

## EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>Meeting</b>	Fire Authority
<b>Date</b>	3 September 2020
<b>Title of Report</b>	Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2020-2025 'Planning for a Safer Future' – Consultation Results and Modified Proposals
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<b>Background Papers</b>	1. CFA report - 23 April 2020, Agenda Item 59 - Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025 2. CFA report - 23 April 2020, Agenda Item 60 - Communications and Consultation Plan for the IRMP
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<b>Appendices</b>	(A) Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025 (B) Communications and Consultation Plan for the IRMP (C) ORS IRMP Questionnaire (D) Stakeholder List (E) ORS Stakeholder Presentation (F) Copies of letters, emails and phone calls received (G) Full Consultation report from Opinion Research Services (H) IRMP Media Coverage (I) Revised Equality Impact Assessment for the IRMP (J) Staffing changes comparison
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### Implications

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

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

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

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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

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

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

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

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

In total, 2,047 responses were received:

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

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

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

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

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to:

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

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

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

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

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## 1 **INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

## **2 CONSULTATION OVERVIEW**

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

## **3 PRE-CONSULTATION FEEDBACK**

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

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

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

### 3.8 Pre-engagement with staff

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

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

## 4 **FORMAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

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

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

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

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

#### 4.5 Consultation Overview

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

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

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

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

## 5 CONSULTATION PROPOSALS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.3 Open consultation questionnaire

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

6.4 Residents' Survey

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

6.5 Public focus groups/depth interviews

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

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

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

6.8 Stakeholder webinar

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

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

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

#### 6.10 Submissions

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

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

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

#### 6.12 Open consultation questionnaire

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

#### 6.13 Residents’ Survey

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

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

#### 6.15 Public focus groups/depth interviews

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### 6.21 Stakeholder webinar

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

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

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

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

#### 6.24 Submissions

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

#### 6.25

*ESFRS proposes the following two options for change:*

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

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

#### 6.26 Open consultation questionnaire

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

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

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

#### 6.28 Open consultation questionnaire

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

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

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

Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations, whilst more than three quarters (77%) disagreed with the proposal, and 4% neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.29 Over a quarter of respondents (28%) agreed with the proposal to re-classify the three “maxi-cab” stations at Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations, whilst just under three fifths (58%) disagreed with the proposal, and more than 1 in 8 (14%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

### 6.30 Residents’ Survey

Overall, just less than a third (27%) of residents agreed with the proposal to remove the second fire engine from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations, whilst three fifths (60%) disagreed, and around 1 in 10 (11%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

### 6.31 Public focus groups/depth interviews

29 of the 40 public focus group participants and depth interviewees agreed with removing the second fire engines from the seven affected stations: 14 strongly agreed and 15 tended to agree. 6 people neither agreed nor disagreed, 4 tended to disagree and 1 strongly disagreed.

6.32 The proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations was supported by a majority of participants across all six focus groups as a sensible redistribution of under-used resources. In particular, people were seemingly convinced by the statistics around critical incidents, low appliance availability and the fact that currently, 74% of incidents in these areas are dealt with by one fire engine (though there was a minority view that the latter figure is unacceptably low).

6.33 This is not to say, though, that there were no concerns or anxieties, for there were several – most notably in relation to second fire engine response times, particularly to the more rural areas served by the seven affected stations. Indeed, this was the main reason why some people opposed this proposal. The other main concern was a potential lack of resilience as a result of removing the seven fire engines, both in terms of attendance at incidents and for stand-by moves to cover ‘gaps’ across the area.

6.34 Other worries were that: it will be difficult to reintroduce the “capital equipment” once it has been disposed of, even in the event of rising incidents; increased use of back-up appliances from other areas could mean a lack of local knowledge among those attending incidents; and that future demographic changes may not have been sufficiently considered.

### 6.35 Stakeholder webinar

Of the 19 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, only 1 agreed with the proposal, 2 neither agreed nor disagreed and 14 disagreed (12 strongly). There were a further 2 ‘don’t knows’.

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

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

#### 6.38 Submissions

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

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

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

#### 6.40 Open consultation questionnaire

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

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

#### 6.42 Residents' Survey

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

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

6.44 Public focus groups/depth interviews

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

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

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

6.47 Stakeholder webinar

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

6.48 Submissions

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

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

6.50 Submissions

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

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

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

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

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

6.53 Submissions

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

6.54 **Proposal 6: Demand management**

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

6.55 **Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)**

6.56 Open consultation questionnaire

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

6.57 Public focus groups/depth interviews

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

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

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

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

6.60 Stakeholder webinar

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

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

6.62 **Lift rescues**

6.63 Open consultation questionnaire

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

6.64 Public focus groups/depth interviews

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

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

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

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

6.68 Stakeholder webinar

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

6.69 **Trapped birds**

6.70 Open consultation questionnaire

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

6.71 Public focus groups/depth interviews

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

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

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

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

6.75 Stakeholder webinar

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.79 Submissions

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

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

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

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

6.82 Open consultation questionnaire

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

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

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

6.85 Residents’ Survey

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

6.86 Public focus groups/depth interviews

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

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

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

6.89 Stakeholder webinar

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

6.90

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

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

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

6.91 Open consultation questionnaire

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

6.92 Public focus groups/depth interviews

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

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

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

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

#### 6.94 Submissions

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

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

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

#### 6.96 Open consultation questionnaire

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

#### 6.97 Residents' Survey

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

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

#### 6.99 Public focus groups/depth interviews

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

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

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

#### 6.101 Stakeholder webinar

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

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

#### 6.103 Submissions

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

#### 6.104 **Other issues: Finances and investment**

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

#### 6.105 Open consultation questionnaire

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

#### 6.106 Residents' Survey

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

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

#### 6.108 Public focus groups/depth interviews

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

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

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

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

6.111 Stakeholder webinar

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

6.112

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

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

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

6.113 Open consultation questionnaire

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

6.114 Public focus groups/depth interviews

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

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

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

6.117 Stakeholder webinar

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

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

6.118

### *The extent to which ESFRS offers value for money*

6.119 Open consultation questionnaire

Around three quarters (74%) of respondents agreed that ESFRS offers value for money, whilst less than 1 in 10 (7%) disagreed, and around 1 in 5 (19%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.120 Residents' Survey

Almost 9 in 10 (88%) residents agreed that ESFRS offers value for money, whilst only 2% disagreed, and 1 in 10 (10%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.121 Residents living in Wealden were significantly more likely than average to agree that ESFRS offers value for money, compared to overall.

6.122 Stakeholder webinar

Of the 19 stakeholders who elected to answer this question, 12 agreed (7 strongly) that ESFRS offers value for money, 4 neither agreed nor disagreed and 1 disagreed. There were 2 'don't knows'.

6.123 In discussion, there were questions and comments around the level of "back-office" and other non-operational savings considered, and the need to lobby central government for more funding.

6.124 Submissions

Those who commented in the submissions generally felt that ESFRS does currently provide value for money, but some said that perceptions might change in future if the Planning for a Safer Future proposals are implemented.

6.125

### *Ways ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future<sup>9</sup>*

6.126 Open consultation questionnaire

Overall, the most common suggestions respondents made for ways ESFRS can make savings were: focusing on preventative measures through education and home safety visits; reducing its management roles; and promoting voluntary work.

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<sup>9</sup> Please note that due to time constraints, this was not discussed in the telephone residents' survey or at any of the deliberative events (the focus groups and webinar).

