



East Sussex Fire Authority

Corporate Plan 2024/25

We Make Communities Safer

Contents

About East Sussex Fire and Fire Authority	8
Members of the Fire Authority	9
Delivering our purpose and commitments.....	10
Commitment number 1 - Delivering High Performing Services	13
Commitment number 2 - Engage with our communities	18
Commitment number 3 –	21
Have a safe and valued workforce.....	21
Commitment number 4 - Making effective use of our resources	24
Our Finances	30
Contact us	33

Welcome

Welcome to our Corporate Plan for 2024/25. This Plan brings together East Sussex Fire Authority's plans and priorities for 2024/25 and includes the progress of those set out in our Integrated Risk Management Plan 2021-25: Planning for a Safer Future, which was agreed in September 2020. The new plans and priorities that will be identified in the next Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-30 will be published next year.

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service consistently delivers exceptional services to both the public and visitors in East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove. Our purpose is **to make our communities safer**. All work is aligned to one of our four commitments listed below:

Delivering high performing services
Engaging our communities
Have a safe and valued workforce
Making effective use of our resources

The organisational culture of the fire sector has recently come under scrutiny, highlighted in the 2023 Culture Spotlight report and the recent Misconduct report by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). We are unwavering in our commitment to a fully inclusive culture and take a zero-tolerance approach to any form of exclusion or misconduct. We continue to embed our Leadership and Behaviour Framework and promote positive behaviours across the Service.

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service is a positive, safe, and supportive workplace. We continue to improve how it feels to work with us by ensuring our values, leadership and behavioural framework and code of ethics are embedded in all that we do. This includes incorporating learning from the experience of others in addition to our internal review processes to ensure continuous improvement.

As we near the completion of the final year of our IRMP 2020/25, this Corporate Plan outlines the remaining commitments still to be delivered. We plan against a trend towards an ever-growing and aging population, the effects of climate change, the rising demand on health and social care services and an escalation in incidents relating to mental health. Our strategies set out how we will meet the changes in the risk and vulnerabilities faced by the public we serve. The activities contained in this plan ensure we continue to deliver an excellent Fire and Rescue Service to our communities to make them safer.

The year ahead



Like all fire and rescue services, we continue to face significant financial challenges, yet we remain committed to providing an efficient and effective service by continually exploring service improvements and efficiencies alongside opportunities for collaboration and partnership working.

Over the period 2010 to 2024 we have saved more than £11.876m from our annual budgets, it is now anticipated that a further £2.164m saving is required over the next five years. This is set out in our Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2028/29.

Dawn Whittaker Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive



We are committed to ensuring value for money through collaboration and partnership opportunities. We share a command-and-control capability with Surrey and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services and this partnership means that together we continue to explore opportunities for efficiencies, improved services and better outcomes for all of our communities.

Nationally, like other fire and rescue services, we are learning and improving in light of the findings of the Grenfell and Manchester Arena Inquiries, however we are confident that our recent and continued investment in our protection team will stand us in good stead to meet the Inquiry recommendations and any further future challenges.

Amanda Evans Chair of East Sussex Fire Authority

Service Priorities

We have set the following priorities for 2024/25, these are:

- **Sustainable funding** – reduce costs, improve productivity, explore alternative funding opportunities
- **Deliver Future Foundations** – Phase 1 includes implementing the holistic change model, achieve identified savings, implement estates options for HQ, review operational training
- **Deliver CRMP 2025-30** – to be agreed by the fire authority in 2026, setting out how we will **address risk in our communities through our prevention, protection and response services**
- **Crewing** – improve staff availability, reduce sickness and absence, refresh our policies, provide improved Logistic and Control Support
- **Service Cultural reform** – delivery of our employee engagement roadmap. Provide effective leadership – at all levels through the Service.

Future years will bring many more changes and challenges for our Service, but we are confident that our planning and preparation will ensure we continue to provide effective high-quality services to the public.

We are always keen to hear the views of our communities, please send in your comments using the contact information at the back of this document.

About East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

We have 24 fire stations and a fleet of fire engines and other operational vehicles. We employ just over 720 staff; 552 are firefighters, and the remainder are specialist support staff. We attend and resolve over 10,000 emergency incidents each year; including fires in buildings, complex rescue incidents involving road traffic collisions, hazardous materials, buildings collapsing and rescuing people trapped in water.

Our fire stations cover the risk of the local area and provide resilience across the County of East Sussex and the City of Brighton and Hove. We have three models for staffing our stations which are based on the risk of incidents happening in the local area:

