Essex County Council

Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel

14:00	Thursday, 21 July 2022	Committee Room 1 County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH

For information about the meeting please ask for:
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(During consideration of these items the meeting is not likely to be open to the press and public)

The following items of business have not been published on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Members are asked to consider whether or not the press and public should be excluded during the consideration of these items.   If so it will be necessary for the meeting to pass a formal resolution:

That the press and public are excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the specific paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A engaged being set out in the report or appendix relating to that item of business.

Committee: Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Enquiries to: Sophie Campion, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

Recommendations:

To note

1. Membership as shown below
2. Apologies and substitutions
3. Declarations of interest to be made by Members in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct

Membership (Quorum: 7)	**Representing**
Councillor D Dadds	Basildon Borough Council
Councillor F Ricci	Braintree District Council
Councillor K Barber	Brentwood Borough Council
Councillor R Savage	Castle Point Borough Council
Councillor J Lager	Chelmsford City Council
Councillor M Lilley	Colchester Borough Council
Councillor P Stalker	Epping Forest District Council
Councillor R Playle	Essex County Council
Councillor M Garnett	Harlow District Council
Councillor M Heard	Maldon District Council
Councillor A Williams	Rochford District Council
Councillor I Shead	Southend Borough Council
Councillor L McWilliams	Tendring District Council
Councillor G Collins	Thurrock Council
Councillor M Sutton	Uttlesford District Council
John Gili-Ross	Independent Member
Sheila Murphy	Independent Member
Councillor J Deakin	Co-opted Member for Balanced Appointment
Councillor A McGurran	Co-opted Member for Balanced Appointment
Councillor L Scordis	Co-opted Member for Balanced Appointment

Minutes of the meeting of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel, held in the Council Chamber at County Hall, Chelmsford on Thursday 23 June 2022

Present:

Councillor	**Representing**
David Dadds	Basildon Borough Council
Frankie Ricci	Braintree District Council
Keith Barber	Brentwood Borough Council
Russ Savage	Castle Point Borough Council
Jeremy Lager	Chelmsford City Council
Mike Lilley	Colchester Borough Council
Paul Stalker	Epping Forest District Council
Ross Playle	Essex County Council
Mike Garnett	Harlow District Council
Mark Heard	Maldon District Council
Ian Shead	Southend-on-Sea City Council
Gary Collins	Thurrock Council
Lee Scordis	Co-opted Member for Balanced Appointment

Co-opted Independent Members
John Gili-Ross (Chairman)

Also in attendance

Gemma Bint	Democratic Services Officer
Pippa Brent-Isherwood	Chief Executive, Office of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC)
Sophie Campion	Senior Democratic Services Officer, Secretary to the Panel
Jane Gardner	Deputy Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Roger Hirst	Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC)
Rick Hylton	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
Emma Tombs	Democratic Services Manager

1   Election of Chairman

Having been proposed by Councillor Heard and seconded by Councillor Garnett and there being no other nominations, it was

Resolved:

That John Gili-Ross was duly elected as Chairman of the Panel.

2   **Review of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel's Constitution Procedure Rules**

The Panel received report EPFCP/08/22 which asked the Panel to consider a change to the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel's Constitution Procedure Rules.

An amendment to Recommendation 2 was proposed by Councillor Ricci and seconded by Councillor Dadds, which sought to remove all references in the Constitution and appendices to only Council Members being eligible for the positions of Chairman and Vice-Chairman. On being put to the vote the amendment was passed and it was

Resolved:

1. That the Panel amends the Procedure Rules within its Constitution to allow for the appointment of up to two Vice-Chairmen.

2. That the Panel removes the word 'Council' from each reference in the Constitution and appendices relating specifically to Panel Members eligibility for the positions of Chairman and Vice-Chairman, so that the positions are open to all Panel Members.

3   **Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

Two nominations were received for the position of Vice-Chairman. Councillor Dadds being proposed by Councillor Heard and seconded by Councillor Shead and Councillor Ricci being proposed by Councillor Stalker and seconded by Councillor Garnett, there being no other nominations it was

Resolved:

That Councillor David Dadds and Councillor Frankie Ricci be duly elected as Vice-Chairmen of the Panel.

4   **Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest**

The report of the Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received.

1. The membership of the Panel was noted.

2. The following apologies were noted:
    - Cllr Deakin, Co-opted Member for Balance Appointment
    - Cllr Sutton, Uttlesford District Council
    - Cllr McWilliams, Tendring District Council
    - Cllr McGurran, Co-opted Member for Balance Appointment
    - Sheila Murphy, Co-opted independent Member

3. The following declarations were made by Members:

- Councillor Frankie Ricci declared a Code Interest as his step-son was currently a serving police officer. Councillor Ricci participated fully in the meeting.
- Councillor Mark Heard declared a Code Interest as his son was currently a serving police officer. Councillor Heard participated fully in the meeting.

5   Balanced Appointment Objective Report

The Panel received report EPFCP/09/22 advising that the composition of the Panel did not fully comply with the statutory 'balanced appointment objective' and setting out the proposed steps necessary to achieve it for this Panel period.

Resolved:

1. The Panel applies to the Home Secretary for permission to co-opt one Labour Member and one Liberal Democrat Member for one year.

2. The Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Groups each be invited to put forward suitable nominations to fill these posts in the event that permission is granted.

3. That a report be brought back to the Panel as soon as we have heard from the Home Secretary.

6   Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 22 March 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

With regard to actions arising from the last meeting, the Panel had asked for more detail on a number of issues. The Commissioner gave an update on the information that had been circulated to the Panel outside of the meeting on the following issues:
- Detail on the increase in hazardous materials incidents
- Fuller detail on incidents where response times were over 25mins
- Timeline of the review of causation factors for pumping appliance availability
- Impact of long Covid in managing longer term sickness
- Moving the location of knife bins – it was noted that there was a balance needed between ensuring they were in the correct location and people knowing where they were. Further detail on how successful the bins were in certain locations would be provided outside of the meeting.
- The use of social media to report crimes – it was clarified that whilst there were options for online reporting, live chat and other established ways of reporting crime, the most effective way to report a crime remained via the emergency 999 service.

7   Questions to the Chairman from members of the public

There were none.

8   Review of Terms of Reference: Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee

The Panel received report EPFCP/10/22 setting out the revised Terms of Reference and Procedure Rules for the Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee.

An amendment to Recommendation 3.1 was proposed by Councillor Playle and seconded by Councillor Shead, which sought to include the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service in the definition of Integrity with regard to behaving in a way that commands public trust and confidence and in the definition of Ethics, setting out the behaviours, values and beliefs. On being put to the vote the amendment was passed and it was

Resolved:

1. That the revised Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee Terms of Reference and Procedure Rules be adopted in the form appended to the Panel report EPFCP/10/22, subject to the inclusion of the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service in the definition of Integrity with regard to behaving in a way that commands public trust and confidence and in the definition of Ethics, setting out the behaviours, values and beliefs.

2. That the following four members of the Panel be appointed to the Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee –
    -   Councillor Ian Shead
    -   John Gili-Ross
    -   Councillor Lynda McWilliams
    -   Councillor David Dadds

9   Review of Terms of Reference: Complaints Sub-Committee

The Panel received report EPFCP/11/22 setting out the revised Complaints process for the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel Complaints Sub-Committee, which also sought agreement to identify members to sit on the Sub-Committee as required for 2022-23.

Resolved:

1. That the revised Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel Complaints process, including the terms of reference of the Complaints Sub-Committee, be adopted in the form appended to the Panel report EPFCP/11/22.

2. That the following Panel Members be nominated to a pool of members for 2022-23 from which membership of the Complaints Sub-Committee will be drawn as and when a meeting is convened –
    -   Councillor Jude Deakin

- Councillor Ian Shead
- John Gili-Ross
- Councillor Mike Garnett
- Councillor Lynda McWilliams
- Councillor David Dadds
- Sheila Murphy

10   Police and Crime Plan Performance Measures - Quarter 4 2021-2022

The Panel received report EPFCP/12/22 which provided an overview of Essex Police's progress in delivering the priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan, based on data and other information to the end of March 2022.

The Commissioner introduced the report and clarified that this was the last quarter of reporting against the priorities in the Police and Crime Plan, as extended for 2020/21. A new Performance Framework would be established for the new Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024 for future reporting. The Commissioner drew attention to some of the highlights in the report such as the increase in investigations via the Resolution Centre, the decrease in call waiting times, volunteering and the cadets and the disruptions against Organised Crime groups. The Commissioner also outlined the areas for a continued focus such as the Resolution Centre call waiting times, the impact of court delays and the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads.

In response to questions and concerns raised by the Panel the following points were made:

- It was confirmed that a review and evaluation of the overall Police and Crime Plan as extended to 2021 had been done. A summary of the outcome and how to access the information could be provided to the Panel.
- Concern was raised regarding the increase in crime figures for a number of areas relating to serious violence, domestic abuse and protecting children and vulnerable people, covering a number of the Police and Crime Plan priority areas. In response it was explained that there were a number of interventions, programmes, areas of focus and investment to try to tackle these areas and there was no single solution. Some areas of success were highlighted and the impacts from Covid were explained. However, there were specific areas such as drug-driven violence, rape and serious sexual assault, violence against women and girls and domestic abuse where more focus was needed. It was explained that improvements had been made in supporting victims in some of these areas, but there had been less progress in dealing with the perpetrators and more investment was needed.
- Members sought more information on the impact of the sentencing policy, in response it was explained that there were some difficulties in the justice system, with delays, prisons being very full and a probation service which was struggling following a restructure.

Priority 1 - More Local, Visible and Accessible Policing
- The number of Specials had not doubled in line with the commitment under priority 1, however partly that was due to the focussed recruitment to regulars with a number of specials joining the regulars, but it was the second largest special constabulary in the Country.
- In response to a question raised regarding the impact on recruitment of low starting pay and competing in the current job market, it was reported that there was a good level of recruitment. Following the precept increase there had been an increase in the South East area allowance. The biggest competitor for recruitment was the Metropolitan Police and some of their recruitment incentives may have an impact on recruitment but currently it was considered to be at a healthy level.
- More information was sought on the encouragement of online reporting. It was confirmed that there was a steady level of reporting in this way. The live chat had improved the process and diverted calls away from the 101 service which had in turn improved those call waiting times. Investment was required to make improvements in the future. These services were promoted regularly through social media and people were encouraged to report crime in different ways. A lot of work was done through District Engagement Plans, identifying and encouraging people to report in different ways. There was a 'More Time to Fight Crime' social media campaign to run intensely over the summer.
- With regard to more local, visible and accessible policing, relating to the commitments in the Plan, there were concerns raised regarding the level of non-attendance at incidents and particularly the impact on confidence in the police, public perception and future reporting of crime. It was confirmed that these issues were looked at through the Performance and Scrutiny Board on a reasonably regular basis. The focus of the Plan was towards prevention to stop things happening in the first place, rather than solely focussing on improved response. Having fewer crimes and being able to focus on solving those crimes was the focus. The initiatives and teams that had been put in place to support this focus were outlined to the Panel. The Commissioner felt assured that confidence in the Police was at a good level and people were not discouraged from reporting crime as it was increasing. It was explained that all requests for contact were managed through the Contact Management Command and assessed against THRIVE – Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement, with trained staff assessing how reported issues should be appropriately dealt with. Responses could be physical or remote through the Resolution Centre, which had increased responses. Some clearly defined offences would always be allocated for attendance, the level of attendance was high on those cases, but it was acknowledged that there had been cases where this policy had not been met. Panel Members expressed the view that they felt a more focussed look at these issues was needed to gain a better understanding of the service and how this fitted with public perception and Priority 1 of the Police and Crime Plan.
- A request was made for advice on applying for the Safer Streets funding. An update was given on the process and planning for the next round.

- An update was provided on the education programme, with particular reference to attending schools. It was advised that the biggest impact had been the joint education teams who had made a number of visits in the last year. Particular issues were being addressed where they had been highlighted. Relationships were being developed with schools and there were a number of initiatives highlighted.

Priority 4 – Reverse the Trend in Serious Violence
- Clarity was sought on issues around the reporting of sexual offences and conviction rates. It was explained that in terms of taking cases to Court, there was a focus on taking more cases, even if the success rate was slightly less. Where there was a good evidential base, the success rate was significantly better. Work was ongoing around issues of disclosure and victims being concerned about the level of intrusion when providing evidence for Court cases.

Resolved:

- That the Panel received and noted the report.

- That the Panel consider adding an item to the Forward Work Plan to take a more focussed look at performance against Priority 1 – More Local, Visible and Accessible Policing (see Minute no.14, below).

11   The 2023/24 Budget Setting Process

The Panel received report EPFCP/13/22 which provided the Panel with an outline of the 2023/24 budget setting process for the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (PFCCFRA) and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) for Essex (Essex Police).

Resolved:

1. That the Panel received and noted the report and accepted the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's invitation to participate in this process through the creation of a 2023/24 Budget Setting Working Group of the Panel, in line with the process set up for 2022/23 budget setting.

2. That the membership would be confirmed and the dates would be provided to the Working Group.

12   Review of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority's Constitution

The Panel received report EPFCP/14/22 which invited comments from members of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on the contents of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority's updated Constitution prior to its adoption.

Resolved:

That following review of the proposed updated Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority's Constitution, there were no recommendations on its content and the updated Constitution was noted.

* **Variation in the Order of Business**

The Chairman proposed a variation in the order of business to take the PFCC Decisions report as the last item of business and the other items in the order of the agenda. Having been proposed by Councillor Dadds and seconded by Councillor Barber it was

Resolved:

That the order of business be varied to take the PFCC Decisions item as the last item of business and the other items in the order of the agenda.

13 The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to update the Panel on any ongoing issues

Due to time limitations, the Commissioner's update would be provided in writing and published on the Council website.

Resolved:

That the report be received in writing after the meeting.

14 Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel Annual Report

The Panel received report EPFCP/16/22 which provided an overview of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel's (the Panel) activities during the 2021/22 municipal year and also set out the Forward Work Plan for 2022/23.

Resolved:

1. That the Panel received and noted the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel Annual Report for 2021/22.
2. That the Panel reviewed the Forward Work Plan and agreed the addition of a focussed look at performance against Priority 1 – More Local, Visible and Accessible Policing.

15 Essex PFCP Grant Claim and Outturn Report - 2021/22

The Panel received report EPFCP/17/22 updating the Panel on the outturn position against the grant to be filed with the Home Office prior to the deadline of 31 July 2022. The return had been signed off by the accountable body's accountant and reflected the actual and forecast expenditure incurred in the administration of the Panel.

Resolved:

That the report was noted.

16   Report of the Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee

The Panel received report EPFCP/18/22 which provided the minutes of the meeting of the Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee which met on 22 March 2022.

Resolved:

That the Panel received and noted the report.

17   National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels (NAPFCP) update

Due to time limitations, the Chairman's update would be provided in writing and published on the Council website.

Resolved:

That the report be received in writing after the meeting.

18   Dates of Future Meetings

The Panel received report EPFCP/19/22 setting out the proposed schedule of meeting dates for 2022-23.

Resolved:

That the schedule of meeting dates be agreed as –

- Thursday 21 July 2022 – 2:00pm
- Thursday 29 September 2022 – 2:00pm
- Thursday 8 December 2022 – 2:00pm
- Thursday 7 February 2023 – 10:00am
- Thursday 20 February 2023 – 2:00pm (Reserve date)

19   Date of Next Meeting

The Panel noted that the next meeting would take place on Thursday 21 July 2022.

20   Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Decisions Report

The Panel received and raised questions on report EPFCP/15/22 which provided information about financial and strategic decisions made by the PFCC.

The Panel sought further clarification on the following decisions:

- Chelmsford Refurbishment Overspend
- Emergency Services Network Programme Detailed Investment Business Case Stage 2

Resolved:

That the Panel received and noted the report.

There being no urgent business, the meeting closed at 4.50pm.

Report title:
ESSEX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/22

Report to: Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Report author:
Police Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority, Roger Hirst

Date: 21 July 2022	For: Noting and comment

Enquiries to:
Enquiries to: Pippa Brent-Isherwood (Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer) Telephone: 01245 291613
Email: pippa.brent-isherwood@essex.police.uk

County Divisions affected: All Essex

1.   Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's (ECFRS's) progress in delivering the priorities set out in the Fire and Rescue Plan 2019 – 2024 and the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2024 during the final quarter of 2021/22.

The more detailed report attached at Appendix 1, produced by the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and scrutinised at the monthly Performance and Resources Board chaired by the Authority, provides highlight and exception reporting against service priorities.

2.   Recommendations

That members of the Panel note and comment / seek clarity as appropriate on the content of the report and attached appendix.

3.   Context / Summary

To put into context the circumstances in which these levels of performance were achieved:

- ECFRS attended 3,708 incidents in Quarter 4 of 2021/22; the highest total number of incidents attended in the final quarter over the last four years. This was predominantly due to a 41% increase in special services and a 19% increase in fires compared with the same time the previous year. Calls to road traffic collisions were higher during Quarter 4 than in any of the previous three years and Storm Eunice, which occurred in February 2022, placed particularly significant demands on the service.

- 2021/22 saw a 10% increase in the number of fires in non-residential properties (from 314 to 346) compared with 2020/21, with Quarter 4 experiencing a 75% increase (from 63 to 110).

- The Safeguarding Team received 331 referrals during the quarter, which is an increase on the same period in 2019/20 and more than double the volume received in Quarter 4 of 2020/21.

- Against this backdrop of increased demand, the Omicron Covid variant significantly impacted staffing levels. The overall percentage of working time lost to sickness in Quarter 4 was 8.1% against a target of 5%, with more than a third of this being Covid-related. The Control Room experienced the highest rate of time lost (at 10.1%), whilst sickness absence amongst support services was below the accepted target (at 3.5%). Staff from many functions across the service volunteered to support the Control Room whilst it was in business continuity arrangements, as well as volunteering to support delivery of the vaccination programme.

Highlights with regard to performance during Quarter 4 include:

- The rate of deliberate fires fell slightly for the whole of 2021/22 compared with 2020/21 (from 4.5 to 4.2 per 10,000 population), with the total number falling by 6% (from 823 to 772).

- The rate of Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs) per 10,000 population remained stable in 2021/22 compared with 2020/21, with Quarter 4 seeing a slight reduction in volume, from 734 to 717. The proportion of ADFs in which a smoke alarm was present and worked was higher throughout the quarter than during the same period the previous year.

- All actions arising for the service out of the Grenfell Inquiry are progressing on target.

- Station staff completed 306 Safe and Well Visits in Quarter 4 of 2021/22 compared with just 42 in Quarter 4 of 2020/21. The average evaluation score from these visits is 9.56 out of 10, with all recipients stating that they would recommend a visit to their friends and family.

- Opportunities to collaborate with Essex Police continue to be expanded and built upon, with the Operational Community Risk Team and operational crews now supporting Operation Grip to reduce anti-social behaviour by carrying out community engagement activity in identified "hotspots".

- The Operational Community Risk team also met with community leaders within the Charedi Jewish community on Canvey Island to promote joint working and enhance community safety. A volunteer has been identified to work alongside ECFRS and the Jewish community to promote fire safety messages and joint training opportunities have been identified with Hatzola, a Jewish community emergency response ambulance service.

- As part of its commitment to increase the diversity of its workforce, the service successfully piloted a change to its assessment centres to support applicants with neuro-divergent needs. This change will now be rolled out across future recruitment activity.

- Maintaining our commitment to transparency, the proportion of Freedom of Information (FOI), Subject Access and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) requests responded to in a timely manner remained well above target. No complaints were received during the quarter regarding the quality of responses to statutory requests for information, and there were no complaints relating to data protection.

In terms of areas for continued focus:

- Linked to the rise in demands on the service, the average response time to potentially life-threatening incidents was outside of target throughout the quarter. The percentage of incidents attended within 15 minutes was also below target. The Area Manager for Response has been tasked with investigating all calls to potentially life-threatening incidents that take significantly longer than target to respond to, in order to target remedial actions in areas most likely to improve performance. Options to increase resilience in the Control Room are also being scoped out.

- Total pumping appliance availability fell compared with the same period the previous year and was also below target throughout the quarter. Wholetime and day crew pumping appliance availability remained at or just below the target of 98%, however on-call availability was significantly below target, ranging between 67% and 74% against a target of 90%.

- Linked to the increased number of road traffic collisions during the period, there were more people killed or seriously injured on Essex roads in Quarter 4 of 2021/22 than in the same period the previous year. Provisional figures show a 233% increase in fatalities (from three to 10) and a 26% increase in serious casualties (from 138 to 174). During the quarter, the Road Traffic Collision Reduction Team attended 10 community events across the county and work began on a post-collision training course for motorcyclists. Scoping work also began on a powered two-wheeler intervention for young riders in the gig economy (deliveries).

