



This matter is being dealt
with by: Kate Kirton
Email: Kate.Kirton@sunderland.gov.uk
Your Ref:
Our Ref:
Date: 5 January 2022

Dear Councillor

You are summoned to attend the Meeting of the Authority to be held in the Main Conference Room, Fire and Rescue Headquarters, Barmston Mere on **Monday 17 January 2022 at 10.30am** when it is proposed to transact the business set out below.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chris Lowther'.

Chris Lowther
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
Clerk to the Authority

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Telephone 0191 444 1500 Fax 0191 444 1512



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Joint report of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (the Clerk to the Authority), the Finance Director and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority (copy attached).

Minutes of the Meeting of the
TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND
RESCUE AUTHORITY held in the
Fire and Rescue Service
Headquarters, Barmston Mere on
MONDAY 13 DECEMBER 2021 at
10.30am.

Present:

ITEM 3 (I)

Councillor Taylor in the Chair

Councillors Bell, Burdis, Flynn, Haley, Keegan, Ord and Woodwark together with Ms. K. McGuiness (PCC).

Part I

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Dodds, Doyle, Forbes, Hunter, Johnson, Kilgour, Samuels and Warne.

Councillor Woodwark commented that given the recent government guidance to work from home where possible, it was likely reason that this was the reason for the number of apologies.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

42. RESOLVED that the minutes of the Authority, Part I held on 15 November 2021 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

The CFO referred to the Immediate Detriment Framework (P7) and explained that a technical update report may be submitted in the future.

The Finance Director explained that the Governance Committee had met on the 29th November. The accounts had now been audited and the Authority had been notified that an unqualified opinion would be issued by the Auditors.

Approval of Reason for Absence from Meetings

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority) and the Deputy Clerk to the Authority submitted a joint report to seek the approval of the Authority, under Section 85 Local Government Act 1972 (the Act), to the absence of a co-opted member from meetings.

Members were advised that Section 85(1) of the Act provided that “if a member of a local authority failed throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of their last attendance to attend any meeting of the authority, they shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the authority”.

Due to ill health, Miss G. Goodwill, co-opted member on the Governance Committee, had not been able to attend a meeting since her re-appointment at the Annual Authority meeting on 14 June 2021.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:

43. RESOLVED that Miss Goodwill’s absence from meetings due to ill health be noted, and in accordance with section 85 Local Government Act 1972 (the Act), approval be given to the reason for her absence from meetings, up to and including 7 March 2022.

Statement of Assurance 2020-2021

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority) and the Finance Director submitted a joint report to present Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority’s 2020/21 Statement of Assurance (SOA) for Fire Authority consideration and agreement to publish.

Members were reminded that Each Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) in England was required to provide sufficient assurance that they were acting in accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018 (National Framework). This had been presented to the Governance Committee on 29th November, 2021.

DCFO Heath explained that within the Foreword to the SOA was a clear statement that the Service believed, based on the evidence that it was operating within the parameters of good governance and in accordance with all regulatory requirements and guidance.

By producing a SOA, the Fire Authority provided information to communities, the Government, local authorities and partners, which allowed them to make a valid assessment of performance during 2020/21.

Members were advised that The SOA was a ‘look-back’ document, which provided information on the Authority’s financial, governance and operational performance during 2020/21, and included details of how the requirements of the National Framework were met. The SOA provided information and evidence to demonstrate compliance with the National Framework and signposted to supporting documents.

44. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the SOA be noted;
- (ii) the Authority agreed that they were satisfied that the SOA properly and accurately reflected the risk environment and good governance arrangements of the fire and rescue service; and
- (iii) the SOA be progressed for publication.

TWFRS 2025 Strategy

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority), the Finance Director and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report to present the new five year Strategy for Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS Strategy 2025) to Fire Authority for information. A schematic of how the strategy aligned with the services business planning arrangements was attached at Appendix A.

Members were reminded that the new TWFRS Strategy 2025 separated the corporate strategy from the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), which were previously combined as one document named the 'Strategic Community Safety Plan'.

DCFO Heath explained that TWFRS had had a corporate plan for over 15 years, and the plan had evolved throughout that period. As the strategic planning process matured, there was a need to review the process to ensure they remained fit for purpose now, and in the future.

Councillor Haley welcomed the report and referred to page 69 – 'Who We Are' and commented that whilst the first paragraph explained that TWFRS was made up of elected members, the photographs below showed the Executive Leadership Team.

DCFO Heath agreed to look into this.

45. RESOLVED that the report and associated TWFRS Strategy for 2025 be noted.

UKRO 2021 Festival of Rescue, Project Closure Summary Report

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority), the Finance Director and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report providing Fire Authority members with an outline of the deliverables of the UKRO Festival of Rescue event held by TWFRS over the weekend of 16-18 September 2021. A full debrief / lessons learned report was in final stage draft and would be shared across the Service, UKRO and West Midlands FRS whom were planning the 2022 UKRO event.

The paper sought to formally record the closing of the UKRO project and report on the key deliverables of time, cost and quality as well as outline areas of success and learning for the Service.

DCFO Heath advised the Authority that overall the UKRO Challenge 2021 'Festival of Rescue' was a success, receiving very positive feedback from competitors, attendees and members of the public whilst also being nominated and shortlisted in two categories for the Excellence in Fire and Emergency Awards.

DCFO explained that regrettably, the Service had not been successful in achieving a prize, however this did not detract from the excellent work which had been undertaken.

As a hosting service, TWFRS set out to deliver a world class event in city centre locations that would engage both competitors and the public and involve the Local Authorities across the area. A key ambition was to make this event the most memorable UKRO event for competitors and for the public to create an event that would seek to highlight the role and position of the FRS in communities and create a festival feel to it. Key to this was providing both business and community safety information, education and interactions between TWFRS and the communities that they served. From feedback from participants, letters of thanks and appreciation from those supporting the event, the service was confident that it could claim to have exceeded the level of quality that was expected from the delivery of the event and produced many lessons learned for the service and for those whom aspire to host UKRO in future years.

Councillor Woodward commented upon the amount of work which had been undertaken extremely well and thanked staff for going the extra mile, adding that this had raised the profile of TWFRS locally, nationally and internationally.

46. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme Update

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority) submitted a report to update Members on the current progress of the National Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP).

ACFO McVay reminded Members that the ESMCP (the Programme) would replace the existing communication service delivered by Airwave Services Limited (ASL) with a new national mobile communication service called the Emergency Services Network (ESN). The present system focused on voice only communications and whilst it was due to become end of life in 2022/23, negotiations were ongoing to seek a contract extension for continued support for the necessary technical systems until the 'go-live' date.

Members were advised that concerns had been raised in relation to the dual role of Motorola as both owner of the company providing the current mobile radio network (Airwave Solutions) and as a key supplier in the roll-out of the planned new

Emergency Services Network (ESN). In July 2021, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) published a consultation on whether to launch a market investigation into the mobile radio network for the police and emergency services.

In October 2021, having considered responses to the consultation, the CMA decided to refer the supply of the land mobile radio network services for public safety (and ancillary services) for a market investigation. This investigation was ongoing.

ACFO McVay then explained that some essential Airwave equipment reached 'end of life' in December 2022 and would need to be replaced with what was known as a Despatch Communications Server (DCS). The Service was presently engaged with Telent, the prime contractor to obtain costings for this work. Members were reminded that there was no grant funding available for this and the burden would have to be borne by the Authority for the provision and maintenance of this equipment.

Members were advised that appropriate resourcing continued to be key in supporting transition activities and included the project co-ordinator role which would be required until transition completion. The Chief Fire Officer had temporarily created this additional role on the Grey Book Establishment, however the powers of delegation limited the duration of such a temporary amendment to a period of two years.

ACFO McVay advised that this post continued to be fully funded via a Section 31 Local Transition Resource (LTR) Grant and Members were requested to approve maintaining this post on the establishment as a temporary role until such time that transition to ESN was concluded or until such time that Grant funding was removed for the role.

The longer term financial impact of transition to the Emergency Services Network continued to be monitored by the Service as presently the Service benefited from a Section 31 Firelink Grant (c£236,00 per annum) Home Office had confirmed that the Service would not receive an equivalent ESN grant once it had transitioned to ESN.

Councillor Woodward commented that this was both annoying and avoidable with consequences for the Authority.

The Finance Officer advised that the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSP) did give an update for the scheme however it did not provide allocations across the Country. Funding of £125,000,000 was to be received nationally however what this mean for TWFA was unknown and it was critical to understand what costs may be incurred.

47. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The content of the report be noted;
- (ii) Approve the temporary amendment to the Grey Book Establishment for the ongoing role of Station Manager B (ESMCP Project Co-Ordinator role)

subject to grant funding until such time that the Service transitions to ESN be approved; and

- (iii) Further reports be received as necessary.

Budget Planning Framework 2022/23

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority) and the Finance Director submitted a joint report setting out the main high level considerations in drafting the Revenue Budget 2022/2023 and longer term financial planning for the Authority which included:

- Identifying the key factors influencing the development of the Authority's financial plans into the medium term and setting out specifically the Budget Planning Framework for 2022/2023; and
- Setting out the context and planning assumptions used for drafting the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2022/2023 to 2025/2026 which would be formally considered later in the budget cycle.

Members were advised that at present, there were a number of uncertainties and that the Finance Settlement was not expected until 15th December, 2021, however a major shift from the existing plans was not anticipated.

The Finance Director reminded Members that the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/2022 to 2024/2025 was approved by Authority in February 2021 as part of the budget setting process, as summarised in Table 2.1 of the report.

The Authority was projecting to face a cumulative funding shortfall of £0.315m by the end of 2024/2025 which was seen as broadly finance neutral, however due to there not being enough information to build a more meaningful resource projection over the medium term despite publication of the Spending Review 2021, an updated MTFS would be presented to Authority in February 2022.

Members were advised that the Bank of England expected inflation to peak at over 4% during 2021 with MPC forecasts showing inflation slightly under its 2% target in 2-3 years, which was the basis of the Authority's MTFS assumption for inflation. It was fair to assume that higher inflation over the next two financial years would need to be taken into account in the revised MTFS.

To support the Government's recently announced Health and Social Care plan; "Building back Better", National Insurance contributions for both employees and employers would rise by 1.25% from April 2022. The majority of the funding (£25bn) would be directed to NHS over the next 3 years and £5.4bn over 3 years for the costs of Social Care. This was an additional cost pressure for the Fire Authority and was estimated to cost around £300k which would need to be recognised in the refreshed MTFS and employees would also be affected.

Councillor Haley commented that whilst some of the funding from increased NI costs would be used to fund the NHS and also Social Care that this by no means met the costs given that the LGA had asked for £10bn to be directed towards social care.

Key funding announcements for Local Government included:

- Average real term funding increases over the CSR of 1.9% for the Home Office and 3% per annum for Local Government but the Fire Service share was unknown.
- Business Rates concessions announced in the Autumn Budget would be fully compensated by the government so no detriment would be incurred by the Authority from this government concession.
- Pensions Grant funding would be merged into the General Formula Grant Funding from 2022/23.
- Emergency Services Network (ESN / ESMCP) revenue funding of £125m for 2022/2023 and £121m capital funding over the CSR period to 2024/25 was confirmed and although this was welcomed, the detail would need to be assessed when it was made available.
- Other Government Grants received by the Authority would not be confirmed until the Provisional Local Government Settlement was announced. For planning purposes, the Authority had retained all grants at the same level as for 2021/2022 over the medium term with the exception of the Firelink Grant that was expected to end in 2023/24. This position may need to be reviewed now that government funding for the ESN had been extended to 2024/25.

The Finance Director went on to say with regards to Council Tax, the Chancellor had confirmed that the current government guidelines would remain unchanged for the fire service and that the current MTFS already assumed an increase of 1.99% in its precept for 2022/2023 and also in each year of the MTFS.

In relation to Business Rates, the government confirmed that it had frozen business rates increase this year and the assumption was that any loss from this action would be fully compensated for in the Local Government Finance Settlement, however there was still continuing uncertainty, specifically around both the continuing adverse impact of both the Covid-19 and Brexit which may mean that there could still be a significant impact on the level of income collected each year.

The Finance Director then advised Members that a provision of 2% had been factored into the budget planning framework for both grey and green book pay. The position would however be kept under review throughout the budget process and any pay award in excess of these estimated levels would become a spending pressure for the Authority to manage. Members were advised that an additional increase of 1% would cost the Authority c£400,000 which would need to be absorbed via additional income, a better grant settlement or budget efficiencies.

Referring to section 7.6 of the report, Members were advised that the Government target for inflation remained at 2%, however the Office for Budgetary Responsibility (OBR) had indicated that 4% was more likely for CPI in 2022/23, and 2% would not be achieved until 2024/25 which was likely to erode the effect of any inflationary

increase in the Authority's resources. As the Authority was only funded for 2%, this meant two years above the level (possibly 5% next year and then 3% the following year) would need to be absorbed within the Authority's budget.

Detailed within the report were the following significant uncertainties for the Authority:

- The Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/2023 to inform the Authority's grant allocations, would not be available until mid-December and would not be finalised until end of January 2022;
- Specific Fire Revenue Grant announcements and their future but especially Fire Protection Uplift Grant, Building Risk Review, Grenfell Tower Infrastructure and Firelink Grants;
- The Government plans in relation to any impact of their Fair Funding and Business Rates Retention reviews impacting on 2022/2023 and beyond;
- Funding implications of the Pensions Grant being included within Formula Grant from 2022/2023;
- The general economic position and especially the continued impact of Covid-19 and the implications of Brexit;
- Impact of continued higher inflation than government forecasts used to allocate grant funding;
- The District Council's Collection Fund positions for both Council Tax and Business Rates for 2021/2022;
- Additional budget pressures which may arise throughout the remainder of the budget process; and
- Any remedy to local authority (including Firefighter) pension schemes regarding McCloud / Sergeant that would impact on the Authority's finances.