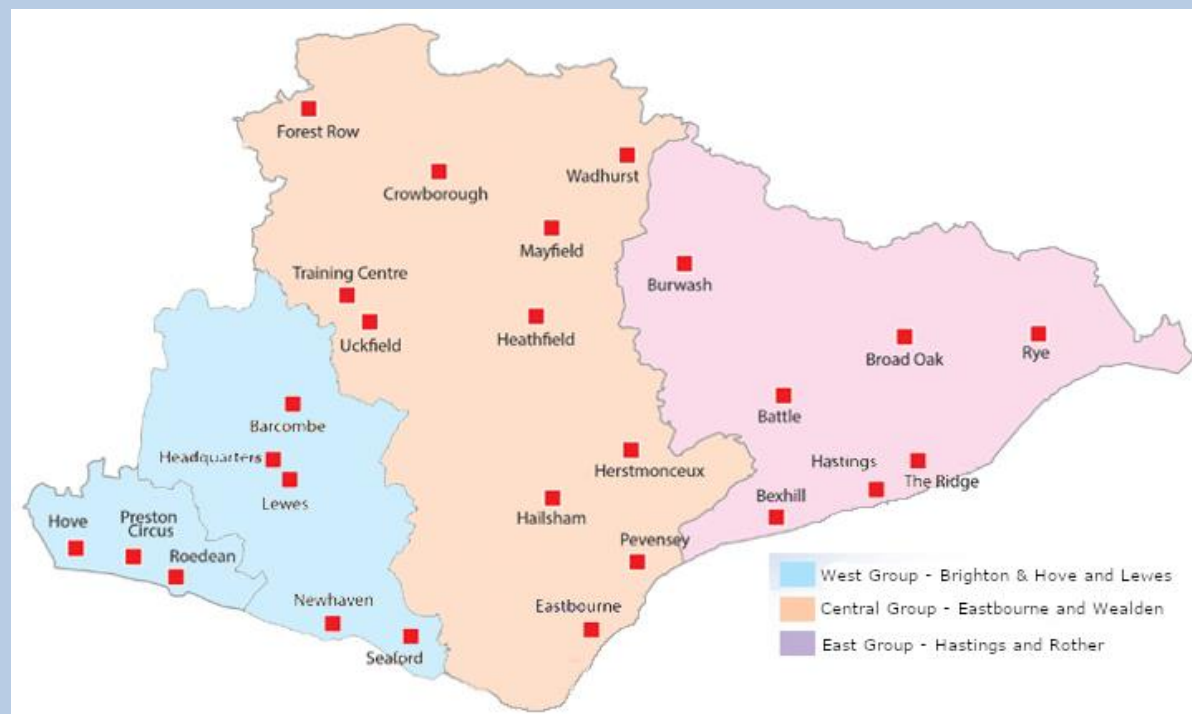
- Wholetime where crews are available on immediate response 24/7
- On-call where crews respond to an “alerter” telling them to go and respond to the fire station
- Day crewed where crews are available on a mix of immediate response and “alerter” response.

Our area is split into three geographical groups, with each containing two of the six districts that make up our service area:

- West Group: Brighton and Hove, and Lewes
- Central Group: Wealden and Eastbourne
- East Group: Rother and Hastings.

In addition to our operational resources, we have Protection offices located in Hastings and Hove, with a joint Protection and Prevention office located in Eastbourne. We also have a Service Training Centre located in Maresfield.

We have attendance standards that set out how quickly we will respond to you in an emergency.



Our attendance standards are:

- From when a call is received until the first fire appliance arrives at an incident with an 'on-station' response should be within 10 minutes 70% of the time
- From when a call is received until the first fire appliance arrives at an incident with an 'on-call' response should be within 15 minutes 70% of the time.



About East Sussex Fire and Fire Authority

East Sussex Fire Authority (the Authority) is a statutory body, made up of elected Councillors from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC). There are 18 councillors, of which 12 are from ESCC and 6 are from BHCC. The Authority normally meets five times a year, with an annual general meeting in June. The dates of the meetings and information about how you can attend meetings and what is discussed can be found here:

[Browse Meetings, 2000 - Modern Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://moderngov.co.uk/Meetings/2000-Modern-Council)

The role of the Authority is to ensure it discharges its statutory responsibilities and that the services provided by the Service are delivered economically, efficiently and effectively and meet the needs of the communities we serve. Under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 the Authority is legally required to provide fire safety advice in order to reduce the risk of death, serious injury and property related losses to the community. It must also make provision for rescuing people in the event of road traffic collisions and for protecting people from serious harm arising from road traffic collisions.

The Authority is legally responsible for the enforcement of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRFSO) which is applicable across England and Wales. This Order places the responsibility on individuals within an organisation to carry out risk assessments to identify, manage and reduce the risk of fire within public and commercial buildings.

The reports released by the Grenfell Tower Inquiry have significantly impacted legislation and regulations in the UK, particularly concerning fire safety and building standards. Here are some key changes:

- The Fire Safety Act 2021 – Clarified that external walls, structural walls, flat front doors and balconies are all to be considered with a fire risk assessment required by the RRFSO
- Building Safety Act 2022 - This Act introduced a new regulatory framework for building safety, including the establishment of the Building Safety Regulator to oversee the safety and performance of buildings. It also introduced a requirement for all fire risk assessments and fire safety arrangements to be recorded
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 - These regulations implement many of the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's Phase 1 report. They include requirements for building owners to provide fire safety instructions to residents, risk information including floor plans to the Fire Service and ensure regular inspections of fire doors and lifts.

The Authority is also a designated Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This Act requires emergency responders in England and Wales to co-operate in maintaining a public Community Risk Register produced by Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF). The SRF enables responders to consult, collaborate and share information with each other to facilitate planning and response to emergencies.

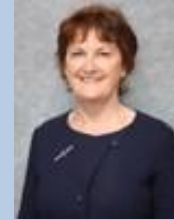
Members of the Fire Authority



Chair – Amanda Evans

Labour

Brighton and Hove City (BHCC)



Vice Chair - Carolyn Lambert

Liberal Democrats

East Sussex County Council (ESCC)

Brighton and Hove City (BHCC) Councillors

Mohammed
Asaduzzaman

Labour



Raphael Hill
Green Party



Ty Goddard
Labour



Jackie
O'Quinn
Labour



Carol
Theobald
Conservative



East Sussex County (ESCC) Councillors

Abul Azad

Independent



Chris
Dowling
Conservative



Nuala Geary
Conservative



Wendy
Maples
Green Party



Sarah
Osborne
Liberal
Democrats



Peter Pragnell

Conservative



Paul
Redstone
Conservative



Phil Scott
Labour



Stephen
Shing
Independent
Democrats



Sorrell
Marlow-
Eastwood
Conservative



John Ungar

Liberal
Democrats



Delivering our purpose and commitments

Our purpose is **‘to make our communities safer’**

We have four commitments which set out what we want to achieve for our communities to make them safer. As a publicly funded organisation, people rightly expect us to use our resources responsibly and efficiently. Our Service plays a vital role in the safety and wellbeing of our community. Our purpose and commitments set out how we will deliver against challenging targets within an ever changing societal, political and financial environment.

