
Main Sources and Location of Accidental Dwelling Fires



227 (55%) Accidental Dwelling Fires occurred in the kitchen, with cooking appliances the source for 178 (78%) of these kitchen ADFs.

Home Fire Safety Visits

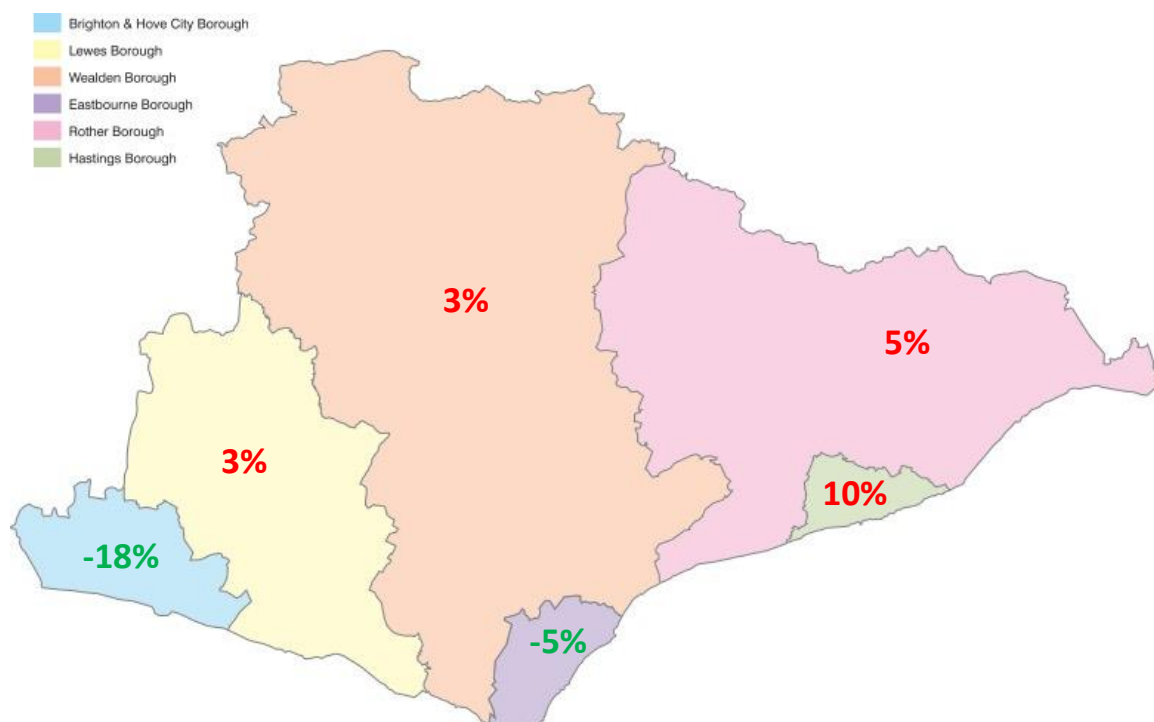
NUMBER OF HFSV 2022/23



Borough	NOMIS 2021 Population	No of HFSVs 2022/23	HFSVs per 10,000 population
Hastings	91,000	1,700	187
Lewes	100,200	1,476	147
Rother	93,400	1,233	135
Eastbourne	101,600	1,320	130
Wealden	160,700	1,793	112
Brighton & Hove	276,300	2,961	93

ESFRS undertook 10,483 Home Fire Safety Visits between 1st April and 31st March 2022/23. This is an 11% increase on the previous year.

Accidental Dwelling Fires % Change from 2021/22 to 2022/23 by Geographical Area



Borough	2021/22	2022/23	% Difference
B&H	166	136	-18%
Hastings	67	74	10%
Eastbourne	61	58	-5%
Wealden	58	60	3%
Rother	41	43	5%
Lewes	40	41	3%

Additional information for Accidental Dwelling Fires from 2021/22 to 2022/23

Brighton & Hove (B&H) with 30 (18%) and Eastbourne, 3 (5%) experienced a decrease in Accidental Dwelling Fires. Hastings, 7 (10%); Wealden, 2 (3%); Rother, 2 (5%); and Lewes, 1 (3%) all experienced an increase.

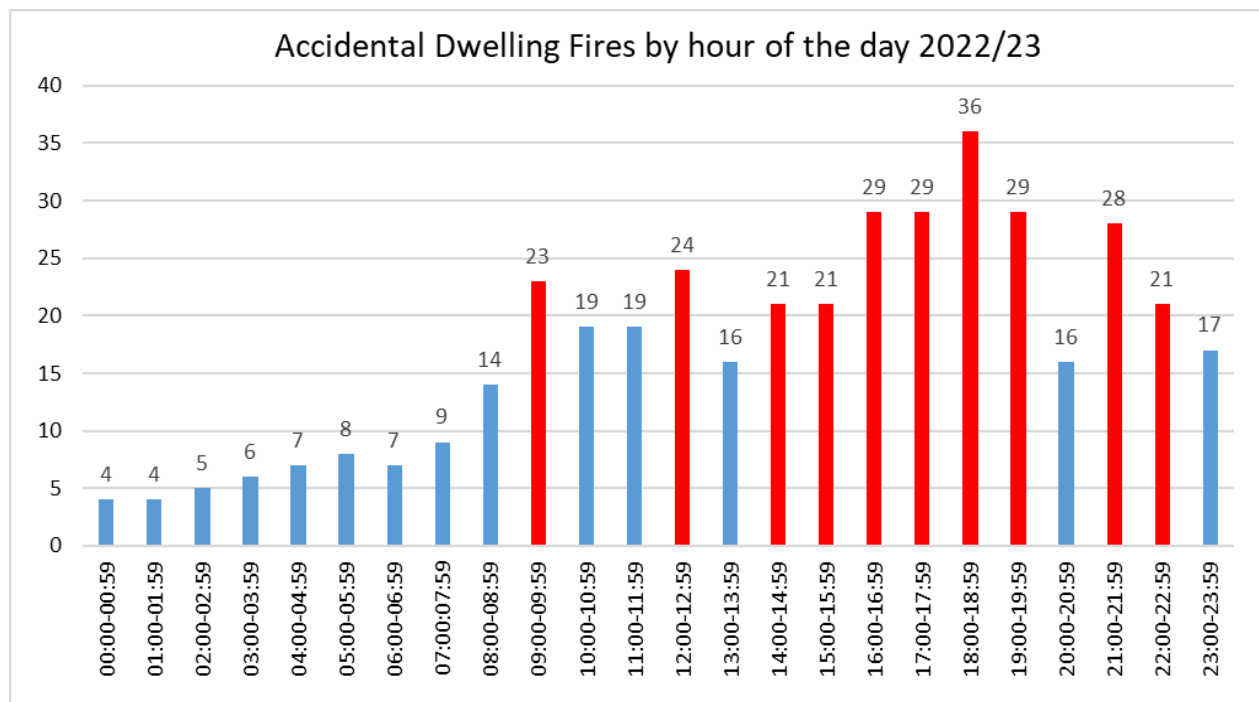
47% of all Accidental Dwelling Fires were either in a Single occupancy (Single family unit) house or Bungalow (194). This is an increase of 2.3% compared to 2021/22 but the same number of incidents. There were increases in Accidental Dwelling Fires in the following categories: Licenced HMO/Up to 2 storeys, 2 to 6 (200%); Purpose Built Flat/Maisonette - multiple occupancy/10 or more storeys, 4 to 8 (100%); Unknown if licenced HMO/3 or more storeys, 3 to 4 (33%); and Purpose Built Flat/Maisonette - multiple occupancy/4 to 9 storeys, 41 to 46 (12%). Notable decreases occurred in caravan/mobile home (permanent dwelling), 4 to 1 (75%); Licenced HMO/3 or more storeys, 10 to 5 (50%); Converted Flat/Maisonette - multiple occupancy/Up to 2 storeys, 21 to 16 (24%); and Converted Flat/Maisonette - multiple occupancy/3 or more storeys 48 to 40 (17%).

