

Public Document Pack

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Resources Committee

Wednesday, 27 November 2024 in Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood commencing at 10.00 am.

If you have any queries regarding the agenda papers or require any further information, please initially contact Sam Hunter on telephone number Preston (01772) 866720 and she will be pleased to assist.

Agenda

Part 1 (open to press and public)

Chair's Announcement – Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

Any persons present at the meeting may photograph, film or record the proceedings, during the public part of the agenda. Any member of the press and public who objects to being photographed, filmed or recorded should let it be known to the Chair who will then instruct that those persons are not photographed, filmed or recorded.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

Members are asked to consider any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests they may have to disclose to the meeting in relation to matters under consideration on the agenda.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 1 - 10)**

4. **Financial Monitoring 2024/25 (Pages 11 - 20)**

5. **Treasury Management Mid-Year Report (Pages 21 - 28)**

6. **Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024/25 - Mid-Year Update (Pages 29 - 50)**

7. **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee has been agreed for 10:00 hours on **26 March 2025** in the Main Conference Room, at Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Further meetings are: scheduled for 2 July 2025
 proposed for 24 September 2025

8. **Urgent Business**

An item of business may only be considered under this heading where, by reason of special circumstances to be recorded in the Minutes, the Chair of the meeting

is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency. Wherever possible, the Clerk should be given advance warning of any Member's intention to raise a matter under this heading.

9. Exclusion of Press and Public

The Committee is asked to consider whether, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, they consider that the public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there would be a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the appropriate paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, indicated under the heading to the item.

Part 2

10. Update from Capital Projects Working Group (Pages 51 - 56)

11. Pensions Update (Standing Item) (Pages 57 - 60)

12. High Value Procurement Projects (Pages 61 - 66)

13. Executive Board Succession Arrangements (Pages 67 - 68)

14. Injury Pensions Sub-Committee

Verbal update.

15. Urgent Business (Part 2)

An item of business may only be considered under this heading where, by reason of special circumstances to be recorded in the Minutes, the Chair of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency. Wherever possible, the Clerk should be given advance warning of any Member's intention to raise a matter under this heading.

**Lancashire Combined Fire Authority
Resources Committee**

Wednesday, 25 September 2024, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
R Woollam	
F De Molfetta	
T Hurn	
M Pattison (Vice-Chair)	
S Serridge (Chair)	
B Yates	

Officers
S Brown, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS) E Sandiford, Director of People and Development (LFRS) B Warren, HR Lead - Pensions and NWFC (LFRS) J Meadows, Head of Finance (LFRS) S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)

In attendance

16/24	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies were received from County Councillor David O’Toole and Councillors Graham Baker and Zamir Khan. Vice-Chair Margaret Pattison chaired the meeting as the Chair had been delayed.
17/24	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
18/24	Minutes of the Previous Meeting
	Resolved: That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 3 July 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Director of People and Development (DoPD) presented the report. The report was one of the ways the service demonstrated its compliance with the Equality Duty, which was created under the Equality Act 2010. The report supported the delivery of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's (LFRS's) People Strategy.

Key areas covered within the report included;

Accessibility

LFRS Corporate Communications Department ensured that information was made available in a variety of formats and using multiple channels to best reach Lancashire's diverse communities.

During 2023-24, the service published a new website that was compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.2 AA standard, which was an internationally recognised set of recommendations for improving web accessibility by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

Fire safety advice was available in 26 additional languages on the website to make the information more accessible to people whose first language was not English. In addition, a series of fire safety videos were available in British Sign Language. All videos were produced with subtitles, including public safety videos from emergency incidents.

The Corporate Communications Department actively supported the prevention work of LFRS working with prevention, community fire safety, and operational teams. A campaign planning process was in place for the effective planning, delivery, and evaluation of prevention campaigns.

Recruitment and Selection

LFRS continued its journey to improve the diversity of the workforce to ensure that it represented the community it served. Positive action was delivered to attract a diversity of candidates to fill the Wholetime firefighter apprenticeship courses. The service had taken an integrated approach in relation to delivering positive action and promoting LFRS as an employer of choice; colleagues from human resources, prevention and operational staff worked together to deliver attraction events supported by other colleagues from the service's employee voice groups. Eight "Have a Go" events were delivered by project members, at various stations and at our Leadership and Development Centre.

The events were supported by Corporate Communications who delivered an integrated targeted social media campaign utilising Facebook 'Events' and Instagram Posts, and Twitter 'Tweets' were also utilised to reach almost 1,200,000 people. Social media was targeted at under-represented groups of people.

Wholetime firefighter applications opened on 7 August 2023 and closed on 16 August 2023 with 956 valid applications received. Of the 956 who applied the demographic profile of applicants was as follows:

Total Applications	Male % of total	Female % of total	BME % of total	LGBT+% of total	Disabled % of total
956	87	13	11	9	5

The outcome further to a robust recruitment process was as follows:

Total Selected	Male % of total	Female % of total	BME % of total	LGBT+% of total	Disabled % of total
35	60	40	17	29	6

Firefighter Apprenticeships

LFRS was an employer provider of firefighter operational apprenticeships. As at 31 March 2024 the Service had 88 firefighter apprentices who had all successfully completed their end point assessment. Of the 88 passes, 8 gained distinctions. In addition to those, the Service had 90 apprentices who were working through their apprenticeship programme.

Flexible Working Policy

During 2023/2024, the flexible working policy was updated to make the right to request flexible working a 'day one' right, and for individuals to have the right to make two requests per year rather than one.

Anonymous Reporting Line – Safe Call

The anonymous reporting line 'Safe Call' had been established where volunteers, members of staff and cadets could raise issues of concern anonymously. This had resulted in 7 reports which had resulted in investigation, training and action depending on the set of circumstances.

Workforce Profile

Employment monitoring data was collected and reported annually in relation to all protected groups apart from gender reassignment due to the sensitive confidential nature of this data. Since 2022/23 there had been a slight increase in the number of women LFRS employed from 18.9% to 19.7% continuing the upward trend. There had been a slight increase in the number of people who were BME from 3.2% to 3.7%, back to the same level as 2021/22 and a slight increase in the number of people LFRS employed who declared a disability from 2.6% to 2.9%. The number of people who identified as LGBT+ had stayed the same at 3.7%.

Disciplinary cases

There were 28 disciplinary investigations during the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 which was an increase of 9 compared to the previous year.

The outcomes of these cases where:

- Two dismissals*
- Three final written warnings
- Eight formal written warnings
- Seven management letters
- Five no case to answer

*Three people resigned or retired prior to the hearing. In two cases the

investigations continued and reached a decision to dismiss and in the third case, the individual would likely have been dismissed had the evidence available been proven at hearing.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Steering Group

The EDI Steering Group was chaired by the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) and was responsible for monitoring the development and delivery of the EDI Annual Report. During 2024, recognising the impact that EDI had on a positive organisational culture, LFRS broadened the role of the EDI Steering Group to monitoring the services activity and progress in developing an organisational culture where everyone could thrive, and consequently the Steering Group was renamed the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Culture Board.

Appendix 2 of the report included progress against the actions the Service was taking in response to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services' (HMICFRS) March 2023, Values and Culture recommendations and the National Fire Chief Council's (NFCC) subsequent recommendations.

The DoPD provided an update in relation to recommendation 9, that 93% of Grey Book members of staff had now had their DBS check completed and where appropriate, a risk assessment completed.

The DoPD confirmed that most actions within the report had been completed.

Further to the HMICFRS report on Standards of Behaviour and the Handling of Misconduct in Fire and Rescue Services August 2024, a second set of recommendations were published and progress against those recommendations was included at Appendix 3. The DoPD confirmed that the service was working through the recommendations with many already launched.

In relation to recommendation 3 the DoPD provided an update that individuals would be moved when there were concerns in relation to performance and individuals may be encouraged to move and volunteer to move for development purposes. There were challenges in compulsory changing contracts of employment to enforce a move. The service was currently exploring the implications of changing the Promotions Policy which was in the process of being updated. However, there were challenges with Flexible Day Crewing (FDC) and On Call as individuals must live within 5 mins of their station.

The role of the Service Solicitor had been expanded to Legal Services and Standards Manager, they would be responsible for overseeing cases and making sure they were investigated in a fair and transparent way. This work was currently being scoped.

In response to a question from County Councillor Woollam in relation to checks completed prior to recruitment, the DoPD confirmed that the service conformed to Safer Recruitment Standards, which required two satisfactory references, one of which needed to be from a previous employer. Additionally, any gaps in employment history were identified as part of the application process. Although the service did not check social media, social media was covered as part of the induction process. The DoPD confirmed that some roles did have enhanced

checks, this included Station Managers and above and roles within the Princes Trust.

County Councillor Woollam asked a further question in relation to the conditions around flexible working and working from home. The DoPD confirmed that the Service had a flexible working policy in place and employees have the right to request flexible working. Agreement to the request was dependent upon the needs of the service. She confirmed that a flexible working policy was also available for support staff which allowed staff to start later, finish earlier and accrue time which could be taken at a later date. In relation to working from home the DoPD confirmed that hybrid (home) working was available to some members of staff within the Service and this was dependent on the role and at the Head of Departments discretion.