Our Commitments

Delivering high performing services

We will use our resources to achieve the best level of safety for people and businesses by:

- Responding quickly to emergencies
- Ensuring plans and resources are in place to provide a flexible, efficient and resilient response to emergency incidents
- Using intelligence and data to match resources to risk and demand.

Engage with our communities

We will use our trusted reputation to deliver educational initiatives and campaigns ensuring:

- We collaborate with partners to promote home and fire safety, business safety, road safety, water safety, and health and wellbeing initiatives linked to core functions
- More people and businesses will be better prepared in an emergency situation.

Have a safe and valued workforce

We will ensure our people are safe and are provided with the right equipment, training and skills:

- Our workforce will be competent and able to deliver our purpose and commitments
- Our culture embraces change, reflects our values, promotes leadership and is inclusive.

Making effective use of our resources

We will become a more efficient service by:

- Ensuring all our resources are managed effectively and focused on delivering our purpose and commitments
- Improving our productivity
- Seeking new sources of income and funding.

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

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



Code of Ethics



The National Fire Chiefs Council and the Local Government Association introduced a Core Code of Ethics (Core Code) to guide all Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) employees in their day-to-day conduct, providing professional standards of practice and behaviour to carry out business honestly and with integrity and to underpin organisational culture.

The Core Code reflects best practice principles, underpins the way we serve our communities, carry out our role, and work together. The FRS Core Code of Ethics identifies five primary ethical principles that are specifically applicable to the FRS. Each of these primary principles is described by a statement that, taken together, signify what good practice by all employees of the FRSs will look like. They lay out the precise forms of ethical conduct and behaviour that every FRS will adhere to in all its activities and in ensuring its employees feel valued and respected.

The Five Fire and Rescue Service Ethical Principles

- Putting Our Communities First: We put the interest of the public, the community and service users first.
- Integrity: We act with integrity including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do.
- Dignity and Respect: Making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.
- Leadership: We are all positive role models, always demonstrating flexibility and resilient leadership. We are all accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI): We continually recognise and promote the value of EDI both within the FRSs and the wider communities in which we serve. We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations, and celebrate difference.

We believe the Core Code of Ethics will help us serve our communities and make our Service an even better place to work. It will help everyone to display and promote good behaviours. We expect everyone in our Service to respect and follow the Core Code. This includes those working with, or on behalf of, the Service.

Commitment number 1 - Delivering High Performing Services

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This commitment to the public includes key areas of our work, to PREVENT, PROTECT and RESPOND.

In an emergency, dialling 999 will ensure we respond promptly. However, many people are unaware that a significant part of our role is to prevent incidents before they occur. We engage in various activities aimed at enhancing community safety.

While our primary duty is to respond to emergencies, our goal is to minimise the need for such responses. We focus on preventing fires and other emergencies through a range of services designed to educate and assist community members in safeguarding their homes and businesses. Whether it's teaching children or raising fire safety awareness among business owners, our efforts significantly reduce risks and save lives.

Each year, we conduct thousands of Safe and Well visits. The visits consider health, social, and lifestyle factors alongside fire risks, allowing us to provide the necessary support and advice. By collaborating with partners and other agencies, we identify the most vulnerable individuals in our communities, ensuring our resources are used efficiently and effectively.

During these visits, we discuss various topics with residents, including fire safety, physical and mental health, wellbeing, and general lifestyle choices. We also install smoke alarms where needed.

We partner with numerous organisations that contribute to improving individual wellbeing following our referrals. Additionally, we run a variety of preventative campaigns and interventions, focusing on road and water safety, supporting businesses, and reducing fire-related deaths and injuries in homes by highlighting the risks associated with living alone.

Annually, we audit 1,000 businesses and other non-domestic premises to enforce fire safety legislation, a legal duty that helps keep people safe in their homes and other buildings.

The tragic Grenfell Tower fire has underscored the importance of enforcing fire safety laws, and we are committed to increasing our efforts in this area.