6.127 **Other issues: ESFRS' purpose and commitments<sup>10</sup>**

*ESFRS has a strong purpose and clear commitments to help make East Sussex safer by:*

*Delivering high performing services by using its resources to achieve the best level of safety for people and business.*

*Engaging with its communities by using its trusted reputation to deliver educational initiatives and campaigns.*

*Having a safe and valued workforce by ensuring the people of East Sussex are safe and are provided with the right equipment, training and skills.*

*Making effective use of its resources by ensuring all its resources are managed effectively, improving its productivity and seeking new sources of income and funding.*

6.128 Open consultation questionnaire

Overall, more than two thirds (69%) of respondents agreed that ESFRS' purpose and commitments are appropriate, whilst just over 1 in 8 (15%) respondents disagreed, and 16% neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.129 **Other issues: Hearing about the consultation<sup>11</sup>**

6.130 Open consultation questionnaire

Overall, most respondents (44%) had heard about the consultation through social media. Around 1 in 6 (17%) heard about it via a letter from ESFRS. Slightly fewer (14%) found out through ESFRS staff, whilst around 1 in 8 (12%) heard via a local councillor or through the ESFRS website.

6.131 **Other issues: Equalities impacts<sup>12</sup>**

6.132 Open consultation questionnaire

An occasional response to the consultation questionnaire touched upon equalities matters: for example, one respondent felt that rural communities, whose populations are generally older, were being treated unfairly compared to the towns. Another comment referenced the importance of considering school safety, with the implication that ESFRS might need to consider the potential impacts on younger people. One respondent also stated that ESFRS already provides

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<sup>10</sup> See above

<sup>11</sup> As above.

<sup>12</sup> As above.

“wonderful” support to elderly and vulnerable people, and therefore should not be “meddled with”.

## 7 COMMUNICATIONS

7.1 An integrated multi-channel communications plan was launched when the consultation opened. It had the following objectives:

- To publicise the plan and its proposals
- To encourage participation in consultation and any stakeholder events
- To conduct a series of senior officer led engagements
- To set out next steps
- To help the public understand fire service issues

7.2 It was recognised that the consultation presented different challenges to previous exercises:

- A careful explanation was required to ensure that the public understand that we are committed to keeping people safe and want to get our priorities right to do this.
- Consultation taking place during an unprecedented period of national lock-down.
- The IRMP proposals were both holistic and inter-connected which made the explanation of the full set of proposals as a package more challenging to portray to less well-informed members of the public.
- Changes to the numbers of operational resources across the ESFRS area would likely impact on the public’s perception of risk

7.3 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was recognised that the consultation will be affected by the limitations that the pandemic created. Due to lockdown and social distancing rules, we would not be able to offer roadshows or face to face interactions with the public, stakeholders or staff. We therefore made the decision to invest more heavily in activities such as webinars, social media engagement and phone calls/interviews than previously, to ensure that we could feel confident the public were aware of our plans. Three key audiences and relevant communication tools were identified, as set out below.

7.4

Communication tools		
<p>Stakeholders</p> <p>Emails</p> <p>Letters</p> <p>Webinar</p>	<p>Public</p> <p>Media</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Twitter</p> <p>Facebook</p> <p>Mail-outs</p> <p>Online Focus Groups</p> <p>Telephone Survey</p>	<p>Staff</p> <p>Emails</p> <p>Watch Visits</p> <p>IRMP Briefings</p> <p>Service Brief</p>

## 7.5 Stakeholders

7.6 Stakeholder engagement was a key strand of this communication plan. In order to support stakeholder engagement, we produced the following supporting materials:

- Press releases to be used for newsletters and websites
- Online stakeholder webinar

When the consultation commenced in April, we contacted over 650 stakeholders and groups inviting them to take part in the consultation survey and to attend a stakeholder webinar. The majority were contacted by email. We contacted a small number by post where we did not have an email address available. Appendix D portrays the stakeholders that were contacted

7.7 The stakeholders included Parish and local Councils, MPs, charities and support groups and partners.

7.8 Printed copies of the consultation were sent to stakeholders if requested.

7.9 We provided all Fire Authority members and senior members of staff with information packs containing copies of the consultation. We asked that they help promote the consultation where they could.

### 7.10 Stakeholder webinar

7.11 The online stakeholder webinar was held on 04 June. There were 69 registrations of interest, 48 booked the event (held on Zoom) and 38 attended on the day, with some of those who were unable to do so submitting questions or comments via email following the event.

7.12 Opinion Research Services (ORS), which facilitated the event commented:

*“In ORS’s extensive experience of IRMP consultations, the ESFRS ‘Planning for a Safer Future’ webinar held on 4th June is one of, if not the, best attended stakeholder sessions we’ve ever conducted. There were 38 ‘on the day’ attendees, and several others who registered but were unable to attend have requested copies of the notes from the session. Levels of engagement were high, with just short of 100 questions asked and comments made – either in advance of, during and following the session. Participants were also encouraged to respond formally after the event via the online questionnaire.”*

7.13 Attendees included an MP and local councillors, representatives of partner organisations (such as local councils, Sussex Police, SECAMB and Southern Water) and other fire and rescue services, and representatives of other local organisations (such as the University of Brighton, Ashdown Forest Conservators, Brighton and Hove Speak Out, the Chinese Association and Optivo).

7.14 ORS gave a presentation outlining the IRMP proposals, attached as Appendix E.

- 7.15 Participants were encouraged to ask questions for clarification, both in advance and throughout the meeting itself. They were also encouraged to give their views via the online chat and Q&A functions, as well as via online polls that were designed to gather a sense of the balance of opinion among attendees on the proposals.
- 7.16 Just shy of 100 questions were asked, a significant proportion of these were answered within the session. The full set of Q&As were supplied to all 69 stakeholders after the event. These can be found in Appendix 1 of ORS's main report, attached as Appendix G.
- 7.17 In addition to the stakeholder webinar, a number of individual or group briefings were undertaken throughout the consultation period by the CFO and DCFO. These included briefings to local MPs, City/Town Councils, strategic partners and other stakeholder groups.
- 7.18 **Press and media**
- 7.19 Media - Interviews and press releases were made available.
- 7.20 Overall, the consultation resulted in coverage in the following outlets:
- The Argus
  - BBC Sussex (radio)
  - Bexhill Observer
  - Brighton and Hove News
  - Eastbourne Herald
  - Hastings Observer
  - Heart FM (radio)
  - ITV Meridian (TV)
  - Kent and Sussex Courier
  - Rye & Battle Observer
  - Splash FM (radio)
  - Sussex Express
  - Uckfield News
- 7.21 To put this into context:
- ITV Meridian News has a daily viewing figure of 340,000
  - The Argus online has a daily reach of up to 32,000 readers across Sussex.
  - The Argus Newspaper has an approximate daily circulation of 9262.
  - BBC Radio Sussex has approximately 223,000 listeners per week.
  - Heart FM (Surrey & Sussex) has approximately 301,000 listeners per week.
  - The Eastbourne Herald has a monthly reach of 49,000 readers in Eastbourne.
  - The Observer Series has a reach of 18,000 readers across Battle, Bexhill, Eastbourne, Hastings, Heathfield, Mayfield, Robertsbridge, Burwash, Rye, Tenterden and Wadhurst.

7.22 Over the course of the consultation period, we released six press releases:

- <https://www.esfrs.org/news/2020-news/proposals-for-east-sussex-fire-and-rescues-future/> - **305 hits**
- <https://www.esfrs.org/news/2020-news/service-statement-on-consultation-decision/> - **608 hits**
- <https://www.esfrs.org/news/2020-news/planning-for-a-safer-future/> - **326 hits**
- <https://www.esfrs.org/news/2020-news/response-to-fbu-press-release-3-june-2020/> - **178 hits**
- <https://www.esfrs.org/news/2020-news/deadline-approaches-to-take-part-in-planning-for-a-safer-future/> - **38 hits**
- <https://www.esfrs.org/news/2020-news/planning-for-a-safer-future-consultation-closure/> - **39 hits**

A full list of IRMP media coverage is attached as Appendix H.