In response to a question from County Councillor Terry Hurn in relation to promoted firefighters being moved to a different station, the DoPD confirmed that HMICFRS had identified that when firefighters were promoted to the same watch there could be some cultural issues. It was not a requirement within LFRS for newly promoted firefighters to move within the service but it was encouraged to aid the development of new skills.

In response to a question from the Chair in relation to Firefighter apprenticeships the DoPD confirmed that Maths and English GCSE qualifications were not essential but could be completed as part of the apprenticeship qualification. She advised that due to the high number of applicants there were some selection tests in place and potential applicants were encouraged to complete their Functional Skills qualification which could be completed for free at college to improve their level of attainment within the tests.

In response to a further question from the Chair, the DoPD advised that the number of applicants could vary with the highest being 1200 and the lowest 670.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

20/24

Financial Monitoring

Councillor Sean Serridge joined the meeting.

The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) advised that this report set out the current budget position in respect of the 2024/25 revenue and capital budgets.

Revenue Budget

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's 2024/5 revenue budget was set at £74.149m. The budget profiled to the end of May 2024 was £25.307m and expenditure for the same period was £25.172m, resulting in a year-to-date underspend of £0.129m.

The overall underspend position was further broken down between pay and non-pay budgets; there was an underspend of £0.209 on pay and a £0.080m overspend on non-pay activities.

Adjustments had been made to the forecasts to reflect known changes, but in headline terms the forecast for the year was a small overspend of £0.173m, which was 0.2% of the net budget.

The year-to-date and forecast positions within all departmental budgets were set out in Appendix 1, with the major variances of note shown separately in the table below.

Area	Year to Date	Forecast	Reason
Service Delivery - Pay	£0.019m	£0.279m	The pay award of 4% was agreed effective July 2024, this was 1% above the services budgeted assumptions which largely accounted for the forecast variance.
Prevention and Protection - Pay	(£0.168m)	(£0.361m)	Several vacant posts existed in the current staffing establishment for which recruitment was planned long term. It was anticipated that 3 posts would be recruited to in year, with a few vacancies to persist for the duration of the financial year. Challenges persisted in recruitment and retention due to competition from the private sector.
Fleet – Non Pay	£0.103m	£0.223m	Vehicle repair and maintenance costs remained high due to inflationary pressures and demand for parts across the industry.
Bank Interest	(£0.068m)	(£0.196m)	Favourable interest rates and new fixed term investment opportunities indicated an early forecast of additional income on budget.

Future Pressures

Green book pay award negotiations were ongoing and were budgeted at 3%. Unison had put the current offer of a flat £1290 pay increase to ballot for industrial action among its members. Current pay projections used the 3% budgeted rate.

Additionally, the employer's contribution rate to the 2015 Firefighters' pension scheme as determined by the scheme actuary was increased from 28.8% to 37.6%. Additional grant funding was assumed to offset this pressure.

Capital Budget

The revised Capital Programme for 2024/25 approved by the Resources Committee was £12m. To date £0.984m had been spent predominantly on

operational equipment for cutting and extraction. A summary of the programme was set out in Appendix 2.

A summary of the programme is set out below: -

Area	Budgeted Items	Budget	Year to Date
Operational Vehicles Budget	The budget included initial costs of two water towers, two climate change vehicles and an aerial appliance from previous programmes. It also included three pumping appliances for the 2024/25 programme. A number of other vehicles were on course for delivery at budget in year, including two water towers, a prime mover, plus a foam pod and an All-Terraine Vehicle.	£2.943m	£0.139m
Other vehicles Budget	This budget allowed for the replacement of various operational support vehicles including several cars, vans and a beavertail lorry.	£0.948m	£0.066m
Operational Equipment Budget	This budget allowed for operational equipment purchases including CCTV cameras for appliances and cutting and extrication equipment.	£1.846m	£0.639
Building Modifications Budget	This budget included the continued programme of Drill Tower Replacements and budget for the initial works to support the upgrade to Preston station.	£3.639m	£0.094
IT systems Budget	This budget included various projects including upgraded Firewalls, network upgrades and replacement of pooled PPE and stock management systems.	£2.593m	£0.046

A detailed review of the Capital Programme had identified a number of areas where expenditure would slip into 2025/26, the table below sets out the main items of slippage:

Area	Slippage to 2025/26	Reason
Operational Vehicles	(£1.501)	Delivery times on operational vehicles post COVID and Brexit were still much longer than anticipated across the sector resulting in delays; a number of pumping appliances, an Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) and climate change vehicle were delayed to early 2025/26.

Other vehicles	(£0.388)	The useful remaining life of a number of operational support vehicles had been extended resulting in slippage to the following year.
Building Modifications	(£0.962)	The project to enhance facilities at W30 (Blackpool) had incurred some initial costs and would continue to deliver in year, but would see final completion in 2025/26. Similarly, Drill Tower replacement works would see part delivery in year.
IT systems	(£0.544)	A review of the IT systems capital programme had identified a number of projects that would likely slip into 2025/26; in particular the replacement systems for the management of stock, assets and pooled PPE. Existing contracts had been extended.
	(£3.404)	

The report had included slippage of £250k for Operational Equipment which the DoCS had requested be removed.

Resolved: That the Committee noted and endorsed the financial position and approved slippage in the capital programme of £3.404m to 2025/26.

21/24 **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday **27 November 2024** at 1000 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Further meeting dates were noted for 26 March 2025 and 2 July 2025.

22/24 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

Resolved: That the press and members of the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there would be a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the appropriate paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, indicated under the heading to the item.

23/24 **Pensions Update (Standing Item)**

(Paragraphs 4 and 5)

Members considered a report that provided an update on the various issues which had arisen in respect of the changes to the pension schemes applying to the uniformed members of the Fire Sector.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

24/24	High Value Procurement Projects
	<p>(Paragraph 3)</p> <p>Members considered a report that provided an update on all contracts for one-off purchases valued in excess of £100,000 and high value procurement projects in excess of £100,000 including: new contract awards, progress of ongoing projects and details of new projects.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Committee noted and endorsed the report.</p>

M Nolan
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Resources Committee

Meeting to be held 27 November 2024

Financial Monitoring 2024/25

(Appendices 1, 2 and 3 refer)

Contact for further information:

Steven Brown - Director of Corporate Services – Telephone Number 01772 826804

Executive Summary

The report sets out the current budget position in respect of the 2024/25 revenue and capital budgets.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to:

- note and endorse the financial position; and
- approve additional slippage in the capital programme of £2.53m to 2025/26.

Information

Revenue Budget

In February 2024 the Combined Fire Authority agreed the Service's 2024/25 revenue budget at £75.155m. This Financial Monitoring report is for the six-month period to the end of September 2024. The forecast outturn is £75.051m, which is a small underspend of (£0.103m). Of the forecast underspend, (£0.135m) relates to non-pay costs, and £0.032m to pay costs.

The year-to-date and forecast positions within all departmental budgets are set out in Appendix 1, with the major variances of note shown separately in the table overleaf.

Area	Year to Date Variance £m	Reason	Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Reason
Service Delivery - Pay	0.181	The grey book pay award of 4% has been agreed and is effective from July 2024. This is 1% higher than our budgeted assumptions and accounts for majority of the overspend.	0.653	The effect of higher than budgeted pay award results in a forecast cost pressure of £0.400m. Additional overtime costs have been incurred over the summer which has increased the forecast by £0.194m.

Area	Year to Date Variance £m	Reason	Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Reason
Prevention and Protection - Pay	(0.248)	The year-to-date underspend is due to vacancies within the department.	(0.415)	Several vacant posts exist in the current staffing establishment for which recruitment and reorganisation is planned. It is anticipated that three posts will be recruited to in year, with a number of vacancies to persist for the duration of the financial year.
Bank Interest	(0.100)	More interest has been earned on balances invested because of higher balances invested, due to slippage on the capital programme, and higher than budgeted interest rates. Interest earned on the Home Office pension grant received ahead of Matthews two and McCloud remedy has been assumed to be transferred to a reserve if required to be repaid.	(0.200)	The forecast reflects the full year effect of higher than budgeted interest rates and higher balances invested due to slippage in the capital programme.
Fleet	(0.086)	Vehicle Repair and Maintenance (R&M) costs in the year to date are lower than budget to date.	0.107	There is a small overspend forecast on R&M costs based on historic spending patterns.
Occupational Health – Medical fees	0.043	Staff medical fees are higher than budgeted due to the requirement for mandatory three-year screenings, recruitment screenings and referrals. The cost of providers remains high with few options between providers.	0.114	Costs are anticipated to increase in the latter part of the year due to both On Call and Wholetime recruitment courses planned.

Area	Year to Date Variance £m	Reason	Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Reason
Property	(0.428)	Programmed revenue maintenance costs have been delayed and is now expected to fall in the latter half of the financial year. Utilities expenditure has also been less than budgeted in the year to date.	(0.331)	The current outturn forecast currently assumes that property works will be undertaken as planned later in the year. Utility costs are currently forecast to underspend by (£0.400m) due to lower than budgeted usage and rates.

Future Pressures

Pay award: Green book pay award negotiations concluded in late October. The national employers and trade unions agreed a pay award of £1,290 per annum (pro-rata for part-timers) on pay points 2 to 43, and an increase of 2.5% on locally determined pay points above 43. This will be paid in November and backdated to 1 April 2024. Current pay projections use the 3% budgeted rate. The revised forecast to include the new pay rate is not expected to change significantly.