What we've achieved 2023/24

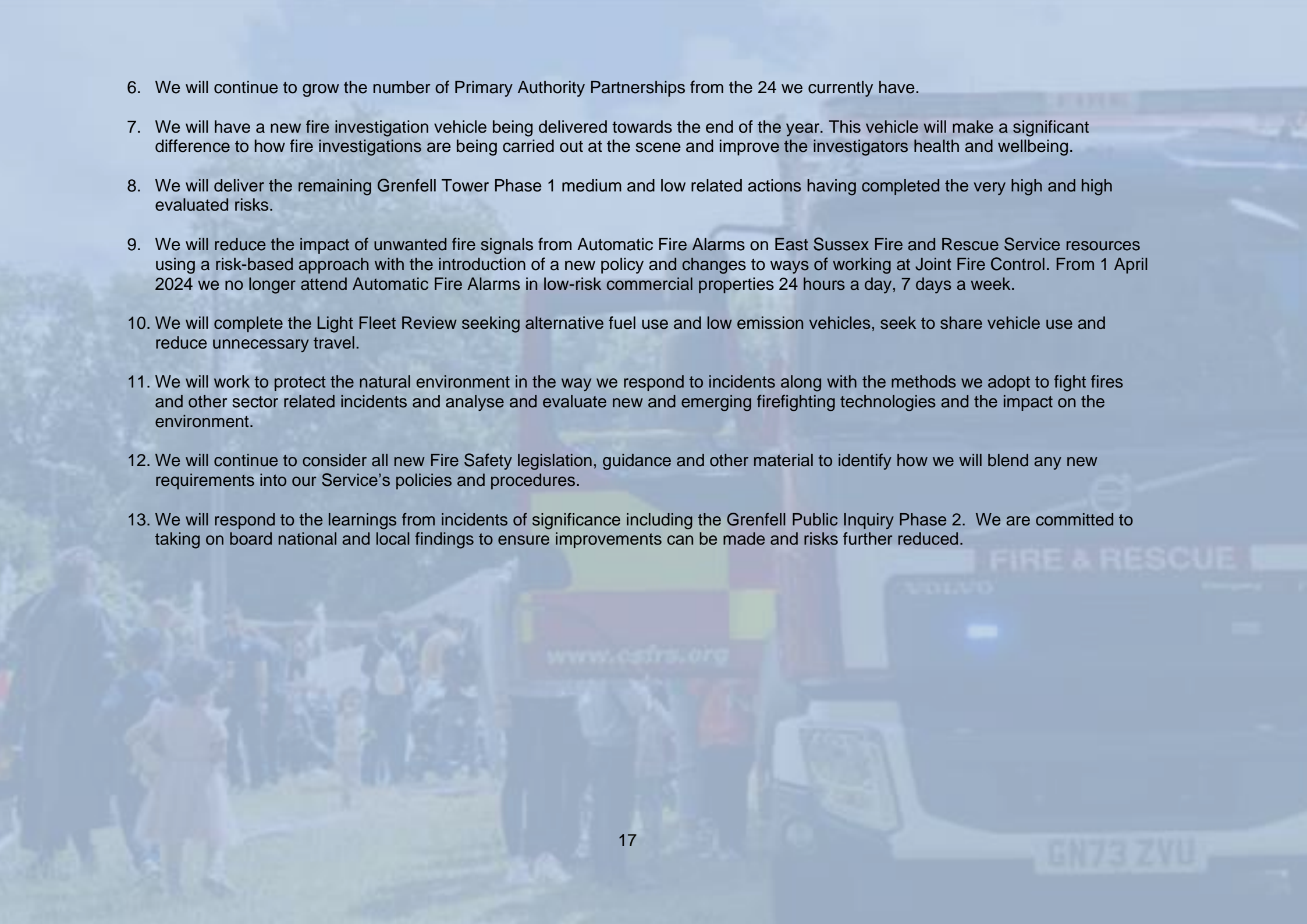
- ✓ We continued the implementation of our 2020-25 Integrated Risk Management Plan, 'Planning for a safer future' including changes to crewing arrangements in the city and our day crewed stations and the introduction of a Flexible Resource Pool. The introduction of the FRP has helped us to better align our resources to risk whilst reducing costs. The FRP are deployed to support response, prevention and protection activities. They are deployed by our Logistics and Control Support team to ensure that they are utilised efficiently to support Service Delivery.
- ✓ Together with our blue-light partners we have delivered joint command training to commanders from all three emergency services to improve the way we work together. The concept is embedded into our risk assessments and guidance, and we aim to test and exercise jointly in realistic environments. In late 2023 and early 2024 we participated in joint JESIP training with our neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services and Surrey and Sussex Police.
- ✓ In 2023/24 we delivered on the majority of our performance targets. We delivered over 500 fire safety audits, met 99% of our consultation targets and responded to complaints within agreed timescales. Over 50% of our fire safety audits are coming out as non-compliant, which means that we are targeting the correct premises. However, it also means we have a challenge to educate the community around compliance rather than enforcing it after we find the issues. This is relevant to both the business community, property owners and even our Local Authority partners.
- ✓ In 2023/24 we successfully investigated over 46 legal cases. These resulted in 2 receiving no further action, 26 receiving an Informal Caution, 3 Simple Cautions and 1 prosecution and the remaining 14 ongoing.
- ✓ We have been delivering our new Risk Reduction Process (RRP) for over a year. We have updated our database and have created dashboards that now provide dynamic risk- based lists that directly feed the work of our staff.
- ✓ We have an options appraisal in respect of Mayfield fire station and agreed to a public consultation exercise.
- ✓ We delivered the first (Hove) of a programme of refurbishments of all our fire stations to ensure they are fit for purpose for the future.
- ✓ We have reviewed our Occupational Health provision and the value that has been added from a collaborative approach.
- ✓ We have improved the maturity of the Service's Information security by aligning with ISO27001 and the NCSC Cyber Assessment Framework.
- ✓ We worked with Joint Fire Control to agree call challenge policies across the three Services involved to ensure reductions at Automatic Fire Alarm signals in low -risk commercial properties. The preparatory work has been completed and will go live for this change in attendance policy in April 2024.

Our priorities for 2024/25

We will continue with the implementation of the five-year **integrated risk management action plan** including:

1. Implementing another critical part of our IRMP 2020 – 2025 which is the “Operational Resilience Plan” that focussed on improvements to our current response model of 15 immediately available frontline fire appliances. The aim providing 18 immediately available and 6 resilience frontline appliances at the start of each day before demand, continues to be considered, taking cognisance of the increasing financial challenges facing the Authority and a report will go to the Authority proposing the optimal position based on risk and affordability. Development of the new related Policy has many dependencies including the Dynamic Cover Tool which shows real-time Officer and Fire Appliance availability and policy changes following a move toward more efficient duty systems.
2. We will refine how we allocate and evaluate our resources to prevention and protection activity according to risk.
3. The continued enhancements and upgrades to our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system will continue to improve how we record, manage and allocate resources to reduce risk. We now use CRM to record our assurance activities for all our interactions. We will start to use it to do the same for our Fire Investigation recommendations as soon as the current technical barrier is removed.
4. We will continue to develop and educate the workforce on the risk reduction process.
5. We are improving how we directly show that our findings and recommendations from every fire investigation are being actioned and how they are driving down risk. We plan to improve this further by utilising the CRM system to record these risk changes.