- The service continued to struggle to deliver its Risk Based Inspection Programme during the quarter, completing 228 audits of priority premises against a target of 609 (37%). Recruitment to vacancies is underway to bring the team up to the establishment required to deliver the programme. The Protection Team is also in the process of training operational crews to carry out fire safety audits as part of the programme, and additional training is being provided to existing Fire Protection staff to increase the volume of audits completed against the target. In addition, a dedicated workshop was held on 17 June to explore further the reasons for these performance levels and agree an action plan to address these.

4.   Appendices

Appendix 1 – Essex County Fire & Rescue Service Quarter Four Performance Report
2021 - 2022

Quarter Four

Performance

Report

2021 - 2022

Essex County
Fire & Rescue Service

ABOUT

A quarterly performance report is produced for the Service Leadership Team (SLT) and other key members of Essex Country Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) to monitor performance of the service, ensuring that budgeted resources are aligned to priorities, and being used effectively and efficiently.

The report is structured based on priorities within the Fire and Rescue Plan (FRP). Each priority has one or more performance measures (Service or FRP), data and commentary are aligned to them to demonstrate that ECFRS are using their resources to drive continuous improvements within the Service, as well as make Essex a safer place to live, work and travel.

PFCC

POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX

ECFRS performance reports are used in Performance & Resource Boards to enable the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) to scrutinise, challenge and support the overall performance of the Service. The end of year and quarterly performance reports are also used at Police, Fire and Crime panel to scrutinise the PFCC.

CONTENTS

KEY STATEMENTS

This report is the Quarter Four performance report for 2021-22. It is structured based on Fire & Rescue Plan priorities, underpinned by a performance framework. Performance is measured in one of the three ways: tolerance, targets, or monitoring, and Appendix A provides the targets outlined in 2021-22 Target Setting paper which was approved by the Service Leadership Team.

- ECFRS attended 3708 incidents in Q4 2021-22, the highest number of total incidents in a quarter four period over the last four fiscal years. This is mainly due to an increase in attendances to special services.

- The average response time to potentially life-threatening incidents in January was 10m21s, 10m18s for February and 10m02s for March. All months were above the target of an average of 10 minutes.

- In January and March 86% and 85.5% of all incidents were attended within 15 minutes. February saw this drop to 83%, which correlates with the protracted attendance times we saw during storm Eunice.

- Total pumping appliance availability ranged between 76% - 81% during Q4 2021-22 (target is 94%). Wholetime & day crew pumping appliance availability was between 97% - 98% (target 98%), and on-call availability between 67% - 74% (target, 90%).

- Fire station coverage on the core stations was between 78% and 100% for Quarter Four.

- The number of non-residential fires attended by ECFRS during Q4 2021-22 was within the green tolerance threshold for January and February (25 - 39 fires) and red for March.

- The number of audits completed against premises measured Very High or High on the Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) was within the red tolerance (0 - 162) for every month in the quarter.

- The Education team delivered safety education programmes to over 18,969 children in Q4. These programmes focused on Home Safety and Cyber Safety.

- ECFRS attended 167 Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs) in Q4 2021-22, within the green tolerance threshold (44 – 68) for all months of quarter.

- The average percentage of ADFs where a smoke alarm was present and worked was 55%.

- For deliberate fires, the blue tolerance threshold (0 – 47) was met for January and February in Q4 2021-22 and green for March.

- In Q4 2021-22, there was 1 fire-related fatalities and 14 casualties (8 in Accidental Dwelling Fires)

- In Q4 2021-22, ECFRS carried out 1,728 home safety interventions, of which 1,058 were safe and well visits. Home Safety Visits carried out by stations have continued to see an upward trajectory with 306 in the quarter. During these visits, the Service fitted over 1,900 smoke alarms

- The Safeguarding team received 331 referrals in Q4 2021-22, an increase compared to the same quarter over the last two years. This correlates with evidence from partners and social care that the pandemic has resulted in an increase in vulnerability in our communities.

- On the roads of Essex, Southend and Thurrock, there were 184 people killed or seriously injured in Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) in Q4 2021-22, an increase compared to the same quarter in the previous year. Note, these figures are provisional figures taken from Essex Police at 19th April 2022.

- ECFRS attended 265 RTCs during Q4 2021-22, an increase compared to Q4 2020-21, but figures are similar the 5 year average.

- ECFRS attended 1,437 false alarms in Q4 2021-22, more than Q4 2020-21. For unwanted fire signals, the number attended in the quarter was within the green tolerance threshold.

- In Q4, of those that have declared their diversity data, the majority age band of the workforce is 36-45, 17.5% of the workforce was female, 5.2% LGBTQ+, 3.1% Ethnic Minority and 4.4% disclosed a disability.

- The overall percentage of working time lost for Q4 was 8.1%, higher than the 5% target, this includes all covid related absences. 35.4% of all working time lost within the quarter was covid related, with a high of 45.9% in support staff.

- For Q4, there were 56 new employee relations cases and 56 closed in the period. The average time to close a case was 110 days. There were 49 cases open at quarter end.

- The percentage of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests (96%), Subject Access Requests (SARs) (100%) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) (99%) requests closed within 20 working days above the target of 90%.

FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN: PREVENTION, PROTECTION & RESPONSE (PPR)

The objective of this priority is to plan and provide effective and efficient prevention, protection, and response activities so the public continue to have trust and confidence in us.

RESPONSE

As shown in the first table below, ECFRS attended 3708 incidents in Q4 2021-22. This is highest number of total incidents attended in a quarter three period over the last four fiscal years. It is clear from the second table that this is due to (41%) increase in attendances to special services when compared with Q4 2020-21. There was a 6% increase in false alarms and 19% increase in fires incidents when comparing the same quarters over two years.

Numbers:

	Total	Fires	Special Service	False Alarms
Q4 2018-2019	3278	923	1015	1340
Q4 2019-2020	3264	851	1065	1348
Q4 2020-2021	3060	679	1029	1352
Q4 2021-2022	**3708**	**811**	**1460**	**1437**

Percentages of Total

	Total	Fires	Special Service	False Alarms
Q4 2018-2019	3278	**28%**	**31%**	**41%**
Q4 2019-2020	3264	**26%**	**33%**	**41%**
Q4 2020-2021	3060	**22%**	**34%**	**44%**
Q4 2021-2022	**3708**	**22%**	**39%**	**39%**

The graph on the following page shows the total number of incidents broken down by incident type by months for two years.

Incident Trend since 2020
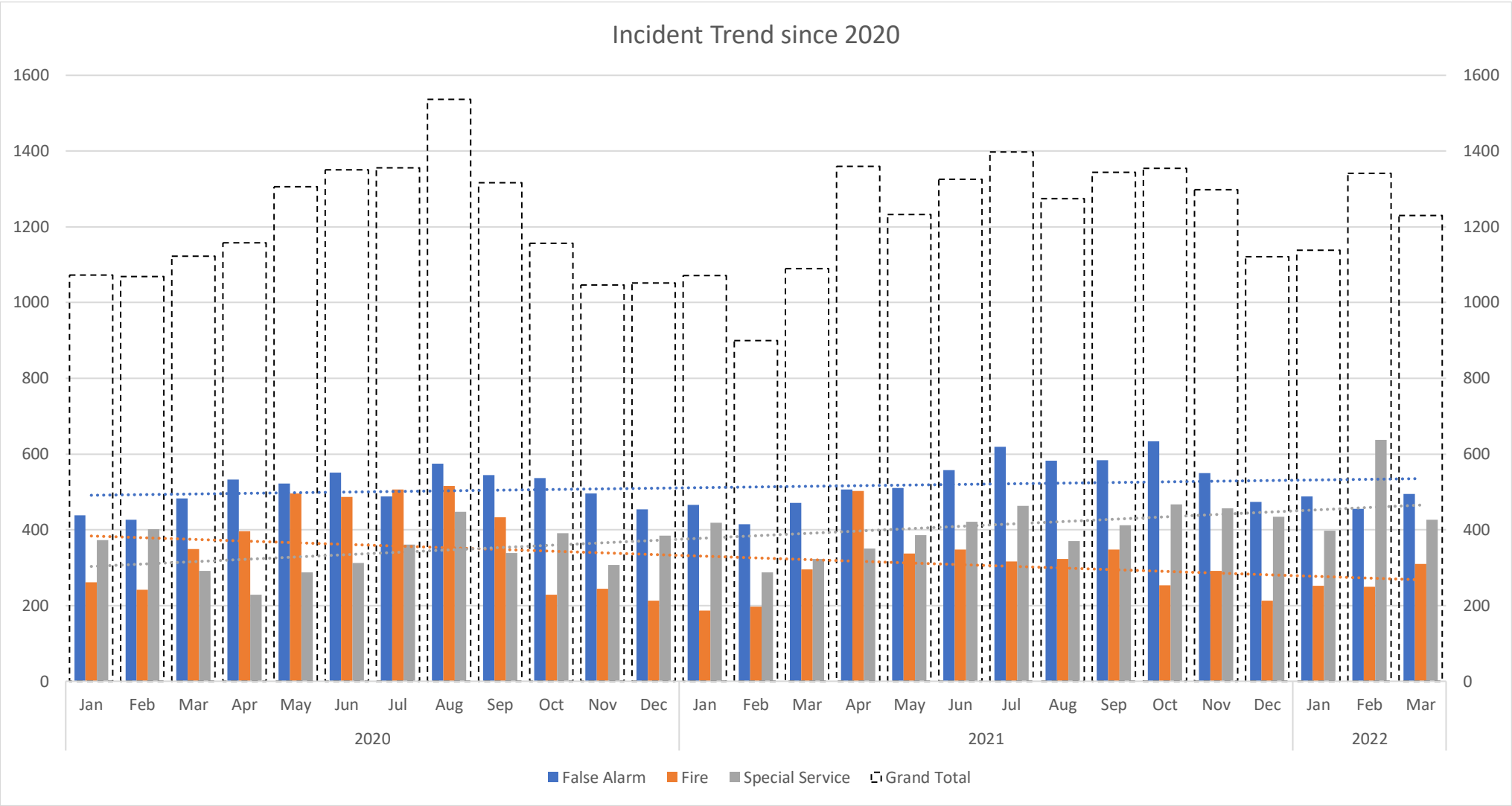
FIRES

There are three fire classification types: primary, secondary and chimney. The table below shows the number of fires per classification for Q4 periods over the last four years. The 19% increase in all fires attended in this quarter (compared to Q4 2020-21), increases were seen in primary and secondary fires, there was a 19% increase in secondary fires[1], particularly those involving outdoor structures and grassland, woodland, and crops.

	Primary	Secondary	Chimney	Total
Q4 2018-19	506	383	34	923
Q4 2019-20	469	349	33	851
Q4 2020-21	377	276	26	679
Q4 2021-22	**465**	**320**	**26**	**811**

Further analysis on primary fires, such as Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs) and deliberate fires are covered in more detail under the prevention section of this report.

SPECIAL SERVICES

This quarter has seen the highest number of number of attendances to special service incidents for a Q4 period in the last four years, and an 41% increase compared to Q4 2020-21. This continues the trend seen in Q3. The table on the following page shows the number of special service incidents per type, ordered from highest to lowest for Q4 2021-22 and the percentage change in brackets.

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[1] Fire Service Definitions. Secondary fires: Secondary fires are generally small outdoor fires, not involving people or property

Special Service Incident Type	Q4 2018-19	Q4 2019-20	Q4 2020-21	Q4 2021-22
RTC	248 (-16%)	244 (-2%)	190 (-22%)	265 (39%)
Effecting entry/exit	237 (1%)	231 (-3%)	220 (-5%)	230 (5%)
Assist other agencies	129 (12%)	134 (4%)	103 (-23%)	191 (85%)
Making Safe (not RTC)	39 (-52%)	76 (95%)	27 (-64%)	161 (496%)
No action (not false alarm)	29 (12%)	18 (-38%)	38 (111%)	118 (211%)
Flooding	84 (-46%)	85 (1%)	171 (101%)	95 (-44%)
Lift Release	74 (16%)	58 (-22%)	51 (-12%)	78 (53%)
Advice Only	6 (-65%)	12 (100%)	15 (25%)	55 (267%)
Removal of objects from people	32 (-24%)	40 (25%)	42 (5%)	54 (29%)
Animal assistance incidents	15 (-40%)	28 (87%)	32 (14%)	45 (41%)
Other rescue/release of persons	25 (4%)	32 (28%)	26 (-19%)	33 (27%)
Spills and Leaks (not RTC)	29 (142%)	23 (-21%)	19 (-17%)	26 (37%)
Suicide/attempts	8 (60%)	8 (0%)	13 (63%)	20 (54%)
Removal of people from objects	10 (-23%)	22 (120%)	9 (-59%)	18 (100%)
Hazardous Materials incident	22 (0%)	13 (-41%)	31 (138%)	17 (-45%)
(blank)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	16 (0%)
Rescue or evacuation from water	6 (0%)	8 (33%)	23 (188%)	12 (-48%)
Medical Incident - First responder	2 (-75%)	10 (400%)	6 (-40%)	9 (50%)
Evacuation (no fire)	3 (-25%)	0 (-100%)	4 (0%)	7 (75%)
Other Transport incident	9 (-31%)	6 (-33%)	5 (-17%)	5 (0%)
Stand By	4 (-56%)	14 (250%)	2 (-86%)	4 (100%)
Medical Incident - Co-responder	3 (-40%)	2 (-33%)	2 (0%)	2 (0%)
Water provision	**1 (0%)**	**1 (0%)**	**0 (-100%)**	**0 (0%)**
Grand Total	**1015 (14%)**	**1065 (5%)**	**1029 (3%)**	**1461 (41%)**

False alarms are covered in more detail under the priority, Make Best use of our Resources.

Service Measure: To get to our first attendance to a potentially life-threatening incident (PLT) within an average of 10 minutes.

This measure calculates the response time of first attendance to a potentially life-threatening (PLT) incident and the target is a 10-minute average. The table below shows the response time in minutes and seconds for potentially life-threatening incidents for Q4 2021-22 and 2020-21.

Target: Average of 10 minutes		
	Q4 2021-22	**Q4 2020-21**
January	10m 21s	11m 00s
February	10m 18s	09m 34s
March	10m 02s	10m 49s

The histogram chart below shows that 50% of PLT incidents (based on type at control) were attended within 10 minutes, 90% within 17 minutes and 95% within 21 minutes.

Histogram - PLT Incidents Q4 2021-22
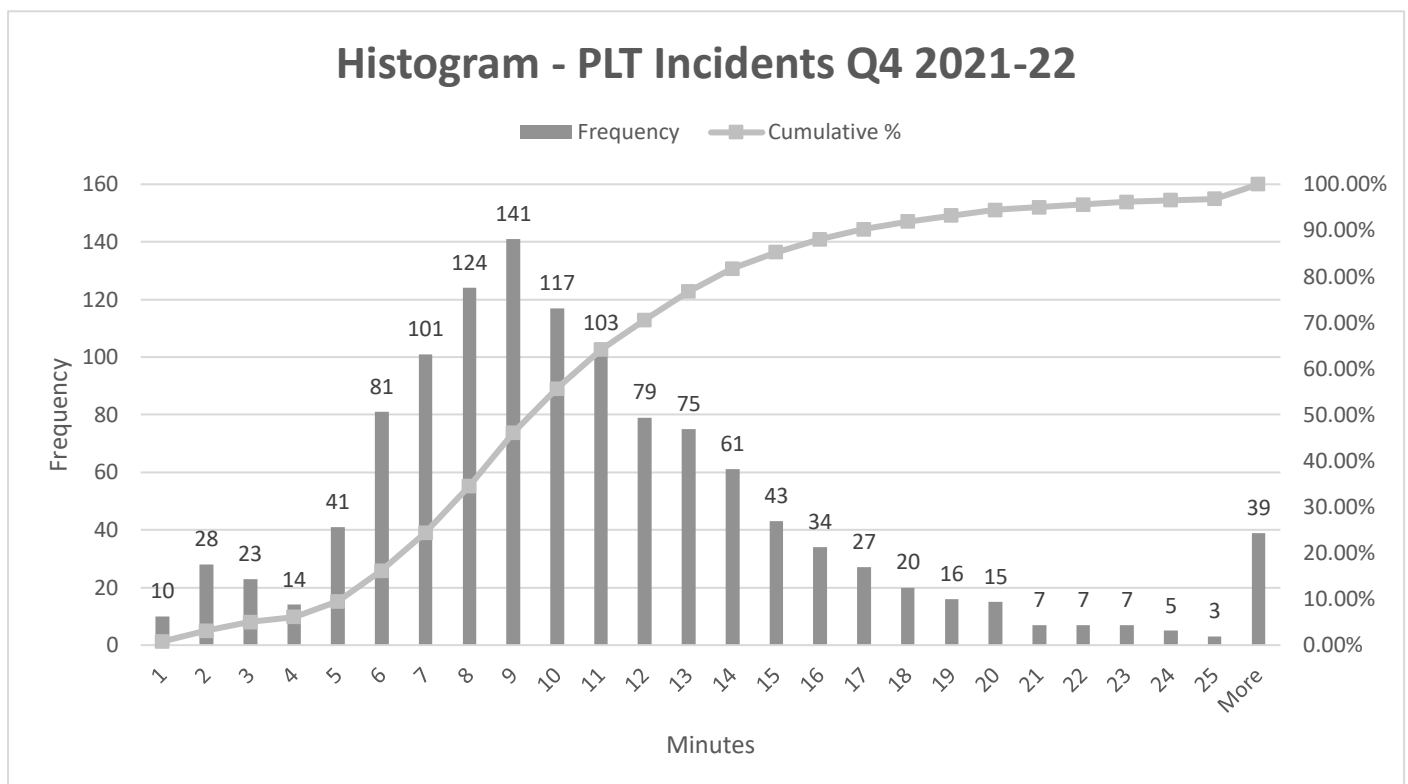
The table below provides the average call handling, turnout, and travel (the three elements of response time) to PLT incidents for Q4 2021-22 and 2020-21. Between Q4 2021-22 and 2020-21,

there is a 30 second difference in average travel times that will highly likely be due to significant reduction in traffic flows due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

	Q4 2021-22			Q4 2020-21		
	Call Handling	Turnout	Travel	Call Handling	Turnout	Travel
January	02:03	02:59	05:58	01:52	02:45	05:47
February	01:45	02:32	05:16	02:14	02:43	06:23
March	01:59	02:44	06:06	01:47	02:37	05:39
Q4	02:03	02:59	05:58	01:52	02:45	05:47

Service Measure: Percentage of incidents attended within 15 minutes.

This measure calculates the percentage of incidents that were attended by an ECFRS first attending appliance within 15 minutes. The service-wide target is 90%.

Target: 90% of incidents within 15 minutes		
	Q4 2021-22	Q4 2020-21
January	86.3%	83.7%
February	83.0%	86.3%
March	85.5%	86.2%

Further analysis, as shown in the histogram chart and table, indicates that 90% of incidents attended in Q4 2021-22 were attended within 17 mins, 94% within 21 mins.

Histogram - % of incidents attended within 15 minutes
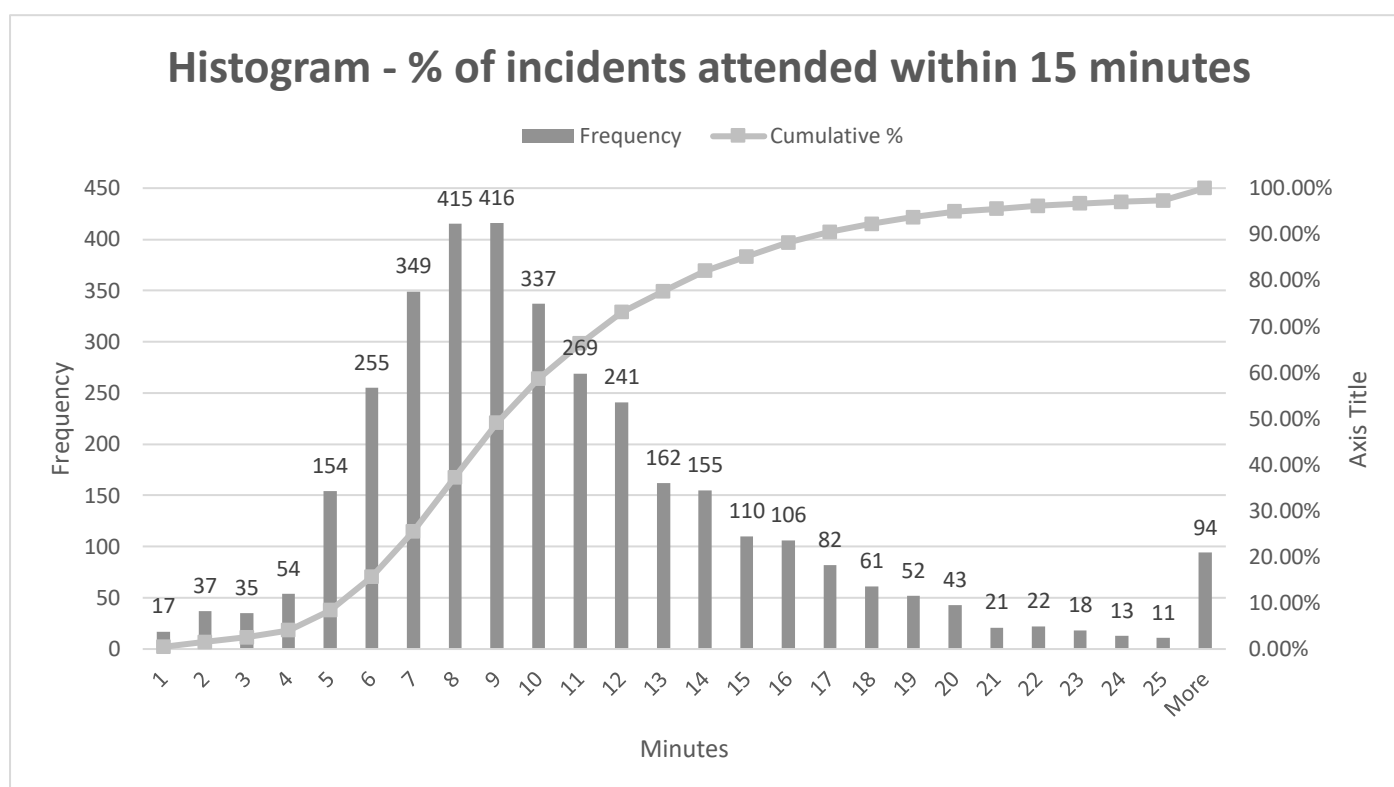
Service Measure: Total Pumping Appliance Availability

This measure includes the total pumping appliance availability for the Service as well as the Wholetime and Day Crew (WT & DC) and on-call (OC) pumping appliances availability. Each crewing type has a specific target: total is 94%, WT &DC is 98% and OC is 90%. The tables below show the pumping appliance availability by month for the last two financial years.