Superannuation: The employer's contribution rate to the 2015 Firefighters' pension scheme as determined by the scheme actuary has been increased from 28.8% to 37.6%. Additional £2.5m grant funding has been received and added to the budget to offset this pressure, however, funding for 2025/26 is unknown at this stage.

Savings Targets

A reduction in the Contribution to Capital of £1.5m was agreed in the medium-term Financial Strategy resulting in a revenue contribution in 2024/25 of £2.5m. The budget has been reduced to this effect.

General Fund

The year end forecasted general fund position is summarised below:

	£'m
Opening balance of LFRS general fund	(4.987)
Forecast revenue underspend	(0.103)
Forecast closing balance of general fund	(5.090)

Note following the final outturn and audit of the financial statements, the opening general fund balance was updated from £4.918m to £4.987m.

Capital Budget

The revised Capital Programme for 2024/25 approved by the Resources Committee is £12m. To date £1.652m has been spent predominantly on fleet and operational equipment. A summary of the programme is set out in the table below and in more detail in Appendix 2.

Area	Budgeted Items	Budget (£m)	Year to Date (£m)	Slippage 2025/26 (£m)
Operational Vehicles	<p>The budget includes costs of two water towers, two climate change vehicles, three pumping appliances, a prime mover and an aerial ladder appliance. All vehicles are on target to be delivered in 2024/25 with the exception of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pumping appliances are in the procurement process. • Aerial ladder appliance – delivery due early April 2025. • Large climate change vehicle in the procurement process and the small one at specification stage. 	2.943	0.446	1.501
Other vehicles	<p>This budget allows for the replacement of various operational support vehicles including several cars, vans and a beavertail lorry. A few vehicles have been delayed to 2025/26:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four Toyota Rav4 and two small vans are on order, however delivery expected early 2025/26. • Two double cab vans are in the procurement process. • Two rescue team vans have slipped due to delivery and conversion lead times. 	0.948	0.176	0.407
Operational Equipment	<p>This budget allows for operational equipment purchases including CCTV cameras for appliances, body armour, and road traffic collision equipment. To date the following slippage includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body Armour – the trial period has been completed and procurement process underway. • Flow meters and hose reel are on trial in Blackpool. It is anticipated there will be an additional budget requirement. • Breathing apparatus compressor is on order with an early 2025/26 lead time. 	1.846	0.812	0.470

Area	Budgeted Items	Budget (£m)	Year to Date (£m)	Slippage 2025/26 (£m)
Building Modifications	<p>This budget includes the continued programme of Drill Tower Replacements, Blackpool facilities upgrade and budget for the initial works to support the upgrade to Preston station. Slippage to date has been identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The enhancement of facilities at Blackpool (W30) has incurred some initial costs however will see final completion in 2025/26. • Most Drill Tower replacement works have slipped due to unsuccessful award of the contract. • Wylfra training props programme is due to start on site April 2024. • Options appraisal is underway for suitable land acquisition. • Estates improvements will continue into 2025/26. 	3.639	0.125	2.573
IT systems	<p>This budget includes various projects including upgraded Firewalls, network upgrades and replacement of pooled PPE and stock management systems. Several IT system projects have been identified as likely to slip into 2025/26; the replacement systems for the management of stock, assets and pooled PPE, public switched telephone network. Existing contracts have been extended. The incident ground radios project has also slipped to next year due to other interdependencies with the breathing apparatus project.</p>	2.593	0.093	0.974

Potential Financial Risks

There are several potential scenarios that have not been reflected in this monitoring report that, if they materialise, may give rise to an increase in revenue and capital expenditure. To provide some information about potential significant financial risks these have been quantified to provide an estimated worst case scenario, these are set out in Appendix 3. Taking all these risks overall and adjusted for the remainder of the year, a potential worst-case scenario would impact the Revenue Budget and Capital Budget accordingly:

£m	Worst Case
Revenue Budget - unbudgeted costs	3.25
Capital Budget – Additional Expenditure	0.65

The potential worst-case scenario could be funded from available budgets but would reduce the general fund balance to below the minimum acceptable level agreed by the CFA.

Financial Implications

As outlined in the report

Legal Implications

None

Business Risk Implications

None

Environmental Impact

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

Human Resource Implications

None

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: N/a

Appendix 1

BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT SEPTEMBER 24 DFM Expenditure	Revised Annual Budget	Year to Date Budget	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Variance	Year to Date Variance Pay	Year to Date Variance Non- Pay	Forecast Outturn Variance DISpend	Forecast Outturn Variance Pay	Forecast Outturn Variance Non- Pay
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Service Delivery									
Service Delivery	42.495	21.782	21.987	0.206	0.181	0.025	0.676	0.653	0.023
Prevention & Protection	3.744	1.830	1.603	(0.227)	(0.248)	0.021	(0.365)	(0.415)	0.050
Covid-19	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Control	2.168	1.084	1.088	0.004	0.000	0.004	0.008	0.000	0.008
Youth Engagement (inc Princes Tru	0.016	0.373	0.403	0.030	(0.016)	0.047	(0.005)	(0.025)	0.020
Special Projects (ISAR)	0.002	0.001	(0.010)	(0.010)	0.000	(0.010)	0.001	0.000	0.001
	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Strategy & Planning	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Service Development	2.250	1.124	1.121	(0.002)	(0.013)	0.010	(0.040)	(0.065)	0.024
Training & Operational Review	4.455	2.243	2.067	(0.176)	(0.088)	(0.088)	(0.004)	(0.072)	0.068
Fleet & Technical Services	3.342	1.810	1.724	(0.086)	0.016	(0.102)	0.107	0.055	0.052
Information Technology	3.397	2.008	2.172	0.164	(0.034)	0.198	(0.037)	(0.079)	0.042
Digital Transformation	0.897	0.397	0.297	(0.099)	(0.010)	(0.090)	(0.091)	(0.010)	(0.082)
	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
People & Development	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Human Resources	0.966	0.487	0.472	(0.015)	0.000	(0.016)	0.030	(0.001)	0.032
Occupational Health Unit	0.310	0.155	0.164	0.009	(0.021)	0.030	0.044	(0.042)	0.086
Corporate Communications	0.397	0.198	0.213	0.015	0.030	(0.015)	0.078	0.092	(0.014)
Safety Health & Environment	0.320	0.153	0.174	0.021	0.007	0.014	0.011	0.013	(0.002)
	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Corporate Services	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Executive Board	1.262	0.659	0.664	0.005	0.011	(0.005)	(0.027)	(0.025)	(0.002)
Central Admin Office	0.751	0.375	0.306	(0.069)	(0.056)	(0.013)	(0.114)	(0.109)	(0.005)
Finance	0.212	0.106	0.128	0.022	0.019	0.003	0.048	0.045	0.003
Procurement	0.692	0.348	0.437	0.089	0.051	0.038	0.095	0.074	0.021
Property	3.970	1.616	1.187	(0.429)	(0.020)	(0.409)	(0.331)	0.002	(0.334)
External Funding	(0.002)	(0.002)	0.000	0.002	(0.027)	0.029	0.000	(0.055)	0.055
migration	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000			
Pay						0.000			
TOTAL DFM EXPENDITURE	71.644	36.746	36.198	(0.548)	(0.218)	(0.330)	0.082	0.036	0.047
Non-DFM Expenditure									
Pensions Expenditure	1.432	0.649	0.663	0.014	0.000	0.014	(0.012)	0.000	(0.012)
Other Non-DFM Expenditure	2.079	(2.286)	(2.371)	(0.084)	0.038	(0.122)	(0.174)	(0.004)	(0.170)
NON-DFM EXPENDITURE	3.511	(1.637)	(1.707)	(0.070)	0.038	(0.108)	(0.186)	(0.004)	(0.182)
TOTAL BUDGET REQUIREMENT	75.155	35.108	34.490	(0.618)	(0.181)	(0.437)	(0.103)	0.032	(0.135)
Use of Reserves	(0.006)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
NET BUDGET	75.149	35.108	34.490	(0.618)	(0.181)	(0.437)	(0.103)	0.032	(0.135)

Appendix 2

Capital Budget Monitoring as at 30th Sept 2024

CAPITAL BUDGET 2024/25	Revised Programme	Actual as at 30th Sept 2024	Projected Year End Outturn	Projected slippage as at 30th Sept 2024	Estimated final cost	Over/ (Under) Spend
	m	m	m	m	m	m
Vehicles						
Operational Vehicles	2.943	0.446	1.436	-1.501	2.937	-0.006
Support Vehicles	0.948	0.176	0.529	-0.407	0.936	-0.012
	3.891	0.622	1.965	-1.908	3.873	-0.018
Operational Equipment						
Operational Equipment	1.846	0.812	1.359	-0.470	1.829	-0.017
	1.846	0.812	1.359	-0.470	1.829	-0.017
Buildings Modifications						
Update Preston Facilities	0.500	0.015	0.250	-0.250	0.500	0.000
Development & Land Acquisition	0.340	-	-	-0.340	0.340	0.000
Blackpool Dormitory	0.834	0.022	0.434	-0.400	0.834	0.000
Drill tower replacements	1.208	0.074	0.125	-1.083	1.208	0.000
Wylfa Prop	0.125	-	0.025	-0.100	0.125	0.000
Estate Improvement Provision	0.632	0.014	0.232	-0.400	0.632	0.000
	3.639	0.125	1.066	-2.573	3.639	0.000
ICT						
IT Systems	2.593	0.093	1.391	-0.974	2.365	-0.228
	2.593	0.093	1.391	-0.974	2.365	-0.228
Total Capital Requirement	11.969	1.652	5.781	-5.925	11.706	-0.263
Funding						
Capital Grant	-	-	-	0.000	0.000	0.000
Borrowing	-	-	-	0.000	0.000	0.000
Revenue Contributions	2.500	1.652	2.500	0.000	2.500	0.000
Earmarked Reserves	-	-	-	0.000	0.000	0.000
Capital Reserves	9.469	-	3.281	-5.925	9.206	-0.263
Capital Receipts	-	-	-	0.000	0.000	0.000
Total Capital Funding	11.969	1.652	5.781	-5.925	11.706	-0.263
Fleet	3.891	0.622	1.965	-1.908	3.873	-0.018
Equipment	1.846	0.812	1.359	-0.470	1.829	-0.017
Property	3.639	0.125	1.066	-2.573	3.639	0.000
ICT	2.593	0.093	1.391	-0.974	2.365	-0.228
	11.969	1.652	5.781	-5.925	11.706	-0.263

Appendix 3

Potential significant risks have been quantified to provide an estimated best case and worst case scenario for each risk.