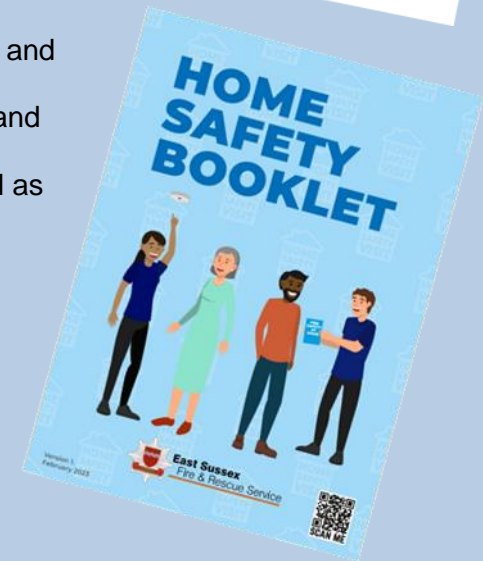
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- A background image showing a fire and rescue vehicle, specifically a Volvo, with 'FIRE & RESCUE' and 'VOLVO' visible on its side. The vehicle's license plate is 'GN73 ZVU'. In the background, a group of people is gathered, and a banner with the website 'www.csfrs.org' is partially visible.
6. We will continue to grow the number of Primary Authority Partnerships from the 24 we currently have.
 7. We will have a new fire investigation vehicle being delivered towards the end of the year. This vehicle will make a significant difference to how fire investigations are being carried out at the scene and improve the investigators health and wellbeing.
 8. We will deliver the remaining Grenfell Tower Phase 1 medium and low related actions having completed the very high and high evaluated risks.
 9. We will reduce the impact of unwanted fire signals from Automatic Fire Alarms on East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service resources using a risk-based approach with the introduction of a new policy and changes to ways of working at Joint Fire Control. From 1 April 2024 we no longer attend Automatic Fire Alarms in low-risk commercial properties 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 10. We will complete the Light Fleet Review seeking alternative fuel use and low emission vehicles, seek to share vehicle use and reduce unnecessary travel.
 11. We will work to protect the natural environment in the way we respond to incidents along with the methods we adopt to fight fires and other sector related incidents and analyse and evaluate new and emerging firefighting technologies and the impact on the environment.
 12. We will continue to consider all new Fire Safety legislation, guidance and other material to identify how we will blend any new requirements into our Service's policies and procedures.
 13. We will respond to the learnings from incidents of significance including the Grenfell Public Inquiry Phase 2. We are committed to taking on board national and local findings to ensure improvements can be made and risks further reduced.

Commitment number 2 - Engage with our communities

Engaging with our communities is our second commitment. Keeping people safe is what we do and we have a range of services that we deliver in order to do this. It is great to see that deaths from fire are falling as a result of years of prevention work and we have come a long way from being seen as just an emergency response service. Preventing fire and other incidents is an important part of our work. We aim to support and educate communities to take steps to protect themselves.

What we've achieved 2023/24

- We visit people in their homes to offer advice, support and equipment including specialist smoke alarms. In 2023/24 we visited 9,075 properties. 91.2% of these Home Safety Visits were to vulnerable people within our community.
- Holiday food and fun is part of the national Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF) funded by the Department for Education and we are proud to be delivering activities on behalf of local authorities. It's aimed at children on benefit-related free school meals. The children really enjoyed meeting the firefighters and looking at the fire engine and that was evident in their feedback. They also learnt about fire, road and water safety.
- We run a cadet scheme and currently have three units – for Eastbourne, for Uckfield and for Hastings and Bexhill. These give young people aged 13-17 a chance to learn a range of skills including:
 - Fire Safety – learn how to keep themselves and others safe by understanding hazards, risks, and control measures
 - What to do in an emergency – learn about fire safety in the home and create a fire plan as well as how we work with other emergency services
 - Basic first aid – how to help people in an emergency
 - Firefighting skills – what firefighters do, the equipment we use, and how we help others
 - Life skills – how to be a positive citizen and an active member of your community.



- ✓ We have 54 Community Volunteers actively supporting the Service's work. They make a vital contribution by assisting in the delivery of key prevention and resilience messages, as well as supporting the local community participating in initiatives and local campaigns.
- ✓ Our Volunteers have assisted with the delivery of 63 Safety in Action sessions to various schools between April 23 - March 24 across 7 sites. 4,617 children have been provided with safety advice between April 23 – March 24 which would not have been possible without the Volunteers continued support.
- ✓ Volunteers have supported 14 HAF sessions across the various stations and 267 children attended the sessions.
- ✓ We have introduced a Foodbank Scheme, undertaking visits to foodbanks / lunch clubs in the Brighton and Lewes area. Since its inception, Volunteers have visited 60 foodbank / lunch club projects and have generated 446 HSVs. This project has allowed the Volunteers to come into contact with the most vulnerable people in our communities who will be at a higher risk of fire. This has been a very successful project. Once the HSVs have been generated, they are passed to the central administration team to risk assess, process and book appointments accordingly.
- ✓ We ran a number of campaigns during the year including drowning prevention, wildfire, unwanted fire signals and electrical safety.
- ✓ We reviewed our internal communications and following staff feedback launched an employee engagement framework.
- ✓ We have written a new Communications and engagement Strategy for 2024-2027 that sets out the key drivers and projects including:
 - Adhering to the Fire Standards Board – Communications and Engagement Fire Standard
 - The public consultation and engagement requirements of the current IRMP and future Community Risk Management Plans
 - It takes into account the Code of Ethics and Culture and the change programmes in the Service including Future Foundations, Building Safety legislation/post-Grenfell and the HMICFRS inspection regime
 - We refined and improved the targeting and evaluation of our communications and engagement programme for our prevention and protection activities
 - We further enhanced our Engagement with children and young people resulting in a new Youth Engagement structure. This included work with home-schooled children and an adaptation of our Safety in Action sessions to accommodate deaf children.