Total Pumping Appliance Availability Target: 94%		
	Q4 2021-22	Q4 2020-21
January	81%	85%
February	79%	85%
March	76%	85%

Wholetime & Day Crew Pumping Appliance Availability, Target: 98%			On-Call Pumping Appliance Availability, Target: 90%		
	Q4 2021-22	Q4 2020-21		Q4 2021-22	Q4 2020-21
January	98%	99%	January	74%	80%
February	98%	98%	February	72%	79%
March	97%	98%	March	67%	80%

During Q4 2021/22 ECFRS introduced coverage reporting to the organisation. This looks at the number of minutes within a month where there was one fire appliance available to attend incidents within a station ground, represents as a percentage. This links into the organisations Key Station Policy and allows out Control teams to prioritise standby movements when appliances go "Off The Run"

Coverage Percentage for January 2022

Page 33 of 170

Coverage Percentage February 2022

Saffron Walden 99%
Sible Hedingham 42%
Newport 85%
Thaxted 63%
Wethersfield 65%
Halstead 97%
Manningtree 53%
Dovercourt 99%
Stansted 92%
Colchester 97%
Wivenhoe 62%
Weeley 97%
Frinton 73%
Great Dunmow 90%
Braintree 96%
Coggeshall 69%
Brightlingsea 80%
Clacton 98%
Old Harlow 51%
Leaden Roding 65%
Tiptree 67%
West Mersea 95%
Witham 98%
Chelmsford 97%
Tollesbury 63%
Harlow Central 97%
Maldon 99%
Ongar 20%
Tillingham 92%
Waltham Abbey 95%
Epping 78%
Ingatestone 0%
Great Baddow 88%
South Woodham 94%
Burnham 87%
Loughton 94%
Brentwood 95%
Billericay 61%
Wickford 69%
Hawkwell 84%
Rochford 74%
RW 93%
Shoeburyness 86%
Basildon 96%
Leigh 90%
Southend 97%
Corringham 95%
Orsett 92%
Grays 98%
Canvey 99%

Core Station
☐ Core Stations

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Coverage Percentage March 2022

Saffron Walden 99%

Sible Hedingham 45%

Newport 79%

Thaxted 56%

Wethersfield 55%

Halstead 97%

Manningtree 56%

Dovercourt 96%

Stansted 75%

Great Dunmow 86%

Braintree 85%

Coggeshall 60%

Colchester 97%

Wivenhoe 49%

Weeley 96%

Frinton 61%

Brightlingsea 85%

Old Harlow 55%

Leaden Roding 46%

Witham 96%

Tiptree 75%

West Mersea 88%

Clacton 96%

Chelmsford 97%

Tollesbury 55%

Harlow Central 96%

Ongar 11%

Maldon 95%

Epping 85%

Great Baddow

Tillingham 85%

Waltham Abbey 90%

Ingatestone 0%

South Woodham 91%

Loughton 90%

Brentwood 93%

Billericay 57%

Wickford 68%

Hawkwell 97%

Rochford 73%

Burnham 81%

RW 93%

Shoeburyness 91%

Basildon 96%

Leigh 91%

Southend 97%

Corringham 98%

Grays 95%

Orsett 92%

Canvey

Core Station

Core Stations

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Commentary (Response)

Observations and key insights about the data.

Coverage is high in key areas, multiple stations showing 100% coverage

Availability is lower when compared to Q4 20/21

Response times improved for 2 of the 3 months in the Quarter when compared to Q4 20/21 and for the month of March the Life Threatening response time was within 2 seconds of target

RTC call numbers were higher than in any of the 3 previous years.

Key actions taken in the Quarter.

The command Group Managers have an appraisal action to create group plans which will identify the risk in each of the groups and ensure the teams are able to effectively resource and prioritise based on that identified risk.

The staff team restructure is fully embedded, this has ensured we have redistributed our current resources and aligned them more effectively to the risks that are identified in the commands.

Area Manager Response has set an action to investigate all life-threatening calls that are significantly longer than target. This has enabled greater scrutiny of incidents and the ability to target remedial actions in the right area to improve performance.

Plan for reaching national average of Home Fire Safety Checks has been developed. The service will be in a position to reach the monthly national average by December 22. For the response teams this means we will be delivering 5200 visits in a 12 month period which represents a significant increase on previous levels.

Actions planned for next Quarter

Internal reporting to take place to understand crew attendance at community events

Preliminary meeting with Group Manager Control and Area Manager Response to scope out options to increase resilience in the control room

HFSC activity to be investigated between Area Manager Response and Area Manager Prevention and Protection to understand blocks and how this can be increased.

PROTECTION

Service Measure: Number of fires in non-residential properties.

Tolerance (per month) for 2021-22	Red	Amber	Green	Blue
Number of Non-Residential Fires	43+	40 - 43	25 - 39	0 - 24

The table below shows the number of fires in non-residential properties, excluding private properties such as greenhouses, summerhouses, or sheds, for each month within quarter three and the total for 2021-22 as well as figures for Quarter four 2020-21.

	Q4 2021-22	Q4 2020-21
January	25	22
February	37	12
March	48	29
Quarter Total	110	63
Rolling 12 months	346	314

The tree map below shows the top 10 property types (excluding private property) associated with non-domestic fires in Q4 2021-22.

Non Domestic Fires
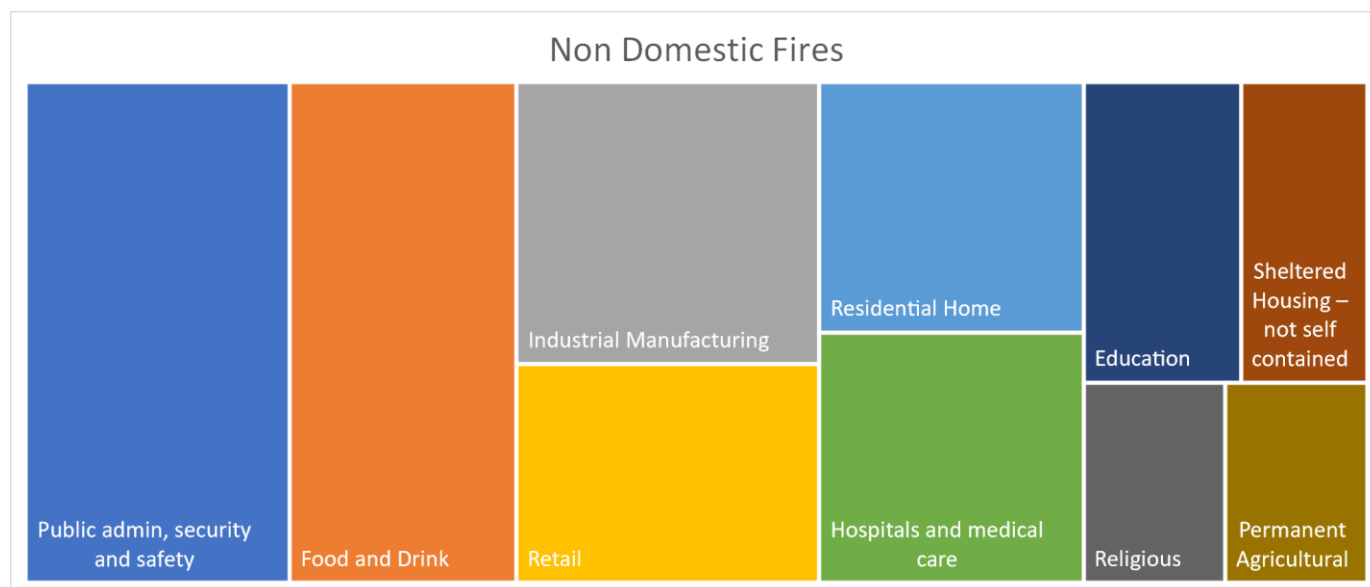
Protection Team Activity Overview

Job Type	January Completed	Success	February Completed	Success	March Completed	Success	Completed - Quarter Total
Planning	108	106	71	70	146	144	**325**
Alleged Fire Risk (AFR)	17		14		13		**44**
Desktop Audits	2	RBIP 1	4	RBIP 4	0		**6 (5 RBIP)**
Full Audits	80	RBIP 57	123	RBIP 91	117	RBIP 80	**320 (228 RBIP)**
Building Regulations	107	104	103	98	147	142	**357**
HMO	9		3		15		**27**
Licensing	10		11		12		**33**
Other Fire Safety Activity[2]	36	34	62	62	68	67	**166**
Other Consultations[3]	96		77		107		**280**

116 Notifications of Deficiencies were served following 326 Full and Desktop audits = 36%

0 Enforcement Notices issued

0 Prohibition Notices served in

---

[2] For example: post-fire visits and general enquiries from public/businesses
[3] Other consultations include BASIS, Consultation, Demolition, SAG

Service Measure: Number of audits completed against those premises measured Very High (VH) and High (H) on the Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP)

Tolerance (per month) for 2021-22 Number of audits completed against premises measured VH or H on the RBIP (monthly)	Red	Amber	Green	Blue
	0 - 162	163 -183	184 - 203	203+

The table below shows the number of audits completed on those premises measured VH and H on the RBIP for each month within quarter three and the total for 2021-22.

	Q4 2021-22	Difference from Monthly (Blue) Target
January	57	146
February	91	112
March	80	123
Quarter Total	**228**	**381**

Commentary (Protection)

Observations and insights about the data

The Assistant Director Prevention and Protection has commissioned a workshop on 17th June 2022 to: -

- Identify why the current 2020- 2024 RBIP is behind target
- Revise the RBIP to meet the requirements of the Protection Strategy
- Identify a resilient delivery process that is achievable and sustainable
- Agree areas of accountability
- Agree content for an SLT paper
- Confirm governance to check progress against targets
- Capture actions and issues
- Agreed the action plan and timescales

Key actions taken in the Quarter

The Protection department continues developing the workforce planning model to ascertain where the uplift fund for additional posts will be spent, to reduce risk, and enable more efficient ways or working. Several areas listed below have been prioritised and making an impact for example. The Business Engagement manager post has enabled a reduction of 350 unwanted fire signals compared to the same period in 2021. Finance meetings have been scheduled monthly to capture the planning forecast from the 2nd round of uplift funding that will be received in two payments. All Grenfell actions are progressing and on target. Monthly meetings have been scheduled to check progress on key actions listed below. The OPFCC have been invited to the monthly meetings to raise awareness and provide scrutiny and challenge on progress.

- Station Manager (SM) Business Engagement post to have a dedicated Watch Manager (WM) resource (Temporary trial, commenced 14th Feb)
- Continuation of a number of prosecutions in relation to Regulatory Reform Order compliance in non-domestic premises.
- Finalisation of BRR project.
- Tender in progress for accredited training for all Crew and Watch managers
- Planning forecast for uplift funding continuing
- Procurement of smoke curtains from uplift fund
- RBIP review underway/work in progress

- Ongoing implementation of new structure for the Fire Protection Team.

- Realignment of Protection support staff to provide admin support at HQ

- Appointment internally into Training and Policy Post - ongoing

- Training Manager (WM) substantiated in post

- Vacant posts advertised/recruitment process (2 x Office Managers (OMs) and one WM Policy)

- Adoption of new reporting spreadsheets for surge funding (Designed between Protection and Finance)

- Representation on Grenfell Project Board

Actions planned for next Quarter

- The Protection team are developing plans to upskill Watch & Crew Managers to enhance knowledge of Fire Protection. Utilising recently purchased Virtual reality training to enable interactive training to carry out Fire Safety audits and increase the volume of medium and high visits by Operational crews in Risk Based Inspection Programme targets.

- Appoint an officer to support business engagement in to reduce unwanted fire signals and reduce the Operational response to these incidents

- Appointment of performance analyst to for Fire Protection team to build utilisation databases and enable individual performance to be visible against targets set in the RBIP

- Collaborating with 5 National Fire Services to deliver the ISO 17020 Fire Investigation Standard to be compliant with the NFCC Professional Standards

- Training continues to be delivered on enhanced Fire Protection training for existing Fire Protection staff (Level 4 and 5) to increase the volume of audits completed in the RBIP

- Workforce and Succession planning for the Fire Protection Team remains a priority and forms part of the monthly Performance update

- Roles profiles and job description to recruit to existing vacancies is underway to bring the team up to the required establishment

PREVENTION

Education

In the Fire & Rescue Plan, there is the following 'we will' statement: 'educate and inform young people, so they live safe lives' under the priority, Prevention, Protection and Response (PPR). At time of reporting, there is no specific performance measure linked to the Education activity. Education is a key activity across the Prevention function and forms part of live safe.

Following the return of schools after the Christmas break and the omicron COVID variant, the central team and Education Officers were once again able to quickly return to booking schools with both face-to-face and virtual lessons.

During this period, the team recruited a new member into the team following a resignation and were able to provide appropriate training, awareness, and shadowing to enable their inclusion and development into the role.

Following the last two years with schools having to balance curriculum priorities and additional education from our team, the last quarter has demonstrated our relationship with schools throughout Essex remains strong and respected. These figures reflect the teams hard work and continued resilience to ensure we reach as many children as possible through our programme offer.

	Face-to-Face	Virtual	Total
January	3913	3312	7225
February	3042	1142	4184
March	6004	1556	7560
Total	**12959**	**6010**	**18969**

During Q4 2021-22, the Education Team continued to promote and deliver our wider programme offer which looks at several key priorities for both Essex Police and ECFRS. The graph below and table on the following page show the different programmes delivered throughout Q4.

Number of children seen per programme
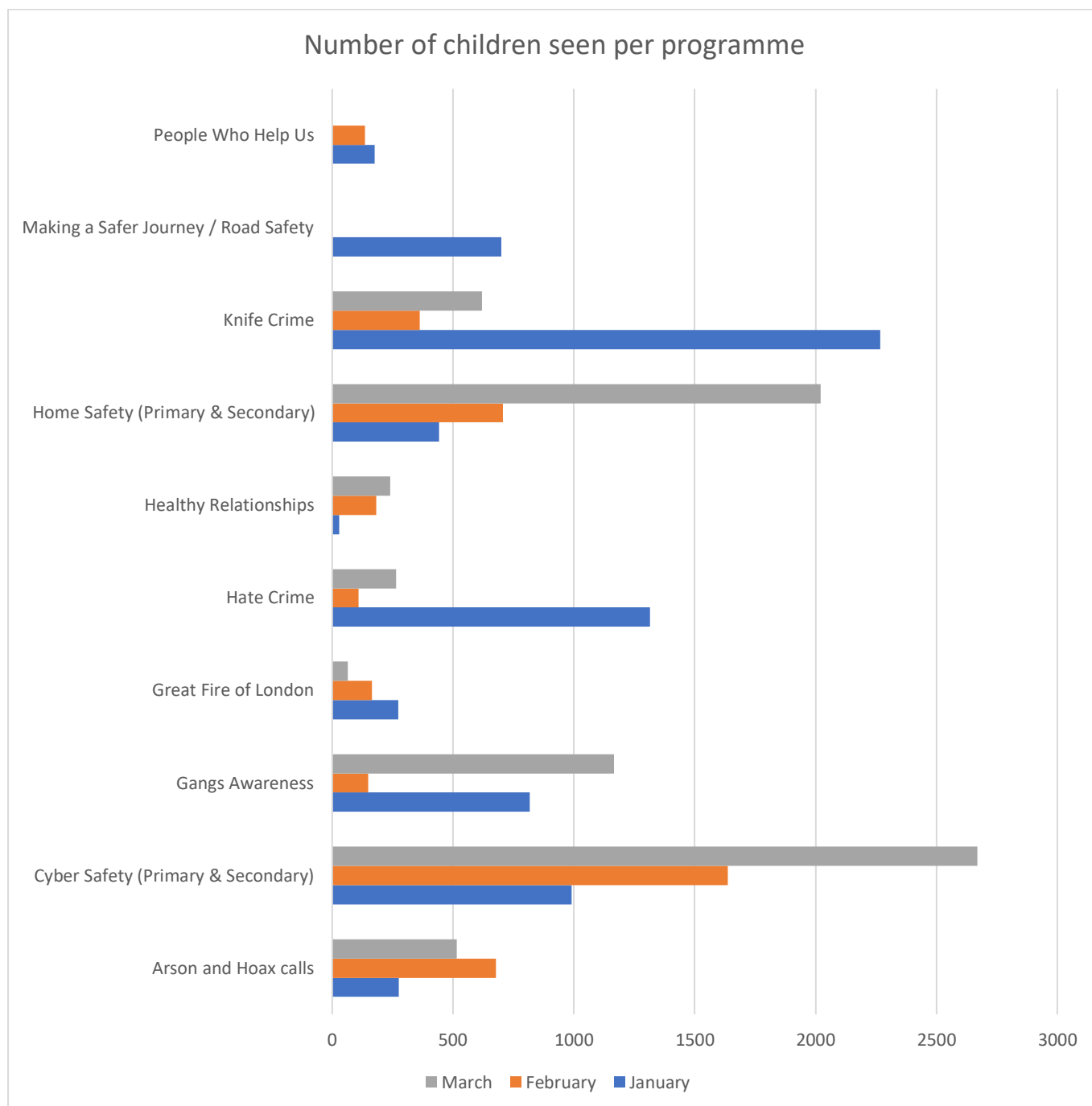
Programme	January	February	March
Arson and Hoax calls	275	677	516
Cyber Safety (Primary & Secondary)	990	1636	2669
Gangs Awareness	818	150	1166
Great Fire of London	273	164	65
Hate Crime	1314	110	264
Healthy Relationships	30	182	240
Home Safety (Primary & Secondary)	442	707	2020
Knife Crime	2268	362	620
Making a Safer Journey / Road Safety	700	0	0
People Who Help Us	175	136	0
Total	**7285**	**4125**	**7560**

Service Measure: Rate of accidental dwelling fires (ADFs) per 10,000 population.
This measure relates to live safe under the Prevention strategy.

Tolerance (per month) for 2021-22	Red	Amber	Green	Blue
Number of ADFs	75+	69 - 75	44 - 68	0 - 43

The table below shows the number and rate of ADFS per 10,000 population.