	Rev / Cap	Worst Case (Full Year) £m
Industrial Action (Risk 1a) – Costs based on reported figures from other fire authorities adjusted for inflation and size of authority.	Rev	2.5
Pandemic (Risk 1d) – Based on direct costs of COVID19, this was funded but this scenario assumes no funding provided.	Rev	1.3
Overspending and future financial pressures on MTFs due to increase in costs of goods and services and pay (Risk 2b) – based on highest one year CPI increase experienced of 13.5%.	Rev	2.0
As above.	Cap	1.3
Loss of Utilities (Risk 3) and ICT (Risk 4) – Includes additional repair costs, overtime, hire costs etc.	Rev	0.2
Operational Event (Risk 11) – large scale incidents and events can be significant however there are funding mechanisms such as Bellwin in place. This cost assumes a prolonged period of overtime that would not be met from national funding schemes.	Rev	0.5
Revenue Total		6.5
Capital Total		1.3

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Resources Committee

Meeting to be held on 27 November 2024

Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2024/25 as at 30 September 2024

Contact for further information - Steven Brown - Director of Corporate Services –
Telephone Number: 01772 866804

Executive Summary

The report sets out the Authority's borrowing and lending activities during 2024/25. Decisions taken were in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy and were based on anticipated spending and interest rates prevailing at the time.

Recommendation

The Authority is asked to note and endorse the report.

Information

In accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Treasury Management Code of Practice and to strengthen members' oversight of the Authority's treasury management activities, the Resources Committee receives a treasury management mid-year report and a final outturn report. Reports on treasury activity are discussed on a quarterly basis with Lancashire County Council Treasury Management Team and the Authority's Director of Corporate Services and the content of these reports is used as a basis for this report to the Committee.

Economic Overview

Treasury management activity is taken within the context of prevailing and forecasted economic conditions. UK headline consumer price inflation remained around the Bank of England (BoE) target later in the period, falling from an annual rate of 3.2% in March to 2.0% in May and then rebounding marginally to June to 2.2% in July and August, as was expected, due to base effects from energy prices.

The UK economy continued to expand over the period, albeit slowing from the 0.7% gain in the first calendar quarter to 0.5% (downwardly revised from 0.6%) in the second. Of the monthly figures, the economy was estimated to have registered no growth in July.

Over the period, the 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started at 3.94% and ended at 4.00% but hit a high of 4.41% in May and a low of 3.76% in mid-September. While the 20-year gilt started at 4.40% and ended at 4.51% but hit a high of 4.82% in May and a low of 4.27% in mid-September. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 5.12% over the period to 30th September.

The latest BoE Monetary Policy Report, published in August, showed policymakers expected GDP growth to continue expanding during 2024 before falling back and moderating from 2025 to 2027. Unemployment was forecast to stay around 4.5% while inflation was shown picking up in the latter part of 2024 as the previous years' energy price declines fell out of the figures before slipping below the 2% target in 2025 and remaining there until early 2027.

Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that Bank Rate would steadily fall from the 5.25% peak, with the first cut in August being followed by a series of further cuts, with November 2024 the likely next one, taking Bank Rate down to around 3% by the end of 2025. The latest forecast from Arlingclose is:

	Base	10 year	20 year
	rate %	gilt %	gilt %
Current	5.00	3.91	4.40
Dec-24	4.75	3.90	4.35
Mar-25	4.25	3.80	4.20
Jun-25	3.75	3.75	4.20
Sep-25	3.25	3.70	4.20
Dec-25	3.00	3.70	4.20
Mar-26	3.00	3.70	4.25
Jun-26	3.00	3.70	4.25
Sep-26	3.00	3.75	4.25
Dec-26	3.00	3.80	4.30
Mar-27	3.00	3.80	4.35
Jun-27	3.00	3.80	4.35
Sep-27	3.00	3.80	4.35

Treasury Management position and Policy

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The treasury management activity is influenced both by the position at the beginning of the year and the plans in year. The position at the start of the financial year is summarised in the Table below:

	Balance 31/3/24
	£m
Capital Finance Requirement	12.8
Less other debt liabilities	(12.8)
Borrowing Requirement	0.000
External borrowing	2.000

The table above shows that the level of loans was above the borrowing requirement. This is the result of the Authority adopting a policy of setting aside additional Minimum Revenue

Provision (MRP) in order to generate the cash to repay loans either on maturity or as an early repayment. This has resulted in the CFR being reduced but due to early repayment charges it has not been financially beneficial to repay three loans.

It is not anticipated that the new capital expenditure will be funded from borrowing in the year while it was anticipated that there will be some reduction in the level of reserves held.

Borrowing

There has been no new borrowing in the first six months of the financial year. This is consistent with the position that the current borrowing is already above the CFR and that the capital programme does not include any expenditure to be financed from borrowing.

The long-term debt outstanding of £2m has been borrowed from the Public Works Loan Board. The table below show the maturity profile of the Authority's borrowings, along with an interest rate paid.

Loan Amount	Maturity Date	Interest rate
£0.700m	June 2037	4.480%
£0.650m	June 2036	4.490%
£0.650m	December 2035	4.490%

If the loans were to be repaid early there would be an early repayment (premium) charge. Previous reports on treasury management activities have reported that the premium and the potential loss of investment income have been greater than the savings made on the interest payments therefore it has not been considered financially beneficial to repay the loans especially with the potential for increased interest rates. However, at the 30 September the estimated premium charge to repay the three loans was minimal although rates and the premium change on a daily basis. To offset the net savings on repaying the loans it was estimated that future interest on investments over the remaining period of the loans would need to be 3.91%. If it is estimated that investment interest rates will be lower than this figure then it may be beneficial to repay the loans.

Investments

Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving low investment returns and having the value of reserves eroded by inflation.

In the period the Authority principally has invested in a call account provided by Lancashire County Council which pays the equivalent of the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF) overnight facility. Each working day the balance on the Authority's Current Account was invested in this to ensure that interest is received on surplus balances within an acceptable risk framework. During the period all surplus balances were placed with the County Council via this arrangement. However on 30 September this balance was transferred back to the authority to be managed internally. Therefore on the 30 September this balance was invested in the DMADF overnight facility.

At 30th September there was a balance of £29.875m invested in DMADF overnight facility while the average for the period for both LCC call account and DMADF deposits was £16.421m. The current rate for these investments is 4.94% in line with the current overnight rate for DMADF.

To increase the rate earned on current balances, the authority have placed fixed term investments with other local authorities. To attract a higher rate of interest than is available on the call account these investments will need to be fixed for a longer period of time. During the year the following investments have been in place:

Start	Finish	Principal £m	Interest Rate	Annual interest	Interest in 2024/25
12-Dec-23	12-Sep-24	5	5.60%	£280,000	£125,808
17-Oct-23	15-Oct-24	5	5.55%	£277,500	£149,774
20-Nov-23	18-Nov-24	5	5.85%	£292,500	£185,116
14-Dec-23	12-Dec-24	4	5.05%	£176,750	£123,483
23-Feb-24	21-Feb-25	5	5.55%	£277,500	£247,849
29-Aug-24	28-Aug-25	5	4.80%	£240,000	£141,370

At 30 September there was £23.5m fixed term investment in place, therefore the total investment held at 30 September is £53.375m.

The overall rate of interest earned during this period was 5.322% which is more favourable when compared with the Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) which averaged 5.12% over the same period.

All investments are made in accordance with the current Treasury Management Strategy and the CIPFA treasury management code of practice.

There has been a further fixed term investment taken out with other Local Authorities during the period which only start later in the financial year as follows:-

Start	Finish	Principal £m	Interest Rate	Annual interest	Interest in 2024/25
2-Oct-24	1-Oct-25	5	4.70%	£235,000	£116,534

Current interest rates available for lending to other Local Authorities are:-

Period	Interest rate
6 months	4.85%
1 year	4.50%
2 year	4.30%
3 year	4.20%

Prudential Indicators

In order to control and monitor the Authority's treasury management functions, a number of prudential indicators are determined against which performance may be measured. The indicators for 2024/25 were approved by the Authority on 19 February 2024 are shown in the table below alongside the current actual.