Main firefighting action by EFRS fire crews at Accidental Dwelling Fires

Main firefighting action at Accidental Dwelling Fires 2022/23	Total
None - No firefighting	203
Hosereel	114
Small means	49
Portable extinguishers	28
Not stated	2
Main branch/Jet (J)	3
Other methods	3
None - Burned out (Allowed to burn under control)	7
Foam	3
Grand Total	412

49% of the Accidental Dwelling Fires attended in 2021/22 required 'No firefighting' action by attending crews and a further 20% were dealt with by 'small means', 'Portable extinguishers' or were 'Allowed to burnout' under the supervision of the crew. (Small means includes methods such as using a bucket of water, disconnecting a fuel supply or removing an item from a heat source for example.)

Time of Accidental Dwelling Fires



Between 14:00 and 21:59 there were 230 Accidental Dwelling Fires (56%). The total for this 9-hour period if averaged out for the full day would be 155. Therefore, there are an extra 75 fires (33%) occurring during this peak time throughout the year. Compared to 2021/22, this peak period (21 fires per hours and above) was less pronounced with reduced numbers between 10:00 to 13:59 from 102 to 74 ADFs. However, between 09:00 to 09:59 there were 5 more fires compared to the previous year.

5.3 Deliberate Fires

Performance April - March 2022/23: 724

Deliberate Primary Fires excluding Vehicle Fires

Increased ✘ by 4% (6) since 2021/22 from 149 to 155 fires.
 Reduced ✔ by 46% (134) since the 2009/10 baseline of 289.

Deliberate Primary Fires in Vehicles

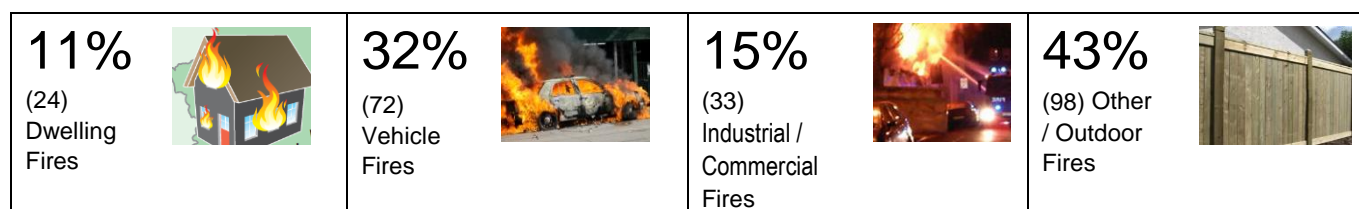
Increased ✘ by 64% (28) since 2021/22 from 44 to 72 fires.
 Reduced ✔ by 69% (158) since the 2009/10 baseline of 230.

Deliberate Secondary Fires

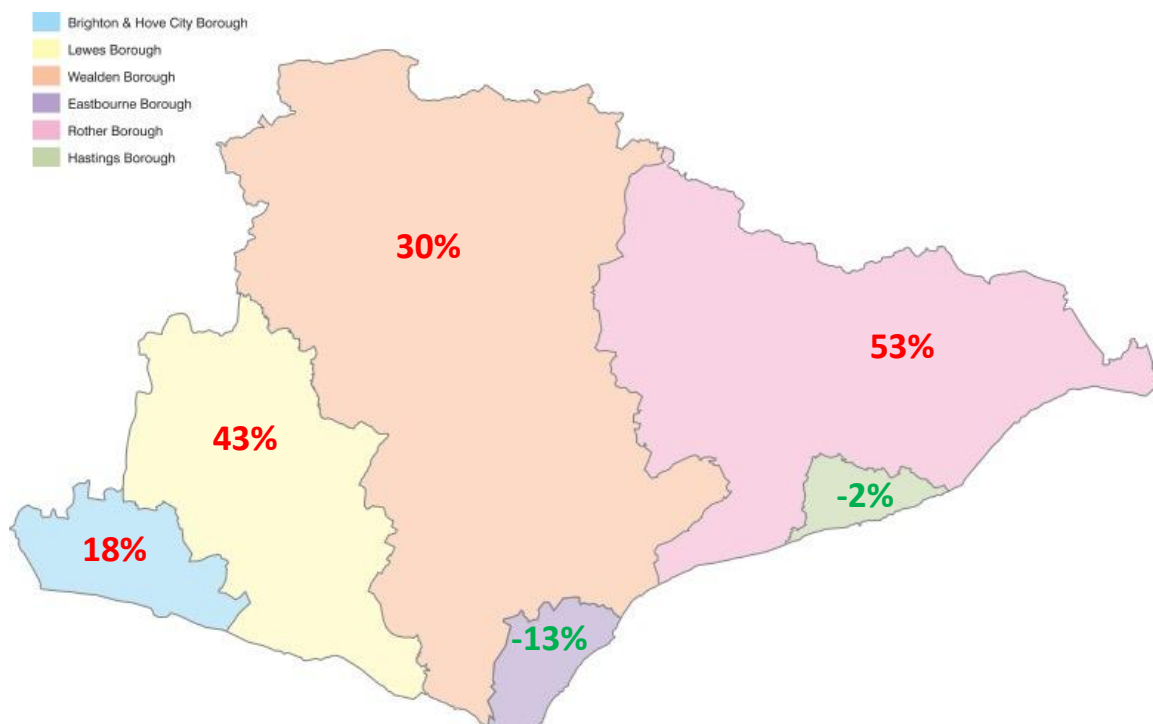
Increased ✘ by 6% (26) since 2021/22 from 471 to 497 fires.
 Reduced ✔ by 42% (356) since the 2009/10 baseline of 853.