### 7.23 **Social media**

7.24 Social media was used to drive traffic towards the website.

7.25 During the consultation period, we posted ten main posts on Twitter (not including tweets in response to followers). We received the following totals:-

#### 7.26 **Impressions: 40,457**

An impression means a tweet has been delivered to a Twitter account's timeline. Not everyone who receives a tweet will read it, but it's possible they could.

#### 7.27 **Total engagements: 2,741**

**Total link clicks: 218**

**Retweets: 42**

**Likes: 28**

7.28 During the consultation period, we posted eleven main posts on Facebook. We received the following totals:

#### 7.29 **People reached: 23,449**

**Engagements: 1,408**

**Shares: 52**

**Likes: 51**

7.30 We also posted on Facebook groups to help reach specific audiences who may be affected by the changes. These groups include Wadhurst and Newhaven. We are unable to obtain the engagement figures for these posts as we are not the authors of these pages.

7.31 Social media was our key contact point for the public during this consultation and was vital in directing them to the official consultation survey rather than alternative petitions created by others. Social media was key in signposting the public to information about the IRMP and ways in which they could ask further questions if required.

### 7.32 **ESFRS Website**

7.33 The website acted as a central hub for information about the consultation and IRMP proposals and also linked to the externally-hosted questionnaire.

7.34 A new section was created on the ESFRS website to host the information [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture). The page was essentially a library of information relating to the IRMP including the main consultation document and associated analytical reports and fire station risk profiles from the Operational Response Review, as well as bite-size videos breaking down each proposal, Frequently Asked Questions and a link to the online questionnaire.

7.35 There were a total of **8,872** hits to the [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture) page. **1,333** of these hits derived from Facebook posts and a further **505** from Twitter posts

### 7.36 **Partner Websites**

7.37 The IRMP Team contacted colleagues within the City/County and the local borough/district councils to ask for support with promoting our consultation on their respective consultation portals/pages. Material was supplied.

### 7.38 **Focus Groups**

7.39 A programme of six deliberative online focus groups was undertaken with a diverse and broadly representative cross-section of residents across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. ORS worked in collaboration with ESFRS to prepare informative stimulus material for the groups before facilitating the discussions and preparing an independent report of findings.

7.40 The focus groups were designed to inform and ‘engage’ participants with the issues set out in the IRMP. This was done by using a ‘deliberative’ approach to encourage people to question and reflect on the proposals in detail. The meetings lasted for two hours and were attended as below:

<b>Area</b>	<b>Time and Date</b>	<b>Number of Attendees</b>
<b>Brighton &amp; Hove</b>	Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2020 6:15pm - 8:15pm	3 (+ 4 depth interviews)
<b>Lewes</b>	Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2020 6:15pm - 8:15pm	7
<b>Eastbourne</b>	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 6:15pm - 8:15pm	5 (+ 2 depth interviews)
<b>Wealden</b>	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 6:15pm - 8:15pm	6
<b>Hastings</b>	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 6:15pm - 8:15pm	5 (+1 depth interview)

<b>Rother</b>	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 6:15pm - 8:15pm	7
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>40</b>

- 7.41 The attendance target for the focus groups was around 6-8 people, which was evidently not achieved in some areas. In order to boost the numbers, ORS undertook a series of depth interviews (four in Brighton & Hove, two in Eastbourne and one in Hastings) using exactly the same discussion guide as at the focus groups. Overall, the 40 participants who took part represented a broad cross-section of residents from the local areas, and particular care was also taken to ensure that people were recruited from the areas most affected by the proposals.
- 7.42 Participants were recruited by random-digit telephone dialling from ORS' Social Research Telephone Unit. Once participants had been initially contacted by phone, all participants were then written to - to confirm the invitation and the arrangements; and those who agreed to come then received telephone or written reminders shortly before each meeting. Such recruitment by telephone is an effective way of ensuring that the participants are independent and broadly representative of the wider community. As standard good practice, people were recompensed for their time and efforts in travelling and taking part.
- 7.43 Although, like all other forms of qualitative consultation, focus groups cannot be certified as statistically representative samples of public opinion, the meetings reported here gave diverse groups of people from East Sussex and Brighton & Hove the opportunity to participate. Because the recruitment was inclusive and participants were diverse, we are satisfied that the outcomes of the meeting are broadly indicative of how informed opinion would incline based on similar discussions.
- 7.44 The full report can be found in Appendix G.
- 7.45 **Telephone Survey**
- 7.46 The second form of quantitative engagement (the online questionnaire being the first) was the telephone survey, undertaken with residents aged 18 and over. The purpose of the survey was to achieve a representative profile of opinions across East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove using broadly the same core questions as in the open consultation questionnaire. A short summary of the proposals was included to be 'read out' within the survey for the benefit of respondents who had not had the opportunity to read the consultation document or to otherwise find out about the proposals.
- 7.47 ORS social research telephone unit staff undertook 620 structured telephone interviews over a period of nearly 5 weeks beginning on 19th May 2020, using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing ('CATI') technology. The survey was conducted using a quota-controlled sampling approach, to ensure a broadly representative sample of residents aged 18 or over across the FRS area.
- 7.48 The telephone survey was designed to provide an estimate of the views one would obtain if it were possible to survey all residents in the relevant population

(in this case, the five East Sussex districts/boroughs plus the city of Brighton & Hove). However, this relies on achieving a sample that properly reflects the population. In practice, due to imperfections in the practical application of any survey and sometimes by the design of the sample, there are usually a number of inherent biases that need to be addressed and corrections that need to be made to the sample design.

7.49 For this survey a decision was made that the sample should be designed so that the target number of interviews for the 6 districts should be large enough to allow for a reasonably robust comparison of views (approx. 100 interviews in each).

7.50 Subsequently, the demographic characteristics of the respondents were compared with data for the whole adult (18+) population. Statistical weighting was applied in order to identify and correct any under (or over) representation of any particular demographic groups due to 'response bias'. The statistical weighting was applied to the results using data from the 2011 census for the profile groups Working Status and Ethnic Group, and 2017 Population Estimates, for Gender, Age and District populations.

7.51 After taking account of the weighting process, we can be 95% confident that the telephone survey results (at overall level) will be within +/- 5 percentage points (depending on the exact sample sizes and opinion splits on particular questions).

7.52 The full report can be found in Appendix G.

### 7.53 **Member Engagement**

7.54 Fire Authority Members were provided with information packs, leaflets and posters to enable them to raise awareness of and encourage participation in our consultation. A variety of methods of engagement were used by Members.

Members received a significant amount of communication from staff and local residents, as well as from fellow councillors and MPs. A volume of responses were compiled directly by Members and a number of communications were forwarded directly to the designated consultation mailbox to inform the published Frequently Asked Questions.

### 7.55 **Mail-out (x 2)**

7.56 ESFRS targeted 20,655 households across the Service area in a series of mail-outs.

### 7.57 1<sup>st</sup> Mail-out

In addition to the telephone survey which took place in direct response to the limitations posed by the national lockdown, letters were sent to 10,743 households across the Service area, informing them of the consultation and how they could get involved. These households had been specifically identified as low likelihood of using or having access to technology such as email, internet and social media using in-house analytical tools and data sets including Mosaic Public Sector lifestyle data.

## 7.58 2<sup>nd</sup> Mail-out

A further 9,912 letters were sent out in the latter part of the consultation period, in response to concerns from specific areas following counter-material being circulated in those areas. This mail-out was confined to households in the station areas of Crowborough, Uckfield and Newhaven. Residents with strong community roots, combined with their use of social media were targeted, excluding any which had previously been contacted in the 1<sup>st</sup> mail-out.