	2024/25 PIs	Actual at 30/9/24
Adoption of the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management	Adopted	Adopted
Authorised limit for external debt	£m	£m
A prudent estimate of total external debt, which does not reflect the worst case scenario, but allows sufficient headroom for unusual cash movements		
Borrowing	4	2
Other long-term liabilities	30	13
Total	34	15
Operational boundary for external debt		
A prudent estimate of debt, but no provision for unusual cash movements. It represents the estimated maximum external debt arising as a consequence of the Authority's current plans		
Borrowing	3	2
Other long-term liabilities	16	13
Total	19	15
Upper limit for fixed interest rate exposure		
Borrowing	100%	100%
Investments	100%	44%
Upper limit for variable rate exposure		
Borrowing	50%	0%
Investments	100%	56%
Upper limit for total principal sums invested for over 364 days (per maturity date)	25	0
Maturity structure of loan debt	Upper/ Lower Limits	Actual %
Under 12 months	100% / nil	0%
12 months and within 24 months	50% / nil	0%
24 months and within 5 years	50% / nil	0%

	5 years and within 10 years	50% / nil	0%
	10 years and above	100% / nil	100%
Ratio of financing costs to revenue stream (%)	Budget	Sept Estimate	
Ratio of financing costs to revenue stream (%)	-1.3%	-2.7%	

Revenue Budget Implications

The 2024/25 revenue budget for treasury management activity shows that anticipated income will exceed expenditure by £1.050m. Considering the activity for the first six months of the year and estimated cash-flow for the remainder of the year the latest forecast is shown below:

	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25
	Budget	Forecast	Variance
	£m	£m	£m
MRP	0.000	0.000	0.000
Interest payable	0.090	0.090	0.000
Interest receivable	-1.050	-2.100	-1.050
Net budget	-0.960	-2.010	-1.050

The interest receivable is above budget as the balances and interest rates are higher than anticipated when setting the budget. The forecast assumes interest rates on the call account averages 4.42% for the remainder of the financial year.

Financial Implications

Included within report above.

Human Resource Implications

None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None.

Business Risk Implications

The Treasury Management strategy is designed to minimise the Authority's financial risk associated with investment decisions, whilst maximising the return on any investments made. As such the adoption of the CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the monitoring arrangements in place ensure that any risks faced by the Authority are managed.

However, it must be acknowledged that there will always be a balance between risk and return and hence the strategy does not completely eliminate the risk of any further default on investments in the future.

Environmental Impact

None.

Legal Implications

None.

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact
Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25	February 2024	Steven Brown, Director of Corporate Services
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate:		

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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Resources Committee

Meeting to be held 27 November 2024

Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024/25 – Mid-Year Update

(Appendix A and B refer)

Contact for further information:

Steven Brown - Director of Corporate Services – Telephone Number 01772 826804

Executive Summary

This report sets out the Productivity and Efficiency Plan for 2024/25 – mid-year update. It shows excellent progress against the agreed actions, with many of them achieved already.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note the report.

Information

As part of the Spending Review 2021, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Local Government Association (LGA) agreed that between 2022/23-2024/25, fire and rescue services in England would increase wholetime firefighter productivity by 3% and create 2% of non-pay efficiency savings. Linked to these targets, the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire asked that all standalone Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) draft and publish Productivity and Efficiency Plans. A plan was produced for 2023/24, the information provides a strong evidence base for the next Spending Review and demonstrates positive leadership from the sector to engage with the productivity and efficiency agenda.

For 2024/25, the Minister has again requested that all FRAs, publish a Productivity and Efficiency Plan for 2024/25 to help the Home Office, NFCC and LGA to build a more comprehensive picture on the sector's progress against the agreed targets and savings achieved.

Guidance has been provided by the Home Office setting out the information that must be contained in the statements; providing primary information about the Authority, detailed of efficiencies and productivity measures achieved to date and planned. The guidance provided three examples from FRAs of well written plans from 2023/24 of which Lancashire was one of the good practice examples.

The 2024/25 plan follows the same format as the previous year and was presented to the Resources Committee in July 2024. The plan sets out many other efficiency and productivity activities and is accessible on the website and attached as Appendix A to this report. It shows that compared to the Government Spending Review non-pay efficiency savings target for fire authorities of 2%, the LCFA achieved 5.6% on average over the period.

Mid-Year Update

The mid-year update of the Productivity and Efficiency Statement for 2024/25 is set out in Appendix B and shows excellent progress against the agreed actions, with many of them achieved already.

Financial Implications

As outlined in the report

Legal Implications

None

Business Risk Implications

None

Environmental Impact

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

Human Resource Implications

None

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: N/a

Appendix A: Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024/25

Appendix B: 2024/25 Productivity and Efficiency Statement: Mid-Year Update

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority
Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024/25

Section 1: Primary information

Budget

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority (LCFA) agreed a net budget of 75.2m for 2024/25 and is broken down below:

	£m
Employee	57.1
Premises	6.2
Transport	2.6
Supplies & Services	8.7
Other (including Capital Financing Costs)	4.0
Income	(3.4)
Net Budget Requirement	75.2

The budget will be met from:	£m
Revenue Support Grant	13.5
Locally Retained Business Rates	4.6
Council Tax Precept	39.3
Grants *	17.6
Other Income **	0.2
Total	75.2

* Grants includes Business Rates Top Up Grant of £12m and one-off Funding Guarantee Grant of £0.9m.

** Other Income includes Council Tax and Business Rates Collection Fund surpluses.

Further details of our Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), Capital Strategy, Reserves Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy are contained in our Budget Booklet/Medium Term Financial Strategy.

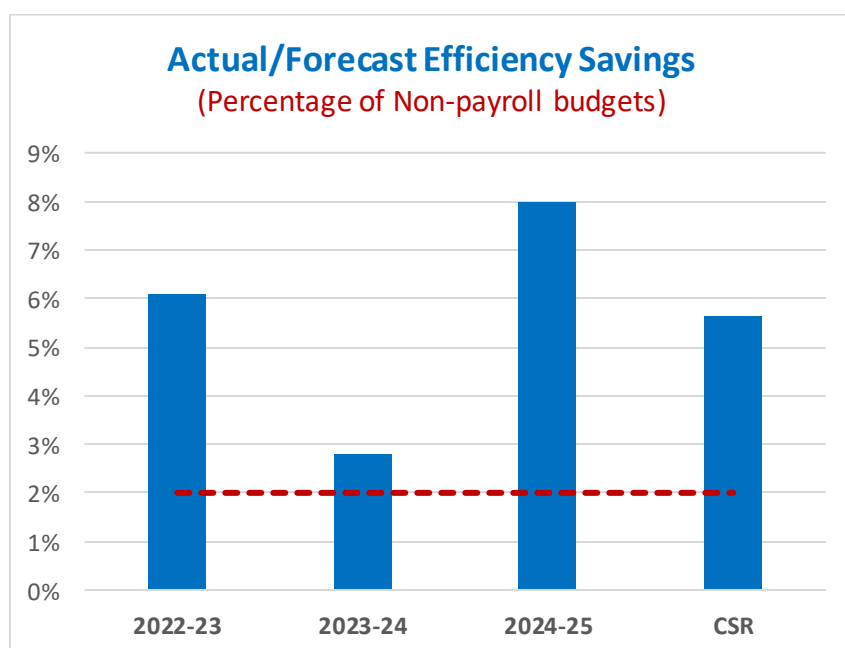
Reserves

A summary of the reserves that are available as at 31st March from 2024 to 2029, split between type of reserves, and planned use over the next five years in line with the current MTFS, is set out below:

£'m	2024	Use	2025	Use	2026	Use	2027	Use	2028	Use	2029
General Reserve	4.8	0.1	4.9	0.2	5.1	(0.3)	4.8	0.1	4.9	0.0	4.9
Capital Reserve	18.8	(7.7)	11.1	(11.1)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Earmarked Reserves	6.6	(0.5)	6.1	(0.3)	5.8	(0.4)	5.4	(0.4)	4.9	(0.5)	4.5
Total	30.2	(8.1)	22.1	(11.3)	10.9	(0.7)	10.2	(0.3)	9.9	(0.5)	9.4

Efficiency Section

The chart below shows the annual and average cashable efficiency savings over the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period (from 2022/23 to 2024/25), as a percentage of non-pay costs. It shows that compared to the Government CSR non-pay efficiency savings target for fire authorities of 2%, the LCFA achieved 5.6% on average over the period; more detail is set out in Annex A.



The table below sets out efficiency and other savings (in £ and % of non-pay budgets) planned to be achieved in 2024/25. The major risks or barriers to delivery are also included in the table:

Saving (including which area of spend)	Type of Saving	£'m	% of Non-pay budgets	Narrative including major risks or barriers to delivery
Reduction in the revenue contribution to the capital programme.	Cashable	1.5	8	The budgeted revenue contribution to the capital programme has been reduced from £4m to £2.5m in 2024/25.