Ms. Kim. McGuinness (PCC) commented that it was appalling that the Authority was in this position of uncertainty given that costs were not unforeseeable and that it was unfair that the Government did not provide adequate notice to make plans for a Service which saved lives.

Councillor Haley agreed and commented that this happened year on year and every year the Finance Settlement was delivered later and later and the fact that the Fire Service had not been addressed was disgraceful.

Councillor Woodward commented that this was incredibly frustrating and was also avoidable and expressed his concerns around the cost pressures for the Authority.

Councillor Bell questioned whether Tyne and Wear had been asked to provide any further assistance and if so, whether these costs would be met by Government and was advised that the Service had received informal asks for help from the ambulance service, however at the present time, it was unknown whether any funding would be provided by Government.

48. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The proposed Budget Planning Framework summarised at Section 8 of the report which would guide the preparation of the Revenue Budget for 2022/2023 be agreed; and
- (ii) It be noted that the MTFS 2022/2023 to 2025/2026 would be presented to Authority in February 2022.

Bonfire Campaign 2021

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority) submitted a report to inform Members of the outcome of the 'Bonfire Campaign' 2021. The aim of this campaign was to reduce the impact of the Bonfire period on communities whilst preventing injuries, deaths and anti-social behaviour caused by fireworks and bonfires.

Members were referred to prevention and education work which had been undertaken which included liaising with Local Authorities regarding uplifts of refuse, targeted messages to all Secondary Schools, engagement events, the SARA Project, the Darker Nights Campaign, media activity, Body Worn Camera footage and a media event at SafetyWorks!

The CFO advised that antisocial behaviour had been discussed with the Minister and that the SARA Project would be used as a case study within the next White Paper to be published.

DCFO Heath explained that the vast majority of people enjoyed the bonfire celebrations safely and responsibly. However, once again crews were attacked by a small minority of individuals.

There were five reported attacks on operational fire crews during the bonfire period in 2021, which represented a 25% increase from four in 2020. All of the attacks involved objects being thrown at firefighters or the appliances, three of the five incidents involved fireworks deliberately directed towards crew members or the appliance. Enquiries to identify those responsible would continue alongside Northumbria Police.

In response to a question from the Chair asking whether any of the perpetrators had been identified, DCFO Heath explained that unfortunately they had not however a combined effort working with Northumbria Police was ongoing.

Councillor Haley commented that these attacks related to a period of 6 days in November however crews were subject to attacks every week and asked what evidence had been gathered to track these individuals down from the investment in Body Worn cameras and CCTV on fire appliances.

DCFO Heath advised that whilst individuals had not been identified the evidence obtained did point the cases in the right direction.

Councillor Burdis referred to the education work in schools which had been undertaken and commented that this should be ongoing all year and not just prior to bonfire night and also involve school governors with a request for them to raise the issues with parents.

49. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The content of the report and the enclosed Bonfire Incident Data Power BI report, attached at Appendix A of the report be noted; and
- (ii) Further reports be received as necessary.

IRMP 2021-2024 Consolidated Document

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority), the Finance Director and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report presenting the Service's consolidated Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2021-2024 for the Authority's awareness (Appendix A of the report).

Members were reminded that at the October 2021 meeting, four proposed IRMP actions for 2021-24 were approved following a period of formal consultation and subsequent amendment. This approval enabled the design and production of the IRMP 2021-24 consolidated document for publication.

The IRMP 2021-24 document presented the Authority's approach to community risk management planning, signposting to key sources of risk management information.

Whilst the Authority's current approach already aligned to the requirements of the new Community Risk Management Fire Standard, the end product (the published corporate document) would be evolved over the coming months to become a 'Community Risk Management Plan.

DCFO Heath advised Members that the HMI Inspection had been ongoing for several weeks and the previous week had been the end of the formal process. The outcome report was expected in the Summer of next year and all staff were to be thanked for their outstanding involvement in this process.

Councillor Haley referred to the Governance section and commented that whilst the Fire Authority was mentioned, it did not explain who the Fire Authority were and that it was important for the Community to understand ownership of the IRMP.

50. RESOLVED that the publication of the consolidated IRMP 2021-24 document be noted.

Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation Order) 2006

51. RESOLVED that in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 the public be excluded during consideration of the remaining business as it was considered to involve a

likely disclosure of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

(Signed) T. TAYLOR,
Chairman

Note:

The above minutes comprise those relating to items of business during which the meeting was open to the public.

Additional minutes in respect of other items are included in Part II.

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

ITEM 3 (II)

Minutes of the meeting of the POLICY
AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE held
in the Fire Authority Rooms, Fire and
Rescue Service Headquarters, Nissan
Way, Barmston Mere, Sunderland on
MONDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2021 at 10.30
am

Present:

Councillor Forbes in the Chair.

Councillors Dodds, Kilgour, Samuels and Woodwark.

Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillor Johnson.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Dodds declared an interest in relation to Item 5 – Bonfire Period Update, specifically the Bonfire near to the Poacher's Pocket at Gateshead and agreed to take no part in the discussion, as Chair of the Licensing Committee for Gateshead Council.

Minutes

3. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Committee held on 5 July 2021 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

2021/2022 Quarter Two YTD Performance Report

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority), the Finance Director and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report to provide the Committee with information relating to Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service's (TWFRS) year to date performance until the end of Quarter Two (Q2) 2021/2022.

Members were reminded that the Covid-19 Pandemic had affected the work of the Service in the first two quarters as TWFRS continued its recovery and reintroduced a physical presence in the community as government restrictions eased.

AM Clark explained that a lot of the effectiveness in the community to resolve challenges with matters such as anti-social behaviour was reliant on a multi-agency co-ordinated approach and that partners had also been working within the same constraints. As lockdown measures eased, the Service had seen an increase in activity related to anti-social behaviour and secondary fires. It was anticipated that this area of work would be a renewed focus for the Service and partners in the year ahead.

In addition, the Service had committed significant resources into supporting the community through the COVID-19 pandemic supporting the vaccination and testing programs, which had subsequently had an effect on some of the operational and organisational performance indicators although the Service was increasingly returning to its main functions.

AM Clark advised Members that the Service had achieved or were within 10% of achieving 12 of the 16 Operational targets which was a similar position to that of the previous year.

In summary:

- There had been 0 fire fatalities;
- Whilst there has been a 4% reduction in the number of accidental dwelling fires, injuries resulting from them had decreased by 19%;
- 62% of injuries from accidental dwelling fires occurred in the kitchen;
- There had been a 44% increase in the number of deliberate secondary fires;
- The average response time for the first appliance was 6 minutes and 16 seconds, this was 15 seconds slower than 2020/21; and
- 3330 Safe and Well checks had been delivered to high risk households. This was an 85% increase from 2020/21

The Committee was then advised that the total number of incidents attended had increased by 13% in comparison to the previous Q2 and it was believed that a contributing factor was due to the easing of lockdown restrictions compared to the previous year.

In relation to the increase in the number of deliberate secondary fires (44%) as this was the highest figure since 2009/2020, this would be an area of increased focus and hard targeting for the Service with TWFRS seeking to work in partnership and collaboration with partners in driving these types of fires down as they represented a serious anti-social behaviour issue for communities.

AM Clark explained that all districts had reported 'Loose Refuse' as the highest property type for deliberate secondary fires and that TWFRS had recently had success in this regard in the Beacon Lough area of Gateshead with the Service now reporting accumulations of refuse using the 'Report it' tool.

In response to a question from Councillor Samuels, AM Clark explained that the 'Report it Tool' was a common tool used across all Authorities so everyone was reporting in the same way.

The Chair commented that the amount of loose refuse could be as a result of people now doing more online shopping which generated more packaging which could in turn, lead to more refuse being dumped/flytipped/set fire to.

Councillor Kilgour agreed and commented that if people were not using the correct channels for disposing of waste, this was an opportunity for a clear messaging to be communicated.

DCFO Heath agreed and advised that the work with the 5 Local Authorities was extremely effective with the uplifts proving very useful.

Within South Tyneside, one main culprit had been identified as causing numerous amounts of deliberate secondary fires, and it was pleasing to note that the individual was engaging with the Service and would be joining the Fire Cadets in the near future.

Members were then advised that social media had been utilised extensively throughout Q2 with posts highlighting the dangers associated with cooking and general kitchen fires reaching over 50,000 people over the period. More recently, a media campaign related to 'darker nights' and the scourge of anti-social behaviour associated with deliberate secondary fires, had attracted both local and region wide press interest.

False alarms in domestic premises had increased by 2% therefore TWFRS continued to work with housing providers to reduce alarms activating in domestic premises with Gentoo challenging 77% of actuations from their monitored housing stock as well as delivering fire safety leaflets to their high rise buildings.

In relation to false alarms in non-domestic premises, an increase of 9% had been seen. Action had been taken in North Tyneside where contact had been made with non-domestic premises who had had multiple attendances. This had resulted in contractors carrying out remedial work on the buildings alarm system.

AM Clark then explained that average response times for the reporting period had increased by 15 seconds to 6 minutes 16 seconds when compared to last year. This continued to be more than two minutes faster than the average response time to property fires across English FRS which was reported as 8 minutes and 43 seconds.

Within dwelling fires where no smoke alarm had been fitted (48) Members were assured that contact had been made with each of the properties to try and educate occupiers where possible however sometimes, people did refuse to co-operate.

Councillor Woodward commented that some statistics may look either better or worse due to circumstances beyond the control of the Fire Authority, which could question the validity of some data.

DCFO Heath agreed and explained that TWFRS would not fully understand what impact COVID19 had had on data until the information was further analysed. In addition, statistics could vary depending on the way in which they are reported across different authorities.

Members were reminded that in March 2020 a Logistics Cell was established to support the community response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This cell had now been stood down but could be reinstated if the community need changed.

AM Clark referred Members to Sections 5.3 and 5.4 of the report and advised that:

From w/c 29 March 2021 to w/c 27 September 2021 TWFRS staff volunteers:

- Administered 19,705 lateral flow tests
- Carried out 14,076 vaccinations

In total since the beginning of the pandemic TWFRS Staff volunteers had:

- Administered 23,685 lateral flow tests
- Carried out 18,510 vaccinations

The Chair referred to the destination sites which were required for PPE and congratulated the Service on playing an excellent role, further commenting that the responsiveness, professionalism and attention to detail showed the Service in the best light possible. Councillor Forbes hoped that this had raised the profile of the Service which was beyond immediate fire response.

DCFO Heath agreed and commented that TWFRS and a partner had submitted a bid for the excellence awards and was pleased to announce that the Service had been shortlisted.

The Chair then referred to the response times and commented that there were 3 potential reasons for the slight increase. These being that the previous year was artificially low, due to an operational change or generally more traffic on the roads since restrictions had been lifted.

DCFO Heath commented that it was currently very complex to understand and likely to be a combination of all 3, however the response from TWFRS was still 2 minutes faster than other FRS's.

The Chair went on to say that if there had been operational changes, Members needed to be assured that it was not a change in the service model which was resulting in the impact on response times.

DCFO agreed and commented that a discussion would be taking place with the FBU in due course regarding fire crews wearing seatbelts prior to leaving the station. The current exemption in the law allowed the service to do what it was currently doing, however this discussion would be predicated on the safety of staff and may impact on response times by a further few seconds.

Councillor Dodds questioned whether any changes in people's mental health could be impacting on the number of deliberate secondary fires and antisocial behaviour and was advised by ACFO McVay that a very strong relationship was in place with the Head Fire Strategy and Reform Office and that a discussion would be taking place early in the new year to see what further information could be gathered.

The Chair on behalf of the Committee congratulated the Service on a positive report, and whilst acknowledging the impact of antisocial behaviour and deliberate secondary fires, welcomed the focused work which would be undertaken in the future.

4. RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the report be noted and endorsed; and
- (ii) Further reports be received as appropriate.

Bonfire Period Update

DCFO Heath tabled a Bonfire Period Report which detailed incidents between 1st November and 6th November 2021.

Members were advised that an uplift regime had been in place and that contact had also been made with 65 schools to share messages about the bonfire period. In addition, the online app for parents was also used to share information and overall, it had been a very proactive campaign.

DCFO Heath advised Members of a bonfire in Gateshead (near the Poacher's Pocket) and reassured the Committee that contact had been made with Councillor Haley and works had also been undertaken with the Local Authorities, the Police and Trading Standards to provide guidance, support and advice.

The Committee was advised that a level of activity was seen which did test the Service, and whilst being very busy, not all calls resulted in mobilisation and that overall the bonfire period was well managed.

There had been two firework related primary fires, one relating to domestic violence/abuse and the other being a firework posted through a letterbox. These were now police matters.

With regards to deliberate secondary fires, there had been a decrease of -13.3% from the same period the previous year, with Members being advised that a lot of bonfires had been well managed.

On bonfire night there had been good police presence in the Southwick area of Sunderland with no reported fire related incidents, however overnight some vandals and pulled up some trees which had recently been planted as part of the Sara Project. Members were advised that a number of trees had been successfully retrieved and stored with a hope that they can be replanted again in the future.

Councillor Samuels commented that reaction from the Community had been extremely supportive and confirmed that the trees would be replanted sometime soon.

The Chair referred to the 6 attacks on Firefighters commenting that a zero tolerance approach needed to be undertaken and hoped that these were thoroughly investigated by the Police to send out the necessary message.

DCFO Heath responded by advising that the support from Northumbria Police had been first class and that the Service had very strong working relationships in place.