## 7.59 **Staff**

Copies of the consultation material were made available via our intranet and staff were signposted to the dedicated IRMP consultation page and questionnaire via service-wide email. Staff were also encouraged to take part in the consultation through regular messages in our weekly staff newsletter 'Service Brief'.

7.60 Senior and middle managers were briefed and provided with information packs to assist with presenting the IRMP proposals to their respective staff groups and to facilitate discussion. Members of the Planning & Intelligence team assisted and supported local station managers in the delivery of the IRMP proposals as required. Questions arising from these meetings were sent through to the dedicated consultation mailbox for the Planning & Intelligence Team to respond to. Where questions related to recurring themes, these were compiled into a set of internal 'Frequently Asked Questions'.

7.61 Local station managers were also encouraged to use their existing links with local organisations, partnerships and stakeholders to promote the IRMP proposals. Information resources and materials were supplied by the Planning & Intelligence teams to assist with this.

## 7.62 **Audiences Reached**

7.63 The following is an estimate of how many people the communication methods used will have reached. It is possible that we may have reached some people twice via the methods employed.

## 7.64 **Newspapers online/print**

- The Argus Newspaper- weekly circulation of 55,572
- Bexhill-on-Sea Observer – weekly circulation of 6,000
- Rye Observer – weekly circulation of 6,000
- Eastbourne Herald – weekly circulation on 21,400

## **Social Media**

### Twitter

- Total link clicks 218
- Impressions: 40,457
- Total engagements: 2,741

## Facebook

- People reached: 23,449
- Engagements: 1,408

## **Mail-out**

Total households reached: **20,655**

## **Total overall reach of communications activities >170,000**

### 7.65 Counter-material and other areas of note

7.66 Throughout the formal consultation period, there were a variety of other electronic and physical counter-materials that were produced and distributed. In the view of officers, some of these materials were potentially misleading or inaccurate. Comments received from both public and stakeholders were identified as being directly in response to the counter-material that had been produced. Unfortunately, some of the counter-material only provided links to online petitions and this therefore likely drew people away from giving us their informed views through the formal channels.

7.67 The Fire Brigades Union released a Vote of No Confidence in the IRMP proposals on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June stating that *'the delays proposed within these plans will directly contribute to the unnecessary loss of life at incidents we attend in the future'* and called for *'an immediate suspension and a full review of all of the proposals.'*

7.68 Consultation on the proposed changes also made national news:

- Prime Ministers Questions  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-52911345/pmqs-russell-moyle-and-johnson-on-fire-services-cuts>
- Sky News  
<https://twitter.com/fbunational/status/1265644334608678912>

## **8 POST-CONSULTATION**

8.1 Formal public consultation on the Fire Authority's draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2020-2025 'Planning for a Safer Future' closed on 19 June 2020.

8.2 There were a total of ten responses received up to 10 days after official close date which have also been included in the report. Eight of these were from members of public, with three of these writing in response to the letter they had received (the 2<sup>nd</sup> mail-out of the 10,000 that we sent out). The remaining two late responses were from Battle Town Council and the MP for Bexhill and Battle. The full responses can be found in Appendix F.

8.3 The teams involved in facilitating the consultation and communications processes have fully debriefed. Learning and suggestions for improvement will be

documented and developed to ensure that acquired (learned) knowledge from this consultation exercise can be applied in future consultation and engagement processes.

## 9 CONSULTATION COSTS

9.1 The Fire Authority approved the consultation and communication plan for 'Planning for a Safer Future' at its meeting on 23 April 2020. It was recognised at the time that the consultation plan had to be reviewed due to Covid-19 restrictions. This meant that the original costs of £27,000 increased to £45,700 which includes the additional spend of a residents' telephone survey, sending the second targeted letter in Uckfield, Crowborough and Newhaven, plus the full analysis and reporting on submissions by email, letter or telephone by ORS.

9.2 A budget of £30,000 for IRMP consultation was provided for in 2019/20 and carried forward into 2020/21. The balance of £19,000 will be funded from the grant provided by Government to alleviate the short-term increase in expenditure and shortfall in income relating to Covid-19.

9.3 The table below shows spend on consultation activities since 2010 and the respective response rates.

9.4

Consultation	Cost £'000	Responses
<i>Planning for a Safer Future 2020-2025 original costs</i>	27 <i>(23K ORS, 4K in house)</i>	
Additional cost attributed to COVID-19 revision of a telephone survey, targeted mail-outs & additional reporting	46 <i>(38K ORS, 8K in house)</i>	2,047
Attendance standards review 2018	22 <i>(18K ORS, 4K in house<sup>^</sup>)</i>	675
Your Service Your Voice 2017/20 IRMP	10 <i>(6K ORS, 4K in house<sup>**</sup>)</i>	588
Changing the Service Shaping our Future IRMP 2014	22	655
Hastings Review 2012	19	504
Rural Review 2010	30	347
<sup>^</sup> Excludes Facebook advertising costs due to inaccessibility & staff time		
<sup>**</sup> All other reviews included externally facilitated focus groups, this one did not		

## 10 PART 2 - OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND MODIFIED PROPOSALS

10.1 As outlined above, the public consultation process has been extremely comprehensive with valuable contributions received from partners, members of the public, and other organisations. In addition, significant feedback has been received from our staff and our representative bodies and, in parallel to the public consultation, senior officers have been engaged in meaningful and constructive dialogue with staff representative groups and trade unions, specifically with senior officials of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU).

- 10.2 Based on both the early findings of the consultation process and this ongoing dialogue with the FBU, officers have developed a set of modified proposals. The modified proposals address many of the concerns raised through the consultation process, as well as reduce a number of the impacts on our workforce; and it is those modified proposals which are presented here for Fire Authority decision.
- 10.3 It is vital that our available resources are used in the most effective way to mitigate the risks our communities face. In developing the modified proposals, officers have therefore remained focused on the original objectives and outcomes. This is critical, as this IRMP will take the Authority through the next five years to 2025 and will need to demonstrate how the Service will balance prevention, protection and response, mitigating risk within available resources, as well as forming the base on which to address the areas for improvement identified through the HMICFRS report.
- 10.4 As a reminder to Members, the key outcomes which would be achieved through the original proposals were detailed in CFA report 23 April 2020, agenda item 59 (see background papers previously provided to Members). The original proposals outlined a number of changes to the Service's service delivery model required in order to deliver these improvements, re-allocating resources more effectively against the risk profile. The 7 key areas of proposed change, which formed the basis of the public, stakeholder and staff consultation, are detailed above in para 5.3.
- 10.5 Whilst it is the view of officers that the underpinning risk and evidence base presented in the draft IRMP consultation remains valid, it is clear from the consultation responses that many respondents were concerned about a number of matters related to the original proposals and expressed concerns about them being progressed.
- 10.6 Discussions with the trade unions, specifically the FBU, have been constructive and meaningful. In parallel to the discussions on the main IRMP proposals, officers and FBU officials have been seeking to reach agreement on a range of new ways of working, policy changes and contractual arrangements which will be introduced in parallel with the implementation of the modified proposals. These agreements will bring about improved availability of our fire appliances, a significant increase in the level of prevention and protection activity, and greater emergency response resilience. It is on the basis of a number of these discussions, that officers have been able to re-work and modify the original proposals.
- 10.7 The modified proposals are derived from the options consulted on and the related consultation responses, and aim to strike the balance between driving necessary change and enabling reallocation of resources to risk, specifically providing more prevention and protection activity and better operational coverage across the Service and in Hastings. Effectiveness and efficiency will be improved, and our core on-call stations will have better availability and be more resilient. This, in turn, will enhance prevention, protection and response performance.
- 10.8 Aimed at enhancing our Service to the public, the modified proposals, if agreed by the Fire Authority, will be delivered through a five-year programme in order to

ensure the right resources are in the right place at the right time based on risk and evidence. The purpose of consultation is to listen to views and consider alternative approaches. Given the alternative views expressed by staff together with the strong feedback from the public and other organisations, the following options are recommended for approval by the Fire Authority.