	Rate		Actuals	
	Q4 2021-22	**Q4 2020-21**	**Q4 2021-22**	**Q4 2020-21**
January	0.3	0.3	61	59
February	0.3	0.3	52	49
March	0.3	0.3	54	63
Rolling 12 months	3.9	4	717	734

The chart below shows a decrease in the number of ADFs from April to July 2021, with a slight increase to the end of the year. This Year has consistently been near or below the 5 year average.
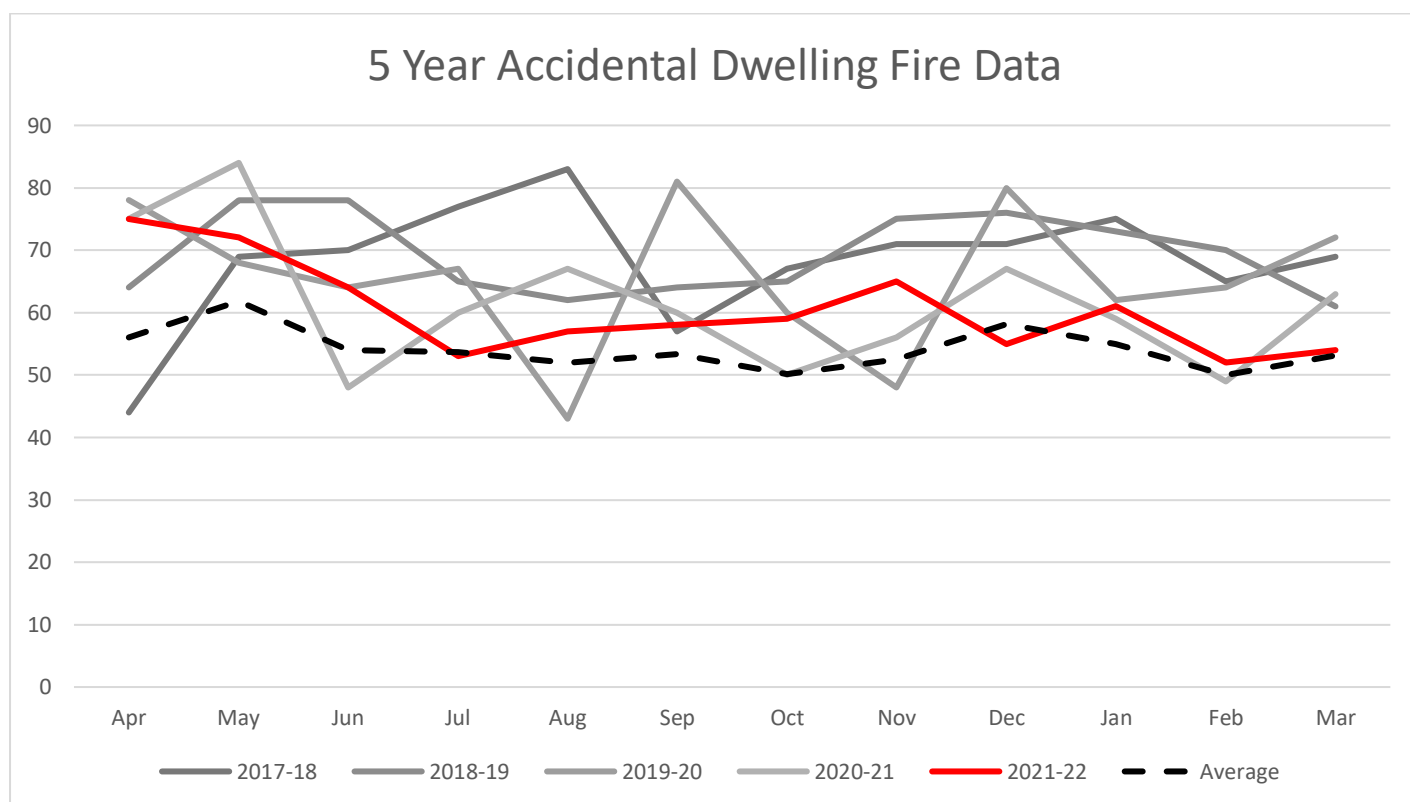
The chart below shows that the number of ADFs from April 2017 to March 2022, with a trendline that depicts a decrease over the period.

5 Year Accidental Dwelling Fire Trend
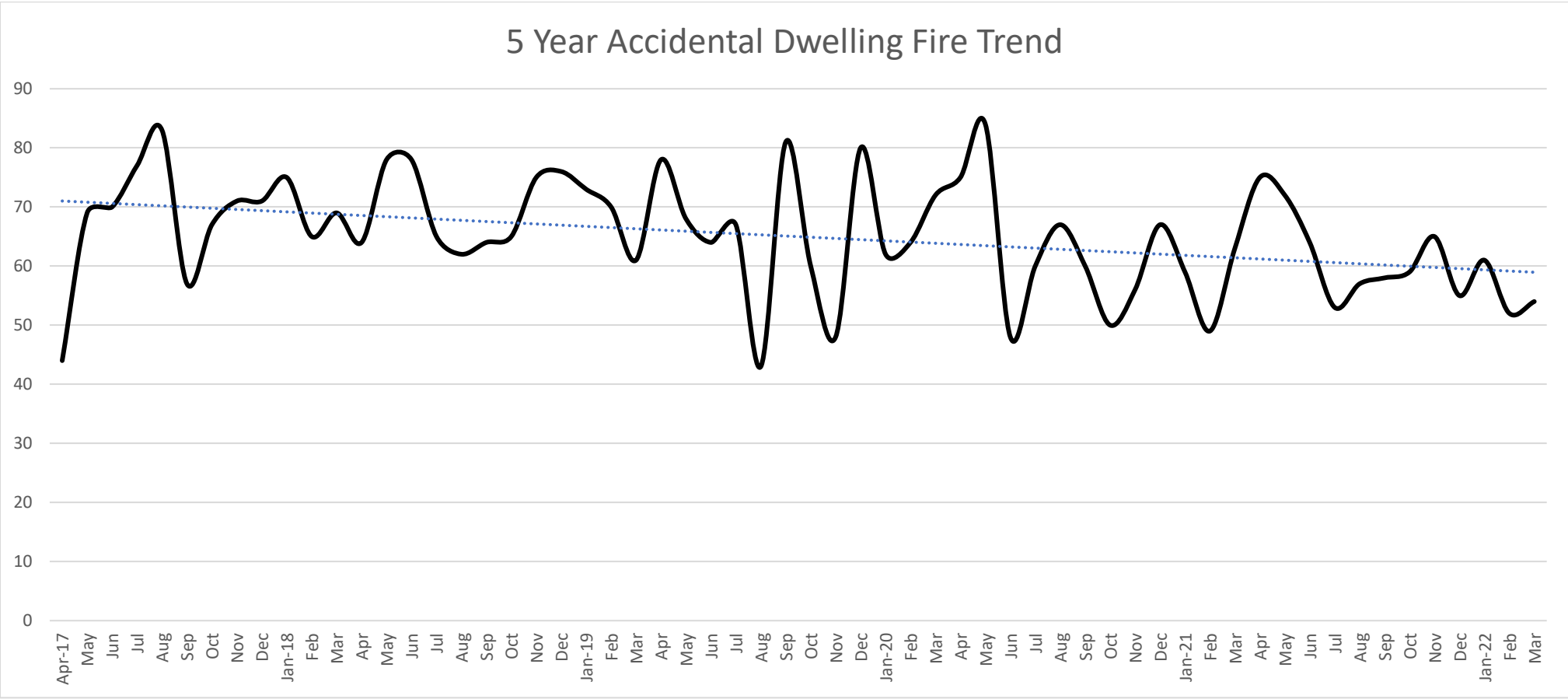
Service Measure: Percentage of ADFs that are cooking related.

This is a monitoring measures and relates to live safe under the Prevention strategy.

The table below shows the percentage and actual numbers of ADFs per month that were cooking related.

	Percentage		Actuals	
	Q4 2021-22	Q4 2020-21	Q4 2021-22	Q4 2020-21
January	30%	34%	18	20
February	23%	22%	12	11
March	20%	22%	11	14

Service Measure: Smoke alarm ownership.

This is a monitoring measure and relates to live safe under the Prevention strategy.

The table below shows the percentage and actual numbers of ADFs where a smoke alarm was present and worked.

	Percentage		Actuals	
	Q4 2021-22	Q4 2020-21	Q4 2021-22	Q4 2020-21
January	63.93%	55.93%	39	33
February	63.46%	54.17%	33	26
March	58.49%	55.56%	31	35

The table above shows that all months in the quarter had a higher percentage of smoke alarm ownership compared to previous year. The rolling 12 months percentage figure also shows an improvement over previous year.

Service Measure: Rate of deliberate fires per 10,000 population.

This measure relates to live safe under the Prevention strategy.

The table below shows the rate of deliberate fires[4] per 10,000 population, by fire classification with the respective targets for each, for Q4 2021-22 and Q4 2020-21 for comparison.

Rate of Deliberate Fires		Q4 2021-22	Q4 2020-21
Primary **Target (Month) – 0.2**	**January**	0.2	0.1
	February	0.1	0.1
	March	0.2	0.1
Rolling 12 months		1.9	1.7
Secondary **Target (Month) – 0.6**	**January**	0.2	0.1
	February	0.2	0.2
	March	0.3	0.3
Rolling 12 months		4.2	4.5

Number of Deliberate Fires		Q4 2021-22	Q4 2020-21
Primary **Target (Month) – 39**	**January**	31	13
	February	25	15
	March	31	18
Rolling 12 months		346	314
Secondary **Target (Month) – 95**	**January**	36	26
	February	40	32
	March	63	57
Rolling 12 months		772	823

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[4] Deliberate fires include those where the motive for the fire was 'thought to be' or 'suspected to be' deliberate. This includes fires to an individual's own property, others' property or property of an unknown owner. Despite deliberate fire records including arson, deliberate fires are not the same as arson. Arson is defined under the Criminal Damage Act of 1971 as 'an act of attempting to destroy or damage property, and/or in doing so, to endanger life'. Source: Fire statistics definitions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Tolerance (per month) for 2021-22	Red	Amber	Green	Blue
Number of Deliberate Fires	158+	117 - 158	48 - 116	0 - 47

All Deliberate Fires	January	25
	February	37
	March	48
	Total	**110**

Fire and Rescue Plan Measure: Reduction in Fatalities and Injuries

This measure monitors the number of fatalities and casualties that went to hospital with injuries that appeared to be serious or slight.

Fire-related

	Red	Amber	Green	Blue
Tolerance (per month) for 2021-22 Primary Fire Injuries	9+	6 - 9	2 - 5	0 - 1
Tolerance (per month) for 2021-22 Accidental Dwelling Fire Injuries	6+	4 - 6	1 - 3	0

Previous performance reports have focused solely on fire-related fatalities and casualties, particularly those that occurred in accidental dwelling fires. The table below shows the number of fire-related fatalities and casualties for Q4 2021-22 and 2020-21 for comparison.

		Q4 2021-22	Q4 2020-21
Primary Fire Fatalities	January	1	1
	February	0	0
	March	0	1
	Quarter Total	1	2
		Q4 2021-22	**Q4 2020-21**
Primary Fire Casualties (Went to hospital with injuries)	January	3	0
	February	9	3
	March	2	8
	Quarter Total	14	11
ADF Casualties (Went to hospital with injuries)	January	3	0
	February	4	2
	March	1	7
	Quarter Total	8	9

The chart below shows the gender and age group of the fire-related fatalities and casualties (including severity of injury) involved in primary fires since quarter 4 2021-22.
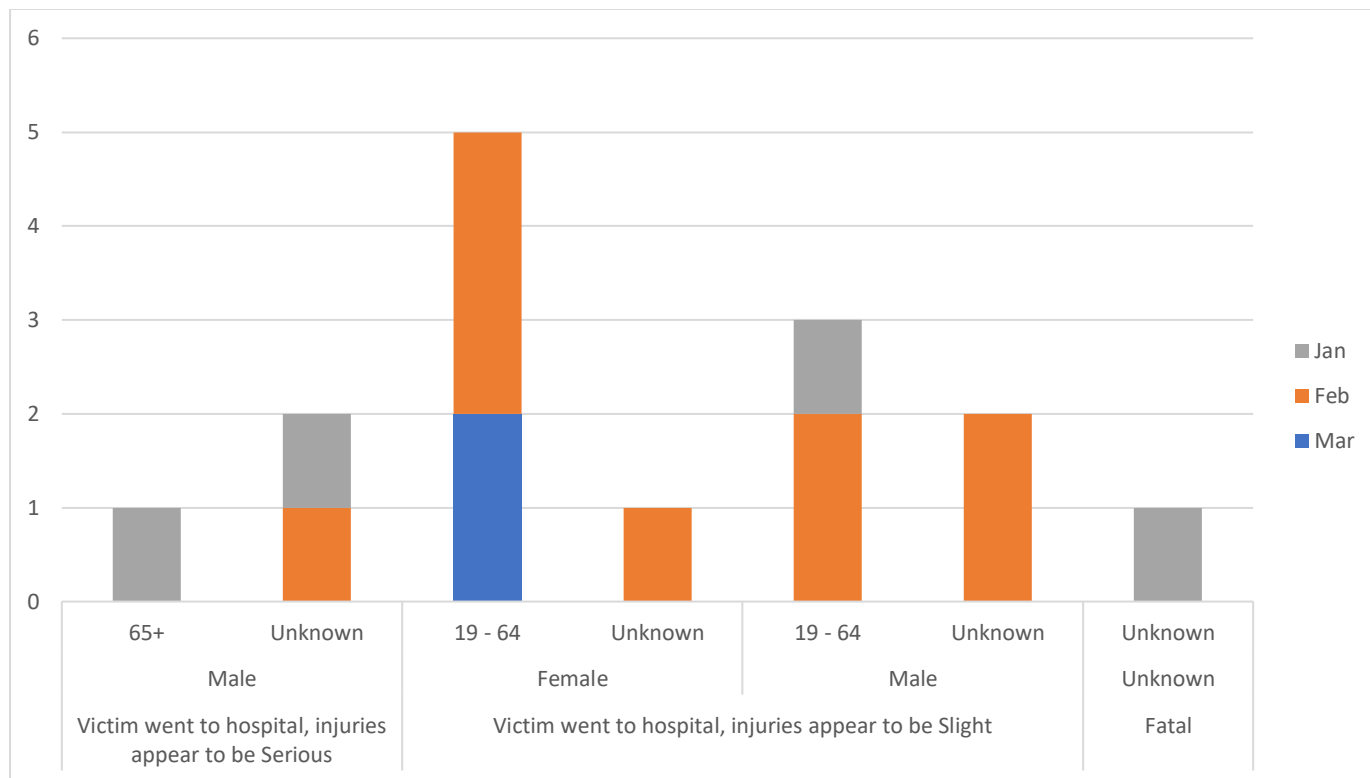
Commentary (Road and Water Safe)

Observations and insights about the data

- In Q4 2021-22, there was one fatality by drowning in March and SAIR undertaken in Q1 2022-23 to identify and understand risk factors about the individual and environment which could be improved on to prevent further drownings.

Key actions taken in the Quarter

- Induction of a Road & Water Safety Lead and Officer continued, with meetings with key stakeholders.

- The Road & Water Safety Lead, met with colleagues in the RNLI to look at data sharing arrangements in order to target most at risk areas.

- Plans to progress the RNLI Waterside Responder Scheme progressed, with information sent to Rep Bodies for their consideration and support.

- Planning begins for the Be Water Aware week, including purchasing of promotional giveaways, leaflets and updates to our internet. A new social media channel was also started.

Actions planned for next quarter

- Planning and coordination of water safety events in Q2 and Q3 2022.
- Effective and efficient planning for the rollout of the RNLI's Waterside Responder Scheme, this includes liaising with other fire and rescue services who have already achieved this. This also includes communication of the proposed planning and implementation approach to key internal and external stakeholders.
- Research, preparing and delivering Be Water Aware Week in April and Boat Fire Safety Week in May.

Commentary (Operational Community Risk)

Actions taken in the Quarter

- The OCR (Operational and Community Risk) Team have attended 231 engagement events throughout this period, engaging with low-income families, minority ethnic groups, older persons and young single parent families totalling over 5751 engagements and generating 304 Home Fire Safety Checks. Some of these events were in partnership with partner agencies which include but are not limited to Essex Police, Local Authorities, Southend Voluntary Service, Essex Youth Services, Environmental Health, Eastlight Community Housing Crimestoppers, Sanctuary Housing, Rainbow Services, Care UK, United in Kind, Dementia Action Alliance, Adult Social Care, RNLI and Essex Faith Covenant.

- During this period 18 referrals have been made to partner agencies

- Following a request from Essex Police the OCR team assisted by Operational crews supported Op Grip. This Operation was targeted at reducing Anti-social Behaviour. ECFRS engaged using visible guardianship and localised delivery of community engagement 54 locations were attended over a four-day period. Engaging with approximately 204 individuals

- Following from the fatal fire in Saffron Walden in the previous quarter, activity continued to target the management and residents of sheltered accommodation and assisted living properties. 127 of these sessions were delivered this quarter reaching approximately 3348 individuals and generating 195 Home Fire Safety Check referrals.

- Within this period 26 targeted intervention activities were delivered in areas where there are increased risks e.g., deprivation, rural area, high numbers of kitchen fires.837 addresses were visited with a total of 710 doorstep engagements gaining 61 Home Fire Safety Check referrals.

- A total of 34 Tactical After Incident Responses (TAIR) following an incident were delivered throughout this period by Operational Crews. 527 addresses were visited with a total of 275 doorstep engagements gaining 16 Home Fire Safety Check referrals

- The OCR team have overseen the delivery of two Strategic After Incident Responses (SAIR) following one fatal domestic fire and one drowning incident.

- The OCR team have met with Community Leaders of the Charedi Jewish Community on Canvey to promote joint working and promote Community Safety. Key areas discussed included:

- A community Fire Safety ambassador – a selected volunteer to work alongside ECFRS and the Jewish community to promote Fire Safety and assist in delivering Home Fire Safety Messages.

- Joint training opportunities between Hatzola (Jewish Community emergency response ambulance service). This will strengthen links between ECFRS and the community as Hatzola are extremely well-respected organisation within the Jewish community worldwide.
- The opportunity to have Hatzola at the ECFRS Open Day on Canvey
- The attendance of ECFRS Operational crews and OCR team at the Jewish Community days and celebrations.
- The Community Safety Partnership Dashboard is now live. The Staff Team are using this to generate briefing packs for those attending partnership meetings with a view to improve understanding and engagement.
- Recording of attendance at Community Safety Partnership hubs and partnership meetings is now active. This enables the uploading of shared intelligence.
- In the last quarter 77 Partnership meetings or hub attendances were recorded.
- OCR team have reached out to and engaged with all CSP Managers and had meetings with many of them to promote engagement with the CSP Network.
- One new Watch Manager (WM) has joined the team enabling an increase in work rate with an additional WM starting mid- June.

Actions planned for next quarter

- Business Continuity exercise to be completed
- Continue planned approach to HFSC generation within Cluster 2 areas across the county.
- A joint activity between Protection and OCR is working on two community action plans to implement at Morello Quarter in Basildon and Joseph Rank House in Harlow. These two

premises are in special measures as part of the BRR and the Protection team have been working closely with them to mitigate risk. This has included involvement of the OCR team and subsequently the development of the action plans. We are looking to deliver these over the next quarter.

- Continue to develop and improve the CSP dashboard to provide improved and relevant data for CSP meetings.

- Offer development sessions for Station Managers and other Staff members who may work with CSP partners in understanding the meeting and ECFRSs place within it.

- Continue to try to resolve vetting issues and embed the Community Safety Officers within the Community Hubs which are in districts throughout Essex.

- Implement Community Safety Partnership (CSP) briefings externally to the districts, to inform our partners and support CSP attendance.

- Embed Fire Stoppers throughout Essex to reduce the deliberate fires within the county.

- Review and improve the Safe Well and Secure process, to improve the outcomes for the Service, partners and the community.

- Work with Epping Forest District Council within the Ninefields estate in Waltham Abbey. This is an area of risk where the resident's life expectancy and opportunities are greatly reduced than in other areas of the County. A range of activities are planned which will be evaluated and reported on as part of a partnership approach to 'levelling up'.

Commentary (Live Safe)

Actions taken in the Quarter

- The number of Safe and Well visits conducted has remained steady between January and March

- Compared with Q4 in 2021, as predicted in the previous report, total visit numbers have increased by **55%.** This is likely to reflect the substantial relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions in 2022 compared with 2021.

- In Q4 2022, Stations completed **306** visits, compared with **42** in Q4 2021. This is an increase of **629%.** Operational Crews recommenced delivering the full Home Fire Safety Check in June 2021.

- Volunteer activity resumed this quarter with four volunteers completing **91** visits. All Volunteers have undergone Shadowing training with Safe and Well Officers and had training on the CFRMIS Power Apps system, this allows direct recording of activity assisting

in efficiencies, effectiveness and accurate recording of data.   Recruitment for new volunteers has commenced.

- Of the **1,728** visits recorded complete across the quarter, **74%** were for individuals aged over 65, **41%** were for individuals who lived alone, **38%** were for individuals with a disability that may prevent escaping the property, and **8%** were for individuals living in social housing.

- Of the total number of visits this quarter, **61%** were completed by Safe and Well Officers, **18%** by Stations, **15.5%** by Community Builders, **0.5%** by CSO's and **5%** by Volunteers.

- Safe and Well Officers and Community Builders made referrals for additional support in **13%** of visits they completed in Q4 2022.

- The Home Safety Team have now completed **141** evaluation discussions with individuals who have received Safe and Well Visits. The average score for a Safe and Well Visit out of 10, is currently **9.56**. This is a positive result and evidences attention to customer service. **91**% of evaluation respondents *strongly agreed* that they would recommend a Safe and Well Visit to their friends and family. The remaining **9%** *agreed* that they would recommend a Safe and Well Visit to their friends and family.

Action planned for the Next Quarter

- Given the almost complete relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, it is likely that visit levels will remain stable in Q1 of 2022/23.

- It should be noted, that in the warmer months, the attention of ECFRS community safety and outreach activity must also begin to reflect the need to promote water safety, road traffic collision prevention, and outdoor fire prevention. It is therefore possible, that internally generated referrals into the Home Safety Service decreases with this change of focus.