Main Types of Fire

Deliberate Primary Fires – 227 fires: 31% of all Deliberate Fires



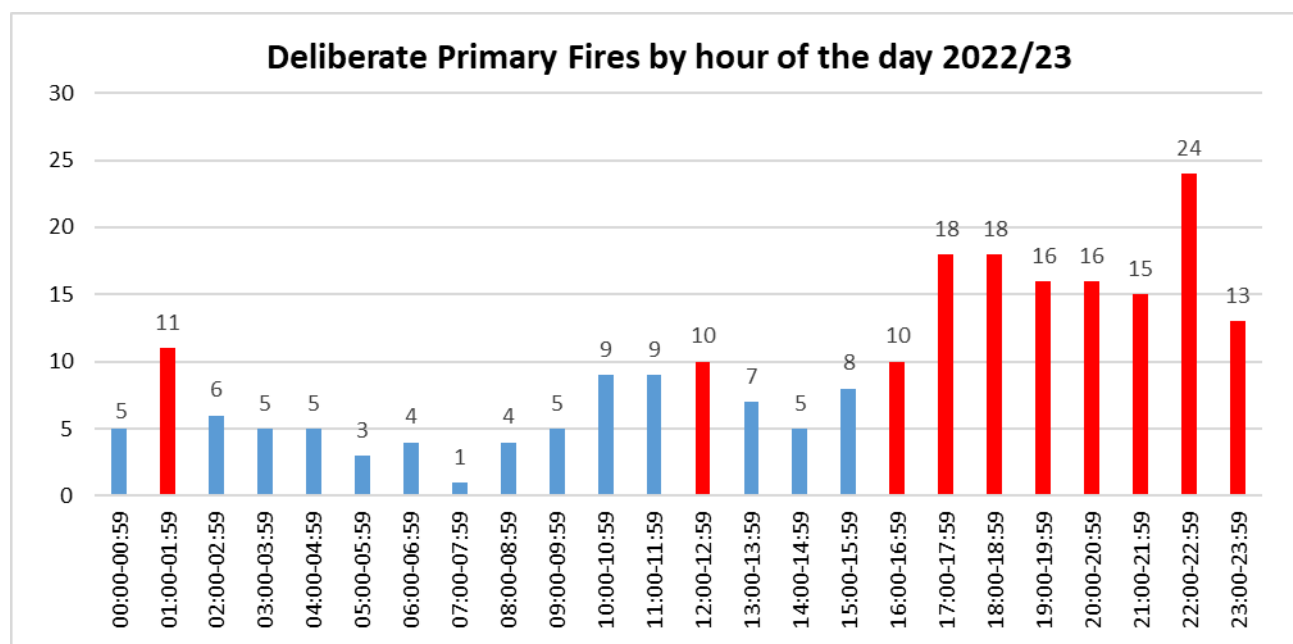
Deliberate Primary Fires % change from 2021/22 to 2022/23 by Geographical Area



Borough	2021/22	2022/23	% Difference
B&H	50	59	18%
Hastings	49	48	-2%
Lewes	28	40	43%
Eastbourne	24	21	-13%
Wealden	23	30	30%
Rother	19	29	53%




Eastbourne had the highest total and proportional decrease in Deliberate Primary Fires with 3 and 13% fires, respectively. Lewes had the highest total increase with 12, whereas Rother had the highest proportional increase with 53%.

Time of Deliberate Primary Fires

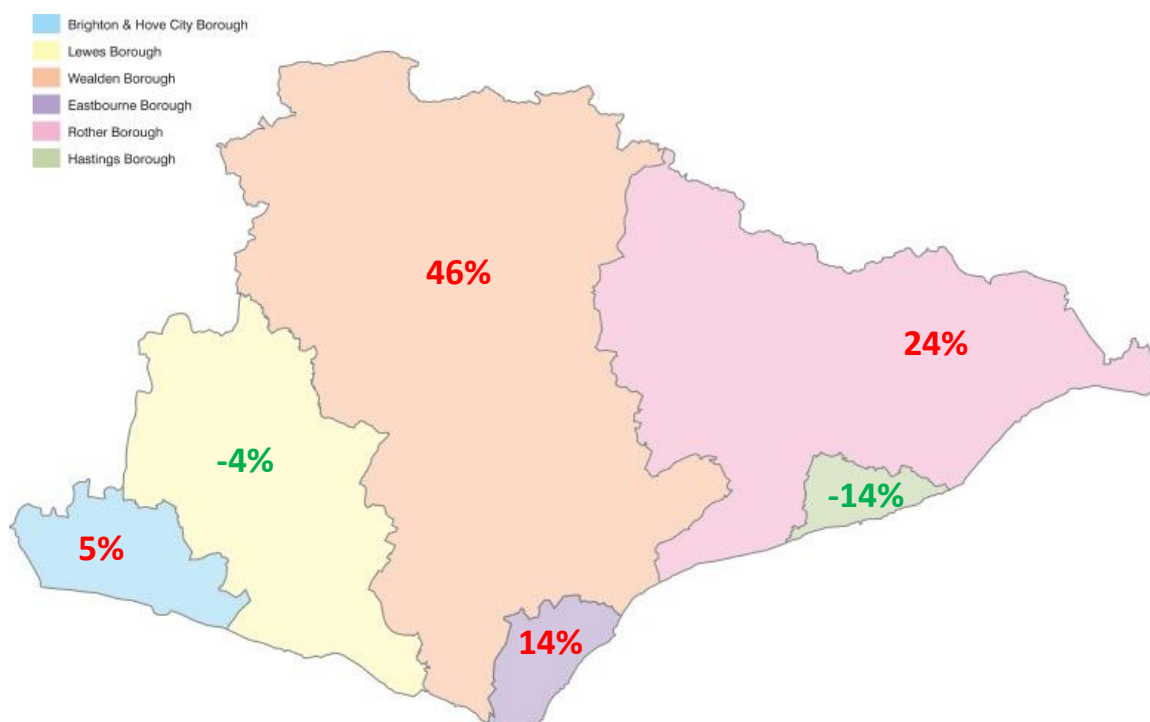


Between 16:00 and 23:59 there were 130 Deliberate Primary Fires (57%). Therefore, most Deliberate Primary Fires were committed during the late afternoon and evening with another peak late night. The total for this 8-hour period if averaged out for the full day would be 76. Therefore, there are an extra 54 fires (24%) occurring during this peak time throughout the year.