Our priorities for 2024/25



1. We collect relevant risk data through engagement with partners to inform the local assessment of risk and deliver the resulting local activities that ensure Risk Reduction under the key themes.
2. We will continue to improve our targeting of vulnerable communities. HSVs will be prioritised and we will follow the National Fire Chiefs Council's person-centred approach.
3. We will continue to develop a new quality framework to ensure meaningful evaluation of our prevention work takes place.
4. We will enhance our existing evaluation techniques, with support from partners and by considering techniques being advanced inside and outside the sector, to secure continual improvement and an enhanced impact on risk.
5. We will continue to review and enhance our Risk Based Inspection Programme to ensure it delivers on our Person-Centred Risk reduction approach.

Commitment number 3 –

Have a safe and valued workforce

We are proud of the community we come from, represent and serve, and it is really important to us that we create a safe place for people to live, grow, and thrive. We recognise that each and every one of us plays a part in making East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service a great and successful place to work.

Our Firefighters face dangerous situations. Ensuring their safety through proper training, equipment, and support allows them to perform their duties effectively and respond swiftly to emergencies. Firefighting is also physically demanding and can be mentally taxing due to exposure to traumatic events. We work hard to ensure that we provide a supportive environment that values mental health and provides resources for stress management which helps maintain a healthy workforce. By prioritising the safety and wellbeing of our workforce we can ensure our staff are prepared to protect and serve our communities effectively.

We understand that our people help us achieve our Vision, Purpose, and Commitments by living our organisational values and behaviours. We know that it is vitally important that our staff are able to achieve their potential, give their best at work, and are listened to and valued for their contribution.

We believe it is important to attract, develop and retain a workforce that is a fair reflection of our communities and can deliver our services in a professional way now and in the future. We will therefore continue to build on the foundations that we have laid in our People Strategy and Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy and we will work hard to continue to provide our staff with a workplace where they can grow and develop. This will allow us to deliver our services in an efficient and professional manner.



What we've achieved 2023/24

- ✓ Our Health, Safety & Wellbeing staff give advice to all employees on matters of health and safety, as well as advising managers on legal compliance, policy formulation, training and safety performance monitoring activities. The effective management of health and safety, leading to fewer accidents involving injury and time taken off work, is beneficial to staff and an investment which helps East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service achieve the high standards which the people of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove have come to expect. We are fully committed to achieving the government targets for health and safety laid out in the document "Revitalising Health and Safety".
- ✓ We developed an integrated suite of Health, Safety and Wellbeing Standards – these have replaced the previous collection of Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy Notes. Developed by the HSW Team, the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Standards have replaced the suite of HSW Manual Notes, with a one-stop shop of simplified information for managing health and safety. The Standards contain easy-to-follow instructions on what staff need to be doing and they contain process flow charts, templates and links to guide staff, supervisors and managers through their responsibilities.
- ✓ We continued to develop a robust debrief process which will provide an understanding of operational activity, including feedback for continued improvement.
- ✓ In 2023, via the Local Resilience Forum, several multi-agency training courses were booked, aimed at Tactical and Strategic Commanders, to refresh, or introduce JESIP to recently promoted Commanders in the Emergency Services. East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service supported this in both the design, development and delivery of courses, which took place in venues within East and West Sussex.
- ✓ As early adopters embedded the NFCC Direct Entry scheme with the employment of a Station Manager and have been ensuring that they are fully integrated into the Service. This scheme offers a non-traditional route into leadership role within the Fire and Rescue Service
- ✓ We started a strategic review of our training, learning and development department, including an evaluation of the training facilities. This work will continue into 2024/25.
- ✓ We continued to embed the Leadership and Behavioural Framework across the Service and have delivered against HMICFRS Values and culture action plan as required. This includes, but is not limited to, starting a phased 3 year roll out for all Service employees to have had a standard Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check. Enhanced DBS checks are being undertaken for staff in specialist roles; Annual 360 -degree feedback process for Senior Managers; The provision of an external company to assist with anonymous complaint / whistleblowing concerns; Regular listening lunches where any member of staff can ask Senior Managers any questions, specific discussions are agreed prior to the sessions.

Our priorities for 2024/25

- ✓ We will write and publish our refreshed People strategy for 2025/29.
- ✓ We will continue to fully implement the end-to-end debrief process that assist with building an understanding of operational activity and this will include feedback for learning.
- ✓ We will review the programme of Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) training and exercising events against risks within our communities.
- ✓ We will continue to embed the NFCC Direct Entry scheme with the employment of a Station Manager and ensure they are fully integrated into the Service. This scheme offers a non-traditional route into leadership role within the Fire and Rescue Service.
- ✓ We will continue the strategic review of our training, learning and development department, including an evaluation of the training facilities.



Commitment number 4 - Making effective use of our resources

The Authority has a legal duty to approve a balanced budget, which means matching its income with its outgoings. These outgoings include staff wages, investing in new or replacement firefighting equipment, improving or maintaining premises and paying for things like energy and fuel. Our communities need to be reassured their money is being used efficiently and effectively, and that our workplace has the equipment, IT, skills, and capacity to effectively prevent and respond to incidents. Our commitment is to ensure we make effective use of our resources and we aim to continue to invest wisely in our supporting infrastructure, estate technology and supporting policies and procedures ensuring value for money is achieved for the public.