## **11 MODIFIED PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE**

- 11.1 The following sections outline the final IRMP proposals for change, including identifying where the original proposal has been modified as a result of the consultation and engagement process outlined above.

Subject to agreement, the following recommendations will replace the original proposals contained within the draft IRMP and the formal Fire Authority document will be updated prior to publication.

### **11.2 Proposal 1 – Operational Resilience Plan (ORP)**

#### **11.3 This proposal remains unchanged**

- 11.4 We propose to enhance our operational resilience by increasing our core number of fire appliances available at the start of the day to 18. The Service's current approach, underpinned by operational policies, looks to provide 15 appliances. We are proposing to improve this.

- 11.5 Data analysis has clearly demonstrated that providing 18 fire appliances at strategic locations around the Service, will have the biggest impact on community risk, population and density index, overall activity and ability to reach critical incidents etc. This is the fundamental basis of the proposed ORP.

- 11.6 We will also plan to secure a further 6 fire appliances as far as possible for operational resilience purposes. These identified appliances do not cover such high-risk areas; however, they are still required to be available in times of high demand to provide resilience to the 18 immediate response appliances. The ORP will ensure these 6 appliances are maintained by introducing greater flexibility into the mobilising arrangements (giving longer for the crew to respond and therefore creating greater flexibility for our on-call staff) and through introducing improved 'on call' contracts.

- 11.7 Both the 18 immediate response and 6 resilience appliances will continue to be supported by the remaining 'on call' stations and appliances as they are today, and the availability of those stations will continue to be monitored through our central and local operations teams.

- 11.8 In order to support the delivery of these new arrangements we are proposing a number of new approaches to staff resourcing. We are proposing to enhance the flexibility of our workforce availability through the introduction of a "flexible resourcing pool" consisting of firefighters who will be posted to stations as necessary to cover for staff absences due to sickness, training or other matters affecting availability. In addition, and as an outcome of the ongoing dialogue,

these staff will also be available to provide specialist prevention and protection work in certain situations, enhancing our capacity in those areas.

11.9 We are also proposing to introduce new contractual arrangements for our on-call firefighters in order to enhance their availability. These contractual improvements will form part of an overall approach to focused recruitment and retention initiatives across our on-call service. We will therefore look to introduce:

- new contracts where required which are aligned to periods where cover is needed to maintain fire appliance availability
- a phased implementation of on-call “combined payment contracts” at those stations which support the 18 ORP appliances.

11.10 This proposal remains fundamentally unchanged. However, through dialogue and discussion, we have identified further contractual and resourcing options which will provide even greater opportunity to ensure the maximum number of fire appliances can be available more often.

11.11 **Proposal 2 - Changes to day crewed duty stations**

11.12 **This proposal has been modified from the original**

11.13 We are proposing to change staffing arrangements at our current day crewed fire stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield.

11.14 As detailed in the original report from April (see background papers), on these stations, firefighters currently work a combination of “positive” and “standby” hours over a 24-hour period. Positive hours are worked on the fire station and standby hours are worked on call from a location within a five minute ‘turn in’ time of the station (in the same way our on-call firefighters do). Two workgroups or “watches” of 6 staff cover an average of 42 daytime hours per week and remain on-call during evening periods helping to guarantee fire appliance availability.

11.15 In the original proposal we were considering introducing a ‘day only’ crewing model maintaining a 24/7 response from these stations through a different crewing structure. In that arrangement, full time firefighters would be on-station during the daytime Monday to Friday, with on-call firefighters providing cover in the evening and at weekends. From the public’s perspective, the only difference between the current day-crewed duty system and the proposed ‘day-only’ duty system, would have been the change from an on-station response during the day time at the weekend, to an on-call response during the ‘day time’ at the weekend.

11.16 Following feedback, dialogue and consultation, this original proposal has now been modified to enable continuation of a 7 day a week “day crewed” system, with immediate on-station response during the day at weekends, at the following stations:

- Bexhill
- Newhaven
- Crowborough

- Lewes
- Uckfield

Changes to the staffing compliment and working patterns will be brought forward with these stations migrating, over time, from the current 2 watch system utilising 12 staff, to a 1 watch system utilising 9 staff.

- 11.17 In line with the original proposal and as a consequence of its specific risk and demand profile, it is still recommended that Battle changes to a 5 day day-crewed system with an on-call response at weekends. The recommendation is that this would be in line with “option B” as detailed in the previous IRMP report presented to members in April (see background papers). This option involves one watch of 7 staff, providing and on-station response for 10.5 hours every weekday on a self-rostering shift pattern, as well as an out of hours off-station response in the evenings in the same way they do now. Cover over the weekend period will be provided by on-call staff who will also provide additional cover to the station during other periods.
- 11.18 Members will recognise the potential impacts on our staff from this proposal. The IRMP team and officers have been considering options to mitigate the impacts of these changes on staff and to develop a constructive consultation process with trade unions. Any necessary HR “protections” will be subject to further consultation and agreement and will be further developed over the coming months. The important point to note is that officers are now recommending that all existing day crewed staff retain their related allowances. This is because they will still be required to provide an off station on-call response overnight in the same way they do now. This recommendation substantially decreases any impact on current day crewed staff. Equally, there will be no requirement to impose compulsory transfers; existing staff will be able to remain on the station, on their current terms and conditions (albeit they will work a different working pattern) for as long as they wish to remain on that station. If further staff movements drop the staffing level to 8, the Service will consider, on a case by case basis, whether that new vacancy needs to be filled with a “day crewed” member of staff (providing out of hours off-station response and attracting the resultant allowances), or whether that vacancy can be filled with a day only member of staff, who would not provide out of hours off-station response and would therefore not attract the allowance. This is in recognition of our aging workforce and would support those members of staff who no longer wish to provide an operational response overnight. The criteria for allowing this will be predicated on sufficient on-call staffing across the station and other matters to be agreed.
- 11.19 **Proposal 3 – Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the operational fleet**
- 11.20 **This proposal has been modified from the original**
- 11.21 Every one of our 24 fire stations have at least one fire appliance and 9 stations have two appliances. Officers reviewed the usage and availability of these second fire appliances against the risk profile and concluded that the provision of

a second appliance at day-crewed and on-call stations was an over provision based on the risk and demand profile.

- 11.22 This proposal would affect: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield; along with the three maxi-cab stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst.
- 11.23 The original proposal looked to remove the 7 second appliances from these stations in order to ensure a more efficient use of our resources, lessening the demand on our future capital programme, reducing the need to borrow in the future, and allowing us to reinvest in other proposals being put forward (i.e. to fund the additional fire appliances in Hastings and Eastbourne, alongside a new ALP for Eastbourne)
- 11.24 Following feedback, dialogue and consultation, we have been able to amend the overall allocation of fleet resources to fire stations, in a way that will provide cover and provision in a different way to that originally proposed, whilst still allowing the Service to make best use of all of our operational vehicles.
- 11.25 Under the modified proposals, Bexhill, Crowborough, Uckfield and Newhaven will have an additional fire appliance located at the station. These appliances will be utilised as flexible Service-wide assets providing part of the Service's spare appliance fleet, as well as being operationally available at the stations for response to incidents, if required.
- 11.26 Other stations will also have access to an additional specialist operational vehicle so that Lewes, Battle, Rye, Heathfield, Seaford and Wadhurst maintain at least two operational vehicles, which will be operationally available at the stations for response to incidents, if required.
- 11.27 **Proposal 4 - We are proposing to change the way we crew stations in Hastings and introduce an additional fire appliance**
- 11.28 **This proposal has been modified from the original**
- 11.29 Both Bohemia Road and The Ridge community fire stations currently each have one fire appliance on an immediate 24-hour response.
- 11.30 In the original proposal, we proposed to:
- Introduce a 'day-crewed' system at The Ridge in Hastings, which would maintain a 24/7 response through a different crewing arrangement; and
  - Introduce a second, additional, fire appliance at Bohemia Road which would provide an enhanced 24/7 response; and
  - Change the crewing of the aerial ladder platform (ALP, high-reach vehicle) at Bohemia Road to a "shared crewing" model.
- 11.31 The Operational Response Review main report and corresponding individual station profiles, identified that Bohemia Road has a significantly higher risk profile than The Ridge and an opportunity was identified to realign our resources

accordingly. Bohemia Road station area ranks 2nd across the Service for the highest number of critical incidents and has had the most life-risk fire incidents over the last 9 years, surpassing Preston Circus in Brighton. It is a high-risk area and given its resource provision compared to the City, there is an imbalance, hence the proposed changes.