Deliberate Secondary Fires – 497 fires: 69% of all Deliberate Fires

<p>40% (198) Grassland, Woodland & Crop Fires</p> 	<p>26% (129) Refuse / Bin Fires</p> 	<p>34% (170) Others</p> 
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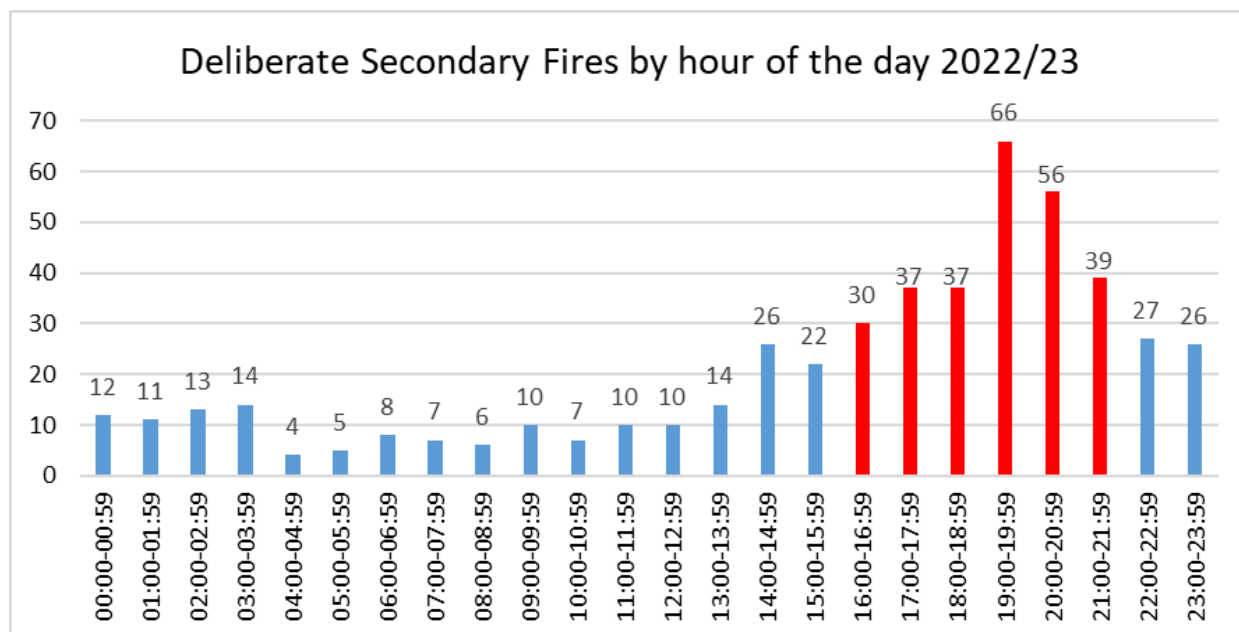
Deliberate Secondary Fires % change from 2021/22 to 2022/23 by Geographical Area



Borough	2021/22	2022/23	% Difference
B&H	134	141	5%
Hastings	122	105	-14%
Eastbourne	81	92	14%
Lewes	57	55	-4%
Wealden	39	57	46%
Rother	38	47	24%

Wealden had the highest total and proportional increase in Deliberate Secondary Fires with 18 and 46% fires, respectively. Hastings had the highest total and proportional decrease with 17 and 14% respectively.

Time of Deliberate Secondary Fires



Between 16:00 and 21:59 there were 265 Deliberate Secondary Fires (68%). The total for this 6-hour period if averaged out for the full day would be 124. Therefore, there are an extra 141 fires (28%) occurring during this peak time throughout the year.

5.4 Primary Fire Fatalities & Injuries

Primary Fire Fatalities

Performance April - March 2022/23: 2

There were 2 Fire Fatalities at 2 incidents in 2022/23 which is a 50% (2) decrease ✓ since 2021/22.

Both fatalities were female.

Age Ranges

The victims' ages were 57 and 93.

One of the two fatalities was in an Accidental Dwelling Fire.

Primary Fire Injuries

Current Performance (April - March 2022/23): 27

There were 27 injuries in 2022/23 which is a 108% (14) ✗ increase since 2021/22.

Main Injury Types

48.1%	(13)	Overcome by Gas/Smoke
22.2%	(6)	Breathing difficulties
18.5%	(5)	Burns
3.7%	(1)	Head injury
3.7%	(1)	Other medical condition
3.7%	(1)	Shock

Age Ranges

0.0%	(0)	under 14
7.4%	(2)	between 14 and 24
14.8%	(4)	between 25 and 35
11.1%	(3)	between 36 and 45
7.4%	(2)	between 46 and 55
22.2%	(6)	between 56 and 65
22.2%	(6)	are 66 and over
14.8%	(4)	were not known

Gender

59.3%	(16)	were male
40.7%	(11)	were female

22 (81.5%) of these injuries were in Accidental Dwelling Fires.

5.5 Sickness Indicators

Performance April - March 2022/23 10.2 Shifts lost per person

All Staff Sickness is 36% above the target (7.5) ✗ (2.7 shifts) and has: decreased ✓ by 2.9% (0.3 shifts) since 2021/22 down from 10.5 shifts lost per person.

- **Wholetime and LCS Staff Sickness** decreased ✓ by 1.0% (0.1 shifts) since 2021/22 from 10.5 to 10.4 shifts per person.
- **Green Book (Non-Uniformed) Staff Sickness** decreased ✓ by 5.4% (0.5 shifts) since 2021/22 from 9.3 to 8.8 per person.

There have been 5,775.6 shifts lost in 2022/23 compared to 5,590.7 shifts lost in 2021/22.