- The Home Fire Safety Checks target becomes live in April 2022, and the Home Safety Team will begin tracking progress against this over Q1 2022/23.

- In the next quarter, the following Home Safety related highlights will be undertaken.

- The first ECFRS supplied portable misting units will be provided to vulnerable people.

- The Home Safety Team will pilot the Life Safe fire extinguisher product, using a specific criterion for vulnerable people.

- The Safe and Well and Home Safety Information Team will attend a Team 'away day' to focus on department performance and development.

- The Safe and Well Officers will undertake a 3 day, crime and burglary prevention course, sharpening their skills and advisory capability for Safe and Well Visits.

- The Tendring Volunteering Pilot, exploring a new way of allocating and completing Home Fire Safety Checks for volunteers will begin in April 2022.

Note, Live Safety commentary relates to the measures under the Prevention section of the Fire & Rescue Plan priority as well as the two Service measures in the following Fire & Rescue Plan priority, Help the Vulnerable Stay Safe.

FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN: HELP THE VULNERABLE STAY SAFE

The objective of this priority is to help vulnerable people to be safer in Essex.

Service Measure: Number of Safe and Well visits delivered to our most vulnerable groups.
This measure relates to live safe and safeguard under the Prevention strategy.

The table below shows data about prevention activity conducted in Q4 2021-22. In relation to the measure, the second row of the table shows the number of safe and well visits completed

Measure	Q4 2021-22				
	January	February	March	Total	Trend based on Q4 2020-21
Total number of Visits	596	549	583	1,728	↗
Number of Safe and Well Visits	369	335	354	1,058	↗
Number of Home Safety Visits by Stations	101	106	99	306	↗
Number of Home Safety Visits by Volunteers	28	21	42	91	↗
Number of Visits by Community Builders	98	82	86	266	↗
Number of Visits by CSO's and Other roles	0	5	2	7	↘
Number of FHB10/FHB160 (standard smoke detectors) fitted	545	554	549	1,648	→
Number of FHB10W/FH700HIA (sensory smoke detectors) fitted	62	106	114	282	↗
	Incoming	686	593	678	1,957	↗

How many enquiries did we receive to the Information Centre	Outgoing	1,252	952	1,032	3,236	↗
	Emails	508	513	546	1,567	↗
Number of referrals made by Safe and Well Officers to other agencies		75	79	68	222	N/A
* Not previously measured						

The table below shows the number of people who received a visit and had one or more of the vulnerable factors e.g., over 65, lived alone, had a disability, or lived in social housing.

| Number of individuals visited in the following vulnerable groups: | Q4 2021-22 | | | | |
	January	February	March	Total	Trend based on Q4 2020-21
The number over 65 years old	439	384	464	1,287	↗
The number who lived alone	238	216	251	705	↗
The number who had a disability	214	194	240	648	↗
The number who lived in Social Housing	41	44	32	117	↗

Service Measure: Percentage of Safe & Well visits delivered within 28 days

Percentage of Safe & Well visits delivered within 28 days from referral to completion	Q4 2021-22 Actual:
Target: 90%	69%

Fire and Rescue Plan Measure: People who received an intervention feel safer and less at risk.

This measure relates to live safe and safeguard under the Prevention strategy.

For the duration of the pandemic, ECFRS ceased handing out paper evaluation forms to be returned by members of the public in line with COVID-19 risk assessment controls. There is, therefore, no data recorded for service evaluations.

Safeguarding

At time of reporting, there is no specific performance measure linked to the Safeguarding.

The work associated with Community Development & Safeguarding Team aligns with supporting those who are at higher risk of harm in our communities, thus included under the Fire & Rescue Plan priority of Help the Vulnerable Stay Safe.

The Safeguarding Team process referrals received through the online CFRMIS system by way of a questionnaire. All referrals are assessed against the Essex Effective Support Windscreen to ensure appropriate support and signposting is provided. The table below shows the number of referrals the team have received per month in Q4 2021-22 comparing with the same quarter in previous year, to show how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on safeguarding referrals now that certain restrictions have been lifted.

	Q4 2021-22		Q4 2020-21	
	Adults	Children	Adults	Children
January	115	8	39	2
February	84	2	59	1
March	118	4	63	1
Totals	317	14	161	4
	331		164	

As can be seen by the above table the number of safeguarding referrals is still increasing compared to this time last year and in fact the year before. There is significant evidence from partners and social care that the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in an increase in vulnerability in our communities and the above data supports these indications, concerns have come to light as restrictions ease and more visits are being carried out. Since we now have well established working relationships with both Police and Ambulance, we are seeing an increase in

referrals from these two partners. As you can see in the chart below comparison figures show a marked increase from last year. This was in part due to covid restrictions where many partner agencies stopped house visits and the increase when restrictions began to lift and visits restarted.
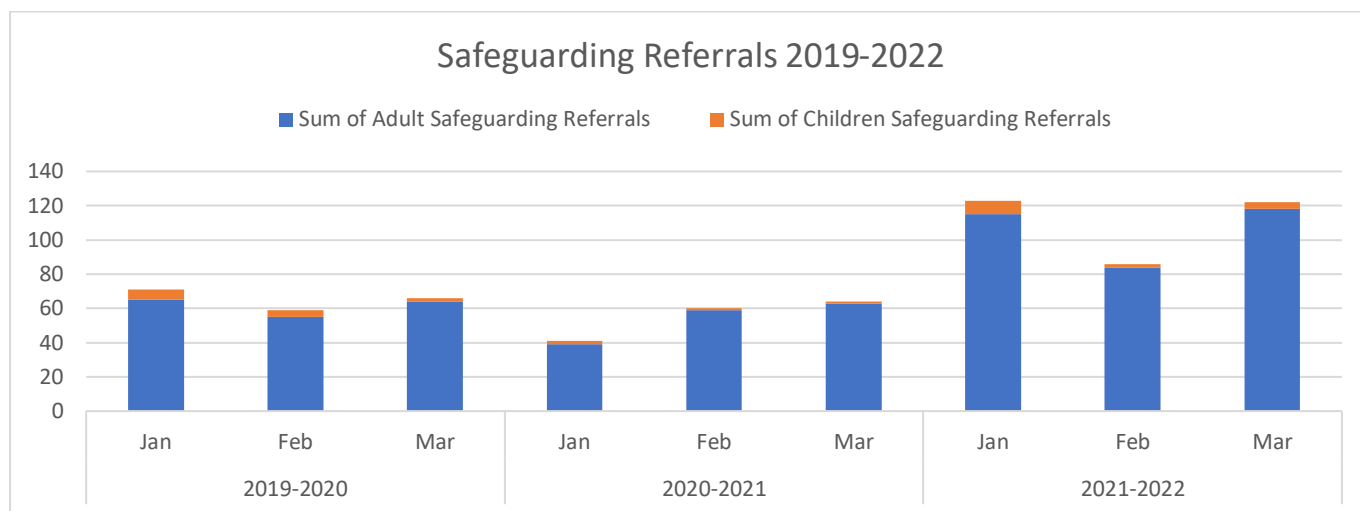
With continued well established working relationships with both Police and Ambulance we are seeing an increase in referrals from these two partners each month. 2019-2020 to 2021-2022 there has been an increase of 64% in the number of referrals received by the Safeguarding team.

Referrer	Q4 2021-22		
	January	February	March
Care Agencies	2	4	2
Community Partners	2	0	4
Control	0	0	0
Housing	11	7	14
Internal	0	0	0
NHS	27	29	44
Other	5	0	5
Police	18	11	19
Safe and Well Officers	4	2	3
Service Personnel	46	21	22
Social Care	8	12	9
Volunteer	0	0	0
Total			

The chart below shows the area the referrals came from for each district

The number of referrals per Command Group in Q4 2021-22.

Referrals for the last quarter

■ North East   ■ North West   ■ South East   ■ South West
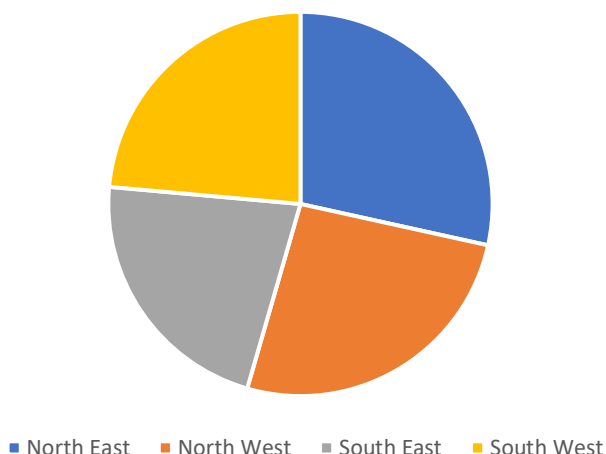
The Community Builders workload has continued to increase and their case load is the highest its ever been. With each case they also complete a detailed report of the risks identified and their actions. These reports are then shared with partner agencies, where consent is given, to support partnership working moving forward. Please see example case studies below:

Concerns	Actions
• **Example 1:** Oxygen Company requesting our attendance as they have a vulnerable person whom they are looking at removing oxygen due to the concerns around hoarding. • Gentleman will not engage with them or other agencies. • Hoarding • No heating or lighting due to bad electrics • Poor living conditions.	• Community Builder attended and consulted with the gentleman. • Found he lived in one room of the property and that was hoarded to a level 8, extreme hoarding. • The room was filled with large bottles of urine • The Community Builder managed to develop a friendship with the gentleman and encouraged him to consult with other agencies. • Community Builder report was submitted to social care and housing with consent. • Family paid for the room to be cleared via a hoarding company • Community Builder liaised with housing, and they redecorated the property and laid new carpets. • New bathroom was put in and electrics were fixed.

- Gentleman never went out just stayed in that room

- Gentleman very frail and dependent on oxygen

- Community Builder revisited and the gentleman no longer needed oxygen due to renovations to the property.
- He now is engaging back into the community and has joined support groups that were signposted to him
- The Community Builder referred to partner agencies and worked with them to support the gentleman.

- **Example 2** Crews were called to a fire when the occupant fell asleep with a lit cigarette.
- The kitchen was piled with empty takeaway cartons and generally in a squalid condition.
- The sitting room has a pile of at least 150 empty wine bottles piled in the center of the room along with discarded smoking materials.
- The occupant has had the property cleared once and has fallen back into hording rubbish.
- The number of wine bottles would indicate an alcohol problem which has probably led to this fire within his property.
- When our Community Builder attended the gentleman was still in his hospital gown but covered in soot from the fire and living in the smoke damaged

Last week the Community Builder happened to pass his flat and noticed a skip on the lawn, so they visited on the off chance.
In their words:
'OH MY WORD!! the difference in him was huge. A month ago he looked unwell, grey skinned, drunk, wearing a hospital gown with soot black hands from touching all the surfaces in his burnt out flat.
Yesterday he was clean, tidy, well dressed and scrubbing his flat from top to bottom - taking off all the layers of wallpaper.
He stated that he is not drinking so much and has had brilliant support from his doctor whilst addressing some personal issues.
He has gutted the flat of everything, hence the skip which has been therapeutic to him. He did have house insurance so they will complete the repairs while he is living elsewhere.
He was taken aback by the fact that I had returned to see him. He didn't know we cared so much. He will be returning to work next week. Fantastic outcome after being rescued from his burning sofa.'

property. There was no electricity and the gentleman had not been able to wash. There appeared to be a drinking problem.	

FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN: IMPROVE SAFETY ON OUR ROADS

The objective of this priority is to reduce the personal, social, and economic impact of road traffic incidents.

All the measures under this priority relate to be road safe under the Prevention strategy.

Fire and Rescue Plan Measure: Reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured.

The Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) launched Vision Zero in 2020. It is the ambition to have zero road deaths and serious injuries on roads in Essex, Southend and Thurrock by 2040. The intermediate target is to halve the number of deaths and serious injuries by 2030.

The table below shows the number of people that were killed or seriously injured (KSI) in Q4 2021-22 and 2020-21. Note, these are provisional figures.

	Q4 2021-22			Q4 2020-21		
	Fatal	Serious Casualties	Total	Fatal	Serious Casualties	Total
January	5	58	**63**	1	49	**50**
February	3	54	**57**	1	38	**39**
March	2	62	**64**	1	51	**52**
Total	**10**	**174**	**184**	**3**	**138**	**141**
Source: KSI stats as at 19th April 2022 from Essex Police.						

Service Measure: Number of Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) attended by ECFRS.

This is a monitoring measure. The table below shows the number of RTCs attended by ECFRS for Q4 2021-22 and Q4 2020-21. The chart below shows the number of RTCs attended per month over the last four years.

	Q4 2021-22	Q4 2020-21
January	99	70
February	76	52
March	90	68
Quarter Total	265	190
Rolling 12 month	845	1114

Number of Road Traffic Collisisons (RTCs) attended by ECFRS, 2017 - 2022

Number of Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) attended by ECFRS, 2018 - 2021
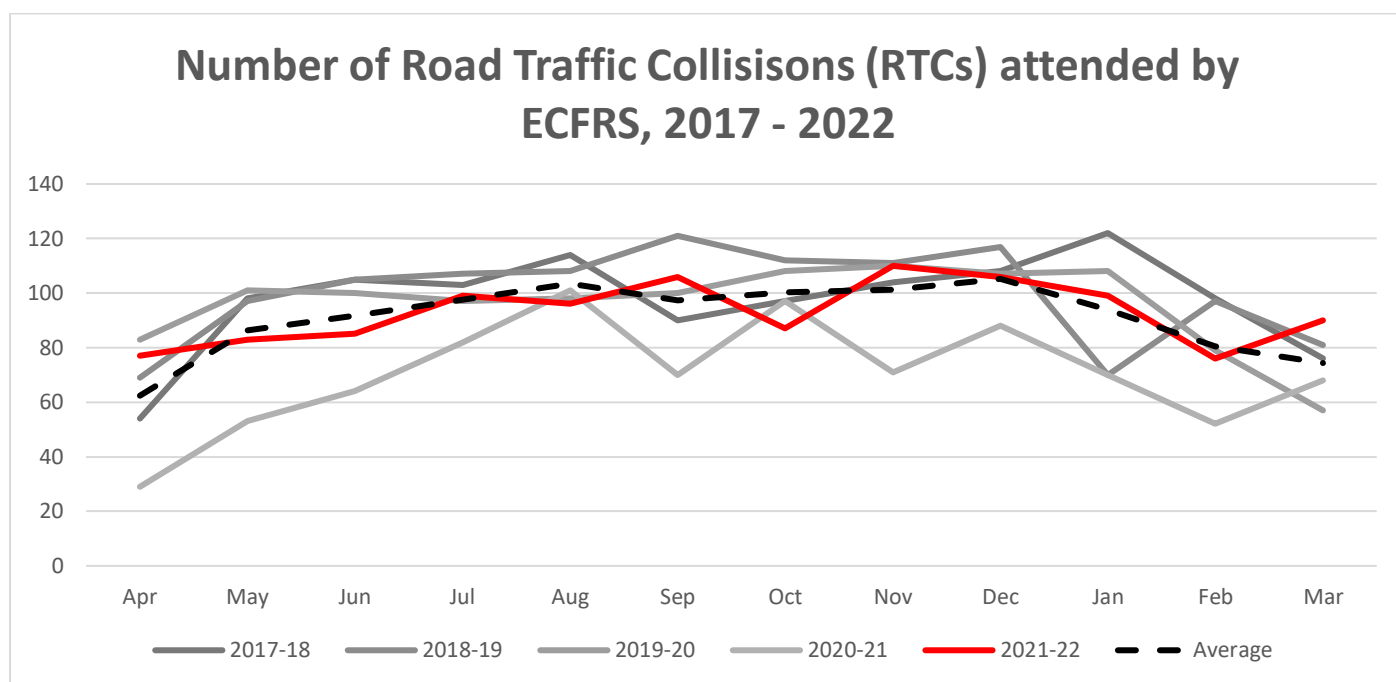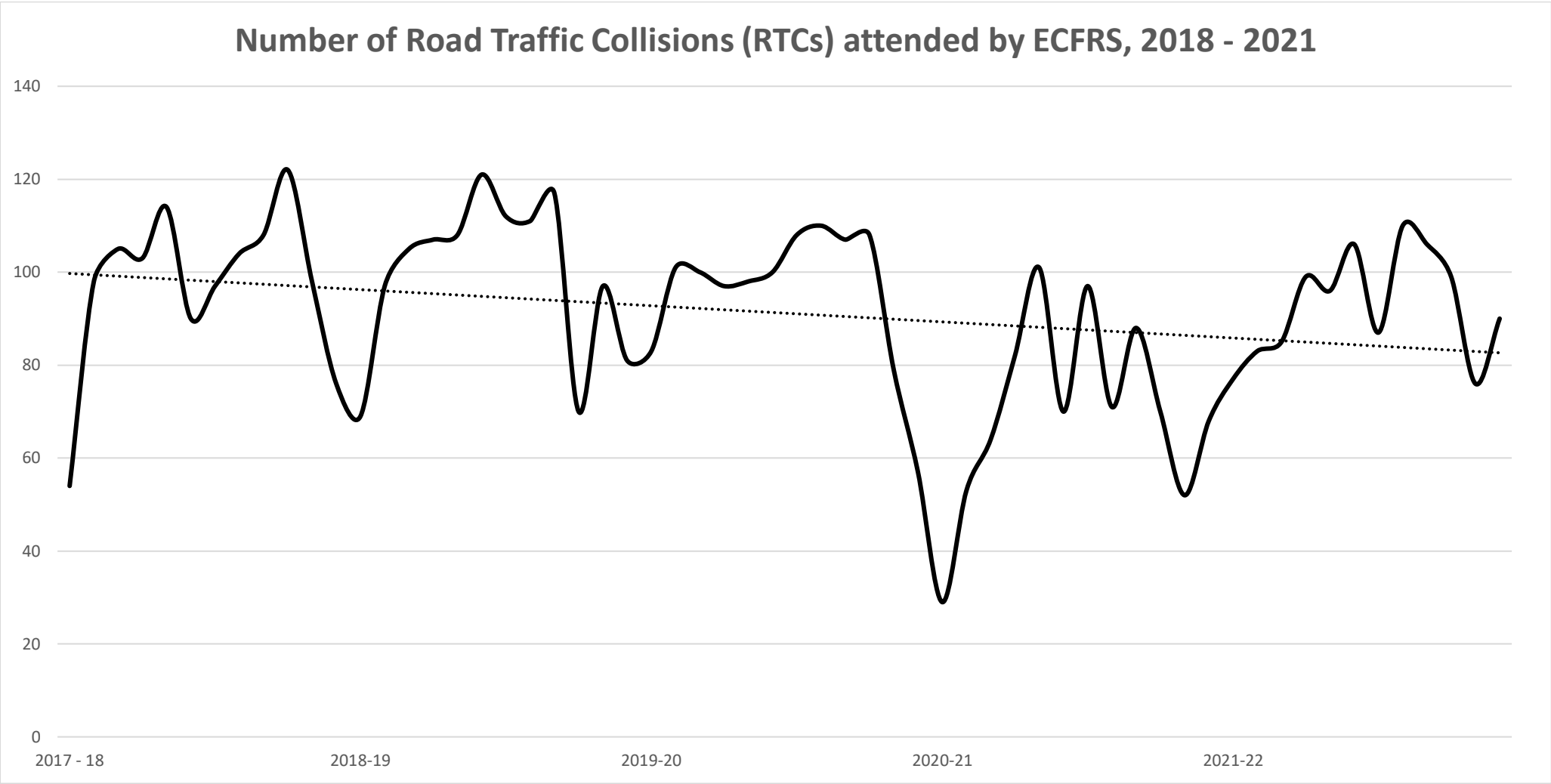
The table below lists the property types involved and the activity undertaken by ECFRS at RTCs attended in Q4 2021-22. 78% of the RTCs involved cars, 19% involved multiple vehicles. 14% of RTCs involved extrication of person/s, the vast majority from cars.

Property Type	Advice only	Extrication of person/s	Make scene safe	Make vehicle safe	Medical assistance only	Other	Release of person/s	Stand by - no action	Wash down road	Grand Total
Agricultural			2		1					**3**
Bus/coach	1	1	1		1					**4**
Car	34	99	234	192	24	14	67	90	18	**772**
Dwelling			2					1	1	**4**
Lorry/HGV		2	11	2			3	5	1	**24**
Motorcycle	2		16	3	3	1		5	9	**39**
Multiple Vehicles	4	28	69	52	14		22	21	10	**220**
Non-Residential			2							**2**
Other	1		1	1	1		1			**5**
Other outdoors (including land)	1		1		1				8	**11**
Outdoor structures			4							**4**
Van	1	2	7	7	1	1	1	1		**21**
Grand Total	**44**	**132**	**350**	**257**	**46**	**16**	**94**	**123**	**47**	**1109**

Service Measure: Number of fatalities and serious injuries at RTCs attended by ECFRS.

