

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

PRODUCTIVITY & EFFICIENCY PLAN 2024/25 (FINAL)

INTRODUCTION

The National Framework sets a requirement that combined and metropolitan Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) produce and publish Efficiency Plans. There is a specific ask from the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire that in 2024/25, all FRAs regardless of their governance type produce plans that not only cover their planned efficiencies, but also plans for increasing productivity.

As part of the current Spending Review, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Local Government Association (LGA) have agreed that between 2021/22 and 2024/25, fire and rescue services (FRS) in England will create non-pay efficiency savings of 2% and increase productivity by 3%. Fire Productivity and Efficiency Plans (P&E Plans) will help the NFCC, LGA and Home Office to collate evidence and assess progress against the agreed targets at national level.

It is a requirement that the Fire P&E Plans are signed off jointly by the relevant Section 151 Officer and the Chief Fire Officer.

SECTION 1: PRIMARY INFORMATION

a. Budget 2023/24

The Authority's revenue budget for 2024/25 was set on 8 February 2024 alongside our Medium Term Finance Plan (MTFP) 2024/25 – 2028/29 and our Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2028/29. A summary of the Authority's planned spending and sources of income is shown below in Table 1. Further analysis in the format required by the Home Office is included at Annex A. The Authority's full budget papers and MTFP can be found at [Financial information | East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service \(esfrs.org\)](https://www.esfrs.org/financial-information)

Table 1 – Revenue Budget Summary

	2023/24	2024/25	Proportion
What we spend:	£m	£m	
Employees	33.7	36.4	73%
Premises	3.2	2.9	6%
Transport	1.2	1.1	2%

Supplies & Services	7.8	11.9	24%
Capital Financing	0.9	1.0	2%
Gross Service Expenditure	46.8	53.3	107%
Income & Specific Grants	(2.6)	(2.5)	(5%)
Net contribution to / (from) Reserves*	0.8	(0.8)	(2%)
Net Budget Requirement	45.1	50.0	100%
How we are funded:			
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%

*The contribution to reserves is the net figure of all reserve transfers and includes the £0.636m drawdown from reserves to balance the budget in 2023/24.

b. Reserves

The Authority's Reserves and Balances Strategy is agreed annually as part of its budget and can be found at [Financial information | East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service \(esfrs.org\)](https://www.esfrs.org). It sets out how the adequacy of the level of General Reserves has been assessed and the details of the level and purpose of the Authority's Earmarked Reserves. Reserves are held for three main purposes:

- a working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing – this forms part of general reserves;
- a contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies – this also forms part of general reserves;
- a means of building up funds (often referred to as earmarked reserves) to meet known or specific requirements.

Within the existing statutory and regulatory framework, it is the responsibility of the Treasurer to advise the Authority about the level of reserves that it should hold and to ensure that there are clear protocols for their establishment and use. The projected balance of reserves for the period is shown in the following table.

TABLE 2: Summary of Forecast Reserves

	31/03/2024	31/03/2025	31/03/2026	31/03/2027	31/03/2028	31/03/2029
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Programme Reserve	765	0	0	0	0	0
Other Earmarked Reserves	6,086	3,557	3,269	1,878	2,345	2,812
Total Earmarked Reserves	6,851	3,557	3,269	1,878	2,345	2,812
General Fund	2,019	2,311	2,461	2,611	2,711	2,811
Capital Receipts	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Useable Reserves	8,870	5,868	5,730	4,489	5,056	5,623

c. Precept

The Fire Authority's decision to increase its precept by 2.99% (the maximum allowable without a referendum) was driven primarily by its commitment to continue to deliver the services set out in its Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-25, its Operational Response Plan, and its Attendance Standards. Even with the 2.99% increase in 2024/25 the impact of increases in both pay and non-pay costs mean that the Authority will need to deliver additional savings of £1.9m in 2024/25. The MTFP models three different scenarios for future funding and these indicate that the Authority will need to make additional savings of between £1.9m and £2.5m to balance its budget for 2025/26, and in a worst case scenario could rise to £3.5m by 2028/29.

d. Efficiency

Since 2010/11 and to the end of this MTFP, the Authority has made, and has planned to make, savings totalling £14.0m of which £11.9m will have been delivered by the end of 2023/24. The MTFP includes agreed savings of £1.9m for 2024/25 and £2.2m over the duration of the MTFP. These savings are summarised in table 3 below and shown in more detail in section 6.7 of the budget report.