11.32 The key purpose of the proposed changes in Hastings were to facilitate the provision of a second, full time, fire appliance at Bohemia Road, increasing the staffing levels at that station accordingly. Introducing this additional appliance will significantly improve the risk cover for both Hastings station areas, building more resilience in the area.

11.33 Following feedback, consultation and dialogue, it is still recommended to enhance cover in Hastings through introducing a second full time fire appliance at Bohemia Road and increasing the staffing levels at that station.

11.34 It is still recommended that The Ridge fire station changes to a 7 day a week “day crewed” system, albeit with a 1 watch staffing level of 9 rather than 12 as originally suggested.

11.35 However, by modifying the overall staffing numbers across the 2 stations, we propose to maintain the dedicated “primary” crewing for the Bohemia Road ALP to provide immediate high-reach cover to the eastern part of our county area. In order to facilitate this aspect of the modified proposal, we need to increase the overall number of operational staff across both Hastings stations by 1.

11.36 **Proposal 5 – We are proposing to make changes to how we provide and crew specialist vehicles including aerial (high-reach) appliances**

11.37 **Aerial Appliances**

11.38 **This proposal has been modified from the original (see also Proposal 4 above)**

11.39 An Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) differs from a conventional fire appliance and is designed for operations where working from height is advantageous or a necessity. These appliances typically reach up to 32 metres in height (9-10 storeys) and are able to supply water or foam jets as well as a stable rescue platform. We propose to maintain three aerial appliances based, as now, in Brighton, Eastbourne and Hastings to ensure response is matched to risk, considering the different local risk profiles in the ORR.

11.40 Our analysis suggest we do need to make some improvements in Eastbourne. We are proposing to put a second, dedicated, fire appliance into Eastbourne and swap the existing aerial rescue pump (ARP) for a dedicated aerial ladder platform (ALP) in order to provide a better mix of resources based on the risks and demand profile within the town and surrounding areas.

11.41 Following consultation feedback and dialogue we propose to crew these aerals as follows:

- The City of Brighton & Hove                      Dedicated crew
- Hastings    Dedicated crew
- Eastbourne    Shared crewing model

**11.42 Other specialist capabilities**

11.43 As reported to Members previously, we also have a number of other “special” vehicles and capabilities. Many of these support our day to day core operational duties, others are there to provide an appropriate response to infrequent rescue scenarios such as large animal rescue or building collapse. The data analysis found that the majority of our specialist capabilities are already well placed.

11.44 We currently have a range of different vehicles, equipment and capabilities and we will look to continually review our options available to us so that we can tailor our approach to best suit each emergency. Specifically, there is further work being carried out in relation to our “technical rescue” capability. Technical rescue relates to a range of low frequency but complex rescue scenarios such as building collapse, road traffic collisions involving large goods vehicles etc.

11.45 The review of technical rescue capability, and broader specialist capability requirements, is ongoing and will report to the Operations Committee and then onto SLT in September. The outcomes of that work will link into the modified proposal 3 outlined above in relation to the provision of additional operational vehicles at certain stations.

**11.46 Proposal 6 – Previous IRMP Decisions**

**11.47 The proposals remain unchanged**

11.48 Previous IRMPs committed the Service to a number of initiatives and programmes of work. Most have been completed, however there are some which were ‘on hold’ until such time as the more comprehensive and current risk assessment had been completed through the ORR.

**11.49 Appliance Design**

11.50 A previous IRMP suggested that a smaller type of fire appliance could be provided to Preston Circus and The Ridge fire stations. This proposal was later subsumed into a broader project to review appliance sizes and capabilities across the whole Service. This, in particular, was looking at options to introduce a “three-tiered approach” to appliance design; essentially, small, medium and large appliances. This was in line with changes taking place nationally and was seeking to ensure that appliances were designed and built in the most economical way based on local need.

11.51 The evidence from the ORR, alongside the impact of the other proposals for change in this IRMP, mean that it is no longer necessary or effective to pursue such a change.

11.52 Following the consultation process, this proposal has not changed and the recommendation to the Fire Authority remains that the Service does not look to introduce a three-tiered approach to appliance design at this stage.

### 11.53 **Managing Demand**

11.54 The current IRMP (Your Service Your Voice 2017-2020) noted that by reducing the demand on our Service for calls that are not deemed appropriate to attend, we will free up our resources to undertake meaningful community safety work that will make people safer.

11.55 The related work was completed and as a result, the Service is recommending managing demand across three operational areas to reduce the number of unnecessary mobilisations which impact on our other work, businesses and commerce. These changes will release capacity into prevention, protection and training.

### 11.56 **Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)**

11.57 **This proposal remains unchanged.**

11.58 We average around 9,200 operational responses to incidents each year. Automatic fire alarm (AFA) systems account for 34% of all these calls. 96% of the calls initially categorised as AFAs turn out to be false alarms – these are often described as “unwanted fire signals”.

11.59 Only 2% of calls to AFAs in non-domestic premises turn out to be fires (average of 32 per year). Of these 32 fires, 20 do not require any firefighting action (the fire will already be out when the crews arrive). The remaining 12 require varying amounts of firefighting action, ranging from an item being taken outside, use of portable extinguishers, and use of main jets. On average, only one call per year to an AFA in non-domestic property requires use of main firefighting jets.

11.61 Members will note that our HMICFRS report was critical of the Service in relation to this matter. We have the largest number of AFA calls compared to our family group average (our family group of comparable and similar sized fire and rescue services) and attendance at these particular call types are widely considered to be an unnecessary drain on valuable fire service resources.

11.62 They divert essential service resources rendering them unavailable, with the possibility of delayed attendance at genuine emergencies; they create unnecessary risk to fire crews and members of the public when appliances are responding under emergency conditions; they are disruptive to work routines, particularly community and business fire safety activity, and training; they have a demoralising effect on personnel attending a high number of false alarms, and instil a culture of complacency with an expectation of a wasted trip; they impose an additional financial burden on the Service, particularly salary and vehicle fleet costs; and they adversely impact upon other employers who release on-call staff for such calls.