Commentary on efficiencies planned beyond 2024/25 is included below; the estimates below represent a saving of 14% of the non-pay budget:

- Cashable efficiencies of £2.5m from 2026/27 are included in the MTF5;
- Both cashable and non-cash releasing savings are expected from a new combined Headquarters and Training Facility from 2027; realising cashable energy, travel and maintenance savings and enabling productivity and cultural improvements from the centralisation of many synergistic services and working in a more modern and efficient operating environment.
- Non cashable productivity efficiencies and potentially cashable efficiencies are expected from our investment in new Training Props from 2027; providing high quality facilities will help in the initial training and ongoing maintenance of competency requirements across a broad spectrum of operational activities.
- A review of operational resources across the wider Preston area has commenced that is expected to result in cashable energy and maintenance efficiencies and productivity improvements, due to working in a more modern and efficient environment, from the rebuild or relocation of our Preston station in 2028/29.

Efficiencies achieved since the Spending Review (from 2022/23) are set out below, they total £1.4m, representing a saving of 3% in 2023/24 and 6% in 2022/23 of the non-pay budget:

- The Emergency Cover Review endorsed by the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority (LCFA) in November 2022 ensured that during its implementation from 2023/24 we:
 - Maintained all 39 fire stations.
 - Maintain our outstanding response standards and all 58 fire appliances.
 - Provided cashable efficiency savings of £0.4m.
 - Increased the overall fire-fighter establishment by 8 and provide more flexible crewing arrangements.
- Adjust pooled Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) budgets during 2022/23 to reflect lifecycle replacement requirements, realising £0.2m of cashable efficiency savings.
- Reduced the majority of non-pay budgets by 2.5% during 2022/23 realising cashable efficiencies of £0.2m.
- Reduced in car users/mileage budgets across all budgets, reflecting alternative ways of future working during 2022/23 realising cashable efficiencies of £0.3m.
- Achieved cashable procurement savings of £0.3m during 2022/23.

Productivity

As detailed in our 2023/24 Plan, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) productivity improvements were to be largely framed around the volumes of Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) and Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSC) delivered, alongside completion of training and increases in operational activity linked to new work areas in support of other agencies. It is anticipated that such productivity increases will lead to safer communities and improved business safety across the county.

We are pleased to report that the last 12 months has seen output gains in aspects of Prevention and Protection activity, commensurate with the broader ambition of a 3% increase. Tangible outputs increased from 22,375 combined HFSC & BFSC in 22/23, to 22,715 combined year-to-date (11 months) for 23/24. We anticipate that the year-end position will be c.24,700 interventions.

The Service has also achieved a reduction in Unwanted Fire Signal mobilisations (AFA's) with the move to 24-hour adoption of a policy change being approved by the CFA and implemented from Spring 2023. Reducing unwanted and unnecessary mobilisations to premises types covered by the policy change and disruption to operational crews has been calculated as an efficiency saving in the region of 1241 hours over the last 11-month period which has undoubtedly supported the increase in P&P delivery.

Section 2: Secondary information

Collaboration

LFRS has a long tradition of partnership working and was able to demonstrate that in exceptional ways throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, working tirelessly with partners to delivery life critical vaccinations across the county. As a key partner of the Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF), our Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) is the current Chair and the Service is linked in with strategic partners to deliver efficient and effective prevention, protection, and response services to Lancashire communities, whilst at the same time ensuring that these services are delivered in the most productive manner, using the available knowledge and skills of ourselves and partner agencies.

Lancashire Blue Light Collaboration Board includes representation from Fire, Police and Ambulance Service, who have all signed a strategic statement of intent which contains the following aims:

- Improve Outcomes
- Reduce Demand
- Better Value for Money
- Reduce inequalities within communities.

Collaboration Projects to date have delivered improved community outcomes and commensurate increases in operational response activity, ensuring the right blue light agency can respond effectively to deliver the best outcomes:

-
- Joint PFI scheme with Merseyside and Cumbria Fire Services to deliver 16 stations across the 3 Authorities (4 of which are in Lancashire), the largest Fire specific PFI scheme agreed at that point in time (estimated capital value of £48m).
- Combined Fire and Ambulance stations at Darwen and at Lancaster; this provides rental income to the Authority (c.£50,000 pa) but also negates the need for North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) to invest in new facilities, saving the public purse £4m-£5m.

- Joint procurement with the Clinical Commissioning Group for the Wide Area Network (WAN), saving £40,000 p.a.
- Gaining Entry for Ambulance Service [c.2000 p.a. based on 2023-24 data].
- Drone development (aerial and sub-surface capabilities) for which LFRS has the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) lead role. Our aerial drone capability has supported with many Missing Person Searches [c.250 p.a. based on 2023/24 data]. With increasing experience of missing person searches, LFRS staff can provide local or specialist advice for consideration by the PoISA, and searches become streamlined allowing a more structured and effective approach to locating high risk missing persons.
- Further investment was approved which has led to us strengthening sub-surface rescue / recovery capability of persons by virtue of an underwater ROV. This asset has been deployed locally, regionally and nationally and delivered improved outcomes by way of quickening incident resolution across a number of incidents. Ultimately, this results in less public spending, due to reduced time commitment of 999 responding agencies. In the 6 months since launch, the 'inspection class' ROV has been deployed operationally several times. The incidents involved the casualty being found by the ROV, or led to areas being searched (and effectively cleared), which in turn had positive effects on the incident conclusion. The underwater deployments have enabled incidents to be de-escalated, significantly reducing the number of resources required from several agencies for what would normally be protracted incidents.
- Specialist canine capabilities - Search and Rescue (USAR & ISAR), Fire Investigation, Cadaver deployed locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally (ISAR). LFRS currently have a Memorandum of Understanding with Greater Manchester and Cumbria FRS to provide fire investigation dog response on a recharge basis.
- North West Fire Control (NWFC) – collaboration between Cumbria, Lancashire, Cheshire, and Gtr. Manchester Fire Authorities, realising annual savings in excess of £1m p.a. The coming year will see further system-based improvements being introduced collaboratively into NWFC to improve efficiency within the context of Dynamic Cover Software (designed to optimise fire cover across the FRS) and a more efficient software-based solution for the handling of Fire Survival Guidance at complex incidents. A collaborative project to source the replacement CAD and ICCS systems within the Control Room also build upon the previous economies of scale delivered through the initial project.
- Our Community First Responder pilot has gone live with a group of community safety staff, and more recently a cohort of Flexible Duty System managers being trained by NWS and able to deploy to life critical medical emergencies during working hours, alongside our ambulance colleagues. Already this has delivered lifesaving interventions whilst awaiting the arrival of ambulance colleagues with c.80 incidents attended during 2023. The UK FRS have been providing emergency medical response (EMR) services to the public in recent years. According to a cost-benefit analysis conducted by the New Economy, the benefits of EMR far outweigh the initial

investment required. The analysis estimates an overall financial return on investment of £4.41 per £1 invested.

- Regional Fleet collaboration through Technical Officers Group (TOG) on equipment and vehicle related issues, including procurements and common specifications.

National leadership – All of our Principal Officers have significant national leadership roles, contributing to sector-wide efficiency and productivity. Our Chief Fire Officer (CFO) is the Vice Chair of the NFCC, leading work across the sector including national work around National Organisational Learning, National Support and Academic Research (ACER).

Our DCFO is the national lead for On-Call, supporting national work-streams including a comprehensive data research analysis; academic evaluation to identify future sustainable solutions to this incredibly efficient duty system; and the sharing of national best practice, including analysis of different operating systems that can demonstrate more efficient and effective ways of operating.

Our Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) is the deputy NFCC lead for Wildfire and during the past 12 months has been instrumental in shaping sector direction of travel and improvement: developing international knowledge exchange; working with lead government departments to develop a national wildfire framework; scope out a cohesive national wildfire strategy for England; and successfully secured H.O. funding to create a dedicated National Resilience Wildfire capability lead.

Transformation Plans

Our transformation high level planning is available across our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and supporting core strategies. Some of our high-level plans include:

Fire Protection Transformation programme:

We have restructured our Fire Protection function to meet challenges posed by risks within the built environment and the introduction of the Building Safety Regulator.

We have delivered further refinements to our previously externally validated Risk Based Inspection Programme to align building and occupancy risk to competence of inspectors, and thereby increase both the efficiency and effectiveness of resources deployed to undertake risk reduction activities.

We have increased productivity outputs in terms of timeliness of the handling of Building Regulation Consultations, from 76.3% in 2022/23, to 94.6% in the year to date.

Business Fire Safety Check training to increase knowledge of the built environment delivered across wholetime and on-call operational crews along with flexi duty officers has produced efficiency and productivity savings of c.225 hours of wholetime operational crew time (reduced travel), alleviated 111 hours of On Call travel time and provided an overall direct financial saving of c.£12k through the use of new digital technology and bespoke delivery.

We intend to explore the potential to undertake system replacement over 2024/25 which will synergise and streamline current P&P and Contact Centre systems, to increase efficiency

in the handling, scheduling and booking of P&P visits, reduce wastage in appliance journey times, alongside delivering reduced system costs.

We are actively streamlining policy and procedure in relation to the gathering of operational risk information (SSRI) to ensure that the collation of information is appropriate to risk, based on a data-led approach and that subjectivity in risk assessment is removed to make the process as reliable and efficient as it can be. We expect to see a reduction in the number of SSRI files held over the coming year and the resultant reduction in unnecessary time spent maintaining these records by operational crews over 2024/25 and beyond.

A **Training review** is planned for 2024-25 to streamline service wide training delivery to optimise our arrangements and build back capacity into both Training and Operational Response functions. The review aims to:

- Assure effective and proportionate training delivery
- Reduce training costs
- Produce further productivity gains for operational crews in future years
- Reduce rota abstractions due to training attendance
- Reduce overtime costs
- Deliver a more flexible training model for On Call staff, reducing the need for time away from primary employment and therefore a reduction in the associated loss of earnings claims.