Table 3: Savings

Description	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
CRMP & other operational savings	(690)	0	0	0	0
Future Foundations	(415)	(215)	0	0	0
Other corporate & support service savings	(778)	12	(35)	(25)	(25)
Overall Total	(1,883)	(203)	(35)	(25)	(25)
Cumulative Total	(1,883)	(2,086)	(2,121)	(2,146)	(2,171)
Additional savings required to balance budget per MTFP:					
High range funding		(1,884)	(1,911)	(1,524)	(712)
Mid range funding		(2,211)	(2,589)	(2,576)	(2,164)
Low range funding		(2,536)	(3,245)	(3,570)	(3,503)

Within the MTFP the Authority will consider options for the future of Mayfield Fire Station, including closure, in order to identify savings. A further report will be brought to the Authority in June 2024 along with proposals for any public consultation.

The primary risks / barriers to delivery of our savings / efficiency plans are:

- Capacity within the Service to develop and implement the plans, including funding where necessary – all projects and initiatives are reflected in our business and budget plans, but this could be affected by unplanned activity including industrial action;
- Capacity of partners – some of our savings / efficiency plans are delivered through collaborative activity and are dependent on the ability of partners to deliver to agreed timelines – appropriate governance arrangements are in place for all collaborative activity and are overseen by Senior Leadership Team / Strategic Change Board;
- The outcome of public consultation should that be required, for example for the options for Mayfield Fire Station.

e. Collaboration

The Service has a long history of partnership working with the aim of delivering more efficient and effective services, which is reflected in a range of established collaborations and new initiatives. We work in partnership nationally through the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) and locally through groups such as Sussex Resilience Forum and 4F which includes the fire services in East and West Sussex, Surrey and Kent. Current collaborations include:

- **Finance Support Services** – provision of a range of transactional and professional finance support services by East Sussex County Council (ESCC), along with the SAP ERP system on a cost recovery basis under a Collaboration Agreement. This provides cost effective access to a range of services and professional skills and additional resilience.
- **Legal Services** – provision of the Authority's Monitoring Officer / Deputy Monitoring Officer and legal services by Brighton & Hove City Council / Orbis Public Law on a cost recovery basis under a Collaboration Agreement.
- **Estates - Shared Service** – a business case has been agreed to establish a shared Estates and Facilities Management Service with Sussex Police. A number of shared posts are already in place. The shared service will provide the capacity, skills and resilience necessary to deliver the Authority's Estates Strategy, ambitious capital investment plan and associated savings target. The Discovery Phase of this project is planned to start in April 2024.
- **Estates – Shared Premises** – the Authority has a shared Headquarters (with Sussex Police since 2017) and 3 further sites where other blue light or public services are co-located on a formal basis. We are exploring the potential to co-locate SECamb and Sussex Police on up to a further 6 fire station sites. The income generated from co-location contributes to the delivery of our Estates Strategy savings target of £45,000 pa. The disposal of our old HQ along with approx. 30 service houses generated over £10m of capital receipts and has been used to finance investment in our remaining Estate. Our ongoing HQ revenue costs were reduced by £150,000 pa.
- **Joint Fire Control (JFC)** – Under a S16 Agreement Surrey County Council provides a joint mobilizing and control service on behalf of Surrey, East Sussex and West Sussex Fire Authorities. This provides a cost effective and resilient solution for this business-critical function, with the move from 3 separate to a single shared control room. We are developing a joint

roadmap which will ensure upgrades are applied once. An additional benefit is working across the three services JFC is aiming to align operational ways of working and further investment in mobilizing and associated IT systems to deliver further efficiencies.