- 11.63 Many other Services have already introduced sweeping changes to how they manage calls to premises with AFA systems. A number have simply stopped attending completely and will only attend if there is a confirmed fire at all premises with AFA systems.
- 11.64 We are proposing a more measured and risk-based approach. This includes appointing a subject matter expert on a fixed term contract to lead an engagement and education project with property owners and responsible persons, in order to allow them to better understand and comply with their responsibilities. Further, we will be introducing a more robust call challenge process via our control centre in line with best practice.
- 11.65 In relation to non-attendance, we are proposing that the Service no longer automatically attend calls to fire alarms operating in low risk commercial premises. These premises are classified as commercial (non-domestic) premises with no sleeping risk, such as offices, shops, factories, pubs, clubs and restaurants. In these premises, when people are present, they are able to check for fire and call back on 999 to confirm; we would then attend as a confirmed fire call with the full attendance of appliances. When people are not present, such as when the business is closed at night, then the life risk is very low.
- 11.66 Finally, we are also reviewing whether, at some point in the future, we should charge a fee for attending unwanted fire signals in some other premises types, in some circumstances. If the Fire Authority are minded to consider such an approach, this would be subject to a separate public consultation in due course.
- 11.67 **Lift releases**
- 11.68 **This proposal remains unchanged.**
- 11.69 We are regularly called to release people from lifts that have malfunctioned. We want to engage and communicate with building owners to ensure that they are improving the maintenance of their lifts and have in place suitable arrangements for releasing people in their lifts.
- 11.70 We are proposing to develop a risk assessed operational policy which would introduce a delay in responding to some incidents where people are not vulnerable or in distress, to give the building owner time to resolve the issue themselves in line with their responsibilities. We are also considering whether, at some point in the future, we should charge a fee for attending such calls. This would bring us in line with a significant number of other fire and rescue services. If the Fire Authority are minded to consider such an approach, this would be subject to a separate public consultation in due course.
- 11.71 Members will want to note that we will continue to attend calls to release vulnerable members of the public from lifts when appropriate and necessary.
- 11.72 **Trapped birds**
- 11.73 **This proposal remains unchanged.**

- 11.74 We already work alongside animal charities to reduce the number of calls we get to birds trapped in netting. However, we continue to attend a small number which tie-up our resources for a period of time and restrict our ability to attend incidents involving risk to human lives. It is often necessary to use aerial ladder platforms and other specialist equipment, making this service disproportionately time consuming and expensive. Therefore, we are proposing that we should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting in the future.
- 11.75 **Proposal 7 – We are proposing to make changes to the duty system that is operated at our six fire stations that are crewed 24/7 on the traditional 4 watch system**
- 11.76 **This proposal has been modified**
- 11.77 This proposal is about the contractual arrangements of the firefighters who work on our six full time shift fire stations at Bohemia Road Hastings, Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus, Roedean and The Ridge Hastings; and the resulting and crewing arrangements.
- 11.78 The current wholetime shift duty system requires a firefighter to work two day shifts followed by two night shifts, then with four days off duty. There are now alternatives to this system in operation across the country and this IRMP process has provided an opportunity to examine if an alternative system would improve how we might deliver our services in a more efficient manner, without detriment to the speed or weight of our operational response.
- 11.79 With the exception of The Ridge (which we propose will become a day crewed station - see Proposal 4), the original proposals identified two options for change. One option (option A) would impact on the remaining 5 shift stations; the second option (option B) would only impact on the three stations in the City.
- 11.80 **Option A**
- 11.81 Option A would be to implement a “Flexible Rostering Duty System” at 5 shift fire stations.
- 11.82 **Option B**
- 11.83 Option B would be to implement a “group crewing” system at Preston Circus, Hove and Roedean. This system enables the Service to provide the same level of response with marginally fewer posts. The term “group crewing” indicates that resources are reduced in one station and enhanced in another, in order to allow the group of stations to operate on a self-sufficient basis for managing operational cover.
- 11.84 Following consultation, feedback and dialogue, the modified proposals will no longer propose changes to the staffing arrangements on all shift stations and, instead, will recommend option B - a change to “group crewing” in the three City stations only.

- 11.85 Group crewing in the City will change the staffing numbers across the three City stations from 104 to 100. Two of the four released posts will be transferred into business fire safety in the City, and the other two posts will be transferred to the flexible resourcing pool in order to improve Service wide operational cover.
- 11.86 These changes will facilitate additional resources being put into business fire safety inspection work, which is fundamental to enhancing safety in the City.

## 12 **OUTCOMES ACHIEVED**

12.1 As outlined earlier, in developing the modified proposals, officers have remained focused on the original objectives; keeping in mind what was hoped to be achieved through the original proposals. The following table highlights the extent to which that has been achieved:

12.2

Outcome	Original Proposals	Modified Proposals
Operational Resilience Plan	✓	✓
Flexible Resourcing Pool	✓	✓
Combined salary contracts	✓	✓
2 <sup>nd</sup> fire appliance into Bohemia Road	✓	✓
More efficient use of fleet including ability to fund new vehicles without borrowing	✓	✓
Eastbourne resources appropriate to risk	✓	✓
Increased capacity to do more prevention and protection work	✓	✓
Improvements to on-call (part time) service	✓	✓
Flexibility to meet financial challenges	✓	Alternative options will need to be prepared

- 12.3 It is the view of officers, that the modified proposals still deliver the original outcomes but do so in a way that addresses many of the concerns raised during the consultation, mitigate risk and reduce impact on our staff.
- 12.4 However, it is important to note that, whilst the original proposals were not designed as a savings programme, it was the case that if all the original proposals had been taken together, they would have presented the Fire Authority with significant flexibility in terms of managing any future financial pressures.
- 12.5 Members will be aware that, in line with the rest of the public sector, there is a high level of uncertainty over future public sector funding, and this uncertainty is

increasing as we begin to understand the short term and longer-term impacts of COVID19.

- 12.6 Whilst the modified proposals do now more clearly separate out this IRMP from future financial planning, it is the case that the Fire Authority will need to consider further options for change in the future, if it is to be able to set a balanced budget through the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- 12.7 This may require the Fire Authority to revert, in a phased and risk-based way, to the original IRMP proposals, and it will certainly require the Authority to consider alternative and additional service-wide savings options which will inevitably affect the range of services the Fire Authority will be able to offer.
- 12.8 An indication of the resulting financial impact of the modified proposal in relation to the original proposals will be outlined later in this paper (see section 14) and also be reflected in the MTFP paper later on today's agenda.
- 12.9 Members will note that the change in the financial impacts of the proposals stem from the change in the number of posts potentially released through the modified proposals. Subject to agreement, the final number of posts released through the modified proposals would be 10. This compares to circa 27 under the original proposals. Further details are provided in Appendix J.

### **13. HIGH-LEVEL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

- 13.1 Analysis of the modified proposals as outlined above has included a full revision of the original a high-level impact analyses undertaken against six key areas (equalities, training, HR, engineering services, estates and finance).
- 13.2 Outcomes from these revisions have not presented any fundamental barriers to progressing with the new modified proposals. However, the process has enabled a detailed series of actions to be identified which will be used during the detailed "design" phase of the implementation project in order to support successful implementation.
- 13.3 The revised high-level equalities impact assessment encompassing all of the modified proposals is attached as Appendix I. Emerging evidence from the consultation process has enriched the EqIA and its action plan. Although no additional adverse impacts to our staff or communities have surfaced, the action plan will be central to the design of each IRMP workstream subject to Fire Authority approval.
- 13.4 More detailed equalities impact assessments specific to each of the proposals will be further developed and refined during the design phase of project implementation.
- 13.5 A detailed financial assessment is provided later in this report (see section 14).
- 13.6 The key headline from the remaining impact assessments is that there are no legal, operational, financial, or resourcing barriers which would prevent the modified proposals, as outlined, being implemented. There are, of course,

significant impacts to consider, particularly in relation to HR matters, which will require further analysis through the design phase of the implementation project in order to support a robust and evidence-based delivery plan. As with all the impact assessments, the development of a detailed implementation timeline will be critical to successfully managing impacts and implications.

- 13.7 This work will be undertaken in collaboration with staff groups and representative bodies during the “design” phase of the implementation project subject to Fire Authority approval of the recommended options. An outline assessment has been made of the project implementation and planning requirements and the headlines in relation to this are provided in section 15 below.