What we've achieved 2023/24

- ✓ We delivered £1.357m of new savings which was 86.5% of our £1.538m target.
- ✓ We have achieved collaborative procurement efficiency savings of £218,000 during the year.
- ✓ We have commenced substantial works for the refurbishment of our largest and busiest fire station at Preston Circus in Brighton. For the duration of the build period the station crew and appliances have been temporarily relocated to the Army Reserve Unit on Dyke Road.
- ✓ We developed and approved a business case to invest over £2.8m in transforming a redundant fire station in Newhaven into an Engineering Workshop to help us maintain our fleet more efficiently and effectively.
- ✓ We implemented a new Wide Area Network across most of our sites through the South East Grid partnership, this will be completed in early 2024/25 and will provide better connectivity and resilience enabling us to make more use of IT to digitise and streamline our processes.
- ✓ We installed CCTV on all our fleet which will enable us to better manage insurance claims and reduces our insurance costs by £30,000 per annum.



Our plan for 2024/25

- Deliver our savings target of £1.883m for 2024/25.
- We will continue the substantial works for the refurbishment of Preston Circus Fire Station. For the duration of the build period crews will continue to operate from the Army Reserve Unit on Dyke Road.
- We will secure planning and begin work on site to convert the old Newhaven Fire Station into an Engineering Workshop.
- We will write and publish our refreshed strategies for Estates, Procurement and Fleet and Equipment.
- We will continue to work with East Sussex County Council to replace our current SAP finance, procurement and payroll system with Oracle Fusion, enabling more efficient and effective processes.
- We will procure a new outsourced delivery provider for our IT services.
- We will support the 4F partnership to procure new breathing apparatus and incident command units.
- Deliver refurbishment of Bohemia Road Hastings, Eastbourne and Roedean Fire Stations.
- We will reduce our HQ footprint as part of the Future Foundations Project to secure savings of around £80,000.
- We will continue to improve the Service's efficiency and effectiveness through investment in core line of business systems - Customer Relationship Management, FireWatch and business intelligence ensuring the Service has access to the data it needs.
- We will be working on the next stage of our project to roll out Microsoft Office 365 to support more efficient and effective ways of working.

OUR PEOPLE

ESFRS employs a total of **721** people

354 Wholtime Firefighters

198 On-call Firefighters

169 Support Staff

9.8% Of our operational workforce are female

3.7% Operational staff from underrepresented groups (where ethnicity was stated)



OUR FLEET

41 Fire Appliances

26 Special Appliances



ASSURANCE

99.4% Wholtime availability

44.5% On-Call availability



FINANCE

£50m Annual budget

£1.9m Ongoing savings



COLLABORATION

Joint Fire Control with West Sussex and Surrey FRs

Shared site with Sussex Police



SOCIAL REACH

18.2K followers X (Twitter)

11K followers Facebook

2215 followers Instagram

2420 followers TikTok



Our Year

2023-2024



Making our communities safer



PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

563 Safeguarding Referrals identified and referred to relevant agencies.

9,075 Home Safety Visits (HSVs).

328 of which were Child HSVs.

78 Children referred to our Firewise programme.

3,648 Children received fire safety education via our schools visits.

94 Fire awareness engagement sessions with Carers, to **1,338** Carers.

171 Property checks to support Homes for Ukraine guests



991 Water Savvy Water Safe

5,447 Safe Drive Stay Alive



YOUTH INCLUSION

3 Fire Cadet Units with

51 Cadets

4,617 Children attending Safety in Action events

291 Children attended our Holiday, Activities and Food (HAF) sessions



INCIDENTS

11,423 Emergency call answered by Control staff

98% answered within 10 seconds

86 seconds average call handling time

10,752 Incidents attended

685 Deliberate fires

438 Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs)

4 Fatalities in ADFs

19 Injuries in ADFs

411 Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)

64 People killed or seriously injured in RTCs attended by ESFRS

3,858 Emergency Special Services including

986 assisting Ambulance and police

453 Flooding and water incidents

166 Animal assistance

64 Bariatric Rescues

192 Over the border mobilisations

43 Incidents involving suicide attempt



PROTECTION ACTIVITY

525 Fire safety audits carried out

708 Building Consultations

968 Fire safety checks by operational crews last fiscal year

118 Non - domestic property fires

14% Reduction compared to the last 5 years average

14.4% Reduction in incidents between 2009/10 and 2023/24



Asking the Public and Getting Involved

A core principle of our approach to service delivery is active engagement and consultation. Public involvement allows individuals and communities to participate in decision-making processes. Consultation is important to understand current and future needs, experiences and expectations, enabling us to identify service developments and improvements and to ensure that we critically assess our services and the information that we provide about them.

We wrote and consulted on our last Integrated Risk Management Plan during the very challenging time of the Covid Pandemic. The plan was a major review of community risk and resource allocation and included over 30 individual workstreams all designed to enable delivery of the Operational Resilience Plan ensuring 18 immediately available appliances 24/7 and a further 6 within 30 minutes and provide additional resources for prevention and protection activity.

In total, 2,047 responses were received to the consultation:

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

Based on the feedback received a set of modified proposals were agreed by the Authority in September 2020. The modified proposals reduce impacts on our workforce and mitigate a number of the concerns presented to the Service through the consultation.

The modified proposals have:

Facilitated the introduction of a flexible “resourcing” pool of firefighters, which will enable us to ensure improved availability of fire engines in higher risk areas. Changed the original proposal through continuing to operate 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.

In line with the current proposal, Battle has changed to 5 -day day-duty system with an on-call response at weekends. Bexhill, Crowborough, Uckfield and Newhaven have a secondary fire engine located at the station. These are 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.

Other stations also have access to specialist operational vehicles so that Lewes, Battle, Rye, Heathfield, Seaford and Wadhurst maintain at least two operational vehicles.

In Hastings we originally planned to enhance cover at Bohemia Road whilst maintaining the dedicated cover for the Hastings aerial (high-reach) appliance to provide cover to the eastern part of our county. It was also planned that The Ridge fire station would change to a 7- day- a -week “day crewed” system.