Councillor Woodward commented that 6 attacks on Firefighters was not acceptable under any circumstances and that it was deeply regrettable that the Service continued to endure these when trying to keep the community safe.

DCFO Heath agreed and commented that the investment in Bodyworn Cameras had been beneficial as footage was subsequently shared with the Police. Councillor Woodward welcomed this and reiterated that whilst there had initially been some reservations from the Trade Unions that footage could be used against staff, that this was not the case and that the equipment was used to protect Firefighters.

Councillor Kilgour welcomed being able to see a 5 year trend and commented that in relation to statistics on Firefighter attacks it would be useful to see additional information, which also compared across the year and not just the bonfire period for a better understanding overall.

The Chair welcomed a report being submitted to a future meeting of the Authority and commented that further detail in relation to each of the attacks would be useful which also included information in relation to whether action had been taken, with individuals being prosecuted or sentenced as a clear message of a zero tolerance approach was of paramount importance.

Councillor Dodds agreed and added that a precis of procedures Firefighters had to undertake to de-escalate a situation would also be useful information for Members.

DCFO Heath agreed to action this and submit a report to the December meeting of the Authority.

(Signed) N. FORBES
Chairman

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

ITEM 4

MEETING: 17th JANUARY 2022

SUBJECT: SCHEDULE OF PRECEPT INSTALMENTS 2022/2023

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE (THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY) AND THE FINANCE DIRECTOR

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Notifications are received from each of the Billing Authorities, upon which the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority will precept, provided that they have agreed pre-determined schedules of instalments for the payments of those precepts.
- 1.2 Members are required to review and approve the precept instalments for the financial year 2022/2023.

2 SCHEDULE OF INSTALMENTS

- 2.1 The Billing Authorities require that payments should be made by twelve equal monthly instalments, commencing in April, payable on the last working day of each month, to continue the practice adopted in 1993/1994.

Friday	29th April 2022
Tuesday	31st May 2022
Thursday	30th June 2022
Friday	29th July 2022
Wednesday	31st August 2022
Friday	30th September 2022
Monday	31st October 2022
Wednesday	30th November 2022
Friday	30th December 2022
Tuesday	31st January 2023
Tuesday	28th February 2023
Friday	31st March 2023

3 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 A risk assessment has been undertaken to ensure that the risk to the Authority has been minimised as far as practicable. The assessment has considered an appropriate balance between risk and control, the realisation of efficiencies, the

most appropriate use of limited resources and a comprehensive evaluation of the benefits. The risk to the authority has been assessed as low utilising the standard risk matrix based on control measures being in place.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications in respect of this report.

5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

6 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Authority is recommended to approve the schedule of instalments proposed under paragraph 4(4) of the Local Authorities (Funds) (England) Regulation 1992, as set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report.

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

ITEM 5

MEETING: 17TH JANUARY 2022

SUBJECT: CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/2022 - THIRD QUARTERLY REVIEW

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY) AND THE FINANCE DIRECTOR

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The original Capital Programme for 2021/2022 was approved by the Authority on 15th February 2021.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to review the current year's Programme and consider any changes necessary to those that were presented to the Authority in the Second Capital Programme Review on 15th November 2021.
- 1.3 Progress on some projects within the Programme as reported previously has been delayed by external factors including the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, BREXIT and issues with the supply of labour, plant and materials being experienced by some areas of the Authority's activities. Where this is the case for the changes required to the Programme, it is indicated appropriately.

2. Capital Programme 2021/2022 – Third Review

- 2.1 The position for 2021/2022 is set out at Appendix A, and is summarised below:

		Second Review	Third Review
		Revised Estimate (November)	Revised Estimate (January)
		£	£
Expenditure	- Projects c/fwd from 2020/2021	850,000	850,000
	- Continuing Projects 2020/2021	11,784,078	11,781,376
	- Projects Commencing 2021/2022	737,430	728,000
	- Vehicle Replacement Programme	4,476,651	4,141,651
		17,848,159	17,501,027
Resources	- Section 31 Grant (ESN)	1,808,616	1,808,616
	- Capital Reserve	14,350,618	14,006,188
	- Revenue Contribution to Capital	442,858	442,858
	- One-off RCCO	850,000	850,000
	- New Dimensions Reserve	196,000	196,000
	- Government Grant	27,067	24,365
		17,848,159	17,501,027

- 2.2 The Capital Programme is showing a net decrease in total of £347,132, from £17,848,159 at the Second Review stage to £17,501,027, the current position.

Creating the Safest Community

- 2.3 Regular monitoring of the Capital Programme continues to take place and at the Third Quarterly Review stage the following issues are brought to Members' attention for information:

Continuing Projects

Estates (-£1,034)

- 2.4 As reported at second review, there continue to be delays with the Stock Condition Survey Works due to availability of contractors and materials. It is anticipated that the budget will not be fully spent by the end of the financial year. Progress will be monitored and any slippage required will be reported to Members at outturn so that the outstanding works will be progressed in 2022/23.
- 2.5 The Outdoor Wellness Areas are now complete with a small underspend of £1,034 and the Capital Programme has been amended accordingly.
- 2.6 There have been a number of technical issues with the Genous Security System but progress is now being made and the project is currently out to tender. It is expected that an order will be placed by the end of the financial year but it is probable that there will be some slippage in to 2022/2023. The detail will be reported to Members at outturn.
- 2.7 The transformation of the former MRU suite into the CCTV centre for Sunderland City Council (SCC) is almost complete but is subject to re-measurement due to extra requests from the client which may result in additional spend on the project. As this project is fully funded from a contribution by SCC, this will have a no adverse effect on the Capital Programme.
- 2.8 It is pleasing to report that the full planning application for the Hebburn Tri station has now been finalised and was submitted to South Tyneside MBC on 30th November 2021. This is a key milestone in progressing the new Hebburn Tri Station development. A further update will be provided to Members at out-turn.

ICT (+£20,000)

- 2.9 An additional £20,000 is required for the Fireground Radios project. Prices have increased by £16,000 since the original estimates due to changing market conditions and additional radios are required to ensure all officers at an incident have access to this facility. The Programme has been amended to reflect the increased budget.

TSC – Non Vehicle Replacement (-£29,430)

- 2.10 It was reported at second review that additional training at the Technical Services Centre (TSC) in the efficient and effective use of the cobra equipment was being completed by the technicians. It is now apparent that this will be effective in extending the life of the current hose for a further four years. The Programme has been amended to remove the budget until replacement of the cobra hose is required effectively saving £29,430 in the year by prolonging the life of the equipment.

Resilience (-£1,668)

- 2.11 Purchase of the new drone is now complete with a small underspend of £1,668 being reflected in the Capital Programme.

Control/Mobilising Project

- 2.12 The national Government led Emergency Services Mobile Communications Project (ESMCP) has experienced a number of significant delays. The timing of progress and expenditure continues to be uncertain pending the revised business case. As reported at second review, an independent review has shown that it is correct to move to the ESN Network but the scheme has encountered numerous delays since its inception by government. As the project is fully funded from specific grant, the project and funding will be slipped as required although this primarily, as members are aware, is out of the control of the Authority.

3. Vehicle Replacement Programme (-£335,000)

- 3.1 Work is still ongoing to re-assess the current small fleet and consider options for replacements where appropriate. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, changes to the ways of working, and potential sponsorships have impacted and delayed this review. Pending its completion, the small fleet replacement budget has remained as agreed by Members in February but may need to be reviewed in light of the planned review.
- 3.2 The Specialist Vehicles due to be purchased in 2021/2022 are pending the outcome of the Specials Review. This is almost complete but, irrespective of the recommendations, the lead time of delivery of these specialist vehicles means that no purchases will be completed by the end of this financial year. The total budget of £335,000 will therefore need to be slipped in to 2022/2023 and will be reconsidered once the review is complete.

4. Capital Programme Funding

- 4.1 The funding for the Capital Programme has been adjusted to reflect the changes to the Programme outlined in sections 2 and 3 of the report with the results shown in the table at paragraph 2.1 and in Appendix A.

5. Prudential Indicators

- 5.1 The Prudential Indicators for the financial year 2021/2022 were approved by the Authority on 15th February 2021. These indicators are regularly reviewed to ensure that:
- The Authority remains within its Authorised Limit for External Debt and any warning signals are highlighted where there is a danger that capital investment plans are not affordable, prudent, and sustainable;
 - Treasury Management decisions are taken in accordance with professional good practice; and
 - The capital expenditure control framework operated locally is consistent with, and supportive of, local strategic planning, local asset management planning, and proper option appraisal.
- 5.2 Internal monitoring procedures have been established to track performance against the various Prudential Indicators agreed by the Authority. These are managed on a day to day basis by the Finance Director. At this stage the Authority is operating well within its Authorised Borrowing Limit, which is a statutory limit determined under Section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003. There are no areas for concern or any issues which require any review of the indicators as originally approved. A further review of the indicators will be reported at the Capital Programme Third Quarterly Review stage.
- #### **6. Risk Management**
- 6.1 A risk assessment has been undertaken to ensure that the risk to the Authority has been minimised as far as practicable. The assessment has considered an appropriate balance between risk and control, the realisation of efficiencies, the most appropriate use of limited resources and a comprehensive evaluation of the benefits. The risk to the Authority has been assessed as low utilising the standard risk matrix based on control measures being in place.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 The financial implications are set out in the report.

8. Equality and Fairness Implications

Creating the Safest Community

8.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

9. Health and Safety Implications

9.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

10. Recommendation

10.1 Members are requested to:

- Note the reported variations since the Second Quarterly Review and approve the requested slippage into 2022/2023; and
- Approve the revised Capital Programme for 2021/2022, as set out at Appendix A.

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/2022 TO 2024/2025

SUMMARY

Project Description	Gross Cost £	Expenditure to 31.03.2021 £	Slippage from 2020/21 £				
				2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £
FIRE SERVICE							
Projects Carried Forward From 2020/2021	850,000	0	850,000	850,000	0	0	0
Continuing Projects	21,667,782	7,953,622	8,514,087	11,781,376	611,000	634,276	687,508
New Projects	2,073,000	0	0	728,000	1,150,000	90,000	105,000
	24,590,782	7,953,622	9,364,087	13,359,376	1,761,000	724,276	792,508
VEHICLE REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME	9,322,937	3,097,286	1,386,651	4,141,651	632,000	80,000	1,372,000
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	33,913,719	11,050,908	10,750,738	17,501,027	2,393,000	804,276	2,164,508

Project Description	Gross Cost £	Expenditure to 31.03.2021 £	Slippage from 2020/21 £				
				2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £
Projects Carried Forward From 2020/2021							
BTC / Safetyworks - strategic projects	850,000	0	850,000	850,000	0	0	0
Total Projects Carried Forward From 2020/2021	850,000	0	850,000	850,000	0	0	0
Continuing Projects							
Estates							
Works arising from Stock Condition Survey	1,490,182	982,846	87,336	187,336	100,000	110,000	110,000
BTC Condition Survey Works	460,547	340,547	0	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Genous Security System	350,000	3,490	346,510	346,510	0	0	0
Security Upgrade Programme	342,000	10,987	331,013	331,013	0	0	0
MRU Development 2020-21 / 2021-22	173,000	0	120,000	173,000	0	0	0
Outdoor Wellness Areas	25,966	24,933	2,067	1,033	0	0	0
IT							
New and Replacement Hardware - General	1,527,530	1,051,530	0	119,000	119,000	119,000	119,000
Information Screens	30,000	0	30,000	30,000	0	0	0
Network and Wireless Infrastructure	489,935	302,211	192,858	187,724	0	0	0
Operational Equipment							
Operational Equipment Replacement Programme	1,587,433	1,107,433	0	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Rope Rescue & Confined Space Equipment	168,787	103,787	0	16,000	14,000	14,000	21,000
Foam and Firefighting Equipment	38,899	29,779	0	9,120	0	0	0
Community Safety							
Smoke Detectors	1,195,882	655,882	0	135,000	135,000	135,000	135,000
TSC - Non Vehicle Replacement Programme Items							
PPE Replacement Programme	816,266	376,266	88,000	176,000	88,000	88,000	88,000
Replace BA Compressors	112,814	31,814	0	14,000	5,000	12,000	50,000
Decontamination Washing Machines	51,635	0	40,000	51,635	0	0	0
Control/Mobilising Project							
Emergency Services Mobile Communications Project (ESMCP)	2,308,255	478,855	1,808,616	1,808,616	0	6,276	14,508
Command and Control	2,446,471	2,331,649	114,822	114,822	0	0	0
Learning and Organisational Development							
Fit for Life Gym Equipment	124,478	121,613	2,865	2,865	0	0	0
Resilience							
USAR Training Enhancement (Rubble Pile)	196,000	0	75,000	196,000	0	0	0
Drone	23,332	0	25,000	23,332	0	0	0
Estates Development Works							
Hebburn Station	7,708,370	0	5,250,000	7,708,370	0	0	0
Total Continuing Projects	21,667,782	7,953,622	8,514,087	11,781,376	611,000	634,276	687,508
Projects Commencing 2021/2022							
IT							
MOBS Firewall Replacement	100,000	0	0	100,000	0	0	0
Fireground Radios	95,000	0	0	95,000	0	0	0
Operational Equipment							
Thermal Scanners	245,000	0	0	245,000	0	0	0
Body Worn Cameras	90,000	0	0	0	0	90,000	0