## **14 FINANCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 14.1 The finance impact assessment has been based both on the core proposals within the IRMP and the other functional impact assessments completed as part of the review. This has proved complex and it is clear that further refinement will be required especially after more detailed implementation planning is completed in the design phase.

- 14.2 Nevertheless, it seeks to assess the material financial implications of the proposals, in revenue terms over the period to 2025/26 when implementation will be complete (and full savings will be realised), and in capital terms over the life of the current five-year capital programme.

- 14.3 In consultation with the ORR Board and other stakeholders, a number of key assumptions have been made which underpin the assessment, as follows:

- The proposed flexible resourcing pool will be populated using any posts released from other proposals, until the maximum level of 8 is achieved. The successful implementation of the ORP (proposal 1) is linked to this assumption.
- Posts will be moved on the establishment to ensure only vacant posts are either removed as savings or reallocated to new functions e.g. flexible resourcing pool.
- Changes to day crewed stations will be implemented in a way that aims to ensure that no staff are displaced against their wishes, or require pay protection arrangements.
- Hastings improvements will be delivered together to minimise the impacts on post holders at these locations. Movements of resources into Business Safety will be implemented after the flexible resourcing pool is populated.
- The implementation time-line is indicative until the completion of the design phase, however it is anticipated that implementation of the proposals will begin in April 2021.

- 14.4 Final proposals from the review of special appliances have yet to be presented and are not reflected in the impact on the Capital Programme.

- 14.5 Changes to ways of working, policy and contractual arrangements which have been developed following engagement with the FBU will be introduced in parallel

with the implementation of the modified proposals but are not at this stage included in the assessment of the impact on the revenue budget. They have the potential to provide further flexibility either to manage future financial savings requirements or re-investment in the Service.

14.6 The financial impact of the modified proposals on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme is summarised in the table below. From a revenue perspective the modified proposals deliver a reduction in cost of £0.525m by 2025/26 or a total of £1.125m over the period (original proposals £2.032m and £5.660m – see also Appendix J). The cost of the Capital Programme reduces by £0.568m over the period (original proposals £0.603m). This has the potential to reduce forecast borrowing costs by approximately £0.040m per annum by the end of the period.

14.7 If the modified proposals are approved, the revenue and capital impacts will be built into the budget proposals for 2021/22 and the revised Medium Term Finance Plan. The revenue impact in 2020/21 will be treated as a budget pressure and will be managed by SLT within the existing approved revenue budget.

#### 14.8 Summary of Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Impacts

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
<b>Revenue Impact</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Modified Proposals	25	44	-74	-171	-424	-525
Original Proposals (Upper forecast)	25	-83	-592	-1,261	-1,610	-2,139
Difference	0	127	518	1,090	1,186	1,614
	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Capital Impact</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Modified Proposals	71	-74	-600	35	0	-568
Original Proposals	86	-74	-685	70	0	-603
Difference	-15	0	85	-35	0	35

14.9 As noted elsewhere in this report, there remains significant uncertainty about future funding for the fire service and this has only been exacerbated by the impact of Covid 19. The outcome of the Spending Review being conducted by Government, which will cover a three-year period from 2021-22 onwards, is unlikely to be known until late autumn and we are not expecting the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement until late December. A paper elsewhere on this agenda sets out the potential scale of the savings required to balance the budget (up to circa £1.6m in 2021/22 and £2.8m by 2024/25). This may require the Authority to reconsider the original IRMP proposals which have the potential to release further revenue savings of the order of £1.5m over and above those set out in the table at para 14.8.

## 15 IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT PLANNING

- 15.1 Based upon the magnitude and complexity of the range of modified proposals, it has been important to prepare an indicative timeline to help understand the interdependencies between each proposal.
- 15.2 This has helped to identify timeframes where definition, design and delivery can take place without compromise, dictating a pace of change that maximises the opportunity to achieve the projected outcomes.
- 15.3 Further detailed work will be required in relation to the impact assessments, planning assumptions, policy implications, delivery timeline and implementation options. This work will be completed principally during the 'design' phase of the implementation project subject to Fire Authority approval of the recommended options.
- 15.4 Governance arrangements that oversee implementation and delivery of each IRMP workstream will be supported by a medium-term project plan to capture emerging issues and maintain the pace of change.
- 15.5 It is likely that the first proposal will 'go live' from the 1st April 2021.

## **16 CONCLUSION**

- 16.1 The Service has recognised through the Integrated Risk Management Planning process that change to the service delivery operating model is required to enable reform and improve our service to the public of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.
- 16.2 In June 2019, HMICFRS undertook an inspection of the Service and publicly reported its finding in December 2019, identifying a number of areas for improvement. The modified proposals in this IRMP, if agreed, will make a positive impact in these areas as follows:
- *The service needs to improve its approach to preventing fires and other risks. It should make sure that staff complete home safety visits promptly.* – the additional resources and ways of working delivered through the IRMP will support all functions of the Service including prevention.
  - *The service needs to improve the ways in which it protects the public through fire regulation.* – the additional resources and ways of working delivered through the IRMP will support all functions of the Service including protection.
  - *The service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands the benefits better.* – the additional resources and ways of working delivered through the IRMP will support all functions of the Service including prevention.
  - *The service could do more to reduce the number of fire false alarms it attends, as these are a burden on its resources* – proposal 6 will contribute to improvement in this area.
  - *The service should improve the availability of its on-call fire engines to respond to incidents* – Proposal 1, specifically the ORP, plus the

various other improvements identified to support our on-call service will support improvement in this area.

- *The service needs to ensure that it allocates its resources appropriately and prioritises activities that address the risks identified in its integrated risk management plan* - the additional resources and ways of working delivered through the IRMP will support all functions of the Service including protection.

HMICFRS will be returning in 2021/22 and will be expecting to see how those areas for improvement have been addressed.

- 16.3 The outcomes of the public consultation have been independently reviewed and have been considered, with the purpose of the consultation to allow the public and staff an opportunity to comment on the proposals and present other ideas as to how the Service may be able to meet those requirements, outcomes and benefits. The modified proposals support the delivery of the Authority purpose and commitments
- 16.4 At its meeting on 23 April 2020, the Authority agreed to commence public consultation on the draft IRMP. This gave a valuable opportunity for consultees to respond within the confines of the proposals identified by the Service as meeting the Integrated Risk Management Plan requirements. The above sections of this report reflect that feedback and demonstrates that implementation of a revised set of proposals, based on those elements that have been subject to consultation, will satisfy the risks identified in the Integrated Risk Management Plan, many of the HMICFRS findings and the purpose and commitments of this Fire Authority.
- 16.5 The adoption of the final and modified proposals will result in the following benefits, helping us to and deliver our purpose of “making our communities safer” through “Planning for a Safer Future”.
- 16.6
- We are proposing to maintain 24 fire stations
  - We are proposing to improve our risk cover and resilience by enhancing the 24/7 availability of some fire appliances that have historically had limited availability.
  - We will balance our resources across the Service to reinvest in more:
    - prevention work (e.g. home safety)
    - protection work (e.g. business safety)
    - training (e.g. firefighter safety)
  - We are proposing to have the right specialist vehicles and equipment so we are ready to respond to all types of incidents.
  - We are proposing to introduce a second fire appliance into Hastings Bohemia Road to improve risk cover and make residents in that area even safer.
  - We are proposing to introduce another dedicated fire appliance into Eastbourne and swap the existing aerial rescue pump (ARP) for a dedicated aerial ladder platform (ALP).

16.8 If agreed, the draft IRMP document (see appendix A) will be updated to reflect the changes made and published as the Authority IRMP 2020-2025.