Following the public consultation and a review of the MTFP we continued with the proposed changes to vehicles in Eastbourne to ensure that Eastbourne has the right mix of operational vehicles and capabilities to meet the risk.

However, the modified proposals planned for the Hastings Group identified above were not taken forward. The proposal to change to “group crewing” in the City of Brighton & Hove only has been implemented. This has facilitated additional resources being allocated to business safety inspection work, which is fundamental to public safety in the City. You can read the full report here:

<https://esfrs.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=136&MId=141&Ver=4>

Community Compass Advisory Group

We welcome applications from members of the public to join our newly established Community Compass Advisory Group (CCAG) and we would love to hear from you!

What Is the Community Compass Advisory Group?

Members of the CCAG are a panel of independent public advisors who work with us for the benefit of the whole community, providing us with impartial advice and acting as critical friends; to support our ambition to constantly improve the service that we deliver.

Why do we have a Community Compass Advisory Group?

As a public service, we have a legal and moral duty to build relationships, foster good will and challenge discrimination. It is our aim to be a truly inclusive organisation and an employer of choice for all.

The CCAG supports us by:

- Providing a link between us and the communities of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove
- Enhances our knowledge of under- represented groups
- Sharing community feedback with local government and other agencies
- Providing advice and support during critical incidents as required
- Responds to the needs of diverse communities and under- represented groups.

Who takes part in the Community Compass Advisory Group? Membership of the CCAG is open to anyone currently residing in East Sussex or Brighton & Hove, who has a genuine interest in working collaboratively with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, to improve the service we deliver. Relevant experience, lived or professional is always welcome, but is not a condition to joining.

The CCAG represents the views of our entire community and aims to include advisors from a variety of backgrounds, including all aspects of race & ethnicity, faith & belief, disability, sex & gender, age & sexual preference.

This is an unpaid role, CCAG members are not employed by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, although remuneration for reasonable travel expenses and mileage will be available.

Views expressed by public advisors should be personal to themselves and not representative of any other third- party organisation or affiliation. We would love to hear your views. Please email inclusion@esfrs.org to register your interest. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Our Finances

East Sussex Fire Authority has agreed an increase of 2.99% in Council Tax. This means that Band D Council Tax will increase from £104.37 to £107.49 in 2024/25 providing a 24/7 emergency response for just £2.07 per week.

Our plans for the future (our revenue budget)

Our revenue budget (for day-to-day spending) will increase by £4.9m, mainly due to inflationary pressures and an existing grant for firefighter pension costs being permanently added to our funding from Government. Pay agreements exceed previously agreed budget provisions and there is pressure on running costs. The 2024/25 budget was balanced by new savings of £1.9m and other flexibilities of £0.9m of which £1.3m are on a one-off basis. Based on current modelling the amount required to balance the 2025/26 budget is £2.2m.

The Fire Authority does not have to take final decisions on its budget for 2025/26 until February 2025 but has asked officers to identify options for achieving permanent savings to balance the budget at the earliest opportunity. This will include a review of options for the future of Mayfield Fire Station. These measures mean that East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service is in the best position it can be to continue its work to provide emergency response, fire safety regulation and community safety programmes within the medium-term financial plan.

Investing for the future (our capital budget)

As well as our day-to-day spending, in 2024/25 we will be investing £8.9m in our assets, including: £2.2m on new fire appliances and other vehicles and £6.8m in improving our buildings. The investment in our estate includes mitigating the risk of contaminants, improvements to reduce energy consumption and the provision of welfare facilities.

Major projects include refurbishment of Preston Circus Fire Station and the creation of an Engineering Workshop in Newhaven. We expect this investment, and other measures will reduce the day to day running costs of our Estate. Government grants and income from the Community Infrastructure levy fund (CIL), along with other money we have and are planning to put aside are funding some of the Capital Asset Strategy, nevertheless the Authority is expected to require new borrowing from 2024/25, the first since January 2008.

What we spend

	2023/24 Budget £m	2024/25 Budget £m	Proportion %
Employees	33.7	36.4	73%
Running expenses	12.2	15.9	32%
Capital Financing	0.9	1.0	2%
Gross Service Expenditure	46.8	53.2	107%
Income and Specific Grants	(2.6)	(2.5)	(5%)
Contribution to Reserves	0.9	(0.8)	(2%)
Net Budget Requirement	45.1	50.0	100%

*The contribution to reserves is the net figure of all reserve transfers and in 2023/24 included £0.6m drawdown from reserves to balance the budget

How we are funded

	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	Proportion %
Government Grants	4.1	6.9	14%
Business Rates	9.7	10.6	21%
Council Tax	31.3	32.5	65%
Total Funding	45.1	50.0	100%

What you pay - Council Tax Bands

BAND	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Annual Cost	£71.66	£83.60	£95.55	£107.49	£131.38	£155.26	£179.15	£214.98
Weekly Cost	£1.38	£1.61	£1.84	£2.07	£2.53	£2.99	£3.45	£4.13

To find out more about our finances visit our website <https://www.esfrs.org/financial-information>

Contact us

We listen to our communities and want you to help us improve the services we provide. If you want to get involved, or would like more information about our services, please get in touch and have your say.

Phone: 0303 999 1000

E-mail: enquiries@esfrs.org

Write to:

Communications

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

Service Headquarters

Church Lane

Lewes

BN7 2DZ

East Sussex Fire Authority is responsible for the preparation of this performance plan and for the information and assessments set out within it, and the assumptions and estimates on which they are based. The Authority is also responsible for setting in place appropriate performance management and data quality control systems for which the information and assessments in the performance plan have been derived. The Authority is satisfied that the information included in the plan is, in all material aspects, accurate and complete and that the plan is realistic and achievable.

Website: www.esfrs.org