Long Term vs Short Term Sickness

- 54.6% of sickness is classed as Long Term (more than 28 days)
- 19.4% of sickness is classed as Medium Term (8 to 27 days)
- 26.0% of sickness is classed as Short Term.

5.6 Health and Safety

Performance April - March 2022/23: 194 Accidents

- Increased ✗ by 29.3% (44) since 2021/22 from 150 accidents to 194, and
- Increased ✗ by 60.3% (73) since 2010/11 from 121 accidents to 194. This is due to more detailed and accurate reporting.

There has been an increase from 5 to 8 (60%) in the number of RIDDOR incidents in 2022/23. For manual handling reported injuries, there has been an increase of 7 (26%) from 27 to 34 compared to 2021/22. This is 13 more incidents, a 62% increase since 2017/18.

There has been a decrease in the number of slips, trips and falls incidents in 2022/23 with 4 reported, down from 8 (50%). These occur for a variety of reasons from operational environments, poor housekeeping and environmental conditions.

There has been a 18% increase in the number of vehicle incidents compared to 2022/23 up from 45 to 53.

Lost time incidents increased by 92% since 2021/22, up from 13 to 25.

Incidences of work-related violence is up from 5 to 8 since 2021/22 and stress up from 1 to 14. This is likely owing to increase reporting but may still not be indicative of the extent of the occurrences of these types of safety events.

There has been a 6% decrease in the number of near hits reported (30 incidents) since 2021/22. The reporting of near hits gives the Service greater opportunity to investigate and introduce control measures before an injury results.

5.7 Level 3 & 4 Incidents attended in 2022/23

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

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

During 2022/23, ESFRS attended 5 level 3 incidents and 2 level four incidents; below are the details of the level 4 incidents:

At 11.29pm, 9th August 2022, ESFRS were mobilised to a large fire at the top of a four-storey building Eaton Court on Eaton Gardens in Hove. There were persons reported at the property and the incident was quickly upgraded to a Make Pumps 10. Appliances were sent from Hove, Preston Circus, Roedean, Lewes, Barcombe and Seaford as well as from Worthing and Shoreham (West Sussex FRS). At the height of the fire, 13 pumps and an aerial ladder were in attendance.

Two people were rescued from the fire, one from the flat where the fire originated and another from the neighbouring flat, both required hospital treatment (one for severe smoke inhalation the other for severe distress). All persons were accounted for. The main action by the fire service personnel was Hosereel (high pressure) HRJ. It took nearly three hours to put the fire out and the by 2.15am 10th August the incident was scaled down. Owing to the extent of fire and water damage, 6 flats were uninhabitable.

The cause of fire was stated as being accidental – careless handling due to sleep or unconsciousness.

At 7.17pm, 18th January 2023, ESFRS were mobilised to the scene of the blaze in George Street in Hastings. The road was closed and people were told to avoid the area. The building itself was derelict and formerly Waves nightclub. Owing to the lateral spread and fire in the roof this incident was soon upgraded to a Make Pumps 10 and an ALP.

There were no reported persons in the building and no injuries. The main action taken by the Fire Service was Hosereel (high pressure) HRJ. By approximately 11:45pm the incident was under control and scaled down. However, relief crew were required overnight and until mid-morning dampening down hotspots. Overall, the service was able to limit the damage to the floor of origin and no other building was affected.

The cause of fire was deliberate, heat source and combustibles brought together by a youth (10-17).

6. Compliments and Complaints received 2022/23

We received 138 compliments and 36 complaints from members of the public this year. We received 33 more compliments and the same number of complaints in 2021/22.

Compliments Received 2022 - 2023				
Incidents	CFS (HSVs, Education, Firebike, Fire cadets)	Volunteers	Other (Switchboard, Bus Safety, Control etc)	Commercial Training
44	85	3	5	1

Complaints Received 2022 - 2023			
No.	Nature of Complaint	Substantiated?	Action Resulting / Comments
1	Access Emergency vehicle	Logged for record purposes	Actioned by Local management
2	Business Safety Concerns	Logged for record purposes	Passed to protection
3	Employee behaviour	Logged for record purposes	Not ESFRS Employee
4	Business Safety Concerns	Logged for record purposes	Passed to Protection
5	Employee Financial Conduct	Logged for record purposes	Passed to HR
6	Forced entry by Service	Logged for record purposes	Complaint withdrawn
7	Forced entry by Service	Unjustified	No action required
8	Employee Conduct	Logged for record purposes	HR Discipline procedure
9	Business Safety Concerns	Logged for record purposes	Passed to protection
10	Employee Conduct	Logged for record purposes	No evidence provided by complainant
11	Driving Standards	Unjustified	No action required
12	Incident Response	Unjustified	No action required

13	Community Safety	Logged for record purposes	Actioned by Community Safety Team
14	Driving Standards	Justified	Actioned by Local management
15	Fire safety Concerns	Logged for record purposes	No evidence provided by complainant
16	Business Safety Concerns	Logged for record purposes	Passed to Local Authority
17	Leaking Hydrant	Partially Justified	Actioned by Hydrant technician
18	Incident Response	Logged for record purposes	Complaint withdrawn
19	Employee Conduct	Logged for record purposes	HR Discipline procedure
20	Incident Response	Logged for record purposes	Actioned by Local management
21	Driving Standards	Justified	Passed to Insurers
22	Fire Alarm Sounding	Unjustified	No action required
23	No evidence provided	Unjustified	No evidence provided by complainant
24	Driving Standards	Justified	Actioned by Local management
25	Driving Standards	Justified	Actioned by Local management
26	Driving Standards	Justified	Actioned by Local management
27	Employee Conduct	Unjustified	No action required
28	Incident Response	Partially Justified	Actioned by Local management
29	Service Response	Logged for record purposes	Actioned by Local management
30	Employee Conduct	Logged for record purposes	HR Discipline procedure
31	Employee Conduct	Logged for record purposes	No evidence provided by complainant
32	Employee Conduct	Logged for record purposes	HR Discipline procedure

33	Employee Conduct	Logged for record purposes	HR Discipline procedure
34	Employee Conduct	Justified	Actioned by Local management
35	No evidence provided	Logged for record purposes	No evidence provided by complainant
36	Incident response	Unjustified	No action required

Plain English descriptions of indicators

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

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

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

EVERY CONTACT COUNTS 2022-2023

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OUR IMPACT WITH THE PUBLIC



East Sussex
Fire & Rescue Service

OUR VALUES

We are **PROUD** of the service we provide



We are **ACCOUNTABLE** for our actions

Each year, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service meets thousands of people, whether through our work to prevent emergencies, to protect buildings through fire safety work or when we respond to 999 calls.