Our 'Climate Change Operational Response Plan 2022-27' was developed with investment into new capabilities. Evaluation of several key deliverables to date has provided operational efficiencies across:

- Fleet vehicles
- Specialist training
- PPE
- Technology & Equipment

Increased partnership working via Lancashire Fire Operations Group (LFOG) has seen the launch of PSPO's (Public Space Protection Orders) over the last year, for sites deemed high risk for wildfire activity. The introduction of PSPO's should deter unwanted and unnecessary fire-setting in high-risk areas, reducing mobilisations and incidents. The success of the PSPO's introduced, will be measured after the 2024/25 wildfire season.

Our **On Call Improvement Programme** provides a fundamental review of our On Call system to ensure that it remains an efficient and effective use of resources. The programme focuses upon recruitment, selection, development, and retention of On Call staff and takes in reviews of induction, initial training, role capabilities, remuneration, employment contracts, mobilising and resilience of special appliances. Several projects were delivered during 2023/24, which included a 'Hybrid Working' trial which enables people to work from an On Call station during essential daytime hours and simultaneously provide availability for the On Call fire engine. This has resulted in more effective recruitment and improved

availability of a fire engine where the trial has taken place. The learning from this project is being shared nationally as positive practice.

We recognise the need to continue to review and invest in the On Call system to ensure its sustainability longer term. During 2023-24 we implemented a Flexi Duty Officer (FDO) restructure to redistribute workloads to create a specific station manager post to drive the improvement and progression across our On Call programme. This redistribution of resources avoids the need to invest in new posts, saving 0.1m.

We have recently commissioned work on a bespoke software solution to provide rich data for each of our on-call units to ensure they are sustainable and able to increase availability of our on-call fire appliances. It is anticipated that this innovative software will lead to improved availability of resources and allow us to target specific individuals based on intelligent data, for upskilling around incident command and driving, in particular.

Charging policies

Our focus in recent years has been to deliver collaborative projects with a priority of delivering the best community outcomes. We have an innovative approach to service delivery and are a trusted partner that can, and does, support regional and national partners during emergency incidents. We have arrangements in place across our neighbouring FRS to deliver the quickest and most suitable response, generally on a 'knock for knock' basis. Over last 12 months we introduced:

- **Charging for out of county asset deployment** in line with NFCC Guidelines on FRS Charging for Mutual Assistance.
- **Charging model for other agencies** for application when FRS assets are used for non-statutory duties in support of other agencies, for example use of our Drones with Lancashire Constabulary.

Asset Management and Investment in Technology

We have developed a **Digital Strategy** that outlines our 5-year trajectory to deliver improved productivity and efficiency both internally and externally. Our high-level projects and plans are progressing well:

Digitising fire engines – We have recently replaced all of our front Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) and will have a full roll-out of rear, demountable MDTs completed by late Spring 2024. At the same time, we have delivered a programme of upgrades of iPad devices on our frontline fire engines, all of which increases the ability for simultaneous activity and thereby productivity. We are currently undertaking a pilot at two of our wholtime fire stations of full digitalisation of a fire engine; this includes additional work terminals and 5G wi-fi bubbles so that firefighters and officers can undertake office administration tasks and access various applications whilst out in communities and away from the station. Access is being provided to the full suite of applications as is presently accessed on fire stations (e.g. HFSC system, BFSC App, Training Management, Incident Recording System, Rota Management System, Service Intranet).

CCTV installations on Service vehicles - to reduce accident and injury costs, also a deterrent for anti-social behaviour and spurious claims. The Service has seen a 30% reduction in accident numbers since 2021/22.

Business Intelligence – the function is being strengthened with use of a data warehouse, new Service level Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reporting, performance dashboards for use by managers to improve understanding of performance outcomes and inform efficient and effective targeting of resources.

Training delivery – the current implementation of a new Learning Management System will vastly reduce the administration demands for operational staff, managers, and training department. Capturing evidence of competency in a digital format will also enable development programmes to be delivered more efficiently and free up capacity. Incident Command workshop events for On Call staff are being delivered using a hybrid approach, i.e. in person at the On Call station, or digitally via Microsoft Teams, reducing travel and time costs.

Equipment and appliance checks, inventories and defects - in line with the appliance digitisation programme, we are currently exploring new fleet management software to remove the manual entries and improve on-station equipment and maintenance checks. This will enable visibility of equipment and vehicle inspections. The new system will be App based, so inspections can be verified remotely and live updates posted on the system. In addition, we now operate an in-house vehicle compliance/safety checking procedure at station level. This ensures appliance safety inspections are completed on-time, keeping defect rectification to a minimum, which provides enhanced appliance availability and efficiencies.

Resourcing

We aim to undertake a strategic review of Emergency Cover resources on a cyclical 3 yearly basis, aligned to refreshed 'Strategic Assessments of Risk' across Lancashire. Our latest Emergency Cover Review (ECR) was conducted in 2022 and will be delivered over the next 3 planning years:

Emergency Cover Review (2023-26): Our latest operational review of emergency cover and duty systems will result in a budget saving of c.£400,000, whilst at the same time increasing overall wholtime firefighter numbers by 8 and increasing the number of available 'positive' hours on stations that change from Day Crewing Plus (DCP) to Wholtime. In summary, the ECR will deliver:

- Reductions in crewing levels across DCP stations from 14 to 13 per station
- Reductions in crewing levels at Flexi Day Crewed stations from 14 to 13 per station
- Change several DCP stations to Wholtime, whilst at the same time reducing overall crewing numbers on single pump Wholtime stations across the county from 28 to 24
- Mainstreaming alternative vehicles into the appliance fleet such as Climate Change vehicles for use in flooding and wildfire response

- Consider how we utilise On Call firefighters in a more productive manner to create efficiencies, for example using them to drive our Aerial Ladder Platforms at 2 fire stations instead of providing dedicated wholetime staffing
- We are continuing to explore opportunities for more flexible ways of operating our duty systems with relevant Trade Unions, for the benefit of our staff and to create more efficient and effective working practices.

Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT) – has now been introduced into the Service and operates 24/7 within our Command Support Room to optimise fire cover ensuring efficient and effective disposition of resources. During spate conditions, use of the DCT has reduced appliance movements (based upon comparison against previous notional cover arrangements), supported reduced usage of overtime, reduced unnecessary disruption to business activities and thereby supported the broader productivity increases. Over the coming year, our aim is to move to full DCT implementation within North West Fire Control, on a collaborative footing, and subsequently the removal of traditional notional fire cover policies and procedures.

Rota Management – alongside the implementation of the DCT, we have created a dedicated central Rota Management Team to streamline and optimise crewing arrangements, reduce inefficient practices in the management of detached duties and overtime, and to optimise emergency cover aligned to prevailing risk.

Over the last year we have undertaken a review of operational protected assets (which resources we keep available 24/7), to ensure we are delivering effective and efficient response arrangements.

Investment in additional Water Tower dual purpose Fire Appliances - to ensure LFRS can deliver high volumes of water for firefighting and reduce the number of appliances required to safely deal with protracted commercial (and to a lesser degree domestic) fires. We have procured two additional water towers which will replace two conventional 'B' type appliances within our fleet. With a higher pumping capability, aerial water throw and piercing capacity, these versatile appliances reduce the size of attendances to structural fires.

Procurement

We are involved in both national and regional procurement projects as well as undertaking our own local procurement activities. In all instances we seek to maximise the benefits offered by existing frameworks to deliver savings, both cashable and non-cashable, and to maximise the commercial advantages offered by collaboration. Some examples being:

- Active member of the Facilities Management and Construction National Strategic Task and Finish Group, currently working on procurement of a national cleaning contract.
- Utilised various Fire Specific National Frameworks such as provision of specialist vehicles, including an Aerial Ladder Platform which delivered a saving of £150,000.

- We have utilised blue light specific frameworks, such as the Police framework for the supply of footwear.
- We have utilised non-fire frameworks, such as Crown Commercial Services for support vehicles, G-Cloud for software support, YPO for PPE/station uniform and Health Trust Europe for IT related services.
- Part of the North West Group, responsible for aligning requirements and undertaking regional procurement activities across various headings, such as laundry of PPE, provision of flood suits.
- As part of the Regional Group we also invite other organisations to join in appropriate exercises, one example being for maintenance and repair of Appliance Bay Doors where NWSAS joined the project.

We record savings generated by procurement on an annual basis, identifying savings of £0.5m in 2022/23.