- **Integrated Transport Function** (ITF) – The ITF Project was established to deliver a collaborative approach to fleet and engineering functions across a number of partners (East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, Surrey Fire & Rescue Service, Surrey Police, Sussex Police and SECamb). Supported by Fire Transformation Fund Grant the project has delivered savings in fuel costs, a collaborative approach to bunkered fuel stocks and a joint procurement for vehicle telematics significantly lowering the cost per unit. It is consolidating workshop sites and developing opportunities for joint structures. A business case has been approved to refurbish an existing site in Newhaven as an Engineering workshop at a cost of £2.8m of which £1.5m is funded by Government grant. This will provide capacity and resilience across the ITF and enable efficiencies through the insourcing of servicing and maintenance currently carried out by third parties.
- **Occupational Health** (OH) – OH services were moved from legacy outsourced provision into a shared service with Surrey & Sussex Police and Surrey FRS in 2018. Service levels have improved and along with additional investment have delivered improved resilience and support for the physical and mental well-being of our staff. Savings have been delivered in a number of specialist contracts that support the OH service.
- **Risk & Insurance** – Fire & Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC) – the Authority moved its insurance from traditional market procurement to FRIC, a hybrid discretionary mutual owned by 13 member FRS, in 2019 with an initial saving of £0.188m. Costs have continued to track below comparable market rates and in 2022/23 and 2023/24 FRIC was able to return some retained surplus to its members. Further savings of £30,000 have been delivered by the installation of CCTV on our fleet.
- **Business Continuity** – East Sussex Resilience Partnership (ESREP) - Working with East Sussex partners ensures that the Service has a joined-up approach to business continuity that dovetails with the broader Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF). This collaboration provides access to joint exercising and significantly reduces the cost of joint training.
- **Fire Investigation** - The 4F Collaboration for fire investigation has, and will provide multiple, non-cashable savings, particularly in relation to joint training, where each service need only organise and finance one training day per year, as opposed to four, to keep its Tier 2 Fire Scene Investigators competent. In addition, joint policy working, sharing of undertakings and information and the agreement on cross border working will provide the opportunity to make financial savings, but also time saving, through a collaborative work approach drawing on the resources of our partners when necessary.
- **4F – Operational alignment** - This project aims to align operational ways of working through policy and equipment across East and West Sussex, Kent and Surrey FRS. This will increase the ability to work effectively cross border as well as produce efficiencies through joint procurement exercises for example our Incident Control Units and Breathing Apparatus.

Both of these projects are in their early stages and savings / efficiencies have not yet been built into our MTFP / Capital Programme.

- **Support for South East Coast Ambulance (SECAmb)** – With our 4F partners (West Sussex, Kent & Surrey), the Service has entered into a formal Service Level Agreement (SLA) with SECAmb. This generic SLA has 7 specific appendices that partners can consider and choose to sign up to at any time that range from co-responding to falls and frailty. The Service has currently signed up to “Assistance to Ambulance calls” and “Gaining entry”. This provides additional support to SECAmb and improves the services to the public.

f. Transformation Plans

Our transformation high level planning is set out in “Planning for a Safer Future” our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2020-2025, and its supporting strategies.

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2020-25 – this major review of community risk and resource allocation was approved in September 2020 and delivery is expected to be complete by the end of 2024/25. Comprising 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. A number of individual workstreams are described in more detail under the Resourcing section below. The total forecast revenue saving for the CRMP by 2024/25 is £694,000. Additional savings of £293,000 in 2024/25 have been delivered through the removal of three Retained Duty Support Officers and the on call sections at Lewes and Crowborough.

Future Foundations – delivery of this programme will ensure that the Service has the capability and focus to deliver our next CRMP and beyond. It will enable us to make our communities safer in a post Covid world, by becoming more efficient, effective, and adaptable. It includes a review of our support service structures, ways of working and office space, including our HQ. We expect it to deliver savings of £415,000 in 2024/25 and £630,000 by 2025/26.

g. Charging Policies

The Service reviews its fees and charges annually as part of its budget setting process [Current Fees and Charges.pdf \(esfrs.org\)](#). These fees are set on a cost recovery basis. Where we provide or receive day to day over the border assistance to other fire & rescue services this is on a ‘knock for knock’ basis with no charging.

- **Large Animal Rescue (LAR)** – The Service has a policy to charge for in certain limited circumstances. The primary driver is demand management rather than income generation and no budget target is set.

- **Lift Rescue** – as part of its CRMP the Service has reviewed its policy of lift rescues and this is currently focused on working with those who own and operate relevant buildings to encourage behaviour change. The option to charge for lift rescue may be considered at a future stage.
- **Primary Authority Partnership (PAP)** – Provided under the Primary Authority Scheme, these partnerships enable the Service to support businesses across the Country in their work to comply with fire safety legislation. It helps to promote consistency and efficiency in legal compliance on a cost recovery basis. We have enhanced the resources in our PAP team to expand the number of businesses we are able to work with. We feel this valuable partnership offers a proactive approach to ensuring business are compliant, but we have also seen a reduction in incidents we attended at those businesses that have signed up to the scheme. Income from the scheme has increased from the target of £19,000 to a forecast of £36,000 in 2023/24.
- **Commercial Training** – the Service is currently refreshing its position on commercial training in response to changing demands and risks on organisations.
- **Licensing consultations** – the Service provides bespoke advice to the Local Authority to enable them to effectively assess applications for marriage and other licenses from a public safety perspective.
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h. Asset Management & Investment in IT

The Service has strategies for IT, Fleet and Equipment and Estates all of which have costed plans for investment and aim to enable improvements in productivity and efficiency across the Service.