For us **Every Contact Counts**.

And that's not just contact with the public, but with our own colleagues, volunteers and cadets.

Our Values run throughout all our work.

We show **INTEGRITY** in our work



We **RESPECT** our colleagues and members of the community

FACTS AND FIGURES

10,440 incidents attended – a reduction from the previous year of 10,562.

412 accidental dwelling fires – a reduction from the previous year of 433.

90% of accidental dwelling fires were confined to the room of origin.

The number of primary fires has increased from 967 to 1012, and the number of deliberate fires from 664 to 724 – these are areas we are now focusing on.

We have met our targets when it comes to arriving at incidents promptly.

- 77.6% of the first arriving appliances at any incident from an 'On-Station response' within 10 minutes.
- 73.5% of the first arriving appliances at any incident from an 'On-Call response' within 15 minutes.



PREVENTING EMERGENCIES - HOME SAFETY VISITS

We visit people in their homes to offer advice, support and equipment including specialist smoke alarms.

In 2022/23 we visited 10,483 properties. 93% of these home safety visits were to vulnerable people within our community.

We are also part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, visiting prospective hosts and properties, offering fire safety advice and checking smoke alarms.

“My wife and I would like to thank the team that came here today and in a very professional, friendly and efficient way, checked our house for safety, did whatever was needed and gave us sound advice to keep ourselves safe. They are a credit to you.”

“Can you please pass on our thanks to the two amazing women from the fire safety team that carried out our home safety check for our Ukrainian family (and us). They were professional, compassionate and a breath of fresh air. We learnt some valuable safety tips for our family as well. They are doing an amazing job!”

“I want to thank you so much for your help with fitting a fire alarm system, they were fantastic - they were efficient, clear, cheerful - a delight. What a great service. We would like to thank you and them for the great help.”

NOT JUST SMOKE ALARMS

Deadly Carbon Monoxide (CO) fumes were identified during one of our Home Safety Visits, potentially saving the life of a woman who'd been feeling unwell.

Safe and Well Adviser Annie Page and Newhaven On-Call Firefighter Tom Griffiths noticed that she did not have a Carbon Monoxide alarm so offered to install one for her. She said she had been told that her boiler was a room sealed one and so she would not need a CO alarm. The boiler was only a few years old and had been serviced within the last few months. However, when the team placed the CO alarm in the kitchen near the boiler, it went off immediately.

They then placed a second CO alarm in the room just to make sure that there wasn't a fault with the first one. The second alarm also went off immediately. The occupant said she had been feeling unwell recently, felt headachy and unusually tired the last couple of weeks.

The boiler was fed by gas canisters outside the kitchen window. It was immediately disconnected, and the boiler was switched off, windows and doors opened. They called the emergency gas number who were there within 20 minutes.

The boiler engineer was explaining that he doubted that the boiler would be emitting that much CO but when he did a 15-minute sealed room test, his test equipment was showing excessively high levels of Carbon Monoxide. He called out another engineer who would locate the problem and rectify it.

The team called the occupier in the afternoon to check that all was well, and she confirmed that the engineer had found the fault and made all necessary repairs and made her safe.

Annie said: "This was a classic example of why CO alarms should be fitted for any carbon burning appliances, whether it be a gas or oil boiler, a wood burning stove or an open fire. If you smell gas or suspect Carbon Monoxide, call the National Gas Emergency Service immediately on 0800 111 999. This line is in operation 24-hours a day, seven days a week."

Lisa Priestman, Community Safety Manager said:

"Every year, about 20 people die from Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gas systems that haven't been properly installed or maintained. Many others also suffer ill health. It is really important to promote and or install Carbon Monoxide alarms when gas or other fossil fuels, like coal, wood or oil, don't burn properly, as CO is extremely poisonous."

The service would like to thank Southern Gas Networks (SGN) who have sponsored 3000 Firehawk alarms for us to fit.

If you would like to find out more about a Home Safety Visit, you can:

Call us on 0800 177 7069 or

Fill in the form on our website: www.esfrs.org/HSV

PREVENTING EMERGENCIES THROUGH EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

We received a surge in invitations to schools, youth organisations and other community groups as cases of Covid fell and restrictions lifted. We've also been able to hold our own events again. It's been great to get out and about.

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“What a wonderful opportunity for our children to learn about fire safety and explore the workings of a fire engine. We really appreciated the team taking the time to talk to the children here in Burwash and for us as staff it felt like we are returning to a new normality as the fire team were the first visitors we have had coming to school since Covid, so thank you once again.”



“Many thanks to Green Watch Preston Circus for your help at the Project Edward road safety event. Really appreciate you coming in to add to the audience for it as well, plus staying on to brighten the lives of small children and their adults in getting up in the cab of a fire engine – and theoretically looking for blind spots!”

“Please pass on my huge thanks to all the firefighters at Forest Row Community Fire Station for our visit. We were made to feel so welcome and the children had a fantastic time. It was lovely to hear their excited exclamations as we walked around. There may not be many of them but they are a lively bunch and were definitely keen to investigate all aspects of the station!”



“Thank you so much to Green Watch Crowborough and Michael Warner, Education Team for sorting out the visit for our home education group! The children all had an amazing time and we have just spent time doing their workbooks that you gave them. My son is autistic and has ADHD, he rarely sits and wants to write of his own accord but he was the first to the table this morning!”



WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Road Safety project

Bexhill Sixth Form College are working in partnership with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Communications Team and Bexhill Community Fire Station to create an innovative Road Safety Campaign targeting the 17-21 year old, newly qualified driver.

Our mission is to collaborate to create dynamic content which can be used across multiple platforms such as TikTok to reach our demographic. As a growing college with around 2500 students on roll, we hope that even by getting our message out to our own students will have a significant impact on driving habits and hopefully go some way to prevent unnecessary accidents and fatalities on our roads.

“A massive thank you to Bexhill crews for all the support that you were able to give our college students during our visit. The students were buzzing about the project and I know will have gained a lot from this experience. Please let your team know how grateful we are to all of them.”

Restart a Heart Campaign

As part of their support to the ‘Restart A Heart’ Campaign, East Sussex Fire Cadets joined their local community first responders to encourage students at East Sussex College, (both Eastbourne and Lewes sites) to learn hands only CPR, use of a defibrillator and the recovery position.