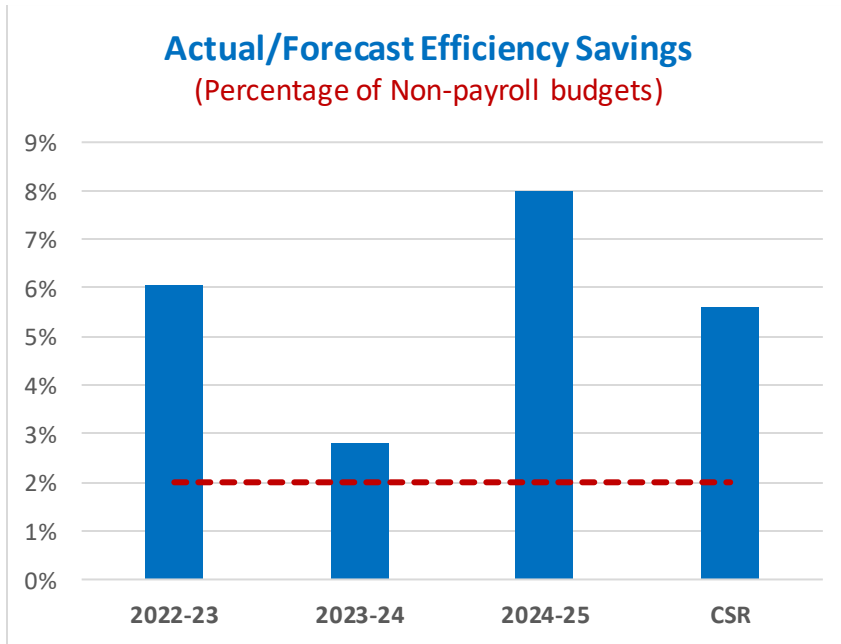
Productivity

LFRS is well placed to deliver the 3% productivity increase under the sector wide Spending Review (2021/22-2024/25) with productivity gains already amassed and evident from our increased outputs. As we move into year 2, we aim to consolidate the gains made, whilst delivering further improvements via the ambitions of various Service priorities.

These gains will be balanced against the need to facilitate capacity to manage through sizeable Service change programmes arising from our Emergency Cover Review. Most notable in this regard, are the significant training burdens arising from duty system changes and staff relocations around the county, and our requirement to train at pace new fire appliance drivers, and a spectrum of specialist skill sets (swift water rescue, large animal rescue, water towers, aerial ladder platforms etc) to maintain service provision.

Annex A

£'000	Actual	Forecast	Forecast
-	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Opening Revenue Expenditure Budget (Net)	63,024	68,490	75,156
Less Total Direct Employee Costs	49,868	54,303	56,367
Non Pay Budget	13,156	14,187	18,789
Efficiency Target (2% of non-pay budget)	263	284	376
Efficiency Savings			
<u>Direct Employee</u>			
Reduction in Prevention/Protection/Response Staff		-400	
Reduction in Support Staff			
<u>Indirect Employee (e.g. training, travel etc.)</u>			
All Indirect Employee Costs	-300		
<u>Premises</u>			
Utilities			
Rent/Rates			
Other Premises Costs			
Shared Premises			
<u>Transport</u>			
Fleet			
Fuel			
Other Transport Costs			
<u>Supplies and Services</u>			
National Procurement Savings			
Local Procurement Savings	-300		
Other Technology Improvements			
Decreased Usage	-200		
<u>Capital Financing</u>			
Revenue Expenditure Charged to Capital			-1,500
Net Borrowing Costs			
<u>Other</u>			
Other Savings 1 (Please Specify)			
Other Savings 2 (Please Specify)			
Other Savings 3 (Please Specify)			
Total Efficiency Savings	-800	-400	-1,500
Efficiency Savings as a Percentage of Non-Payroll Budgets	6.08%	2.82%	7.98%
Efficiency Savings Target	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
Over/(Under)	4.08%	0.82%	5.98%



2024/25 Productivity and Efficiency Statement: Mid-Year Update

Agreed Action	Update
Efficiency Section	
£1.5m Cashable Saving in 2024/25 - Reduction in the revenue contribution to the capital programme.	Achieved. The budgeted revenue contribution to the capital programme has been reduced from £4m to £2.5m in 2024/25.
Cashable efficiencies of £2.5m from 2026/27 are included in the MTFS.	Potential efficiencies have been developed will be updated as part of setting the 2025/26 MTFS and long-term capital programme.
Both cashable and non-cash releasing savings are expected from a new combined Headquarters and Training Facility from 2027; realising cashable energy, travel and maintenance savings and enabling productivity and cultural improvements from the centralisation of many synergistic services and working in a more modern and efficient operating environment.	The programme is not yet at the stage where cashable and non-cashable savings will be estimated but will be a key programme of work later in the capital programme.
Non cashable productivity efficiencies and potentially cashable efficiencies are expected from our investment in new Training Props from 2027; providing high quality facilities will help in the initial training and ongoing maintenance of competency requirements across a broad spectrum of operational activities.	As above.
Productivity Section	
Progress with combined HFSC & BFSC.	<p>Year to date, the Service have completed 12,138 HFSCs, which is greater than the 11,737 completed at the end of Q2 2023/24.</p> <p>Built environment training has been provided to all community safety advisors for them to identify areas of non-compliance with the fire safety order. This training provides community safety staff with the knowledge to</p>

Agreed Action	Update
	support residents living in multiple occupation homes along with when onward referral is appropriate to our Protection department. The Service have completed 1,867 BFSCs year to date, which is greater than the 1,719 completed at the end of Q2 2023/24.
Reduction in Unwanted Fire Signal mobilisations (AFA's) with the move to 24-hour.	The new AFA policy went live 24 hours a day in May 2023 which can evidence a circa 78% reduction to incidents in premises affected by the policy.
Increased productivity to meet our statutory duty in regard to Building Regulations.	Following revised internal processes our response to building regulations within statutory timescales is 98%.
Continued use of technology for built environment training delivery.	Following the delivery of built environment training which evidenced significant efficiency and effectiveness saving, our second phase of training is planned for early 2025.
Explore options to streamline Prevention and Protection digital systems to improve productivity.	Work has been undertaken to identify systems on the market which, if implemented, would improve productivity across prevention and protection. Work has now begun to establish the project management structure around implementation.
Improved SSRI process to reduce unnecessary impacts.	In February 2024, a new process for SSRI reviews allowed for a more accurate scoring mechanism. This provides assurance to the reviewer and at the same time reduces the number of unnecessary SSRI's that had been overscored on the previous methodology that focussed purely on the individual premises risk. The new process has an added layer of accuracy by using the NFCC risk score, along with the Risk Based Intervention score, which includes ward-based data, distance to the nearest fire station, numbers of previous incidents, flood risks etc. The new process will allow for some reviews of lower risk premises such as primary schools, being reviewed remotely, so increasing the capacity of crews. Early data was showing approximately 1/3 of all level 3 risk sites were being downgraded to level

Agreed Action	Update
	<p>2, meaning the inspection frequency is increased, along with the amount of time spent carrying out a review. This will allow us to reduce unnecessary SSRI's. this will allow crews to focus on the highest risk premises.</p> <p>As part of this project, all operational staff were given a refresher and approximately 70 staff given a full day reference holder session, which included input from a member of our Built Environment team.</p> <p>Along with the service investing in 2 risk technicians, the assurance and availability of staff to ensure competence has increased greatly. The policy has also been amended to ensure reviewers work closer with protection staff and subject matter specialists when it comes to reviewing high risk premises, or those with complexed fire engineering solutions.</p>
Streamline service wide training delivery.	<p>A new software package has been introduced for recording and reporting on training. Alongside this, enabled by the improvements in functionality, a review was completed in terms of development programmes including how competency would be evidenced. The result of this has been a significant reduction in the number of hours taken for FF's in development (WT and On Call) to complete their evidence requirements, whilst still demonstrating the required level of competency. From initial feedback from staff, it is anticipated this new process will be approximately 50% less in terms of the time required inputting evidence, however the data will be collated and analysed as part of the post implementation review.</p> <p>Ten virtual incident command workshops have been delivered to On Call stations by incident command</p>

Agreed Action	Update
	<p>trainers, utilising MS Teams. These sessions have been well attended, and in addition to existing OIC's getting opportunities to practice skills, there have been other staff observing who have shown an interest in becoming OIC's and have progressed onto a full incident command course following the sessions.</p>
<p>On-call improvement programme.</p>	<p>The On-Call Improvement Programme (OCIP) is driving transformation across the Service with several workstreams to improve productivity and efficiency.</p> <p>Incident Command trainers have reviewed the process for On-Call Incident Command Courses, which has resulted in 10 Courses and 58 staff being trained as Incident Commanders in 2024. This is a significant increase in course delivery from previous years.</p> <p>On-Call Performance Management training for Station Managers and Unit Managers was completed in Q2, which included the roll-out of sector-leading innovative software for On-Call Availability, Recruitment and Skills (OARS). The software has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of workforce planning, development, and performance. OARS is the first of its kind nationally, and the Service demonstrated the project and software as best practice at the NFCC On-Call Conference in September.</p>
<p>Charging for out of county deployments and other agencies.</p>	<p>All relative chargeable out of county deployments have now been updated and an up-to-date charging schedule has been completed, Standard Operating Procedure 250 Special Service has been updated. Two new forms have been completed to enable charging for blue light and non-blue light organisations</p>
<p>Digitisation of fire appliances.</p>	<p>The service has implemented a modern replacement for the previous 80+ Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs). This upgrade also features the</p>

Agreed Action	Update
	<p>installation of a second, demountable MDT with 4G/5G capability, mounted at the rear of all 58 front line fire appliance. To further enhance connectivity on the incident ground, we have tested and deployed 4G/5G routers across 5 appliances, including the services 3 Incident Command Units. These are connected to o2 and StarLink for enhanced speed and resilience. Additionally, each one of the services 26 P1 appliances now has two iPads, each connected to a different network provider, ensuring reliable and seamless communication in a variety of operational environments.</p>

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