TSC - Non Vehicle Replacement Programme Items							
New and Replacment Hardware - Miquet	78,000	0	0	18,000	0	0	60,000
Cobra Hose Replacement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Learning and Organisational Development							
Fire Behaviour Units	150,000	0	0	150,000	0	0	0
Estates							
BTC Atrium	120,000	0	0	120,000	0	0	0
Projects Commencing 2022/2023							
IT							
Telent Mobs Hardware Refresh	350,000	0	0	0	350,000	0	0
Operational Equipment							
Breathing Apparatus Replacement	800,000	0	0	0	800,000	0	0
Projects Commencing 2024/2025							
Estates							
Derv Tank and Pump Replacement	20,000	0	0	0	0	0	20,000
Operational Equipment							
Drone	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	25,000
Total Projects Commencing 2021/22 onwards	2,073,000	0	0	728,000	1,150,000	90,000	105,000
Total	24,590,782	7,953,622	9,364,087	13,359,376	1,761,000	724,276	792,508

Project Description	Gross Cost £	Expenditure to 31.03.2021 £	Slippage from 2020/21 £				
				2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £
VEHICLE REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME							
Specialist Vehicles							
Fire Boat Inflatable and Motor	18,937	10,932	8,005	8,005			
Flat Bed - BTC	220,000	110,000	0	0	110,000		
Fire Boat Transporter Cat08	40,000	20,000	0	0	20,000		
Forklift & Moffett	160,000	80,000	0	0	80,000		
Driver Training Vehicle (Curtainsider)	250,000	125,000	0	0	125,000		
Welfare Vehicle (Cat12)	120,000	0	0		120,000		
Telehandler - BTC (JCB loadall)	80,000	0	0			80,000	
High Volume Pump	0	0	0			0	
ALP Cat03	650,000	0	0				650,000
Boat (inflatable & Motors)	22,000	0	0				22,000
Prime Mover	200,000	0	0				200,000
Small Fleet							
Small Car	165,000	0	88,000	88,000	77,000	0	0
Large Car	78,001	75,696	2,305	2,305	0	0	0
Small Van	14,000	0	14,000	14,000	0	0	0
Large Van	250,000	118,645	51,355	51,355	80,000	0	0
Specialist Car	75,000	0	0	55,000	20,000	0	0
Appliances	6,980,000	2,557,014	1,222,986	3,922,986	0	0	500,000
Total Vehicle Replacement Programme	9,322,937	3,097,286	1,386,651	4,141,651	632,000	80,000	1,372,000
TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME	33,913,719	11,050,908	10,750,738	17,501,027	2,393,000	804,276	2,164,508

CAPITAL PROGRAMME FINANCING

Home Office Section 31 Grant (Emergency Services Network ESN)	1,808,616	0	6,276	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital (RCCO)	442,858	250,000	250,000	250,000
Capital Reserve	9,864,537	1,511,000	468,000	542,508
Additional RCCO	850,000	0	0	0
External Funding - SCC Contribution	173,000	0	0	0
New Dimensions Reserve	196,000			
Grant	23,332			
COVID-19 Grant	1,033			
	13,359,376	1,761,000	724,276	792,508
Vehicle Replacement Programme Reserve	4,141,651	632,000	80,000	1,372,000
Total Financing	4,141,651	632,000	80,000	1,372,000

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING: FIRE AUTHORITY 17TH JANUARY 2021

ITEM 6

SUBJECT: REVENUE BUDGET 2021/2022 - THIRD QUARTERLY REVIEW

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY) AND THE FINANCE DIRECTOR

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report advises Members of issues relating to the 2021/2022 Revenue Budget position at the third quarterly review stage of the financial year and requests that they note the report.

2. Budgetary Control Report 2021/2022

- 2.1 The Revenue Budget Second Review reported to Members in November 2021 a projected underspend of £0.703m. Members agreed to transfer £0.700m of this to the Transformation and Reform Reserve to be used at a future date for initiatives planned under the TWFRS 2025 Programme.
- 2.2 Regular monitoring of the Revenue Budget has continued to take place and an overspend at outturn is now projected to be £0.051m. The COVID-19 pandemic is, and will continue, to impact on Service activity, and the financial implications of this will be monitored. Any resulting savings in addition to those reported and already transferred to reserves will be reported to Members at outturn.
- 2.3 A summary of the updated position is set out at Appendix A which shows the projected costs compared to both the revised and original budget positions for the main budget headings. The main variances are set out in detail below for information.

Employee Costs (+£25,000)

- 2.4 Realised savings of £0.575m were confirmed and transferred to reserves at the second quarterly review stage as part of the transfer to reserves. A minimal overspend is now projected at this stage however this position may vary as staffing implications continue to change throughout the rest of the year.
- 2.5 Operational overtime costs continue to be well managed and the costs have reduced in recent months after trainees have been allocated to watches on stations. It is anticipated that the latest recruits allocated to stations in late December may see overtime costs reduce further. This position will be reported to members at out-turn.

Premises (+£94,000)

- 2.6 An overspend of £94,000 is projected on premises costs. Electricity charges have increased significantly from October with a projected overspend of £85,000 alone, in addition to increases in gas charges of £21,000. Savings are projected on water and rates which will absorb some of the additional costs.

Transport (-£11,000)

- 2.7 The transport budget is now projected to underspend by £11,000 following the transfer of a confirmed saving on travel expenses reported at second review. Further savings on car allowances and travel expenses are expected to continue for the remainder of the financial year. An overspend of £8,000 is projected on fuel costs due to the current volatile price increases; this will be closely monitored during the last quarter.

Supplies and Services (-£49,000)

- 2.8 A net underspend of £49,000 is now projected across supplies and services. Confirmed savings on subsistence were transferred to reserves at second review but there continues to be a projected saving at outturn due to a reduction in travel. This is in addition to savings on catering provisions due to a reduced service in the SHQ canteen.

Contingencies

- 2.9 The Contingency provision continues to be monitored with the budget allocated out in to other budget heads for events and budget pressures as they become certain. This will be fully reviewed prior to the 2022/2023 revenue budget being set in February. The final position on the Contingencies budget for 2021/2022 will be reported at outturn.

Income (+£8,000)

- 2.10 Realised savings of £98,000 were confirmed and transferred to reserves at second review leaving a projected net over achievement of income of £8,000. This is due to a combination of the following:
- An additional one-off PFI Authority Support repayment of £21,000;
 - Over-recovery of Northumberland SLA Income of £50,000
 - Under-recovery of catering income due to reduced sales of £29,000; and
 - A Government adjustment reducing the Firelink Grant allocation for 2021/2022 by £50,000 as this was overpaid in error in 2020/2021.

3. Financial Support

- 3.1 In response to the tragic event at the Grenfell Tower, Government has provided a number of one off grants totalling £0.597m to date to assist with the additional financial burden of responding to the outcomes of the enquiry. These

cover Building Risk Review, Protection Uplift, Grenfell Infrastructure, Fire Safety Accreditation and Protection.

- 3.2 Spend against these Fire Safety specific grants is being carefully planned, closely monitored, and reported to Home Office with the total received being fully committed to fund specified safety equipment, additional staff and training to maximise the benefits and meet the requirements set out for each funding stream in the short term. Longer term, it is hoped that additional funding will be allocated in these areas as part of the mainstream Government Funding settlement.

4. Statement of Balances

- 4.1 The balance of the General Fund has been increased to £4.089m following approval at second review to transfer the remaining unspent COVID-19 grant of £0.146m. The balance continues to be viewed as an appropriate level of General Fund Balance for the size and financial risks faced by the Authority.

5. Risk Management

- 5.1 A risk assessment has been undertaken to ensure that the risk to the Authority has been minimised as far as practicable. The assessment has considered an appropriate balance between risk and control, the realisation of efficiencies, the most appropriate use of limited resources and a comprehensive evaluation of the benefits. The risk to the authority has been assessed as low utilising the standard risk matrix based on control measures being in place.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The financial implications are set out in Appendix A of the report.

7. Equality and Fairness Implications

- 7.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

8. Health and Safety Implications

- 8.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 Members are requested to note the third quarterly review position with regard to the Revenue Budget for 2021/2022 as set out in this report and summarised at Appendix A.

REVENUE BUDGET 2021/2022 THIRD REVIEW

Appendix A

	Original Budget For Information	Revised Budget	Projected Outturn as at Third Quarterly Review	Variance Out-turn to Revised Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure				
Employees	43,240	43,395	43,420	-25
Premises	2,570	2,583	2,677	-94
Transport	1,028	1,022	1,011	11
Supplies and Services	8,603	8,796	8,747	49
Contingencies	1,700	564	564	0
Support Services	15,060	15,060	15,060	0
Capital Financing	989	993	993	0
Total Expenditure	73,190	72,413	72,472	-59
Income				
Grants and Contributions	-8,063	-9,062	-9,033	-29
Receipts	-163	-277	-314	37
Fees and Charges	-1,146	-1,096	-1,096	0
Interest Earned	-5	-5	-5	0
Recharge Income	-14,736	-14,739	-14,739	0
Reserve appropriations	-535	761	761	0
Total Income	-24,648	-24,418	-24,426	8
TOTAL BUDGET	48,542	47,995	48,046	(51)

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

ITEM 7

MEETING: 17TH JANUARY 2022

**SUBJECT: PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT
2022/23**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER / CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CLERK
TO THE AUTHORITY) AND THE FINANCE DIRECTOR**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report updates members on the implications of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/23, which was announced by the government on 16th December 2021. More detail is included within Appendix 1 of this report and Appendix 6 (copy to follow) sets out for members' information the agreed and submitted response to the consultation on the Provisional Finance Settlement for 2022/23. This response was agreed by members of the Emergency Committee because of the timings involved as this had to be submitted to government by 11:45am on 13th January 2022.
- 1.2 This position is unfortunately becoming a regular feature of recent Finance Settlement consultation papers which are being announced continually very late in December with only a short four week period of consultation.

**2. PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT 2022/23
– NATIONAL CONTEXT**

- 2.1 The information provided in the Settlement is derived from information and data provided by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his 3 year Spending Review 2021 announced on 27th October 2021.
- 2.2 The summary below sets out all of the national financial information included in the published one-year Provisional Settlement for 2022/23 as follows:
- Core Spending Power increases nationally by an average of 6.9% for all of local government assuming that all local authorities levy the maximum Council Tax increases allowed in 2022/23. The LGA has commented that 'It is good that the Settlement has provided a potential increase of 6.9 per cent in council core spending power, including new government grant, to support vital local services. However, this assumes that council tax bills will rise by a maximum 3 per cent next year, including 1 per cent for social care authorities, next year, and this will continue to place a significant financial burden

on households in a year of economic uncertainty as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The national average Core Spending Power increase for all standalone Fire and Rescue Authorities is an increase of 4.7%.
- Provides an additional £636 million of Social Care Grant so that according to the government councils can improve conditions for carers and those in need.
- Provides an additional £162 million of Social Care Reform Funding which is to be allocated in 2022/23 to support local government in preparing councils for social care reform and to help move towards providing a fair cost of care.
- Introduces a new one-off Services Delivery Grant totalling £822m for 2022/23 which is allocated to all local authorities based on their Settlement Funding Assessments (SFA). This is to help fund vital front line services but will be excluded from any proposed baseline for transitional support as a result of any funding system changes.
- Rolls over New Homes Bonus Funding of £554 million for 2022/23. The government has provided the same level of funding as in 2021/22 and has indicated that it remains committed to reforming New Homes Bonus to improve how housing growth across the country is incentivised, and that their response to the consultation on the New Homes Bonus will be published in the coming months.
- Maintains the Lower Tier Services Grant at 2021/22 levels of £111 million which benefits councils with responsibility for services such as homelessness, planning, recycling and refuse collection and leisure services. The funding floor has also been updated so that no council will have less funding available in 2022/23 than it did in 2021/22.
- Retains Rural Services Delivery Grant of £85 million which is unchanged from last year and continues the additional support for rural areas which the government claims can face additional cost pressures.
- Continues with the Business Rates Retention pilots by providing 100% Business Rates Retention schemes in Cornwall, Greater Manchester, Liverpool, West Midlands and West of England and 67% Business Rates Retention for London councils, to enable them to control more of the money they raise locally.
- Increases Revenue Support Grant in line with inflation, which is an increase of over £70 million for 2022/23.
- Provides £45m over the next 3 years to help fund the additional costs of external audit resulting from the Redmond Review and continues the funding of £15m provided in the 2021/22 Settlement.
- Fire Pensions Grant was not merged into Formula Grant as expected and is yet to be announced although the Home Office have indicated it will be at the same level of £115m as last year.
- The government has confirmed 'it is committed to ensuring that funding allocations for councils are based on an up-to-date assessment of their needs and resources' and it is expected that their

proposed fair funding review and business rates reforms will be consulted upon in the Spring, however, this will not include the fire and rescue service at this stage. Transitional arrangements are expected for any changes implemented as a result of these reviews.

2.3 The following (Band D) Council Tax Referendum principles to be applied in 2022/23 were also announced:

- a general core principle of up to 2% applying to Shire County Councils, Unitary Authorities, London Boroughs, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and Fire and Rescue Authorities
- a continuation of the Adult Social Care precept, with an additional 1% flexibility available for Social Care authorities on top of the core principle of 2%
- Those Social Care authorities which did not use the entirety of the 3% Adult Social Care precept in 2021/22 can use the unused flexibility in 2022/23
- up to 2% or a £5 referendum, whichever is the higher, for Shire District Councils
- a £5 referendum principle for the 8 lowest-charging Fire and Rescue Authorities
- a maximum of £10 for Police and Crime Commissioners including the police element of the GLA
- No referendum principles for Mayoral Combined Authorities or Town and Parish Councils.

3. PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT 2022/23 – IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AUTHORITY

3.1 The Provisional Settlement for 2022/23 for the Authority is detailed in Appendix 2 but in summary shows that the Authority's Core Spending Power has increased by 4.99% in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22, which is slightly above the national average increase for all standalone Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA's) of 4.7%.