“Thank you for the fantastic work put in to make Restart a Heart 2022 a huge success this year. It is fantastic to see that schools and organisations who received their training in aid of this year’s campaign are providing positive feedback and asking to receive sessions again in the future. As a result we hope that important partnerships made throughout the year to make this campaign a success continue, ensuring that our communities are aware of these lifesaving skills.”

ELECTRIC BLANKET TESTING – A SHOCKING RESULT!

Over a third of electric blankets failed checks at a series of events held by the service.

Out of the 547 electric blankets tested, a huge 188 blankets failed and are no longer being used.

Funding from Public Health allowed the service to offer replacements to a number of those who attended the sessions.

More than blankets

Those who attended were also able to take advantage of additional wellbeing advice and support for keeping warm this winter with the help of fuel poverty experts from our local councils.

Representatives from Trading Standards were on hand to provide the public in East Sussex with useful information on current scams that are operating in the area.

And in Brighton and Hove members from Together Co were also able to talk to residents about the social prescribing service.

We would like to thank all those who made these events a success.





On 18 January 2023, local domestic abuse charity RISE welcomed a fire safety training session from the Service for front line staff.

This training included the basics of identifying a fire common causes of fire, and general fire safety at home. The training also covered the potential dangers caused by hoarding and additional risks present for those experiencing domestic abuse and violence. RISE staff were pleased to hear about the option of Home Safety Visits, from female officers, for survivors of domestic abuse.

Sanctuary Scheme Caseworker Helen, who has referred service users for a home safety assessment said:

“The training has been really useful and I’ve already used the referral scheme. It’s fantastic that the service understands the additional risks that can be present for women experiencing

domestic abuse, and that they can and will provide personalised support to our service users, reflecting their individual needs. The service can prioritise clients at high risk of harm or arson, they can be creative with contact and visits to keep clients safe, and they can support with electrical safety, blanking plates for letterboxes and undertake external risk assessments.

As part of my most recent referral, uniformed female officers visited a woman in her home, gave practical advice on what she could do to make her home safer and installed smoke alarms. They set up a flag on her address, meaning that any fire alert from the property would immediately indicate the possibility of additional risk, allowing the service to prepare and provide a personalised response. It was a really good, co-ordinated response and my client was really happy with how the whole process went.”

RISE CEO Jo Gough said:

“When someone is in the thick of trauma due to the abuse they have experienced, it can be impossible for them to hold onto practical ideas like keeping access and exits clear or going through a fire plan with a child. RISE is pleased to work in partnership with the team at East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service on this important issue, and to be able to provide this valuable training for our front-line teams so they can help keep survivors safe.”

About RISE

RISE stands for Refuge, Information, Support and Education.

Founded in 1994, RISE support women, children & LGBT+ people in Brighton & Hove and surrounding areas who are affected by domestic abuse.

PROTECTING BUILDINGS - FIRE SAFETY ENGAGEMENT, TRAINING AND ENFORCEMENT

The new Fire Safety (England) Regulations came into force on 23 January 2023 to meet the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's Phase 1 recommendations. The Inquiry was established following the devastating Grenfell Tower Fire in 2017.

The service worked hard to make sure that the local community knew about its responsibilities through engagement and communication.

It also continued its work on inspections, checks and prosecutions.

Number of inspections of high-risk premises - 506

Number of fire safety checks by operational crews – 1,523

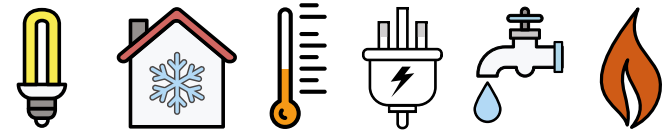
More than a thousand people attended 108 business safety engagements.

CAMPAIGN – SAVE SAFELY

Our 6-month long online Save Safely campaign was created in response to the cost-of-living crisis and fuel poverty, to encourage people to save safely and reduce the risk of fires associated with finding alternative ways of heating homes.

Engagement online as follows (as of 19 April 2023):

- Total Facebook reach was approximately 20K people with approximately 8100 views of the videos and in excess of 200 reactions, comments and shares
- Total Twitter impressions were in excess of 17K with around 3.5K views and 277 engagements
- Total TikTok views were just under 4K
- Total views of all related webpages – 778.



#SaveSafely

RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES

We respond to a wide range of incidents – but some stand out that little bit more.

“We are parents of a severely autistic teenager, who weekly boards at a local school. Thank you so, so much to the team who came to his rescue and helped when he was stuck in his bedroom because his door handle broke. One of his carers was full of praise for everyone who helped and said they were so kind and supportive of him. To support him through this incident while helping to keep him calm was simply incredible.”

“We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the crews from Heathfield Community Fire Station who arrived promptly following the emergency call which involved the 10,000 volt cables running across our garden snapping and sparking which ignited trees and shrubs and underlying planting in our garden. They dealt with the circumstances in a calm and efficient manner, coupled with a dose of good humour, keeping both us and officers safe in what could potentially have been a very dangerous situation.”



“I would just like to say a massive thank you to the wonderful crew who helped us. Our autistic non-verbal granddaughter unfortunately became locked in her mum’s car with the keys and mum’s phone in with her. Thankfully the next door neighbour had a brother who works in the service and immediately called 999. They arrived at the scene and were just wonderful. They handled a delicate situation superbly taking every possibility into account along with emotional stress that was a big part of the problem. I could not have hoped for a more professional, compassionate group of people who worked together to defuse and manage an emotionally charged situation with the utmost thought for all concerned. To you, it was another job. To us it was a rollercoaster. Thank you.”



OUR PEOPLE - FIREFIGHTERS

We've welcomed new On-call firefighters, with eight joining in November 2022 and a further six in March 2023.

On-Call firefighters are ordinary people who combine their day jobs with being On-Call for Fire and Rescue situations and emergencies.

When the call comes in, they drop what they are doing and become part of the East Sussex Fire and Rescue team. It's a huge commitment, but an immensely rewarding way to serve the community, keep the public safe and earn an extra income.

All had to complete intensive training at our Service Training Centre. The course consists of 16 days intensive training, split over three weekends and a two week course. Upon completion firefighters are equipped with practical and theoretical knowledge enabling them to safely respond as part of an operational response team within our community.



OUR PEOPLE - COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

We would like to thank our fantastic Community Volunteers and recognise the tireless volunteering work they have completed this year.