[IT Strategy 2020 - 2025.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

[Fleet and Equipment Management Strategy Final.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

[ESFRS Estates Strategy 2018 - 2025 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

All three strategies are due to be reviewed during 2024/25. We are also in the process of re-procuring our outsourced IT service delivery partner. Our major projects over the next 12 months are:

- **Fleet Asset Management Replacement** –The Service is currently replacing its end-of-life fleet asset management system with a new cloud-based system, Transend, which has the capability to digitize current paper-based processes and enable efficiencies and improved management of our vehicle fleet.
- **CRM** – a significant investment in MS Dynamics CRM will deliver efficient and effective process for Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI), Home Safety Visits (HSVs) and Business Safety Inspections with associated savings in time, printing and storage alongside significantly improved data, information and reporting. We are also implementing mobile apps and

issuing tablet devices which are enabling improvements in productivity. We are currently working with our IT partners Telent and Tiski to commercialise this product.

- **MBOS Project** – East Sussex County Council (ESCC) is leading this project to replace our existing SAP ERP (finance, payroll and procurement) system with Oracle Fusion. This provides the opportunity to streamline existing finance, procurement and payroll processes, and in future phases to further integrate services with ESCC.
- **MS Office 365** – the Service is currently completing the technical roll out of Office 365 and is drafting a business case for business implementation which will enable productivity and efficiency improvements through the use of tools such as SharePoint, Teams and Power BI.
- **CCTV on vehicles** – the Service has completed the installation of CCTV on our fleet. As well as opportunities to learn from accidents, improve driving standards and better manage / defend insurance claims it will result in a reduction of almost £30,000 pa in our insurance costs.
- **E-recruitment Phase 2** – this additional investment in the JobTrain system will streamline the onboarding and compliance process for new starters, improving efficiency.
- **Firewatch Mobile App** – the implementation of the Firewatch App will enable the Service to communicate in a more effective and timely manner with instant messaging to the staff advising them of service shortages and incidents. Evidence from other services indicates that this has resulted in increased availability of fire appliances when larger incidents are occurring, and availability issues being addressed in a more timely manner and more effectively.
- **Lifecycle replacement** – the Service will be investing over £1m in replacing end of life technology in 2024/25 e.g., pagers & alerters, laptops, mobile phones and Tom Toms – this will enable us to make further improvements in productivity & efficiency.
- **Data Management** – The Service is investing in its data management capability. The first step in the programme is building a data warehouse. This will aid enable the Service to make more informed decisions by applying data analytics to large volumes of information. Other benefits include prompt access to data, higher data quality and reliability, lower time consumption and effort of manual processes.
- **Refurbishment of Fire Stations** – 2024/25 will see the refurbishment of our largest / busiest fire station at Preston Circus in Brighton and three other wholetime stations in line with our Design Guide. This will ensure that these key assets are fit for purpose for modern firefighting, improve the management of contaminants, provide gender appropriate welfare facilities, modern sleeping pods and enhance energy efficiency and sustainability.
- **Fleet Programme** - The Fleet & Equipment Strategy and 5 year Capital Programme have been aligned with the Service's CRMP 2020-25. This included the removal of 5 P4 appliances and the provision of an additional aerial appliance to replace the existing combined aerial rescue pump in Eastbourne. In overall terms this delivered a saving on capital investment of £528,000 by 2024/25. Improvements to forward procurement and the use of frameworks ensure that best price is achieved.

Service requirements are reviewed as part of our replacement programme for special appliances to ensure that best value is achieved. We have also reviewed our liding policy for our light fleet (cars and vans) and expect to make savings of £438,000 in 2024/25 as a result of delaying some replacements.

i. Resourcing

As noted on p7 the Service will complete the delivery of its current CRMP in 2024/25 and is already working on a new version which will consider how the Service can use its resources to respond to risk in the community in the most efficient and effective manner. The current CRMP included a number of key workstreams which impact on resourcing including:

- **Flexible Resourcing Pool (FRP)** - Our newly established FRP is based on the principle of having a group of operational staff that can be deployed to cover crewing deficiencies across the service. They work on a duty system that provides maximum availability and can be deployed at short notice. They are also able to support a range of statutory protection activities as well as training, risk information collection and prevention activities.
- **Flexible Overtime Policy / Efficient Crewing Policies** - We have reviewed and amended our policies so that we can improve our approach to securing staff to crew appliances when there are shortfalls in our planned crewing levels. Overtime shifts will be available to both wholetime and on call colleagues and we are currently working to secure an automated technical solution within our availability system so that the business process is as efficient as possible. We have introduced a policy that allows us to use on call crew members that are available but who are not allocated to an appliance. This means that we can react quickly to an increase in demand and allocate available personnel to appliances that we can then deploy to meet operational demand or provide support at a protracted incident.
- **Resting facilities on On Call & Day Crewed Stations** - We have undertaken works on five stations to enable 24 hour staffing at these sites, broadening our response capability and reducing overtime spend. The risk vs benefits of extending this work to remaining premises is under review.
- **Day Crewed Duty System** – the Service is changing the duty pattern at all its day crewed stations (6), resulting in additional shifts to carry out prevention, protection, and response activities by the station staff, and reducing headcount. This will enable both cashable savings through a reduction in staffing and reinvestment of resources into protection.
- **Group Crewing in Brighton & Hove** - Within the City of Brighton and Hove we have changed the crewing model at three stations. The establishment across the stations is at a level where stations are crewed to our acceptable crewing level and a provision to cover late notice sickness is included. This has seen a reduction in posts, but the establishment at the stations provides sufficient FTEs to cover annual leave and sickness.
- **On Call Duty System** – We have conducted a Service Review of our On Call Duty System, which has included a staff survey and engagement sessions. This has led into an On Call Sustainability Paper, which proposed thirteen recommendations to our Senior Leadership Team. These recommendations were all focused on maximising appliance

availability, streamlining of processes such as recruitment and Development Programs but also includes a review of how we allocate and spend our ancillary budgets. Work is in progress to develop formal proposals from this review.

In addition, the Service has progressed a number of other resourcing initiatives:

- **Logistics & Control Support Team (LCS)** - LCS is the liaison point between all departments within the Service and the Joint Fire Control (JFC), supporting close links between them to ensure that their requirements are met. This includes supporting Telent, our IT provider, with fault identification and investigations where mobilising and / or associated equipment is involved, or planned maintenance work that may affected the Control function. Through a variety of functions, including some of the deliverables of the CRMP, the LCS team support crewing and appliance availability and forecasts. This includes the management of the Flexible Resource Pool (FRP). Since April 2023, the FRP has covered 550 shifts that would otherwise have been covered by overtime and / or cover moves. In September 2024, this team will take full accountability for crewing as we move to a centralised approach to our crewing model ensuring there is a holistic overview of the Service's crewing at any given point. Further to that it frees up more capacity for station based supervisory managers to concentrate on other activities such as operational preparedness and Prevention & Protection.
- **Strategic Review of Training** – The Service has completed a review of how operational training is structured, resourced and delivered. A refreshed approach to training delivery will reduce the impact on crewing and staff availability, reduce overtime costs, and ensure compliance with national and local standards. Recommendations and new ways of working will underpin investment decisions in new training infrastructure.
- **Direct Entry (DE)** – the Service is an early adopter and has employed a DE Station Manager in 2023/24 through the NFCC DE Scheme. This is expected to deliver a more efficient route to delivering a competent SM when compared with traditional routes.
- **Sickness Absence** – We have seen a rise in long term sickness, this has been impacted by longer waiting times for NHS procedures and a rise in mental health issues. As a result, we have commenced a voluntary subsidised pilot with Benenden Health to speed up this process with the aim to return staff to work as quickly as possible. We also have reviewed the contract with our Occupational Health provider which has resulted in a change of KPI's, the development of clearer support plans and further training for managers making referrals to ensure the right level of detail is being provided to enable a clear timely action plan. There has also been a focus on the HR Business Partners and managers roles on return to work plans, tightening up on the guidelines associated with light duties again with the focus on a timely return to full duties.

j. Procurement

The Service's Procurement Strategy 2020-25 sets out its vision to be a corporate, commercial service, delivered centrally and collaboratively, on behalf of the Authority. One of our core principles is to support Partnering and Collaboration by aligning our categories with the national agenda, aggregating spend through effective collaboration or by sharing services on common goods and services, without compromising the outcome.

[Procurement Strategy.indd \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

The Service works closely with the NFCC National Procurement Hub (NPH) and supports its principles of collaboration, standardisation and strategic supplier and contract management. As well as collaborative frameworks let through the NPH we also work with other Blue Light Services (e.g. through the 4F collaboration), public sector bodies or public buying organisations such as Crown Commercial Services (CCS), Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO), Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO), Bloom Procurement, SCAPE, Health Trust Europe and other NHS frameworks.