It is important to note however that the 4.99% increase is predicated on a number of underlying assumptions and issues that could have an impact on the real resource position of the Authority in 2022/23:

- Government continues to assume that the Authority can still grow its Council Tax base by 0.78% in 2022/23 and will also increase its precept by the maximum allowed of 1.99%.
- Government have assumed that there is no Business Rates detriment to the income yield expected in 2022/23 despite the

continued adverse and devastating impact of Covid on businesses. The assumption is that income will remain at £4.088m in 2022/23.

- The government has fully funded both the freeze in business rates for 2022/23 and the concessions outlined in their Spending Review. The LGA has confirmed however that the increase used in the Provisional Settlement uses CPI and at the Final Settlement will be updated for RPI thereby increasing funding to local government by approximately £275 million. This means that the annual inflation increases applied to business rates and all concessions will then remain fully protected, which is welcomed. It must also be pointed out that the Safety Net Threshold set at £14.379m for the Authority has not been adjusted to take into account any reduction in business rates income from 2020/21 when covid impacted.
 - New Services Grant which according to the government is one-off funding for 2022/23 distorts the sustainable funding position. Whilst this additional funding of £1.072m is welcomed, if this grant is not maintained in future years then the real underlying Core Spending Power increase for 2022/23 is actually lower at 2.85%. It also creates uncertainty of funding levels for future settlements unless this can be fully consolidated into the Grant Funding Settlement and is a cause for concern.
- 3.2 The Draft Revenue Budget for 2022/23 is based on the Budget Planning Framework principles presented to members in December 2021 which now takes full account of the detail within the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/23 and also recognises some additional cost pressures resulting from changes in government policy highlighted in the SR21. The main conclusion from the Settlement, in overall terms, is that the impact of the increases to grant funding for 2022/23 is a better financial settlement than the position anticipated in the Budget Planning Framework 2022/2023, although additional cost pressures and the final resources position for the revenue budget are yet to be finalised for 2022/23.
- 3.3 The table below sets out the main changes to the resources position as compared to the existing MTFS forecast for 2022/23 at this stage which helps show the detail and also includes the main cost pressure variations identified to date. A more detailed and refined MTFS will be provided to members in February when the revenue estimate process has been finalised and the longer term financial implications are included.

	Current MTFS 2022/23 £m	Amended MTFS 2022/23 £m	Changes £m
Cost Pressures:			
Additional NI employer costs	Nil	0.325	0.325
Full year Impact of 2021/22 Pay Awards	0.067	0.692	0.625
Total Additional Costs	0.067	1.017	0.950
Resources:			
Top Up Grant	11.571	11.457	(0.114)
Revenue Support Grant	9.079	9.263	0.184
Compensation Indexation Grant	0.819	1.277	0.458
New Service Delivery Grant	Nil	1.072	1.072
**Council Tax	25.135	25.135	Nil
**Business Rates Share	3.810	3.810	Nil
Total Resources	50.414	52.014	1.600
Remaining Resource to meet additional cost pressures in the revenue budget for 2022/23 (forecast to be insufficient at this time)			0.650

no changes assumed at this stage until notifications are received from our 5 district councils, as government estimates are not as accurate.

- 3.4 The Authority's Core Spending Power (CSP) increase in 2022/23 has benefitted from the funding changes announced in the Provisional Settlement but is mainly because of the new one-off Services Grant for 2022/23 which has been allocated based on the Settlement Funding Assessments (SFA) of each local authority. This has meant that the Authority has received a marginally better settlement than the average increase across all standalone FRA's. The Authority's increase of almost 5.0% in 2022/23 compares to the national average increase for all local authorities of 6.9% and is slightly better than the 4.7% average increase for all standalone fire authorities. This improved position however needs to be taken into the context of past Settlements as there is still funding inequities in the current system which still need to be addressed and it is disappointing that these will not be amended as part of the government's proposed changes to the funding system being consulted upon in the spring. More information on the Authority's Core Spending Power is detailed in Appendix 3. The net increase in resources shown in the Authority's CSP shows that, in summary, the Fire Authority continues to see its resources eroded by more than the national average by a further 1.9% but is almost 0.3% above the average increase for the fire service. This means that the Authority's

funding position has marginally improved compared to other FRA's in 2022/23 but overall it has still incurred significant and disproportionate funding reductions from 2010/11 to 2022/23. The fact that this is a further one year Finance Settlement with one-off funding included also means that it will make budget planning more difficult compared to a clear and transparent three year settlement that would have been much more helpful to the Authority in planning its services.

- 3.5 In Appendix 4 and Appendix 5 there is more detail on the comparable CSP information amongst fire authorities for 2022/23, over the last 7 Year period and since austerity began in 2010/11 and also how they compare to the national position across England (where this information is made available). This information provides important context to members despite the improved funding position. It is already well known, despite the slightly improved Settlement for 2022/23, that Tyne and Wear has suffered some of the worst funding reductions since 2010/11 using the government's own measure of resources and continues to see a lower settlement despite the 'improving' position. It is also important to recognise that this information relates to funding and completely ignores the significant cost pressures also faced by the Authority since austerity began which it has also had to manage within its existing Revenue Budget. Higher inflation and pay awards will still need to be managed as part of the budget planning process, despite the welcomed increase in resources in 2022/23.
- 3.6 The Authority welcomes the retention of the additional funding nationally of £115m provided by the government for the increased Pension costs which is worth almost £2.7m to the Authority (the same figure as the three preceding years) but means that the allocations are not keeping up with the actual additional costs being incurred and still only meet roughly 90% of the costs involved. The Authority along with the NFCC and LGA successfully lobbied the government to secure this funding for future funding settlements. It was expected that this funding was to be merged into the general fire service funding control total for 2022/23 although this was not a feature of the Settlement but this will inevitably change the basis of the grant allocations to each fire authority once implemented.
- 3.7 In summary a more favourable funding Settlement than expected which is welcomed and this will help to meet the known and also the undoubted additional cost pressures that are expected from higher inflation (as confirmed by the OBR and the Bank of England) and possibly higher pay awards in 2022/23 now that the public sector pay freeze has ended. The Settlement also shows that without the additional new one-off Service Grant for 2022/23 the Authority would find itself in a much more challenging position. It is hoped that this funding is not one-off and can be made a permanent feature of the next two years funding settlements up to 2024/25 in order to provide more clarity on levels of resources for the Authority so that it can more effectively plan its services into the medium term. Failure to

secure this funding for future years however will undoubtedly mean a much more challenging financial position for the service to manage in both 2023/24 and 2024/25.

- 3.8 The Authority's response to the Government's consultation on the Provisional Finance Settlement is set out in Appendix 6 (Copy to follow) for Members information.

4. REVIEW OF GENERAL BALANCES AND RESERVES

- 4.1 As in previous years, a full financial risk analysis of general balances and earmarked reserves will be undertaken prior to the submission of the final budget proposals to the Authority in February. As part of this analysis, the level of uncommitted general balances will be reviewed in light of the latest Authority decisions and the final budget proposals.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The Authority is requested to note:
- a) the contents of the report which includes the updated Draft Revenue Budget resources position for 2022/23 taking into account the implications of the provisional local government finance settlement at this stage;
 - b) the comments made on the Authority's behalf to the government's consultation on the Provisional Grant Settlement for 2022/23;
 - c) the final Revenue Budget and Precept for 2022/23 will be presented to the Authority at its meeting in February together with an updated and more detailed MTFS.

Appendix 1

DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23

1. PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT 2022/23

- 1.1 On 16th December 2021, the Secretary for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove MP, announced the 2022/23 Provisional Funding Settlement and launched a consultation on the proposed settlement ending on 13th January 2022.
- 1.2 The Provisional Settlement sets out the Government's Core Spending Power (which measures total available resources for all local authorities) for 2022/23 will see an overall increase nationally of 6.9% using this measure.
- 1.3 Under the Retained Business Rates funding arrangements for Local Government implemented from April 2013, 50% of the Business Rates collected will be retained by local authorities. There are a number of local authority's trialling both a 100% and 75% Business Rates retention models in preparation for the new proposed funding system which has been further delayed and is subject to the outcome of a government consultation in the Spring. This was mainly because of the impact of both the Coronavirus but also work being prioritised to complete a Brexit trade deal. The Government also announced a freeze on all business rates for 2022/23 because of the Coronavirus and that the planned reset for 2022 would be reviewed in line with the Chancellors Autumn Spending Review announcements, however, all authorities affected would be fully compensated for these measures, which have been confirmed in this Settlement.

The government stated that they will provide transitional arrangements for those authorities adversely impacted by any changes resulting from their Fair Funding Review and Reform of the Business Rates Retention system consultation. Whilst local government funding is under review, the Fire and Rescue part of the current funding formula is not expected to change. As in pre pandemic discussions, the fire and rescue formula may or may not be expected to be reviewed in the coming years.

- 1.4 The Government has retained the safety net threshold for each authority to limit the losses on Business Rates income collected in any one year. This has been frozen once more at £14.379m based on the Authority's local share funding baseline figure of £15.545m which was also unchanged from 2021/22. It is very unlikely however that activation of the Safety net will be called upon for most top up authorities in 2022/23 and the continual increases in the safety net adds additional risk to Authorities (who bear any

Business Rates losses up to the threshold amount). For this Authority it means that business rates would have to fall by £1.166m before any government funding would be triggered.

- 1.5 The Localism Act provides for the provision of referendums to veto excessive council tax increases. This effectively places a limit on council tax increases and if authorities exceed Government limits then the public must be able to vote to agree or veto any considered 'excessive' increase. In the Provisional Settlement the minister announced that the referendum threshold principles would return to an increase of no more than 2% for most Authorities. For the Authority this means an increase of below 2% is allowed for 2022/2023, although the lowest 8 Fire and Rescue Authorities can increase their Council Tax by a £5 flat rate increase to their Band D level. More flexibility is also being provided for District Councils whereby they can increase by 2% or a flat rate increase of £5 at Band D whichever is the greater, and the Police and Crime Commissioners can increase by a flat rate increase of £10 at Band D (the same as in 2021/22). The supplementary increase to help councils pay for Social Care has also been reduced from 2% in 2021/22 to 1% in 2022/23.

Impact on Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority

- 1.6 The Government's Core Spending Power for Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority will increase by £2.500m or 4.99% in 2022/23 to £52.595m compared to an adjusted £50.095m in 2021/22.
- 1.7 The breakdown of the total Core Spending Power is shown in Appendix 2. This is the overall funding available to the Authority including Council Tax, Locally Retained Business Rates and other government funding. This may have to be reviewed once the final Local Government Settlement has been announced in late January or early February.

Settlement 2022/23

- 1.8 As set out in 1.6 above the Authority's indicative Core Spending Power in 2022/23 will increase by 4.99% to £52.595m.
- 1.9 The changes include:
- The government has provided a new one-off Service Grant for 2022/23 of £822m nationally which has been allocated based on all authorities SFA's. The Authority has received £1.072m from this new funding stream and this is one of the main reasons for the improved financial Settlement for 2022/23. The Minister indicated this one-off grant can be used as authorities see fit and is to help them deliver vital front line services.

- The government figures assume a Council Tax increase of 2.77% made up from the revised cap put in place last year which allows an increase for the fire service of below 2% (1.99%) and an assumption the Authority's Tax Base will grow by 0.78%. This is one of the reasons the Authority's Core Spending Power for 2022/23 has improved although below are the other reasons for this improved overall funding position and it should be noted however that the Authority takes a much more prudent estimate of council tax income than that set out in the Settlement.
- The Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) has been increased, by 1.12%, which is a cash increase of £0.274m in 2022/23. The figures however are marginally higher than those already forecast in the current Budget Planning Framework 2022/23 by only £0.070m in total. This is mainly because only Revenue Support Grant was uplifted by inflation of 3.10% but Business Rates and Top Up Grant were both frozen in line with the government's measures to freeze business rates for 2022/23 because of the adverse impact of the Coronavirus on businesses.
- The Government continues to allocate the Authority Compensation for the Under-indexing of Business Rates Income which provides funding to make up the gap between the capped business rates increase applied by the government (over a number of years now) in order to protect small businesses from the statutory inflationary increases. The amount has increased higher than expected in the 2022/23 Settlement mainly due to the fact that the government froze all business rates for 2022/23 and inflation was running at 3.1% (higher than expected) and has fully compensated local authorities through this grant mechanism for these changes instead. The amount for 2022/23 is £1.277m, an increase over last year of £0.467m to fund the gap, although the Authority was unaware of this scale increase in 2022/23 it had uplifted the previous capped income to £0.819m in its MTFS, so the real net benefit to the Revenue Budget from this increase is an additional £458k worth of grant funding.
- The government also is projecting Business Rates to standstill at £4.088m in 2021/22 for the Authority despite the detrimental impact the Coronavirus has had on businesses. This estimate was already considered optimistic based on past business rates received by the Authority and the fact every year the amount collected is under the estimates provided by each of the Authority's district councils, which tends to create a deficit position to that expected. This optimistic projection for Business Rates is another reason why the Core Spending Power for 2022/23 is higher than budgeted in the MTFS. The MTFS and budget for 2022/23 however includes lower more realistic figures for both Council Tax and Business Rates income growth based on local knowledge of what is achievable and may also

need to be revised lower once more information is received from its district councils.

- The net impact of all of the above changes to the Authority's MTFS is additional funding of £1.600m.
- The Core Spending Power measure however excludes spending pressures faced by the Authority over the next financial year. These continue to be refined and will be updated to show the final position for 2022/23 and beyond in February.

Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) for 2022/23

- 1.10 The Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) comprises of three elements as indicated below:

Retained Business Rates - reliant on a 2% share of each district council's local share;

Revenue Support Grant - determined by central government and the funding reductions/changes are routed through this allocation each year;

Top Up Grant - fixed (and usually uprated by inflation) now until 2023, the next planned reset.