Here's a selection of what they've been up to!

'Be Bright Be Seen' Campaign

Our Volunteers raised awareness, and distributed hi-vis items at events, supporting Brighton and Hove City Council every year. This initiative's been very successful. In 2012 the baseline was around 45% of riders using lights, this has now increased to 87% of riders with full lights in 2022, with 57% using helmets and 45% having elements of hi-vis on.

Events

The list of community days we've been involved with is long! Pride in Hastings, Eastbourne and Brighton, Eastbourne 999, Project Edward road safety events, Have A Go recruitment day at Lewes and our station open days.

Service Training Centre and Operational Exercises

Firefighter Pass Out Parades and events need lots of extra help and our Volunteers regularly support the Training Centre with car parking and looking after attendees.

They are also in demand for casualty role play, acting out symptoms depending on the scenario given to them. In this way our Volunteers allow for realistic training simulations for the firefighters. Volunteers are often carried on stretchers or cut out of cars. Outside of the Training Centre environment, Volunteers are involved in on-site operational exercises, whether acting out a hospital evacuation or even a train crash.

If you're interested, find out more on our website:
www.esfrs.org/your-safety/community-volunteers



OUR PEOPLE - FIRE CADETS

We now have three units of Fire Cadets, with packed waiting lists!

Open to anyone aged between 13 and 17, they make new friends, have loads of fun and learn all about what it means to be a firefighter and make a positive impact on our community.

Here's a snapshot of what they've been up to!

- Two East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Fire Cadets received a royal invite from the Lord Lieutenant to the exciting Platinum Jubilee concert. Liberty and Alex were even spotted on TV by their families. Cadet Alex said: "The atmosphere was absolutely electric. People enjoying themselves, singing along, dancing. All the singers present who I thought I would never have the honour of seeing. It was absolutely amazing."
- This celebration at the Jubilee concert was then followed by a Jubilee tea party at No 10 to which East Sussex Fire Cadet of the year Coby received an unexpected invitation.
- Following 'World Drowning Prevention Day' Eastbourne and Uckfield Cadets attended a session at Ashdown Leisure, Nutley, to remind them of important water safety messages. This session was especially pertinent following the tragic drowning of at least 13 people during the recent heatwave. The Cadets also had the opportunity to use kayaks, paddleboards and take part in a raft building competition.
- Cadet parents, carers and other family members were invited to end of term parades at both Eastbourne and Uckfield units. Each event gave the opportunity to reflect since these units commenced at the start of 2020. Cadets remembered the challenges of virtual meetings, socially distanced meetings in community hall car parks and the return to stations. Highlights included the recent 999 event in Eastbourne, the Uckfield Station car wash, participating in the Remembrance Parades and the action packed team building weekend at Herstmonceux last Autumn.

GIVING BACK – THE FIRE FIGHTERS CHARITY

We support the Fire Fighters Charity throughout the Year in many ways and so do you.

You may have attended one of our charity car washes or taken a trip to one of our special clothing banks that are available at eight community fire stations: Pevensey, Broad Oak, The Ridge, Seaford, Battle, Rye, Mayfield and Barcombe.

A special mention goes to the generosity of those in and around Brighton.

On 15th and 16th December 2022, Crews, Community Volunteers and other support from across East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service carried out a charity collection in and around Preston Circus Fire Station, Brighton. The first one post-Covid, with almost arctic temperatures, a cost of living crisis and just general change in people's spending habits meant it was always going to be a difficult time to get close to the figures we have reached historically. Despite the cold weather, those who participated and donated helped make the event a success raising a total of £4526.95 for The Fire Fighters Charity.

The Fire Fighters Charity provides services that enhance quality of life for serving and retired firefighters, fire personnel and their families through a range of support programmes including physical rehabilitation, psychological support, recuperation and a confidential helpline which provides impartial advice, guidance and support on a wide range of concerns.

You can find out more about the work of The Firefighters Charity here:

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk



The
Fire Fighters
Charity

A FINAL WORD FROM HMICFRS

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service is pleased that it has been judged as 'Good' across eight important areas in its latest inspection report by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), published in January 2023.

The service is judged to be good at:

- Understanding fires and other risks
- Preventing fires and other risks
- Responding to fires and other emergencies
- Responding to major and multi-agency incidents
- Making best use of resources
- Future affordability
- Getting the right people with the right skills
- Managing performance and developing leaders.

Progress does not stop here. This report is just one way our service to the community is monitored to ensure we continue to deliver our commitments to the public in East Sussex and Brighton and Hove.

The report also found:

- The service delivers sound financial management. There are regular reviews to consider all the service's expenditure, including its non-pay costs. This scrutiny makes sure the service gets value for money

- Staff were proud to work for East Sussex Fire and Rescue and most staff displayed the values which the service promotes widely
- The service has demonstrated a clear commitment to the support of staff following traumatic incidents
- The service is creating a culture of continuous improvement. This is promoted throughout the service and staff are encouraged to learn and develop
- The service has made sure all staff are trained and clear about what to do if they encounter inappropriate behaviour.

HMICFRS Background

HMICFRS: His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) independently assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and in July 2017 extended its remit to include inspections of England's fire and rescue services.

The full report can be found on the HMICFRS website: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/frs-assessment/frs-2021/east-sussex/



East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Date: 7 September 2023
Title: Amendment to Calendar of Meetings 2023-24
By: Abigail Blanshard, Democratic Services Manager
Lead Officer: Abigail Blanshard, Democratic Services Manager

Background Papers: CFA 15 June 2023 - Fire Authority & Panel Meetings 2023-24

Appendices: None

Implications:

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

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To inform Members of a proposed change to the date and venue of the February 2024 meeting of the Fire Authority.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The calendar of meetings for 2023-24 was approved by the Fire Authority at its meeting on the 15 June 2023.

It has been necessary to change the date of the February 2024 meeting of the Fire Authority from Thursday, 1 February to Thursday, 8 February 2024.

In order to accommodate this move, the venue of the meeting has also had to change as East Sussex County Council cannot host us. The meeting will now be held at Brighton Town Hall, Bartholomew Square, Brighton.

Standing Orders provide that the Chief Fire Officer may postpone any meeting and determine where it takes place with the prior agreement of the Chairperson.

RECOMMENDATION: The Fire Authority is asked to note that the date of the February 2024 meeting of the Fire Authority will now be Thursday, 8th February 2024 at Brighton Town Hall, Bartholomew Square, Brighton.

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