Examples of frameworks and other collaborative procurements used by the Service include:

- Structural Firefighting Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Uniform & workwear
- Vehicles incl. Emergency Response Vehicles
- Car & vans
- Breathing Apparatus
- Emergency Response Equipment e.g., rescue tools, thermal imaging cameras
- Fuel & fuel cards
- Utilities
- Smoke alarms
- Cleaning consumables
- Estates Capital projects consultancy
- Estates Capital projects delivery
- Agency Staff
- Stationery
- Servicing and testing of operational equipment including compressors and hoses
- Medical supplies, including defibrillators
- Specialist PPE

Through our annual returns to the NPH we have reported collaborative efficiency savings of £218,000 for the year 2023/24 of which we expect £184,000 to continue into 2024/25. This will be added to as we complete our 2024/25 tendering programme.

k. Productivity

Is the FRS pursuing the sector-wide Spending Review target of improving the productivity of wholetime firefighters by 3% by 2024/25 (2021/22 baseline)?

The Service has pursued the sector-wide Spending Review target of 3% and have achieved year on year improvements since 2015 following the implementation of the support and delivery framework, with the introduction of the watch - end of monthly return. We continue to monitor the productivity of watch-based staff and have assessed the historical data for comparison (over several years) between work groups/watches. We have seen increased productivity in many watch-based activities captured through our End of Month watch returns (which is our reporting process for each work group). To drive further efficiencies, our Annual Assessment of Risk ensures a % of watch capacity is directed to Road, Fire, Protection or Water prevention activities based on the risk profile for that station area. All activities are collated within the initiatives library with all attracting an evaluation toolkit and Equality Impact Assessment to ensure we maximise our public offer to our diverse communities. Home Safety Visits (HSVs), Fire Safety checks and SSRI (Site Specific Risk Information) visits are all allocated through a holistic risk reduction methodology.

Our current CRMP and Medium Term Financial Plan has seen a further reduction of 14 wholetime staff, the removal of six low activity appliances and two on-call sections, but the aim is to maintain current performance and productivity levels and therefore public offer with a reduced workforce.

Our productivity levels have largely improved year on year over the last 5 years acknowledging the impact of the Covid period. That said as detailed in a Covid HMICFRS report we adapted our services very well during Covid and delivered by comparison to other UK FRS's a higher percentage of our key prevention and fire safety activities. We continue to explore opportunities to enhance performance further. Examples include, exploiting advancing technologies (£2 million invested in our key IT risk system*) the introduction of flexible contracts for dual contract and on-call staff, the reallocation of administration activities that results in firefighters' spending more time with the public and enhanced training for firefighters resulting in them undertaking high risk vulnerable Safe and Well and Fire Safety visits. These changes further ensure that we are deploying our resources to the risk within our communities.

** We are approaching the final stages of the implementation of a new IT system that will underpin our SSRI, Prevention and Protection functions supporting the use of tablets at scene. This investment has already seen the reduction of 2 posts across the Service, alongside savings in paper and copying, and reductions in storage.*

Once the IT system is fully implemented and delivered, further efficiencies will be achievable. Once the visits completed the data will be immediately uploaded to the database removing a number of manual processes. All records will be standardised and the user will not be able to conclude the check/visit unless all required information has been inputted, reducing the risk of incomplete records resulting in less time being spent querying issues.

In addition, as of the 1st April 2024 we are moving to non-attendance to AFA's at low risk commercial premises, this is aimed at better use of time and resources to carry out safety critical training and risk reduction activities. This has also been coupled together with a review of standby arrangements and the impact of moving crews too quickly disturbing safety critical training and risk reduction activities.

Taking into account the changes listed above regarding headcount and resources, we have maintained the same unit output and have kept the targets at a level which equates to an increase of productivity per wholetime firefighter. The implementation of the IT system changes and a refinement of the way in which we measure performance from 2024-25 will allow us to provide productivity return per unit of resource across all key productivity areas (HSV's, Audits, Community Engagements, SSRI's, exercises/training etc.).

How does the service measure and monitor wholetime firefighter productivity or capacity? What do you use as the baseline?

Productivity is measured through Tier 1 and 2 performance measures that are underpinned by watch/team based End of Month returns (tier 3 and 4 measures). This productivity and performance intelligence is displayed through dashboards (PPD1) on CRM that managers readily access. These dashboards are reviewed and scrutinised through delivery and strategic boards.