This is a monitoring measure as ECFRS attends a proportion of RTCs, compared to Essex Police. In Q4 2020-21, ECFRS attended 32 RTCs where there were 40 fatalities or serious injuries as a result of an RTC.

RTC Reduction Events in Q4 2021-22

During Q4 2021-22, the Road Traffic Collision Reduction team attended 10 events:

- 5 Vision Zero Days of Action (formerly known as Surround a Town) events in Colchester, Braintree, Chelmsford, Brentwood, and Basildon.
- 3 My Small Change events at the following colleges: Stansted College and New City College
- 2 Fire Car deployments to support SERP activity in Harwich and at a car cruiser event in Southend.

Power 2 Wheeler (P2W)

- The outcomes of the P2W steering group were shared with SERP strategic group.
- Work began on a post collision training course for motorcyclists, with support from the Education and Specialist Intervention Team
- Scoping began on a P2W intervention for young riders in the gig economy (deliveries) began

Road Traffic Collision (RTC) – Other

- ECFRS introduced Vision Zero into the Leading Greater Essex Programme as a challenge for the cohort
- Support of the SERP Community Speed Watch (CSW) Scheme continues with 3 Steering Groups taking place in this quarter, and continued development and support of the Co-ordinator.
- 3416 letters were generated to offending motorists in this quarter, following CSW activity, with an 87% accuracy rate by volunteers

Source: https://saferessexroads.org/policecommunity/community-speed-watch/
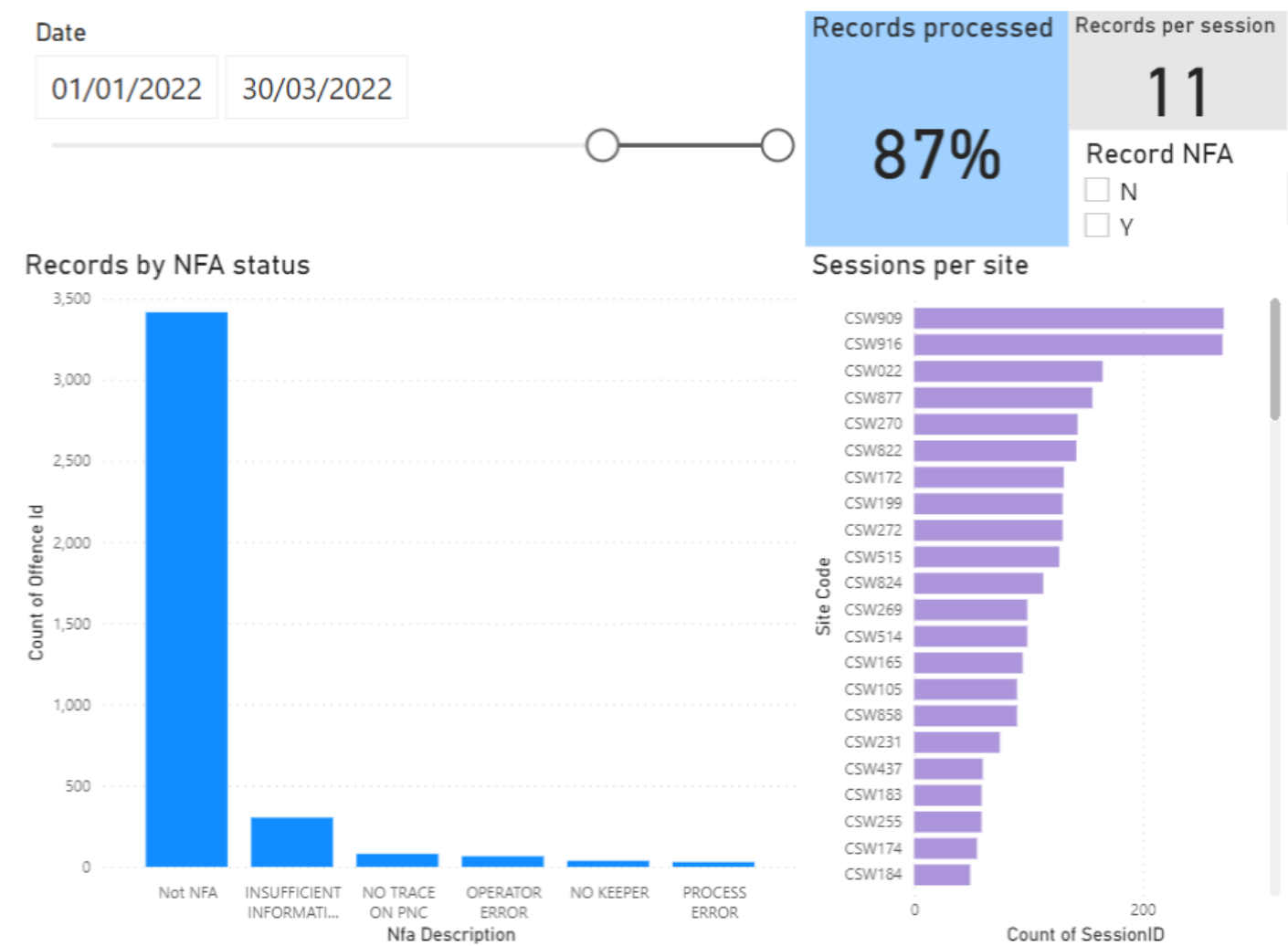
- ECFRS attended the SERP Governance and Strategy Board.

Commentary (Road Safe)

Observations and insights about the data

- In Q4 2021-22, there were 298 people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions (RTCs) on roads in Essex, Southend, and Thurrock. Whilst figures are provisional, the number of people killed or seriously injured in Q4 is higher than Q4 2020-21. However, it is noted that quarter four in 2021 featured COVID-19 restrictions that would have impacted travel movements of residents and visitors to the area.

- 65% of the victims who were killed or seriously injured in a RTC during Q4 2021-21 were male. This high percentage, alongside the 8 males who sustained serious injuries were reported to be at or under the age of 30 reaffirms that road safety reduction work should continue to focus on engaging with this high-risk road user group.

Key actions taken in the Quarter

- The new Road and Water Safety Lead and Officer began an audit of all events products and activity, designed and purchased new promotional items and began planning for national events.

- As the previous page details, Essex Fire attended 10 events in total during the quarter across multiple districts in our service area. Many of these events were supporting SERP's Vision Zero Days of Action.

Actions planned for next Quarter

- Continued progress on Vision Zero Days of Action engagement events and feedback.
- Continued progress against Leading Greater Essex challenge and PFCC Conference
- Lead on the post collision response later of protection

FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN: MAKE BEST USE OF RESOURCES

The objective of this priority is to improve the safety of the people of Essex by making best use of our resources and ensuring value for money.

There are three Fire & Rescue Plan measures under this priority and the one reported regularly is related to false alarms. A Service measure monitors unwanted fire signals, a subset of false alarms. The other two measures, the HMICFRS rating of the Service and cost of the service per resident are reported when data is finalised by the relevant department or following inspections.

Fire and Rescue Plan Measure: Reduction in number of false alarms.

A tolerance threshold was applied to false alarms due to apparatus only caused by automatic fire detection in property types categorised as either 'non-residential' and 'other residential'. More commonly referred to as unwanted fire signals.

Tolerance (per month) for 2021-22	Red	Amber	Green	Blue
Number of False Alarms Due to Apparatus	96+	93 - 96	56 - 92	0 - 55

The table below shows that ECFRS attended 1656 false alarms in Q4 2021-22, 169 more than Q4 2020-21 and the 12-month rolling total is also higher at quarter two end. The largest percentage increase between Q4 2020-21 and 2021-22 for the false alarm types was 20% for false alarms due to apparatus.

False Alarm Type	Q4 2021-22				Q4 2020-21			
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total	Jan	Feb	Marc	Total
Due to Apparatus	209	205	212	626	237	206	196	**639**
Good Intent	268	237	269	774	224	204	262	**690**
Malicious	11	13	13	37	5	5	13	**23**
Grand Total	466	415	471	1437	466	415	471	1352

The Service monitors unwanted fire signals which are false alarms due to apparatus caused by automatic fire detection in property types categorised as either 'non-residential' and 'other residential'. This monitoring measure has a tolerance threshold for number of unwanted fire signals per month, and for all months months in Q4 2021-22 the number attended was in the green band (56-92+), with December in the green band. The table below shows ECFRS attended 247 unwanted fire signals in Q4 2021-22, 21 fewer than Q4 Q4 2020-21.

	Q4 2021-22	Q4 2020-21
January	91	97
February	78	81
March	78	86
Quarter Total	247	264

Unwanted Fire Signals 5 attended by ECFRS, 2017 – 2022
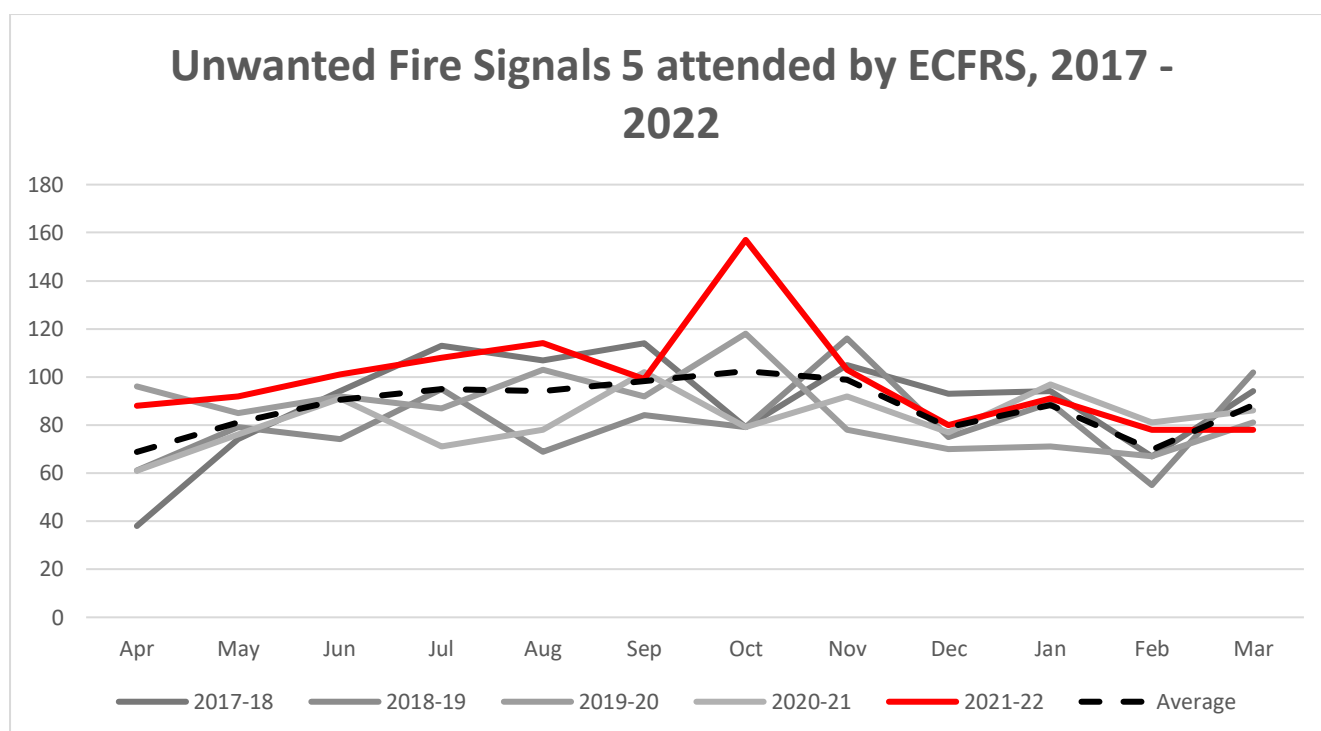
FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN: PROMOTE A POSITIVE CULTURE IN THE WORKPLACE

The objective of this priority is to have a safe and diverse workforce who we enable to performance well in a supportive culture underpinned by excellent training.

Fire and Rescue Plan Measure: Improved workforce diversity

Diversity Metrics

The following table presents the Service's headline diversity metrics as at 31 Dec 2021 with the addition of count as well as the percentage as before:

EE Group / heads	Gender % that are Female [1]	Majority Age Band	% LGBQ+ [1]	% Ethnic Minority [1]	% Disability
Wholetime / 637	7.2% (44)	46-55	6.2% (29)	4.5% (21)	4.1% (26)
On-Call / 511	3.4% (17)	25-35	3.8% (12)	1.6% (6)	4.0% (21)
Control / 40	85.0% (34)	36-45	2.9% (1)	2.7% (1)	2.5% (1)
Support / 324	50.9% (162)	56-65	5.4% (14)	2.9% (8)	5.9% (19)
Overall / 1512	17.5% (257)	36-45	5.2% (56)	3.1% (36)	4.4% (67)
Prefer Not To Say [3]	3.3% (50)	-	8.5% (129)	0	- [2]
Not Stated [3]	3.7% (57)	-	29.0% (441)	23.7% (360)	- [2]

Note 1: reflects the proportion of those individuals that explicitly self-identified their gender, sexual orientation or ethnicity in response to the request for personal information

Note 2: options for disability response are currently 'yes' or 'no' only

Note 3: reflects the number and percentage of all employees who stated 'prefer not to say' or did not respond

There is no reportable shift in these numbers compared to the prior quarter as all changes are <0.3% different.

Attendance – Lost Time Rate

The following table presents the Q4 lost time rate for each Employee Group and the Service overall. The figure represents the amount of available working time that has been lost to sickness absence in the quarter and includes any time recorded as self-isolating or otherwise absent from the workplace due to Covid-related conditions.

EE Group	Lost Time Rate
Wholetime	8.5%
On-Call	10.1%
Control	17.8%
Support	3.5%
OVERALL	**8.1%**

Attendance

The following table presents the Service's sickness absence metrics for the rolling 12 months to 31 March 2022. Figures include any time recorded as self-isolating or otherwise absent from the workplace due to Covid-related conditions. The table has been updated in Q4 to include additional analysis for the Working Days Lost per person:

Mean: the total number of days lost, divided by the number of employees

Median: the middle value (where the number of days lost are ordered)

Mode: the most common number of days lost

EE Group	% of Current Employees taking sick leave	Working Days Lost per Person			Total Working Days Lost	% Long Term [1]	% Short Term [1]
		Mean	Median	Mode			
Wholetime	75.2%	16.7	9	4	7,985.6	50.8%	49.2%
On-Call	60.9%	29.3	13	11	9,104.7	57.3%	42.7%
Control	95.0%	23.3	12.5	8	886.9	59.5%	40.5%
Support	55.6%	12.5	6.5	1	2,255.1	49.0%	51.0%
OVERALL	**66.7%**	**20.1**	**10**	**4**	**20,232.2**	**53.9%**	**46.1%**

Note 1: Periods of absence lasting 28 <u>calendar</u> days or more are classified as Long Term. All shorter periods than this are considered to be Short Term. The measure identifies the % of working days lost that form part of a long term (or short term) absence.

Note 2: The overall amount of time lost increased compared to Q3 due to COVID. It is marginally lower than Q4 2020/21

The following table presents the proportion of working days lost to sickness in the 12 months to 31 March 2022 which are attributed to COVID related reasons:

EE Group	% COVID-related
Wholetime	31.8%
On-Call	35.9%
Control	37.3%
Support	45.9%
OVERALL	**35.4%**

Employee Relations

The following table presents the Service's employee relations casework metrics for Q4 2021/22:

Case Type	New Cases	Closed Cases	Average Time to Close (days)	Cases Open at Quarter End	Oldest Case (days)
Attendance	26	25	129	32	263
Disciplinary	3	5	163	1	99
Grievance	8	11	48	3	80
Performance	19	15	105	13	80
Overall	**56**	**56**	**110**	**49**	**-**

The number of cases has increased from Q3 from 50 to 56 however the increases are in attendance and performance management. Grievance numbers are lower (from 13 to 8). More detail of the Grievance data is included below.

Ten more cases were closed compared to Q3 (46) and the time to close remains consistent. The oldest open case is now 126 days less than Q3 which is a significant improvement to note.

Additional Commentary - Key actions taken in the Quarter

Diversity

Positive Impact Assessment completed for the first phase of the Recruitment policy review. No specific or immediate actions required.

Made a 'proof of concept' change for one of assessment centres to support neuro-divergent needs. This was positively received and will be incorporated into our future recruitment activity

The April and September 2022 squad candidates will see an increase in the numbers identifying as LGBTQ+ and from this we also had an increase of successful candidates moving through the process. We also saw an increase in the number of candidates from an Ethnic Minority background progressing through the process and receiving offers.

Of all joiners in Q4, 20 were On Call firefighters. Of these, 80% were in either the 17-24 or 25-35 age band. Two of the three Support new joiners were in the 56-65 age band, with the third aged between 25 and 35.

30% of the On Call new joiners had not stated their ethnic identity, while the remainder all self-identified as either White British or White British/Irish.

All Support new joiners were of white origin, apart from one employee from a black and minority ethnic background.

Attendance

The latest COVID variant – Omicron had significant impact on staffing levels, particularly in December and daily absence and projected return to work data was shared with the COVID Risk Group (including twice daily at the peak of it's impact). The group met daily throughout the Christmas and extended holiday periods to anticipate and respond to the changing internal and external dynamics.

The whole Service also sought to support departments in Business Continuity during this challenging period with staff from many functions volunteering in Control and as volunteers in our

Essex partner organisations where the impact of absence was a concern in meeting the vaccination targets.

The Service also launched the revised Fitness Policy. The Fitness team continue working with individuals and their managers that are currently below the required level to mitigate risk of coming off the run and impact to our Service commitments.

We have 75 personnel on a fitness review; 20 of which are below 37ml/kg/min and when looking at the phased plan, those below 37ml/kg/min would be removed from operational duties in June 2022

The fitness team offer fitness advice/support at every annual fitness test regardless of results, 1 to 1 support given at review fitness appointments, online support available on intranet and Instagram
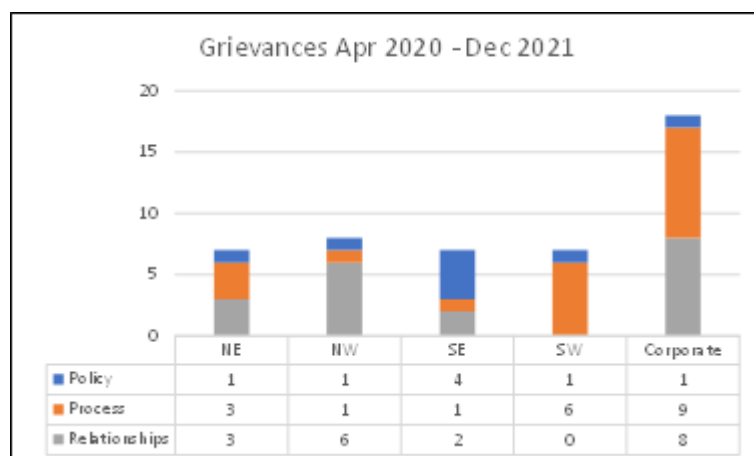
Employee Relations

We have been proactively supporting absence case management and as part of the wider attendance management agenda, the People partners began coaching with managers following launch of the updated Attendance management policy. Hydra training was provided for WM levels managers.

Spotlight on Grievances

In the last report it was noted that there had been an increase in grievances. We undertook a review of the types of cases being raised and where these were arising to check for any trends of themes requiring attention. The following charts illustrate the numbers of grievance cases opened since the start of the 2020/21 financial year, with information regarding the case type.

The first two charts illustrate all cases raised in the 21-month period between April 2020 and December 2021 while the second pair of charts compare the data for the full 2020/21 financial year with the 9 months of data for the 2021/22 year so far (i.e. cases opened prior to the end of Q4).

The primary reasons for grievances being raised were split almost evenly between process-related cases and relationship-related cases, with policy-related cases following behind.

Number of Grievances – Apr 2020 – Dec 2021

Grievances Apr 2020 – Dec 2021

	NE	NW	SE	SW	Corporate
Policy	1	1	4	1	1
Process	3	1	1	6	9
Relationships	3	6	2	0	8
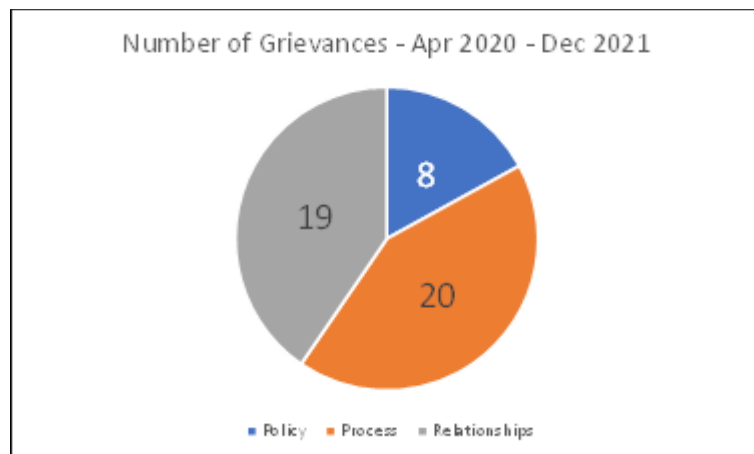
The second pair of charts demonstrate the case distribution between the two year, with a higher number of relationship-related cases in 2020/21, compared to 2021/22 YTD.