- 1.11 The SFA total of £24.808m is, in summary, made up of:

Retained Business Rates (per Govt)	£4.088m
Revenue Support Grant	£9.263m
Top Up Grant	£11.457m

Retained Business Rates

- 1.12 According to the government's funding assessment, the forecast income from Business Rates for 2022/23 for the Fire Authority is £4.088m which is unchanged from the previous year. This represents the amount of business rates the Authority can expect, according to the government, in total from the five constituent councils in Tyne and Wear. Any variation to this figure has to be met by the Authority if it is short, but it will gain from any additional income above the level assessed by the government. The risk, however, is that with business rates appeals, both backdated and current year, government business rate projections may be considered optimistic especially in light of the detrimental impact of the coronavirus. The Authority will not be notified of its business rates income until each district council has determined its total business rates for 2022/23 which it must do by no later than 31st January 2022.

- 1.13 Consequently, the Authority's local share of business rates will be reported in February when the final budget is set; this may incur an additional financial risk to the Authority if our actual share is significantly different from that included in our MTFS for the year which currently is £3.810m based on a more realistic assessment.

Revenue Support Grant

- 1.14 The amount of Revenue Support grant to be received by the Authority is £9.263m. This includes core revenue grant funding allocations of Formula Grant and previous Council Tax Freeze Grants. The Authority, as set out in the Chancellors Spending Review 2021, is seeing its RSG funding being increased (by 3.10%) in line with inflation which continues the government's policy of providing at least inflationary increases for public sector services. The MTFS assumed an increase of 1%, so there is additional RSG for the Authority of £184k from this variation. The Settlement was predicated on inflation using CPI when Business Rates requires RPI to be used instead. Any increase in funding is to be reflected in the Final Settlement according to the LGA who have estimated the national funding total for local government could increase by £275m overall.

Top Up Grant

- 1.15 The amount of Top Up Grant to be received as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement remains at £11.457m. This element of the funding has been fixed again until the next reset (2023/2024) and usually increases by inflation each year, although as business rates was frozen by the government it also meant it had to freeze the top up and tariffs applied for 2022/23 in addition. This element of funding tends to be one of the more certain elements within the current funding regime.

Compensation for under-indexing Business Rates

- 1.16 The Government has allocated the Authority a grant of £1.277m in 2022/23 to fund the gap between the capped business rates applied to small businesses and the rate of inflation. The funding each year is increased both by any further government concessions (which is the case for 2022/23 as all business rates were frozen once again as they were in 2021/22 in light of the impact of the Coronavirus on the economy) and also is uprated by inflation to ensure the 'lost business rates' funding from all concessions does not diminish the income due to local government in real terms.

Other Revenue Grant Funding not in SFA

- 1.17 There are other revenue funding streams that the Authority receives from government in respect of New Dimensions Grant, Fire Link Grant and PFI Grant, but at this stage this funding has not been released as part of the Settlement. The budget currently assumes no significant changes for this funding for 2022/23 at this stage on the basis the government has stated it is providing stability of funding for 2022/23. Final allocations will inform the final Budget to be presented in February.

The government did not make any mention of the funding for building safety in the settlement, including funding for local authority building control and for fire services to increase capacity to deliver the functions of the Building Safety Regulator. This is a concern as sufficient funding will be required to enable the fire service and local authorities to support the regulator in its work to deliver meaningful change to the built environment.

The government has also retained the special grant for 2022/23 to help fire authorities meet the significant cost of changes to the pensions discount factor for the firefighters pension scheme which was originally trailed by the Chancellor in his 2016 Budget. The Authority prudently included £0.480m in the MTFS as a spending pressure, based on the likely increase at that time but revisions saw this cost escalate to the point that the Authority was facing a £3.2m overall liability. The Authority's share of the grant monies from government was almost £2.7m so this extra funding and the provision in the MTFS actually met this cost in 2019/20. Although the grant has been maintained for each year to 2021/22 at the same level since 2019/20 and is expected to remain unchanged for 2022/23. This grant as previously mentioned has been secured for future years but will be distributed as general grant funding in future years (possibly from 2023/24).

Council Tax Income (Precept)

- 1.18 Funding settlements the Authority receive are predicated on the assumption that Council Tax precept increases will be taken in full by Members. This in effect forces the Authority to make annual Council Tax precept rises to avoid a revenue budget shortfall. The Authority continues to set its precept each year and relies on each district council within Tyne and Wear to collect the council tax income on its behalf. The Authority is awaiting the council tax base information from each Council to be able to assess if this will have an impact on the precept collectable in 2022/23 as it did in 2020/21 and is expected to have an adverse impact in 2021/22 too. Current planning remains unchanged based on no growth in the Tax Base (because of the adverse impact of the continuation of covid19), along with a proposed 1.99% increase (the maximum allowed by government without the need for a referendum) in the precept. The amounts this is expected to raise from

Council Tax is currently £25.135m. It is however currently still very difficult to project the yield from Council Tax for 2022/23 at this stage, until final confirmation is received from our 5 district councils.

- 1.19 The localisation of council tax arrangements introduced from 2013/2014 poses an additional risk each year for the Authority as the individual council tax schemes determined annually by each district council could impact on the Authority's collectable income. The extent of this will be clarified by the end of January 2022 when the district councils are obliged to advise the Authority of their surplus/deficit position on their Collection Funds and projections of their council tax base for 2022/23. This then allows the authority to estimate its expected council tax income for 2022/23. This will be reported as part of the final revenue budget in February but may be impacted by the continuing adverse impact on council tax income collection, which the additional LCTS funding provided by the government last year is helping to mitigate.
- 1.20 The table below summaries the 2022/23 provisional estimated resources position for Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority.

Summary of resources position 2022/23	Amount £m
Projected Income from Council Tax Precepts	25.135
Top up grant	11.457
Revenue Support Grant	9.263
Business Rates (MTFS)*	3.810
Services Grant (one-off)	1.072
Compensation for under-indexing Business rates	1.277
Potential Total Estimated Resources (Settlement)	52.014
MTFS Estimated Resources (reported in February 2021)	50.414
Change in resources (at this stage)	+1.600

* The Authority's Business Rates estimate from the govt is currently £4.088m with no detriment because of covid / brexit included.

It is important to note that cost pressures have already increased by £0.950m in 2022/23 as a result of the fact fire sector staff were given a pay award of 1.5% for operational staff and at least a 1.75% pay award for non-operational staff which was unexpected and therefore unfunded in 2021/22. In addition there is also the increased cost of National Insurance Contributions in 2022/23 (£0.325m) that the government announced just before the Autumn Budget so the net impact on the MTFS is a net increase in overall resources of £0.650m in reality at this stage although more work is still required before the revenue budget can be finalised. There are significant cost pressures still to finalise and the resources position is also not yet confirmed which will impact on the Revenue Budget for 2022/23.

Members will also need to consider whether to accept the proposed Council Tax increase of 1.99% in light of final information on resources as part of the budget setting process in February.

- 1.21 Comments on the Settlement which formed part of the Authority's consultation response are set out in Appendix 6 for Members information and approval along with any additional comments that Members wish to raise.

2. Service Pressures

- 2.1 A number of spending pressures were identified within the Budget Planning Framework and have been incorporated into the draft budget for 2022/23. They include:
- Inflation
 - Firefighter Pension Increase
 - Pay Award from 2021/22
 - National Insurance costs
 - Pay award provision for 2022/23

These will continue to be refined in order to finalise the revenue budget position.

3. Overall Position

- 3.1 The implications of the provisional settlement are better than anticipated but this is mainly due to the introduction of the new Services Grant one-off grant funding worth £1.072m to the Authority in 2022/23. As inflation was 3.1% in September 2021 this also played a part in increasing the funding allocated to local government via the Business Rates Retention system and the positive impact on Revenue Support Grant. Costs have however also increased since the last MTFS was reported in February 2021 and the net income or benefit at this stage in the budget preparation process shows a net improved financial position of £0.650m, although the revenue budget has not yet been finalised and as indicated in paragraph 1.20 above.
- 3.2 There is still work to be completed before a final revenue budget for 2022/23 can be presented for consideration by members and most of the outstanding issues are summarised in Section 6 of this report which can impact on the final budgeted position.
- 3.3 The detailed Revenue budget for 2022/23 and the updated MTFS will be however be reported to the meeting of the Authority on 14th February 2022.

4. General Fund Balances, Earmarked Reserves and Provisions

- 4.1 As in previous years, a full financial risk analysis of general balances and major earmarked reserves will be undertaken prior to the submission of the final budget proposals to the Authority in February. As part of this analysis, the level of uncommitted general balances will be reviewed in light of the latest Authority decisions and the final budget proposals.

5. Capital Programme

Capital Grant Funding

- 5.1 Since 2016/17 the Authority no longer receives any capital grant funding from the government which has and continues to be a feature of Local Government Finance Settlements for the fire service. The Authority is therefore having to self-fund its Capital Programme from reserves and where possible from its revenue budget.

Prudential Indicators

- 5.2 Members will be aware that Government support for capital expenditure has previously been provided by supported revenue allocations through Formula Grant that allow authorities to control the amount that they borrow without seeking government approval. The basic principle is that authorities are free to borrow as long as their capital plans are affordable, sustainable and prudent. As a control mechanism to ensure this occurs, all authorities must follow a prudential code. This involves the setting of various prudential limits that must be decided upon by the Authority as part of the budget process. Prudential indicators must be set covering the following areas:
- Affordability;
 - Prudence;
 - Capital Expenditure and Capital Commitments;
 - External Debt;
 - Treasury Management.

As part of the budget process, these prudential indicators will be updated and reported to the Authority in February for approval.

Capital Financing

- 5.3 The Capital Programme for 2022/23 is still under consideration, and will be reported to Members in February. Given the financial position planned for the Authority over, at the medium term (to 2025/26), consideration will be given to the financing arrangements of the Capital Programme in the context of balancing the overall revenue budget position for the Authority

and achieving, as far as possible, the agreed objectives of setting a sustainable budget.

5.4 The various options available for financing the Capital Programme will be kept under review until the Revenue and Capital Budgets are finalised to ensure that the optimum use is made of the available resources. These options include:

- Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay (RCCO) funding permitting;
- Use of the earmarked Capital Development Reserve;
- One-off Funding received in year;
- Capital Receipts;
- Other financing arrangements where considered appropriate.

Revenue Implications Arising from the Capital Programme

5.5 The Capital Programme has been aligned to the MTFS and will include all approved capital projects, the main features being replacement of the remaining 10 pumps and the new tri station at Hebburn. There are a number of other capital schemes which will need to be funded from the Capital Development Reserve on a phased basis and from the Revenue budget if funding is available. At this stage, the planning assumption is that the revenue implications will, in overall terms, be resource neutral but this position may change as the budget is further developed.

6. Outstanding Issues

6.1 It must be stressed that the figures presented are indicative only at this stage and there are a number of significant and outstanding issues and some financial assumptions made may need to be clarified prior to submission of the final budget proposals to the meeting of the Authority in February 2022.

6.2 The outstanding issues are as follows:

- Review of inflation provision in light of escalating costs
- Review of pay award provision with ending of the public sector pay freeze
- Final preparation of the budget requirement for 2022/23 is still ongoing at this stage, and will be subject to variation;
- Update of the MTFS is ongoing following announcement of the provisional finance settlement and will be further updated as necessary to reflect any changes that the government will make within the Final 2022/23 Settlement;
- Awaiting notification of the Council Tax Bases of Billing Authorities

- for 2022/23, this will directly impact on the Precept total;
- Awaiting notification of any net surplus/deficit on the collection fund of the Billing Authorities for council tax for both 2021/22;
 - Awaiting notification of business rates income from each council for 2022/23;
 - Awaiting notification of any net surplus/deficit on the collection fund of the Billing Authorities for business rates for 2021/22;
 - Confirmation of the decision from the Authority to increase the Council Tax Precept by 1.99% for 2022/23;
 - Confirmation of other revenue grant funding allocations; and
 - Confirmation of any rebate from the Business Rates Levy Account.