We have carried out a watch capacity review that has broken down the current key activities of the shift day and night and we have allocated an appropriate time period to each of the activities undertaken. We are in the process of overlaying the operational call activity for each station to see the impact on other activities, which will assist in the comparing of performance across watches more effectively. Our new IT system offers additional efficiencies through automating critical and highly repetitive processes. The shift time allocation table below is supported by the End of Month reports that analyse all areas of performance and productivity.

Day shift/activity	Time allocated (out of 9 hour shift)
Ops preparedness	30 mins
Priority admin	15 mins
PT	45 mins
Tea Break	15 mins
Training	120 minutes
Lunch	60 mins
Prevention/Protection/SSRIs	120 minutes
Mentoring/development/wat ch references	60 minutes
Prepare station for handover/ routines	60 minutes
	Total 8 hours 30 mins allotted

Night shift/activity	Time allocated (out of 15 hours shift)
Ops preparedness	30 mins
Priority admin	15 mins
PT	45 mins
Training	120 minutes
Evening meal	60 minutes
Essential work/personal development/mentoring	180 minutes
Stand-down	360 minutes
Breakfast	30 minutes
Station admin and routines	30 minutes

Prep for station handover	30 minutes
	Total 15 hours allotted

Does the service set performance or activity targets for its wholetime firefighters?

Operational crews also seek to deliver a minimum target of 1,200 community safety, education and/or awareness activities per year, linked to their Annual Assessment of Risk, this is in addition to Home Safety Visits and Fire Safety Checks. The End of Month Return sets the baseline Risk Reduction activities for each individual work group at a minimum target of four per month per watch (wholetime) and two per month per watch (on-call) against the key thematic interventions, Road safety, Home safety and Water safety. It is understood that the state of an individual's health can lead to them becoming more vulnerable and therefore consideration is given to the impact of poor health when determining and shaping our Fire, Road and Water risk reduction activities. The risk reduction activities we deliver include:

Home fire safety visits, Fire Safety Audits, SSRI's, Exercises, Multi Agency Exercises, Station open days, Community Events covering the themes of water/fire/road and Business safety, Biker Down, Safe Drive Stay Alive, Safety in Action, Cadets Scheme, The Watch Scheme, Blue Light 999 days, Sussex Safer Road initiatives (Speed-watch), Trye Safe, Dementia Awareness, Firewise, GP referral scheme, fitting of child safety equipment to name some from each thematic.

We ensure our Operational firefighters are resourced to deliver a minimum target of 7,000 Home Safety Visits annually in order to respond effectively to the risk in our communities as determined by our risk reduction process.

Operational crews – HSV delivery by year, (Please note the comments alongside):

2020/21 = 7205 (Firefighters completed 3614 visits)

2021/22 = 9472 (Firefighters completed 6297 visits)

2022/23 = 10563 (Firefighters completed 7013 visits)

The remaining visits above were undertaken by Safe & Well Advisors. The overall 22/23 figure was even higher than would have been expected as an additional specific programme was undertaken around Homes for Ukraine visits by Safe & Well Advisors.

2023/24 = On track to deliver over 9,000 visits in total (over 7,000 FF visits). The target being a minimum of 7,000 by operational crews and 2,000 by Safe & Well advisors. **

Target for 2024/25 = A minimum of 7,000 by operational crews and 2,000 by Safe & Well advisors.

We ensure our Operational firefighters are resourced to deliver a minimum of 1,000 Fire Safety checks annually in order to respond effectively to the risk in our communities as determined by our risk reduction process.

Operational Crews – Fire Safety Checks by year (Please note the comments alongside):

2020/21 = 69 (undertaken by WT Firefighters)

2021/22 = 1128 (undertaken by WT Firefighters)

2022/23 = 1699 (undertaken by WT Firefighters)

2023/24 = This year we have set a resource provision to support delivery of 1,000 FSCs. This is due to the fact that we have analysed the expected level of prosecution and enforcement activity per visit having refined our inspection approach through our risk reduction methodology. We have upskilled all our Supervisory Managers to enable them to quality assure and sign off FSCs (enhancing efficiency) and we have rolled out the use of tablets to remove the reliance on paper and having. We have seen approximately 30% of FSC's return an inadequate inspection requiring improvement. We have 37 cases of legal action being taken, which requires significant resource/time allocation and requires specialist training. **

The target of 1,000 checks ensures we can deliver against the risk as determined through our risk reduction process, prosecute effectively and maintain competence for those undertaking the visits.