Grievances 2020/21

	NE	NW	SE	SW	Corporate
Policy	0	0	2	0	0
Process	1	1	0	1	4
Relationships	2	5	0	0	6

Grievances 2021/22 YTD

	NE	NW	SE	SW	Corporate
Policy	1	1	2	1	1
Process	2	0	1	5	5
Relationships	1	0	2	0	2
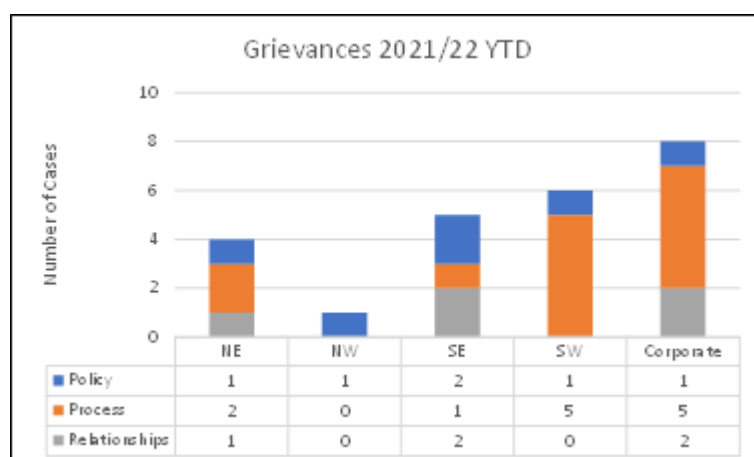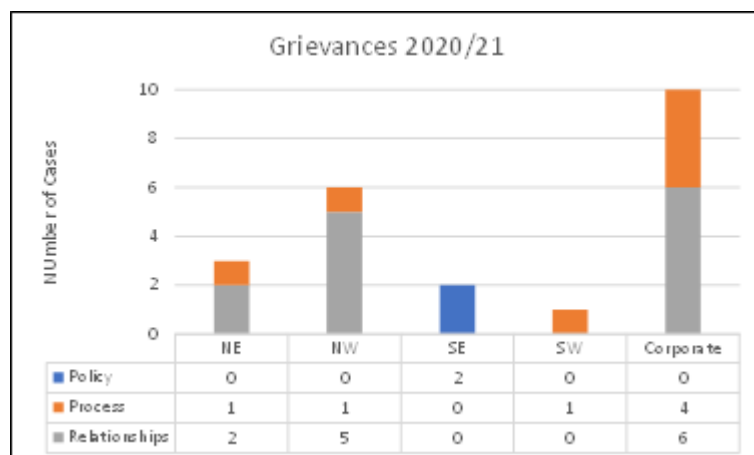
Actions planned for next Quarter

- Consultation for a Transitioning policy will be completed in Q4 for launch in Q1 22/23. This will form part of the Equality Policy and will further demonstrate our commitment and support to current and future employees.
- AFSA Review follow up action planning to further progress our diversity in recruitment agenda
- Complete review of Artic Shores to ensure that the tool is meeting the needs of the Service and specifically our commitments to Positive Action
- Develop a revised framework to facilitate redeployment in a fair and effective manner is underway which will enhance the support to employees and managers through an improved process that aligns with the service policies, attendance management, dignity at work, equality, and diversity.

- We are adopting ways to improve our use of technology, how we collect use and analyse data to help identify trends and triggers that will provide for better planning, monitoring, and evaluating of casework and support ways of improving employee wellbeing.
- Spot check Audits planned to review case records for quality and consistency
- Fitness team are working on a process for those on fitness reviews to use SharePoint to access personalised fitness plans
- Launch the Code of Ethics training module and next phase of the communications plan.

FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN: BE TRANSPARENT, OPEN AND ACCESSIBLE

The objective of this priority is to ensure our communities are involved, engaged, and consulted in the service they receive.

Service Measure: Percentage of FOIs, SARs and EIRs closed on time.

Request Type	Corp Target	No. Received	No. Closed	No. Closed in time	% Compliance	Direction of travel
Freedom of Information (FOI)	90%	36	36	34	96%	↑
Environmental Information Regulations (EIR)	90%	93	93	92	99%	↑
Subject Access Requests (SARs)	80%	2	1	1	100%	↑

Statutory Requests - March 2021 - March 2022
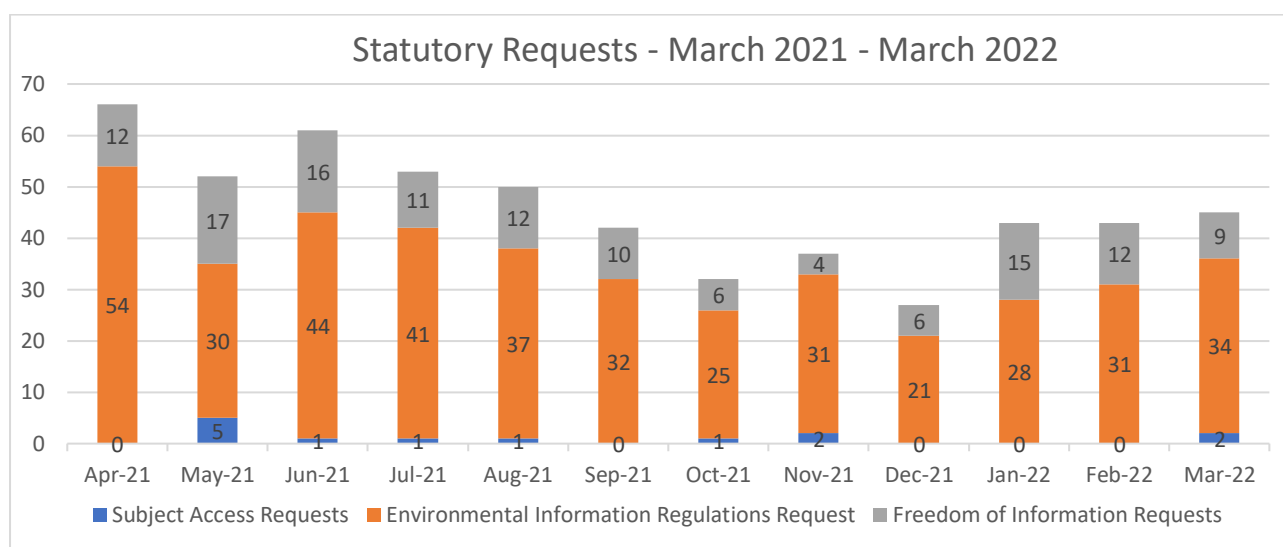
Complaints about statutory requests for information (Internal Reviews)

Request Type	No. Received	No. Closed	No. Upheld
FOI	0	0	0
EIR	0	0	0
SAR	0	0	0

Statutory Data Protection Complaints

Complaint/request type	No, Received	Complaint/request type	No, Received
Rectification	0	Objection	0
Erasure	0	Access	0
Restriction	0	ICO Regulatory Complaint	0

ECFRS Information Governance (IG) team handles reported data breaches.

Breach Level	No.	Affected Business Areas
Near Miss/Minor Breaches	9	IG Team, Control, Health & Safety, Fleet, HR.
Moderate Breaches	1	HR
Major/Critical Breaches	1	ICT
Total Breaches	11	
Breaches reported to the ICO	0	

Requests to access Surveillance footage internally = 6
Computer Aided Dispatches (CAD) Requests = 16

Information Governance Training and Awareness

Training Type	No. Completed
eLearning	Course published 05/05/2022
Ad Hoc sessions	4

Action plan activities delivered in Q4	Action plan activities planned for Q1
To reduce the likelihood of mishandling of data and information, the IG team conducts several training and awareness sessions on managing information securely.	Implementation of DPIAs process.
Every member of staff must complete Data Protection training	The training course published in May 2022 is called Data Protection Essentials.
Performance in processing statutory requests (EIR, FOI and SAR) and closing complaints has met its target in Q4.	Performance processing information requests has clearly improved in Q1 2022
The internal Information Governance team structure has been reviewed and realigned to compliment the new arrangements provided through our outsourced service.	The internal structure of the IG team was reviewed again.
Our privacy notices and various information governance forms and templates we are using including our data protection impact assessment template have been updated to ensure compliance with the law.	IGS has provided a framework with updated templates that comply with the law for different processes. Many of the templates have been implemented especially on procurement
General Updates	
Our Data Protection Officer carried out an internal audit of all information governance processes and policies	
The audit highlighted 7 risks and an action plan with 30 steps was put in place to achieve good assurance	
The IG team structure was reviewed and realigned following SLT decision and was moved to Corporate Services	
As part of the restructure the SIRO role will now be undertaken by the Director of Corporate Services	

Percentage of complaints closed within 20 working days Target: 90%	Q4 2021-22 Actual: 88%
Complaints and Compliments Themes: ECFRS received 15 complaints and compliments between January and March 2022. The main complaint themes were Operational (4) Service Provision (2), social media (1) HR Recruitment (1) Other (2)). We received 5 compliments between January and March 2022, all of which were thanking crews for their hard work.	

Actions planned for next Quarter:
1. Follow the action Plan purposed by the Data Protection Officer
2. Improve and implement an organised approach for surveillance
3. Implement training and awareness following the communication plan and online training course.

Appendix A – 2021-22 Target Setting

Tolerance Measures

Performance Measure	Target Owner	Red	Amber	Green	Blue
Number of Primary Fire Injuries	Assistant Director P&P	9+	6 – 9	2 – 5	0 - 1
Number of Accidental Dwelling Fire Injuries	Assistant Director P&P	6+	4 - 6	1 – 3	0
Number of Deliberate Fires	Assistant Director P&P	158+	117 - 158	48 - 116	0 - 47
Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires	Assistant Director P&P	75+	69 - 75	44 - 68	0 - 43
Number of Non-Residential Fires	Assistant Director P&P	43+	40 - 43	25 - 39	0 - 24
Reduction in the number of False Alarms Due to Apparatus	Assistant Director P&P	96+	93 - 96	56 - 92	0 - 55
Number Audits completed against those premises measured Very High and High on the Risk Based Inspection Programme on monthly basis	Assistant Director P&P	0 - 162	163 - 183	184 - 203	203+

Targets

Performance Measure	Target Owner	Target	Comment
Wholetime Pumping Appliances Availability	Assistant Director Response	98%	
On call Pumping Appliances Availability	Assistant Director Response	90% for Key Stations Improvement on previous year for other stations	Targets will be reviewed in line with the new Response Strategy.

To get our first attendance to a potentially life-threating incident within an average of 10 minutes	Assistant Director Response	10 Minute Average	
Percentage of incidents attended within 15 minutes	Assistant Director Response	90%	
90% of Safe and well visits are delivered within 28 calendar days from referral to completion	Assistant Director P&P	28 calendars days	
Percentage of working time lost per person per employee group	Director of People Services	To be below 5% of working time	
Percentage of End of year appraisals completed (forms returned to HR)	Director of People Services	100%	
Freedom of Information Response Rates	Assistant Director of Performance and Data	90% Closed within 20 Working days	
Complaint Response Rates	Assistant Director of Performance and Data	90% Closed within 20 Working days	

[END OF REPORT – INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK]

ANY QUESTIONS

OR FEEDBACK…

CONTACT US

WORKPLACE GROUP:

https://essexfire.workplace.com/groups/performancedata/

EMAIL:

informationgovernance@essex-fire.gov.uk

SUBJECT LINE TO INCLUDE "QUARTER THREE (Q3) PERFORMANCE REPORT

Report title: Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) Decisions
Report to: Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel
Report author: Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

Date: 21 July 2022	**For:** Noting

Enquiries to:
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer)
(01245) 291613
pippa.brent-isherwood@essex.police.uk
County Divisions affected: All Essex

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Panel with information about financial and strategic decisions made by the PFCC.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Panel is invited to note the contents of the report, identifying any areas that require further clarification or comment.

3. Context / Summary

3.1 This report contains information about decisions made since 9 June 2022 up to and including 7 July 2022.

4. Appendices

Appendix A: PFCP Meeting 21 July 2022: PFCC Decisions Detailed
Appendix B: PFCP Meeting 21 July 2022: PFCCFRA Decisions Detailed

Ref	Decision On	Value	Outline	Date approved
027-22	Crime Prevention Show Garden 2022	£12,000	To approve the allocation of £12,000 to Essex Police's Designing Out Crime Team to deliver a Crime Prevention Show Garden at RHS Hyde Hall in collaboration with the Royal Horticultural Society.	27 June 2022
039-22	Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	N/A	This decision report sets out the approved position as well as the forecast on the Capital Programme and reserves.	24 June 2022
059-22	7 Forces Contract for Office Supplies	£1,032,000 over four years	This report contains details relating to the office supplies contract for Essex Police and requests that authorisation be given for the award and the application of the PFCC's electronic signature to the Cluster Member Agreement Call Off Agreement.	24 June 2022
063-22	Month 12 Revenue Appropriations	Total £2.232m appropriations to reserves	This decision report seeks the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's approval to make appropriations to reserve in relation to Safer Streets rounds 2 and 3, Estate Services consultancy work, the Chief Constable's operational carry-forward and surplus Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) income.	20 June 2022
074-22	Violence and Vulnerability Unit Roles from 2022/23	£323,800	To approve the allocation of up to £323,800 yearly from 2022/23 from the Violence and Vulnerability Fund to fund seven additional posts within the core Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VVU) team.	21 June 2022
080-22	PFCC's Complaints and Expressions of Dissatisfaction Policy	N/A	The PFCC's Complaints and Expressions of Dissatisfaction Policy was last reviewed in 2020, to reflect national reform of the police complaints system and the introduction of the updated Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations. In accordance with the PFCC's ongoing policy review plan, the policy has now been reviewed and updated to reflect organisational learning acquired over the last two years and to ensure that the policy continues to accord with all relevant legislation and guidance. A recommendation made to the PFCC by the Complaints Sub-Committee of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel has also been discharged through this review.	20 June 2022
089-22	Essex SARC Paediatric Cover	£43,089	This decision sheet seeks approval for the provision of an additional £43,089 as a 25% contribution to the costs of paediatric cover in the Essex Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) from 1st July 2022.	6 July 2022

Ref	Decision On	Value	Outline	Date approved
090-22	2022-23 Crime Prevention Fund Outcome	£213,575	This report seeks to gain approval for the allocation of £213,575 in community grants via the 2022-23 Crime Prevention Fund.	5 July 2022

*Denotes decision report which is pending publication due to commercially sensitive information or not published in full due to otherwise sensitive information. Commercial decisions will be published upon completion of the contract.

For detailed information on each decision, go to the PFCC website at Decision making - Essex Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (pfcc.police.uk) Decisions can be sorted by reference number and date on the PFCC website.

Please note: This report contains PFCC decisions made after 9 June 2022, up to and including 7 July 2022 (ahead of submission for the PFCP meeting of 21 July 2022).

Ref	Decision On	Value	Outline	Date approved
030-22	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Reports	N/A	To provide information about: a) Action taken during 2021 to progress our objectives against the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010. b) The outcome of our Gender Pay Gap reporting. c) Progress against the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework.	24 June 2022
031-22	Sale of Surplus Property	£*	Relates to the sale of PFCCFRA estate	24 June 2022

*Denotes decision report which is pending publication due to commercially sensitive information or not published in full due to otherwise sensitive information. Commercial decisions will be published upon completion of the contract.

For detailed information on each decision, go to the PFCC website at http://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/finance-reporting/decision-making-fire-rescue/
Decisions can be sorted by reference number and date on the PFCC website.

Please note: This report contains PFCCFRA decisions made after 9 June 2022, up to and including 7 July 2022 (ahead of submission for the PFCP meeting of 21 July 2022).

Report title: Response to the Government's 'Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service' consultation
Report to: Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel
Report author: Paul Turner, Director Legal and Assurance and Monitoring Officer
Date: 21 July 2022 · **For:** Approval
Enquiries to: Sophie Campion, Senior Democratic Services Officer sophie.campion2@essex.gov.uk
County Divisions affected: All Essex

1. Purpose of Report

To provide the Panel with the draft response to the Government's 'Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service' consultation for comment and approval prior to the submission date of 26 July 2022.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Panel considers the draft consultation response in conjunction with the advice provided in this report;

2.2 That the Panel discuss and agree any changes to the draft consultation response;

2.3 That the Panel agree that the response is finalised and submitted prior to the deadline date of 26 July 2022.

3. Context / Summary

3.1 The Government's consultation on a package of proposals for the reform of fire and rescue services in England was launched on 18 May 2022. The proposals cover three principal areas of reform; People, Professionalism and Governance. The full consultation document can be found at Appendix A.

3.2 The 'Governance' section of the consultation primarily concerns transferring fire functions to a single, elected individual. This is already the case in Essex, as the Commissioner commenced fire and rescue governance in 2017.

3.3 Some other areas of the 'Governance' section would however have an impact on the fire governance arrangements within Essex, notably proposals to make Chief Fire Officers operationally independent.

3.4 Advice in respect of these proposals, which are contained within questions 40-44 of the consultation, has been provided for the Panel's consideration and can be found at Appendix B. The advice has been reflected within the consultation response, which can be found at Appendix C.

4.   Appendices

Appendix A   -   consultation document
Appendix B   -   advice in respect of questions 40-44
Appendix C   -   draft consultation response

![Home Office logo]

Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service

Building professionalism, boosting performance and strengthening governance

May 2022

CP 670

Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service

Building professionalism, boosting performance and strengthening governance

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

May 2022

About this consultation

To:	This white paper and consultation covers a package of proposals for the reform of fire and rescue services in England. The proposals cover three principal areas of the reform vision: People, Professionalism and Governance. Views are sought on the specific proposals and the wider package of reforms presented.
Duration:	From 18/05/22 to 26/07/22
Enquiries (including requests for the paper in an alternative format) to:	**Email:** firereformconsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk Or Fire Reform Consultation Fire Strategy & Reform Unit 4th Floor, Peel Building 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF
How to respond:	There are three thematic sections in this consultation. Each section is divided into topical chapters which provide background information to the lead question(s). Respondents can answer as many or as few questions as they wish. You do not have to comment on every section or respond to every question in each section but can focus on where you have relevant views and evidence to share. If you wish to respond to all questions, you do not have to complete the whole form at once. Please send your response by 11:59pm on 26 July 2022 Please respond to the questions in this consultation online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service Alternatively, you can send in electronic copies to: firereformconsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk; or,

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

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

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

Contents

Ministerial Foreword

Home Secretary

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fire Minister

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

People

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

Professionalism

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

Governance

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

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

Building on Success

The Case for Change

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

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

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

Fire and Rescue Reform to Date

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

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

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

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

Stepping Up During the Pandemic

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

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

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

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

Shining a Light Through Independent Inspection

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

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

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

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

Lessons from Grenfell

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

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

6

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

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

A Clear Role for Fire and Rescue Services

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

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

The Way Forward - Strengthening our Fire and Rescue Service

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

Our Vision

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

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

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

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

People, Professionalism and Governance

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

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

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

Page 110 of 170

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

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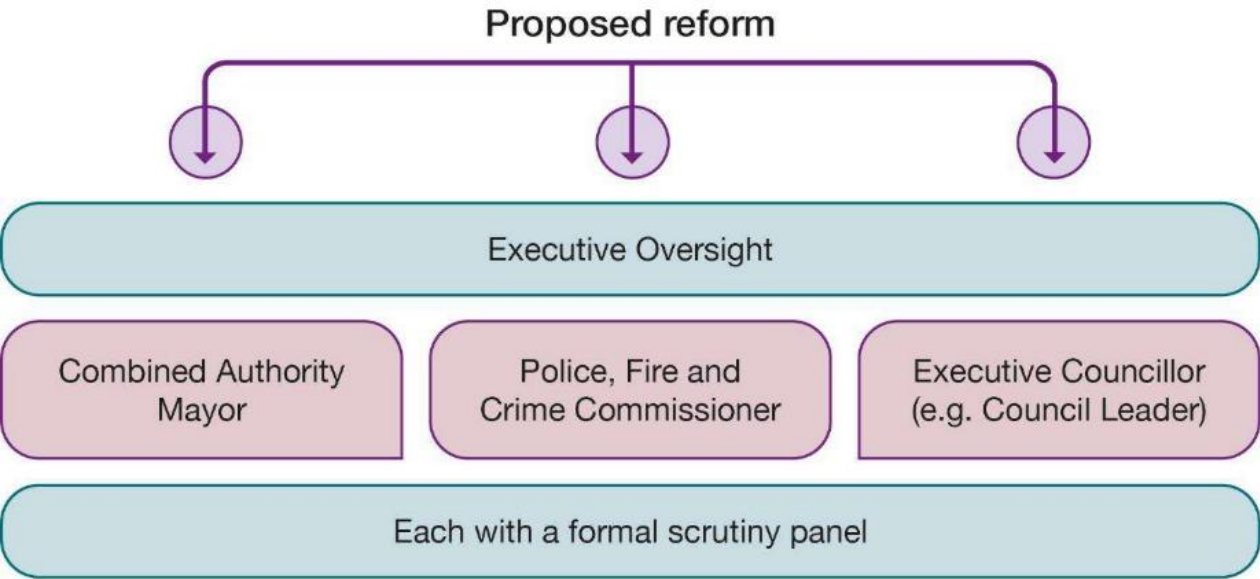- Clear expectations for fire and rescue services

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

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

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

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

Current Types of Fire and Rescue Authority

County Council (currently 10*)	Metropolitan (currently 5*)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (currently 4*)
Combined Authority Mayor (currently 2*)	Standalone (currently 20*)	Unitary (currently 3*)

Proposed reform

Executive Oversight

Combined Authority Mayor	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner	Executive Councillor (e.g. Council Leader)

Each with a formal scrutiny panel

*fire and rescue authorities as at 1 January 2022

Page 112 of 170

10

People

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

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

The Role of Fire and Rescue Services

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

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

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

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

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

Modern Working Practices

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

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

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Public Safety

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

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

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Business Continuity

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

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Pay Negotiation

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q5: Please provide the reasons for your response.