**Government's Assessment of the Authority's Core Spending Power
(Provisional Settlement 2022/23 - 16th December 2021)**

Appendix 2

		2021/22 Adjusted £	2022/23 Provisional £	Change £	Change %
Assumed Council Tax Requirement (precept total)		24,751,176	25,437,880	686,704	2.77%
Revenue Support Grant	8,988,979		9,263,345		
Top up Grant	11,457,053		11,457,053		
Business Rates - Govt assessed	<u>4,088,188</u>		<u>4,088,188</u>		
Settlement Funding Assessment		24,534,220	24,808,586	274,366	1.12%
Services Delivery Grant		0	1,071,649	1,071,649	
Compensation for under-indexing Business Rates		809,972	1,277,264	467,292	57.69%
Core Spending Power Total		<u>50,095,368</u>	<u>52,595,379</u>	<u>2,500,011</u>	<u>4.99%</u>

Notes
2021/22 Council Tax figures adjusted downwards to reflect actual collection in the year

Core Spending Power Components	Adjusted Core Spending Power 2015-16	CSP 2016-17 Final (Adjusted)	Change in 2016/17	CSP 2017-18 Final (Adjusted)	Change in 2017/18	CSP 2018-19 Adjusted	Change in 2018/19	CSP 2019-20 Adjusted	Change in 2019/20	CSP 2020-21 Adjusted	Change in 2020/21	CSP 2021-22	Change in 2021/22	CSP 2022-23	Change in 2022/23	Changes since 2015/16	
	£m	£m	%	£m	%	£m	%	£m	%	£m	%	£m	%	£m	%	£m	%
Council Tax Requirement	20.265	20.960	3.43%	21.765	3.84%	22.747	4.51%	23.712	4.24%	24.523	7.81%	24.751	4.38%	25.437	2.77%	5.172	25.52%
Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA)	29.054	27.407	-5.67%	25.415	-7.27%	24.573	-3.31%	24.092	-1.96%	24.485	-0.36%	24.534	1.83%	24.809	1.12%	-4.245	-14.61%
Compensation for under-indexing Business Rates	0.206	0.206	0.00%	0.218	5.83%	0.343	57.34%	0.498	45.19%	0.623	81.63%	0.810	62.65%	1.277	57.65%	1.071	519.90%
Efficiency Support Grant	0.000	0.000															
Lead Local Flood Authorities	0.000	0.000															
Council Tax Freeze Grant 2015-16	0.000	0.000															
Adult Social Care New Burdens (Care Act)	0.000	0.000															
Social Care Council Tax precept	0.000	0.000															
Improved Better Care Fund	0.000	0.000															
New Homes Bonus and returned funding	0.000	0.000															
Rural Services Delivery Grant	0.000	0.000															
Servcies Delivery Grant (one-off)	0.000	0.000												1.072	100.00%	1.072	
Totals	49.525	48.573	-1.92%	47.398	-2.42%	47.663	0.56%	48.302	1.34%	49.631	4.13%	50.095	3.71%	52.595	4.99%	3.070	6.20%
<i>Memorandum National Position</i>																	
<i>Standalone Fire Services</i>																	
SFA can be analysed as follows:																	
Top Up Grant	9.980	10.064	0.83%	10.688	6.21%	11.021	3.12%	11.273	2.29%	11.457	3.96%	11.457	1.63%	11.457	0.00%	1.477	14.80%
2017-18 Top Up Grant reconciliation	0.000	0.000		0.000		0.012	100.00%	0.000		0.000						0.000	
Business Rates Share	4.129	4.163	0.83%	3.829	-8.03%	3.921	2.40%	4.023	2.60%	4.088	4.26%	4.088	1.62%	4.088	0.00%	-0.041	-0.99%
Revenue Support Grant	14.945	13.180	-11.81%	10.898	-17.31%	9.620	-11.73%	8.796	-8.57%	8.940	-7.07%	8.989	2.19%	9.264	3.06%	-5.681	-38.01%
Total	29.054	27.407	-5.67%	25.415	-7.27%	24.574	-3.31%	24.092	-1.96%	24.485	-0.36%	24.534	1.83%	24.809	1.12%	-4.245	-14.61%

2010/11				2022/23						Change in Core Spending Power amount from 2010-11 to 2022-23	Percentage change in Core Spending Power from 2010-11 to 2022-23
	Business Rates plus RSG = SFA Equivalent	Council Tax	2010/11 Core Spending Power Equivalent	Modified Settlement Funding Assessment	Compensation for under-indexing the business rates multiplier	Estimated Council Tax excluding Parish Precepts	Services Grant one-off	Rural Services Delivery Grant	2022/23 Core Spending Power		
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000		£000	%
Cleveland Fire	22,382	10,857	33,238	14,882	769	12,939	646	0	29,236	(4,002)	-12.04%
West Midlands Fire	80,813	38,208	119,021	53,590	2,772	46,358	2,325	0	105,045	(13,976)	-11.74%
Tyne & Wear Fire	35,570	23,749	59,319	24,808	1,277	25,438	1,072	0	52,595	(6,724)	-11.33%
Merseyside Fire	46,305	27,247	73,552	31,720	1,654	31,477	1,388	0	66,239	(7,313)	-9.94%
South Yorkshire Fire	36,770	22,972	59,742	24,390	1,288	27,953	1,081	0	54,712	(5,030)	-8.42%
West Yorkshire Fire	57,490	35,421	92,911	38,783	2,033	45,273	1,705	0	87,794	(5,117)	-5.51%
Nottinghamshire Fire	25,010	23,100	48,110	16,465	891	27,475	748	0	45,579	(2,531)	-5.26%
Humberside Fire	27,174	22,287	49,462	20,387	1,050	24,888	881	0	47,206	(2,256)	-4.56%
Lancashire Fire	32,608	29,736	62,344	24,513	1,288	32,971	1,081	0	59,853	(2,491)	-4.00%
Derbyshire Fire	19,674	22,025	41,700	13,377	738	26,334	619	0	41,068	(632)	-1.51%
Durham & Darlington Fire	14,529	16,647	31,176	10,729	585	19,420	491	0	31,225	49	0.16%
Avon Fire	24,879	22,097	46,976	16,209	896	29,264	752	0	47,121	145	0.31%
Average			53,308						53,849	541	1.01%
Essex Fire	32,371	42,629	75,000	25,299	1,357	49,054	1,139	0	76,849	1,849	2.47%
Buckinghamshire Fire	11,452	17,384	28,835	7,553	423	21,356	354	0	29,686	851	2.95%
Staffordshire Fire	18,600	24,129	42,728	14,542	790	28,288	663	0	44,283	1,555	3.64%
East Sussex Fire	14,673	24,541	39,214	11,088	638	29,051	535	0	41,312	2,098	5.35%
North Yorkshire Fire	12,968	18,523	31,491	8,787	506	23,106	424	540	33,363	1,872	5.95%
Cambridgeshire Fire	14,443	15,815	30,259	9,012	502	22,138	422	0	32,074	1,815	6.00%
Kent Fire	29,596	42,854	72,450	21,558	1,225	53,011	1,027	0	76,821	4,371	6.03%
Leicestershire Fire	18,840	16,855	35,695	13,483	740	23,621	621	0	38,465	2,770	7.76%
Cheshire Fire	18,621	24,853	43,474	13,605	778	31,827	653	0	46,863	3,389	7.80%
Berkshire Fire	15,423	18,429	33,852	10,518	586	25,025	491	0	36,620	2,768	8.18%
Greater Manchester Fire	75,335	42,036	117,370	51,260	2,632	70,904	2,209	0	127,005	9,635	8.21%
Hereford & Worcester Fire	10,668	20,644	31,312	7,832	467	25,288	392	115	34,094	2,782	8.88%
Devon & Somerset Fire	31,245	43,705	74,950	22,551	1,309	56,397	1,098	445	81,800	6,850	9.14%
Dorset Fire & Wiltshire	20,588	33,316	53,904	14,451	859	44,200	721	52	60,283	6,379	11.83%
Shropshire Fire	8,268	13,323	21,590	5,284	322	17,951	270	336	24,163	2,573	11.92%
Bedfordshire Fire	11,386	16,955	28,341	8,346	488	22,963	410	0	32,207	3,866	13.64%
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire	29,266	38,649	67,915	24,945	1,349	50,641	1,132	0	78,067	10,152	14.95%

Notes

Authorities marked in red have become part of another Authority eg Combined Authority / Police and Crime Commissioner and Fire Authority. Where this is the case the Combined Authority data for the 2022/23 settlement has been used as this represents the closest comparable data to that shown for 2010/11.

Core Spending Power Changes

	Change in 2022/23 %	Change over last 7 Years %	Change since 2010/11 %
England excluding GLA	6.9	20.6	Not Available
Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Authorities			
Merseyside	5.1	7.3	-9.9
South Yorkshire	5.0	7.2	-8.4
Tyne and Wear	5.0	6.2	-11.3
West Midlands	5.3	6.5	-11.7
West Yorkshire	5.0	7.6	-5.5
Other Authorities			
Avon	4.7	9.5	0.3
Bedfordshire	4.6	13.0	13.6
Berkshire	4.4	11.0	8.2
Buckinghamshire	4.2	10.4	3.0
Cambridgeshire	4.7	11.4	6.0
Cheshire	4.7	11.4	7.8
Cleveland	5.4	6.8	-12.0
Derbyshire	4.7	9.1	-1.5
Devon / Somerset	4.2	10.2	9.1
Dorset and Wiltshire	4.2	12.2	11.8
Durham / Darlington	4.7	9.3	0.2
East Sussex	4.1	9.2	5.4
Essex	4.5	7.2	2.5
Hereford / Worcester	4.0	10.5	8.9
Humberside	5.0	7.9	-4.6
Kent	4.5	10.8	6.0
Lancashire	4.9	6.4	-4.0
Leicestershire	5.0	11.3	7.8
Nottinghamshire	4.7	8.9	-5.3
Shropshire	4.7	15.3	11.9

MEETING: FIRE AUTHORITY 17 JANUARY 2022

SUBJECT: OUR ANNUAL REVIEW 2020/21 – ANNUAL REPORT

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE (THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY) AND THE FINANCE DIRECTOR

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to present Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority's 'our year in review 2020/21' (annual report) for Fire Authority consideration and agreement to publish.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 For a number of years the Service published a combined Statement of Assurance (SOA) and annual report. However, following a review by the Governance Advisor, supported by the Corporate Governance Board (CGB) it was deemed appropriate to separate the two documents. This was primarily because each report has a different purpose and audience; therefore the presentation and content of each differed, as did the approval process.
- 2.2 A paper was presented to the CGB on 9 July 2021, which detailed the structure of each report and it was agreed by the Board that the two reports should be separated.
- 2.3 The SOA is a statutory requirement and follows a defined framework, within which the Fire Authority provides evidence to demonstrate it is acting in accordance with its statutory duties. The SOA was presented to Members on 13 December 2021.

3. OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

- 3.1 As the annual report concept developed and separated from the more formal, legislative requirements of the SOA, an opportunity arose to evolve this report into a communication and engagement tool, to display the work of the Service over the past 12 months.
- 3.2 The annual report is a performance report, which communicates the Service's activities of the preceding year, presenting key achievements and promoting the organisation to the public, partners and other stakeholders. Performance is presented using data, information, compliments and case studies to illustrate the breadth of the services provided, and how public money was spent.

- 3.3 It is acknowledged in this initial year, the report is published later as we have worked to create the document however moving forward, it is anticipated that this document is published by the end of Quarter 1.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 There are no risks in respect of the annual report.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The annual report has no direct financial implications and contains a retrospective picture of expenditure in 2020/21.

6. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of the annual report.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of the annual report.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Fire Authority is recommended to:
- a) Note the contents of the annual report.
 - b) Progress the annual report for public publication.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers to refer to the subject matter of the above report.

**Tyne and Wear Fire
and Rescue Service**
Creating the Safest Community



ANNUAL REPORT OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

2020 / 2021

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-

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Business Improvement Department



ANNUAL REPORT
OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

2020 / 2021

3

WELCOME

Welcome to our annual report, which provides an overview of Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Services' activities for 2020/21. This report details the services we provided to you, how we performed, our achievements and how we spent your money.

As Chief Fire Officer (CFO), it is my role to lead Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, ensuring that our statutory obligations are met and creating the safest community for those who live and work in our region. The Service does this by responding quickly and efficiently to incidents, but also deploying prevention activities by proactively collaborating with partners, residents and local businesses to promote community safety, health and wellbeing, social responsibility and inclusion.

In recent years, the fire and rescue service has faced many challenges as a result of financial austerity, public sector reform and working within the constraints of limited resources to respond to the needs of an ageing and diverse population. However, it was the emergence of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) which had the utmost impact on our Service within this period. The pandemic tested all areas of our Service, and I believe we have met this challenge with resilience, professionalism, and strong leadership.

In response to the pandemic, our business continuity arrangements were swiftly implemented and staff adopted new ways of working to protect themselves and the public whilst continuing to deliver a first class fire and rescue service. Those who were able to do so worked from home, prevention and protection activities continued with residents and local businesses engaging either virtually or by telephone with a triage system being adopted until Covid-secure measures could be put in place.

As an emergency service, many of our frontline operational staff and Control Room operatives could not work from home and continued to attend the workplace to take 999 calls, respond to incidents, keep appliances and equipment ready for use and carry out critical administrative functions that could not be done remotely.

As strategic members of the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum (LRF), we assisted with the multi-agency response to Covid-19 and established a logistics cell to coordinate partner support requests. Staff volunteered to carry out extra activities in addition to their statutory duties and responsibilities which included delivering essential personal protective equipment (PPE), medical supplies and food parcels, aided with Covid testing and the rollout of a successful vaccine programme and supported Local Authorities with their additional demands on response and recovery. All actions carried out were to ensure the most vulnerable in our communities were supported. I am immensely proud of what we have achieved and thankful to our staff, retired staff and our volunteers for the integral roles they have played in keeping the communities of Tyne and Wear safe. Without their hard work and commitment, much of this work would not have been possible.

Next year will be an important one strategically for the fire and rescue service as the Government intends to publish a white paper on reform of the fire sector that will set out the future direction of our Service, taking into account the lessons learnt from a range of different areas including the Covid-19 pandemic, Grenfell Tower fire and the Manchester Arena bombing. It will also look at how the fire and rescue services can contribute more widely to public safety and wellbeing.

In closing, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you; the public for your ongoing support, in what has been a testing year for all.



Chris Lowther QFSM

*Chief Fire Officer
and Chief Executive*

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

OUR YEAR IN PHOTOS

Quarter One 2020/21



Covid-19 logistic cell established

The logistics cell was established to triage requests from partners for support. Staff volunteered to temporarily work alongside partners in health, local authorities and the voluntary sector to support Covid-19 response activities.



NHS Nightingale hospital North East opened

Staff worked with designers, contractors and clinical governors to convert an existing building into a temporary healthcare facility. Following four weeks of intense work, the hospital opened in May 2020.



First rescue carried out using a smoke hood

At the start of 2020, all appliances began carrying smoke hoods. The hoods are designed to give those being rescued 50 minutes of clean, safe air. Our first rescue using a smoke hood took place in June 2020.