Target for 2024/25 = Resource provision set to achieve a minimum of 1,000 by operational crews.

*** Please note that during this period, the CRMP 2020-25 delivered a number of changes reducing Wholetime firefighter posts, removal of six low activity appliances and two on-call sections. Despite these reductions in appliances and staffing the unit of productivity output from our WT Firefighters has, at least, been maintained in many cases exceeded.*

Operational crews are also responsible for ensuring that SSRIs are reviewed periodically as prescribed. The Service seeks to ensure that all very high and high risk premises receive a revisit within the period allocated through our risk reduction process.

2020-21 = 22 SSRI assessments by Firefighters
2021-22 = 449 SSRI assessments by Firefighters ***
2022-23 = 209 SSRI assessments by Firefighters
2023-24 = 262 SSRI assessments by Firefighters

Target for 2024/25= Resource provision set to achieve a minimum of 250 by operational crews to meet requirements of risk reduction process.

*** In 2021-22 we directed additional time and resource to delivery of SSRIs to facilitate and support a review of our SSRI process that contributed to the development of our holistic risk reduction process (HSVs, FSCs, FS Audits and SSRIs). The number of SSRI's requiring completion each year by Firefighters is determined by the outcome of the previous visit as each visit is risk scored and a risk treatment process applied to ensure the risk is mitigated effectively.

What success has your service had in improving wholetime firefighter productivity?

Please refer to Section i) which provides a list of policy and duty system changes that will further impact positively on the productivity of Wholetime firefighters. The Service has now implemented its latest round of efficiency changes through 2023-24. Alongside the savings that will be taken from the current CRMP there are a number of changes (duty system, policy and IT infrastructure changes) designed to secure further improvements in productivity.

When taken together, if the targets for HSVs, FSCs and SSRIs for 2024/25 are met, we will have delivered an increase in those outputs by firefighters of 4.8% since 2021/22 (HO Baseline year) and 122.7% since 2020/21. These increases have been achieved with a reduction in the number of wholetime firefighters of 14 or approximately 4%. On this basis improvements in productivity will have exceeded the 3% target.

Approved by Dawn Whittaker, Chief Fire Officer & Duncan Savage, Assistant Director Resources & Treasurer 30 March 2024

Annex A – Efficiency Template

See separate spreadsheet.

	Actual 2022-23	Forecast 2023-24	Forecast 2024-25	CSR
Opening Revenue Expenditure Budget (Net)	41,766	45,057	49,992	
Less Total Direct Employee Costs	31,325	33,793	37,494	
Non Pay Budget	10,441	11,264	12,498	
Efficiency Target (2% of non-pay budget)	209	225	250	
Efficiency Savings				
<u>Direct Employee</u>				
Reduction in Prevention/Protection/Response Staff	-50	-199	-760	
Reduction in Support Staff	-25	-180	-219	
<u>Indirect Employee (e.g. training, travel etc.)</u>				
All Indirect Employee Costs	-16	-407	0	
<u>Premises</u>				
Utilities	0	0	-290	
Rent/Rates	0	-106	0	
Other Premises Costs	-45	0	0	
Shared Premises	0	0	0	
<u>Transport</u>				
Fleet	0	0	0	
Fuel	15	0	0	
Other Transport Costs	14	-22	-19	
<u>Supplies and Services</u>				
National Procurement Savings	-25	0	0	
Local Procurement Savings	0	-10	-25	
Other Technology Improvements	-184	-274	-118	
Decreased Usage	-116	-221	-129	
<u>Capital Financing</u>				
Revenue Expenditure Charged to Capital	0	0	0	
Net Borrowing Costs	0	0	0	
<u>Other</u>				
Other Savings 1 (Please Specify)	-48	48	-358	
Other Savings 2 (Please Specify)	0	0	-139	
Other Savings 3 (Please Specify)	0	0	0	
Please specify the other savings and any other comments:				
2022-23 Other Saving 1 is a one off reduction in contingency				
2023-24 Other Saving 1 is the reversal of the one off reduction in contingency				
2024-25 Other Saving 1 is a reduction in contingency budget				
2024-25 Other Saving 2 is yet to be allocated although will relate to a reduction in support staff or				
Total Efficiency Savings	-480	-1,371	-2,057	
Efficiency Savings as a Percentage of Non-Payroll Budgets	4.60%	12.17%	16.46%	11.08%
Efficiency Savings Target	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
Over/(Under)	2.60%	10.17%	14.46%	9.08%