Nurturing New and Existing Talent

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

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

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q7: Please provide the reasons for your response.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Page 117 of 170

Professionalism

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

Leadership of the Profession to Date

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

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

Leadership

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

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

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

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

A 21st Century Leadership Offer

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q10: Please provide reasons for your response.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Smarter Use of Data

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Research

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

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

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

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

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

- ❑ **Collaborating**
- ❑ **Commissioning**
- ❑ **Conducting**
- ❑ **Collating**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Clear Expectations

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

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

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

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

Ethics and Culture

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

Code of Ethics

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Fire and Rescue Service Oath

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

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

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q21: Please give the reasons for your response.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

22

Professionalism Summary

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

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

- **Leadership**
- **Data**
- **Research**
- **Ethics**
- **Clear Expectations**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Independent Strategic Oversight

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

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

A College of Fire and Rescue

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q28: Please provide your reasons for your response

Page 126 of 170

24

Governance

Governance Structures

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Page 127 of 170

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Please provide the reasons for your response.

The Mayoral Model

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

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Police and Crime Commissioners

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Other Options, such as an executive councillor

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

Page 129 of 170

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

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

Yes	No

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

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q36: Please provide the reasons for your response.

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

Boundaries

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Fire Funding

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

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q39: Please provide the reasons for your response.

A Balanced Leadership Model

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

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

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

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

30

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

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

Page 133 of 170

31

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

Please provide the reasons for your opinions.

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Legal Entity of Chief Fire Officers

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

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

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

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

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Clear Distinction Between Strategic and Operational Planning

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

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q48: Please provide the reasons for your response.

About you

Please use this section to tell us about yourself

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

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

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34

Contact details and how to respond

Please respond to this consultation online at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service

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

Alternatively, you may send paper copies to:

Fire Reform Consultation

Fire Strategy & Reform Unit

4th Floor, Peel Building

2 Marsham Street,

London

SW1P 4DF

Complaints or comments

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

Extra copies

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

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

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

Publication of response

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

Representative groups

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

Confidentiality

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

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

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

Impact Assessment

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

The impact assessment for this consultation can be found at:

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

Consultation principles

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

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

Present situation in Essex

Three legal entities:

- PFCC (with respect to the police)
- PFCC (fire authority)
- Chief Constable

Currently the CFO is an employee of the fire authority and has to comply with reasonable instructions of the Commissioner.

By contrast the relationship between the commissioner and the chief constable is highly regulated by statute. There is no contractual relationship and the powers of the commissioner with respect to the police and the CC are limited. The Commissioner (police) owns all police land.

Proposal

If the proposal is implemented there will be four legal entities

- PFCC (with respect to the police)
- PFCC (fire authority)
- Chief Constable
- Chief Fire Officer

The issues would be:

- Is it necessary to have the commissioner as 2 corporations sole if the CFO is also a corporation sole. At present the CFO is the Chief Executive of the PFCC Fire Authority Corporation but they would no longer be able to do this role if they become a corporation sole in their own right.
- Who should fire service employees work for - currently constables are independent office holders rather than employees
- Should PFCC (fire authority) and CFO both have the power to enter into contracts?
- Who should own the fire assets?
- Should all fire service functions transfer to the CFO – currently the Commissioner retains some policing functions (eg grant making – should some fire functions likewise be retained by the commissioner?
- Who should deal with fire complaints?
- Does the new Corporation sole need a CFO and a Monitoring officer?

In terms of advantages, the key issues are set out below

Pro	Con
• Operational independence	• The justification for operational independence for the Chief Constable is clear. The fire service seems less susceptible to inappropriate external interference and there is a cost to this independence – consideration is needed as to whether it is justified • The allocation of resource to partnership working/fire prevention would be removed from democratic control
	• Creating a further corporation sole means another set of: back office systems (finance/auditors/contracts/advisors/payroll/ accounts/HR policies/banking facilities/insurance etc)
• Specific accountability for functions prescribed by law	

Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service Consultation

Government stakeholder consultation

As Chairman of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel, I welcome the opportunity to respond to the Home Office Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service Consultation.

Essex was the first county in England and Wales to transfer Fire and Rescue Service governance to a commissioner in November 2017. This resulted in the implementation of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and the Police, Fire and Crime Panel.

There are existing PFCP members who were involved with the business case formation that led to a successful transition of FRS governance to the PFCC. Essex FRS governance transition experienced some early transitional issues however the efforts and collaboration of all parties involved within the process mitigated these issues and Essex FRS is moving towards being one of the most efficient services in England and Wales.

It is hoped this consultation response will help the Home Office reach a satisfactory conclusion. I am willing to discuss the content of this response if it would be helpful.

John Gili-Ross

Chairman, Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Consultation Sections

Modern Working Practices

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Yes				

Public Safety

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Yes			

Business Continuity

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		Yes		

Pay Negotiation

Context

The effectiveness of the National Joint Council (NJC) – the body that oversees decisions on firefighter pay and terms and conditions – has long been questioned. Adrian Thomas, in his review of conditions of service in 2015, concluded that it needs to be modernised

and in the State of Fire and Rescue 2020 report, Sir Thomas Winsor called for fundamental reform. The negotiation of annual firefighter pay awards is a closed process until after any decisions is effectively made, with the views and agreement of only one union being sought and considered. HMICFRS have made recommendations on the current pay negotiation structure, including a suggestion to review its current operation and effectiveness. We welcome this recommendation and will consider how best to take it forward as part of our package for reform. The independent review would consider whether the current pay negotiation process is dynamic enough to respond to changing priorities. It could consider evidence from other employment models and sectors.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		Yes		

Q5: Please provide the reasons for your response.

EPFCP does not wish to add any comment to this question other than that shown in the table above.

Nurturing New and Existing Talent

Context

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Yes				

Q7: Please provide the reasons for your response.

We have a national fire and rescue service operating within a mix of differing governance fire authority structures. At an operational level the skills and capabilities needed to successfully deliver a quality, reliable and consistent service should materially be the same, irrespective of the county or fire and rescue authority area.   There is no substitute for good quality or diverse operational experience, however not all operational experience leads to talent creation at a management and senior leadership level. Talent spotting and nurturing of future senior leaders has been in place within many large private organisations for many years. Public sector organisations should have a similar if not the same approach to identifying and developing senior leadership employee potential.

Not all fire and rescue employees will have the capability or desire to be senior FRS leaders. Likewise talented managers and leaders may not wish or need to be capable FRS operatives. This does not mean that either party is less valuable to a professional, high performing organisation which the public expects.

As an example, and prior to being transitioned to being the first fire and rescue service to have a locally elected commissioner (PFCC), Essex FRS was identified through independent reports that it was a failing organisation. Specifically, it was noted that EFRS employees operated within a "toxic" culture. Essex PFCC had the foresight and determination to transform the culture of the service into a modern, forward thinking quality employer in which employees could be proud and had a desire to work. Transformation leadership takes a specific skill and senior management experience to undertake an independent and unbiased view of the organisation as a whole. Appropriate and effective change was needed to reverse the known unacceptable employee environment and encourage recruitment at all levels to transform the organisation. A non-operationally FRS experienced but highly talented Chief Fire Officer was appointed who had a proven track record of transformation leadership programmes within the public sector. In creating a diverse but experienced senior management team the CFO appointed a high potential, highly experienced, deputy CFO with many years of operational FRS experience.

The above highlights the benefits of nurturing and developing high performing talent at all levels should be a welcome addition for any organisation.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Yes			

Professionalism

Leadership

Context

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Yes			

Q10: Please provide reasons for your response.

People develop their skills in different ways and varying timescales. Every employee deserves to work within an organisation that encourages personal development and opportunity to diversify between roles. A statutory leadership programme that is open to all employees would aid personal development. The example given in response to question 7, reinforces the message that leadership talent and capability skills can be transportable across differing operational organisations

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Yes				

Smarter Use of Data

Context

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

Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service: Government Consultation

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

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

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

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

❑ A national data analytics capability.

❑ Data-focused training.

❑ Consistent approaches to structuring data

❑ Clear expectations for data governance

❑ Securing data-sharing agreements.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Yes				

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

The Emergency Services Network home office programme to replace the aged Airwave communications network has shown little evidence of implementation success, yet is significantly over budget. ESN is planned to fulfil the voice and data needs for all emergency service agencies and as such a vital data exchange component supporting FRS and the other emergency services. There are many documented benefit expectations in using an all-digital ultra-highspeed network many of which FRS can only fully exploit once ESN becomes fully operational.

Research

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

- *collaborating - providing a permanent set of skilled analysts to collaborate with others, including services, to promote good quality research that will provide benefits to services*

- *commissioning - commissioning other organisations to conduct research on behalf of the central fire and rescue research function when national-level research is appropriate*

- *conducting - directly undertaking research, including reviews of existing evidence, using staff permanently housed within the central fire and rescue research function*

- *collating - identifying emergent issues, opportunities, and ongoing fire-related research undertaken across services, academia, industry and other organisations, ensuring that priorities are being addressed and learning is being shared to avoid duplication of effort*

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

- Collaborating

- Commissioning

- Conducting

- Collating

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Yes **			

** This question largely relates to operational activities which are outside of the Panels remit.

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

No further comment is provided beyond that which appears in the table above.

Code of Ethics

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Yes			

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Yes			

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Yes				

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Yes				

Fire and Rescue Service Oath

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

As noted above, the core code may be subject to review before being placed on a statutory basis, if that option is pursued. However, by way of example, an Oath based on the core code may include affirming such principles as acting with integrity, and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion. As we anticipate the Oath and the statutory code to be intrinsically linked, subject to the outcome of this consultation, we will continue to work closely with interested parties on the content and process associated with the statutory code and Oath.

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Yes				

Q21: Please give the reasons for your response.

Inappropriate and unacceptable employee behaviour (bullying) existed within Essex FRS prior to the service governance being transferred to the commissioner. Whilst this has been remedied within EFRS it may exist in other services. A mandated fire and rescue service oath would help ensure employee behaviours are appropriate. It should be left to local service managers to maintain service disciplinary procedures with breaches being dealt with as an employment matter.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Yes				

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Yes				

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Yes				

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

- *Leadership*

- *Data*

- *Research*

- *Ethics*

- *Clear Expectations*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Yes				

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

Progression and personal development opportunities should be made available for all service employees.

Independent Strategic Oversight

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

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

A College of Fire and Rescue

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

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

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

*- on **Leadership**, developing and maintaining courses such as Leadership Programmes and direct entry schemes*

*- on **Data**, providing a home for a strategic centre of data excellence*

*- on **Research**, housing a central research function to ensure that research is prioritised, conducted effectively, and shared*

*- on **Clear Expectations**, taking on responsibility for the creation of fire standards, building on the work of the Fire Standards Board*

*- on **Ethics**, the proposed independent body could be provided with powers to create and maintain the proposed statutory code of ethics and fire and rescue service oath, and also keep practical implementation of the code and Oath under review*

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

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Yes			

Q28: Please provide your reasons for your response

EPFCP understands that a College of Fire was in place some years ago and that it may have been disbanded due to cost. Whilst EPFCP agrees with the principal of having a college it must come with appropriate levels of sustainable funding.

Governance

Governance Structures

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

Unlike FRAs overseen by PFCCs or combined authority mayors, the majority of authorities still operate a committee structure comprising many members (in the case of one authority, nearly 90). This can slow decision making and impair accountability. And

across most of England, the public do not have a direct say in who is responsible for their fire service. In most areas, while members are elected (for example, as a councillor), they are not directly elected with a clear mandate in relation to fire.

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

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

there has a single, elected, ideally directly elected, individual who is accountable for the service rather than governance by committee

there is clear demarcation between the political and strategic oversight by this individual, and the operationally independent running of the service by the chief fire officer

that the person with oversight has control of necessary funding and estates

decision-making, including budgets and spending, is transparent and linked to local public priorities

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Yes				

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

Please provide the reasons for your response.

A named individual would be responsible for FRS governance within a service area however the area is defined. The model in place within Essex, with governance provided by the PFCC with the chief fire officer being the operational lead for fire has proven to be successful. Budget determination is through the CFO and based upon meeting the needs of the FRS plan. The precept required to help fund the budget is determined by the PFCP within the confines of any capping in place with this model being tried and tested and works effectively.

The challenge and holding to account of the commissioner by a PFCP is a mature and successful model that provides appropriate transparency in respect of commissioner decision making.

The Mayoral Model

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

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Yes			

Police and Crime Commissioners

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

It is for each commissioner to determine whether they want responsibility for fire. If so, they need to produce a proposal for the Home Secretary that demonstrates how a

governance transfer meets the statutory tests of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, and that it does not have a detrimental impact on public safety. To date, four areas have made the transition to a police, fire and crime commissioner.

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

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Yes				

Other Options, such as an executive councillor

We recognise, reflecting the circumstances of each local area, that it may be preferable for somebody a different option other than a PCC or mayor to be given responsibility. This may be where a fire service is currently part of a county council or local boundaries aren't aligned. We are therefore willing to consider other options, although any option will need to meet our criteria for good governance as listed above, in particular the need for clear executive rather than committee leadership.

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

Yes	No
	No

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

No comment necessary.

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Yes			

Q36: Please provide the reasons for your response.

The existing model set out for area policing operational oversight and the political oversight provided by a commissioner is now tried, tested and is successful. Extending the model to include FRS operational decision making and political oversight has provided proven benefits for Essex. FRS should be required to meet national standards whilst also addressing and meeting local operational priorities and demands. A structured linkage between operational capabilities and political oversight should result in public benefit that matches local demand priorities to a locally derived budget and precept.

Boundaries

In order to transfer fire governance to an elected official, the boundaries of the fire and rescue service and the police force/combined authority/county council must align. This is to ensure that there is a consistent electoral mandate across the whole of the area

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Yes				

Fire Funding

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

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

On conclusion of this consultation, we will work with national and local government representatives to consider these issues further. Should any changes to governance be

given effect, we will consider options to ensure that authorities in all their forms continue to take effective decisions on their service provision ahead of any governance change.

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Yes				

Q39: Please provide the reasons for your response.

Whilst this scenario has not occurred in Essex, there is at least one county FRS budget that was reduced mid-term to meet council spending deficits, thereby potentially compromising FRS operational effectiveness and changing agreed capital spending plans mid-term. FRS needs to operate within a known and agreed budget to plan effectively for existing and future service needs. The CFO should determine the budget to meet local operational requirements with the political oversight leadership determining the level of precept required.

A Balanced Leadership Model

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

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

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

The table below illustrates the possible demarcation of responsibility between the political (executive) leader and the chief fire officer. For example, the chief fire officer would make decisions in relation to the appointment and dismissal of staff, and the configuration, deployment and organisation of fire service resources. They would also make decisions

to balance competing operational needs aligned to the strategic priorities set by the executive leader, to which they must have regard; including operational decisions to reallocate resources to meet immediate and ongoing demand and allocate staff to specific duties to reduce risk and save lives. We will work with those in the fire sector and local government to define this further ahead of making the required legislative changes.

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

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

There will be a bright, clear line demarcating the nature and extent of the chief fire officer's operational independence against the role of the executive leader. We will consider best practice in local government to develop this, as well as learning from the relationships between PCCs and their chief constables. We could consider producing something akin to the Policing Protocol to clarify roles and responsibilities and provide safeguards. To support that, the declaration of the acceptance of office of PCCs and mayors could be extended to respect the operational independence of chief fire officers in the same way it presently applies to the independence of police officers.

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Yes			

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

The present situation in Essex has three legal entities:

- PFCC (with respect to the police)

- PFCC (as the fire authority

- Chief Constable

Currently the CFO is an employee of the fire authority and has to comply with reasonable instructions from the PFCC. In contrast the relationship between the commissioner and the chief constable is highly regulated by statute. There is no contractual relationship and the powers of the commissioner with respect to the police and the CC are limited. In respect to Essex the PFCC owns all police land.

The model proposed works effectively in Essex and the CFO has greater operational independence than they may have had when a PFCC is not in place and may be more due to a good professional relationship between the PFCC and the CFO.

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

If the proposal is implemented there would be four legal entities:

- PFCC (with respect to the police)

- PFCC (fire authority)

- Chief Constable

- Chief Fire Officer

Under the proposed model it is assumed the chief fire officers would be given corporation sole status in line with that which is in place for chief constables and commissioners.

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

Unlike operational independence for the chief constable, the fire and rescue service seem less susceptible to inappropriate external interference, yet there will be a cost to this independence. Consideration is needed as to whether the cost can or should be justified.

The allocation of resource to partnership working/fire prevention would potentially be removed from democratic control.

Creation of a further corporation sole may lead to another set of: back-office systems (finance/auditors/contracts/advisors/payroll/ accounts/HR policies/banking facilities/insurance etc).

Legal Entity of Chief Fire Officers

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

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

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

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

Following on from the response to Q42 there are issues that arise which needs careful consideration:

- Is it necessary to have the commissioner as two corporations sole if the CFO is also a corporation sole? At present the CFO is the Chief Executive of the PFCC Fire Authority Corporation but they would no longer be able to do this role if they become a corporation sole in their own right.

- Who should fire service employees work for - currently constables are independent office holders rather than employees?

- Should a PFCC (fire authority) and CFO both have the power to enter into contracts?

- Who should own the fire assets?

- Should all fire service functions transfer to the CFO – currently the Commissioner retains some policing functions (e.g. grant making – should some fire functions likewise be retained by the commissioner?

- Who should deal with fire complaints?

- Does the new Corporation Sole need a CFO and a Monitoring officer?

Clear Distinction Between Strategic and Operational Planning

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

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

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

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Yes				

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Yes				

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

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Yes				

Q48: Please provide the reasons for your response.

Under such proposals the chief fire officer relationship with the commissioner would mirror that in place between the chef constable and commissioner thereby ensuring consistency of operational implementation and strategic planning. In both cases the commissioner will hold the chiefs to account for their respective service operational delivery.

About you

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

This submission is the agreed input from the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel. This response submission was approved at the EPFCP meeting in July 2022

Members of the panel were engaged with the process and business case submission that resulted in the commissioner becoming the Essex Fire and Rescue Authority and the formation of the PFCC and PFCP.

DRAFT

Report title: Forward Work Plan	
Report to: Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	
Report author: Sophie Campion, Senior Democratic Services Officer	
Date: 21 July 2022	For: Consideration
Enquiries to: Sophie Campion, Senior Democratic Services Officer sophie.campion2@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1.   Purpose of report and background

1.1   To plan the business of the Panel.

1.2   The next Meeting of the Panel is scheduled for **Thursday 29 September 2022.**

1.3   Business proposed to be taken to the meetings is as follows:

Provisional Date	Topic Title	Lead Contact	Purpose and Target Outcomes
29 September 2022	• ECFRS Annual Report and Statement of Assurance • PFCC Annual Report • Budget Scene-Setting	OPFCC OPFCC OPFCC	Statutory Duty to review the Annual Report and Statement of Assurance Statutory Duty to review the Annual Report Invitation to the Panel to engage with the Budget-Setting Process
8 December 2022	• Police and Crime Plan Performance Measures – Quarter 2 • Fire and Rescue Plan Quarterly Performance Update • Budget Update	OPFCC OPFCC OPFCC	Statutory Duty to review the Police and Crime Plan and monitor performance Statutory Duty to review the Fire and Rescue Plan and monitor performance

February 2023	• Proposed Fire Precept • Proposed Police Precept	OPFCC OPFCC	Statutory Duty to review the proposed precepts
TBC	• A review of the issues relating to E-Scooters • A focussed look at performance against Priority 1 – More Local, Visible and Accessible Policing.	TBC TBC	As agreed at the Panel's meeting on 22 March 2022 As agreed at the Panel's meeting on 23 June 2022

2. Recommendation

The Panel is asked to note the Forward Work Plan and identify any other business it would like to consider.