Firefighter recruits 51/20 complete training course

Twenty-three recruits from course 51/20 displayed their skills during their passing out parade. Friends and family joined in virtually watching both pre-recorded and live footage of the event.

Quarter Two 2020/21



Refurbished fire boat returned to the River Tyne

Whilst undertaking familiarisation training, crews received a report of a woman in the Tyne. They located the casualty; one of the crew swam to her, secured her until the boat could bring them both to safety. Since its return, the fire boat has been involved in a number of rescues.



Fireworks seized in a joint operation

A large quantity of fireworks, were seized from a domestic premise in Hylton Castle, Sunderland following a joint operation with Northumbria Police and Sunderland Trading Standards. They were being sold without a license and were being kept without suitable storage.



Principal Fire Officer appointments

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Lynsey McVay was permanently appointed after five months temporary in the role. She is our first operational female to hold this position. Peter Heath was promoted to Deputy Chief Fire Officer; this role replaced one of the two existing Assistant positions.



Queen's Fire Service Medal awarded for distinguished service

Our CFO Chris Lowther was named in Her Majesty the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2020 and received the Queen's Fire Service Medal (QFSM) for distinguished service.

Quarter Three 2020/21



First new appliances for emergency response

As part of continued investment in our fleet, the first new state of the art fire appliance was delivered to Birtley Community Fire Station. Thirteen more appliances entered the fleet during 2020/21 and a further 10 are on order for delivery during 2022.



Firefighter recruits 52/20 complete training course

Eighteen recruits from course 52/20 displayed their skills during their passing out parade. Again, friends and family joined in virtually, watching both pre-recorded and live footage of the event. This was second passing out parade to take place during the pandemic.



Santa Dash to raise funds for charity

Staff participated in a charity run from Roker to Seaburn and back and raised £430.91 for the Firefighters Charity. The charity offer specialist physical and mental health and wellbeing support to members of the UK fire and rescue services.



Staff support the Covid-19 vaccination programme

Staff marshalled at vaccination sites across Tyne and Wear to ensure the safe flow of patients through the pods and supported NHS staff in the recovery area. Some staff also trained as vaccinators, administering 5,189 Covid vaccines during 2020/21.

Quarter Four 2020/21



Dog and owner helped to safety

A man entered frozen water at Mount Pleasant Lake, Washington to rescue his dog. Members of the public followed the instructions on the throwline board and alerted our Control Room who provided the access code and they used the throwline to help the man and dog to safety.



Staff assist with community lateral flow testing

Staff worked with Public Health England (PHE) and were trained to deliver lateral flows tests. The testing of pupils was critical to enabling the identification of asymptomatic cases of Covid-19 amongst the student community.



CFO commendation award online ceremony

The CFO hosted an online ceremony to present an award to crews for their conduct at the Croft Care Home fire. Their decision-making, selfless actions and professionalism led to the rescue of six elderly residents. The officer in charge collected the award on the behalf of the crew.



National On-Call Firefighter Week

A grandad-of-five from Chopwell celebrated the essential role of an on-call Firefighter. An on-call Firefighter is someone who works for the fire service as a secondary job and lives close to the station. Pictured with his son, also an on-call Firefighter

OUR WORKFORCE

Our people are our most important asset and are at the heart of what we do. We are committed to developing and investing in them to meet the demands of a modern and diverse fire and rescue service.

Our Organisational Development Strategy is focused on ensuring we have a professional and skilled workforce to deliver high-quality services that are resilient and flexible to respond to current and future challenges. A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is at the heart of this approach and we strive to provide equal access to our services and equality for all in the workplace. We embrace diversity by working with organisations to strengthen our Service.

Our Firefighters and operational staff are supported by corporate teams who provide a range of services, for example, human resources, finance, strategic planning, project and performance management, data and information processing, information communication technology (ICT) infrastructure and systems development, fire prevention, health and safety, communications and media liaison, web and graphic design and business improvement, support and administration.

Training Firefighters to respond

During 2020/21, we employed 51 apprentice Firefighter recruits of which, 41 completed the training programme. Our recruits' training commences with an intense 12-week programme covering core practical and theoretical elements of the role of a Firefighter.

The course prepares the recruit for the operational environment and once posted to a station they continue their apprenticeship and development until they are ready to undertake their end-point assessment. Throughout their development, each apprentice Firefighter is required to complete a series of rigorous assessments to ensure they meet the standards required. Once they have successfully completed all development within Phase I, the Firefighter will be deemed competent in their role.

Key Facts - Our Organisation 2020 / 21



We are committed to providing a strong training and development culture that ensures public and Firefighter safety. Our fully qualified Firefighters at all levels are required to maintain their competence within the National Occupational Standards framework and are subject to regular training, assessment and validation throughout their career, relevant to their role. The standard of performance is monitored through regular performance and review activities.

Recruitment and promotion

During 2020/21, we recruited for a variety of permanent, temporary and fixed-term posts within the Service, across all departments, which resulted in 48 new appointments and 62 internal promotions. We promote our Service as an Employer of Choice, encouraging applicants from underrepresented groups to apply, across all recruitment campaigns.

Training and development

We have a range of career pathways, which allows us to widen perspectives and encourage growth in our workforce to support high performance. We continue to prioritise career development and progression and our Investors in People (IIP) Gold Award recognises our commitment to the management and development of staff through training, mentoring and promotion opportunities. We recognise that investment in staff translates into excellent customer service from an enthused, knowledgeable and highly trained workforce, who will go the extra mile.

Occupational health

Our Occupational Health Team (OHT) provides comprehensive physical and mental health support to staff through a biopsychosocial model, which includes counselling and trauma support. Although our sickness absence rates remained manageable during the pandemic the total shifts lost per person during 2020/21 was 5.46. The OHT facilitated 22 alternate duties, phased return to work and / or reasonable adjustment assessments, enabling staff to be present at work or return to work sooner following an absence or injury. We take a proactive approach to reasonable adjustments with each individual assessed on a case-by-case basis and bespoke support provided.

Grievances

There were seven grievances recorded in 2020/21, which included claims of discrimination and unfair treatment. Of these, three were upheld, two were not upheld, one was resolved in another way and the outcome of one is not yet known.

Leavers from the Service

Staff views are important to us and feedback is regularly considered to improve the Service. All leavers are invited to undertake a face-to-face exit interview with the CFO and to complete an online questionnaire, which provides us with feedback reports. We collect and monitor leaver information, which enables us to address any equality imbalances within the workplace and ensures compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty requirements.

MAKING TYNE AND WEAR SAFER DURING THE PANDEMIC

COVID-19 AND THE CHANGES MADE TO THE WAY WE WORKED

During the pandemic, we utilised business continuity plans and emergency response structures to ensure core functions were maintained; these arrangements remained in place throughout 2020/21.

An online Covid-19 portal was established to communicate key messages to staff and weekly briefings were provided to Authority Members to keep them apprised of plans and response preparations. Delivering our statutory duties was a key priority, and conducting those duties in a way that kept staff and the public safe. As the pandemic evolved, we continued to adapt our ways of working, always prioritising the most vulnerable in society.

We worked with PHE and the Health and the Safety Executive (HSE) to ensure robust health and safety arrangements were in place. We implemented control measures to make our sites 'Covid-secure', insulating operational watches and our control room to minimise the transmissibility of the virus in the workplace. We made a significant investment in our ICT infrastructure and equipment to enable remote working for all staff. Meetings moved to virtual platforms where possible or where not, the necessary 'Covid-secure' precautions were implemented.

In the community, fire safety audits were conducted remotely, shifting the focus to priority areas to support the pandemic response including those premises that continued to have a 'physical workplace' such as care homes, schools and industry, with in-person visits conducted where required. We refined our prevention work to support those at greatest risk, and provided home safety advice by telephone and safe and well checks those at highest risk from fire or arson threat.

We maintained our response capability through the close management of staffing levels. We also adapted operational training and where possible, moved training to virtual platforms and we were able to proceed with our scheduled recruit courses, which operated in person with Covid-safe measures in place. Due to these actions, absence levels remained manageable and there was minimal impact on our emergency response. Testament to our cautious and pragmatic approach we achieved high attendance at work figures throughout the pandemic, with absence rates ranging from less than one percent, up to just short of three percent. These figures demonstrate the committed and professional way staff approached the pandemic, adhering to Covid-secure measures in the workplace and to Government advice in their personal lives. This was important, not only in protecting each other but in maintaining our Service at a critical time.

Partnership working and our Covid-19 response

As well as providing the public with a full range of fire and rescue services during the pandemic, our staff supported the wider response. We took an active and leading role in the LRF, working with local authorities' health partners and voluntary organisations to determine the ways in which our skills and resources could be best utilised. We established a logistics cell to triage support requests and 200 staff volunteered to work temporarily alongside partners.

The table below illustrates some of the work staff supported.

Key Facts - Covid-19 activities undertaken 2020 / 21¹



3000
Total for
mass testing

164 hours



5189
Total for mass
vaccination

3502 hours



3890
Vulnerable
persons

Deliveries of
essential items



456
Deliveries of
PPE & medical
supplies

To NHS and
care facilities



47
Movement
of bodies

Mass casualty



724
Packing /
repacking
food supplies

For vulnerable
people

In addition, our Fire Safety team supported the development of the Nightingale Hospital North East at Washington, which involved converting an existing building into a temporary healthcare facility. Staff worked with designers, contractors and clinical governors to address fire safety measures and after four weeks of intense work, during lockdown, the hospital opened in May 2020.

Our Covid-19 response has strengthened existing partnerships through national and local associations, initiated interactions with new partners, and increased our engagement with the most vulnerable in society.

The logistics cell made a huge contribution to local communities moreover, this work was achieved in addition to day-to-day fire and rescue service duties.

A number of 'thank you's' were received from partners in recognition of the work conducted by staff and overleaf is an image composed of words extracted from those compliments. The size and prominence of each word indicates the frequency of its use.

¹ For this dataset 2020/21 refers to 24/03/2020 - 04/04/2021.

PREVENTING INCIDENTS AND PROTECTING YOU

We target resources to achieve positive outcomes for the communities of Tyne and Wear and undertake this through prevention, protection, response and resilience activities with partners.

Key Facts - Prevention activity highlights 2020 / 21



Prevention

We aim to prevent incidents from happening through education, advice and intervention. This includes understanding the communities we serve, identifying and supporting those most at risk. We work closely with the health service, local authorities and the police who are similarly seeking to address social and health inequality to improve community outcomes.

Our Prevention and Education department is at the forefront of our proactive approach to community safety. Our staff and volunteers provide a valuable link with hard to reach people ensuring that we can work to educate the community about what they can do to keep themselves safe from fire, as well as reducing the risk of a wide range of other emergencies.

We conduct a range of activities with the community, which includes managing and delivering:

- the Safe and Well Check programme
- the multi-agency interactive safety centre SafetyWorks!
- the schools education programme

- youth inclusion/diversionary activities such as the Phoenix Programme, Prince's Trust Team Programme, Juvenile Firesetters Education Programme (JFEP) and Fire Cadet
- safety campaigns and initiatives, such as deliberate fire reduction including Firestoppers, bonfire, water safety and road safety
- community engagement and the management of community advocates and volunteers
- engagement with vulnerable persons

More fires originate in the kitchen than any other room in the home; we do all we can to reduce the likelihood of all fires occurring. Our Safe and Well Checks offer a person centred approach to fire prevention focusing on two key areas. The first is education through tailored safety advice to reduce the risk of fires occurring, and the second is providing and fitting free smoke and heat detectors where required to ensure that where fires do occur, they are detected earlier, helping to reducing the risk of injury to residents and damage to premises.

² The total includes four online four-week courses and two 12-week face-to-face course.

The following are three examples of feedback received following a Safe and Well check:

Prevention - Service user feedback

'I just wanted to pass on my thanks for your swift response to my request for a visit to the above property. Mr [name] tells me that 2 smoke alarms were fitted, and the fire officers also returned yesterday to give him some fire retardant bedding. This support has given him hope that people do have his best interests at heart, and has spurred him on to work with us to challenge his landlord around the other safety issues that need to be addressed. It is a very daunting prospect for him, but one he feels he can now undertake with our support. Once again, many thanks.'

'I have just had two Firefighters fit a sensory smoke alarm for me. They were both fantastic. Fully adhered to social distancing. They were both really friendly and showed me how to use the equipment. Such an amazing service. Please can you pass my thanks on.'

'This is how you do access right. Doesn't make it a big deal, and sorts it out themselves without me having to ask - big thank you to @Tyne_Wear_FRS for making things so easy and stress-free #AccessMatters.'

As well as working to improve safety in the home, we conduct a number of campaigns about personal, road and water safety and have simulated activities at our educational facility, SafetyWorks! This life-sized town of safety scenarios provides the opportunity for individuals to learn about living safely in and outside the home. The centre was temporarily closed during the pandemic and staff used virtual platforms to share safety messages. When restrictions lifted, visits commenced however, the numbers of visitors were a fraction of the usual 14,000 per annum.

Our service area covers 17 miles of coastal water, two major rivers, the Tyne and the Wear and multiple inland water locations therefore it is important that the public are aware of the dangers in and around open water. We have invested significant time and resource to reduce the risks of water-related incidents including prevention, response and post-incident learning. During 2020/21, we attended 164 water-related incidents, which included persons falling into water, threatening to jump or having jumped and missing persons around watercourses. Regardless of how someone might find themselves in water, the speed of assistance is critical in the race to save them.

Prevention - Case study: water safety

Our community engagement starts at Safetyworks! where from an early age we provide 'Be Water Aware' education about acting safely in and around water. We also collaborate with partners including Northumbria Police, to deliver demonstrations of our Swift Water Rescue Team and fire boat on the River Tyne. We set up information stalls at Newcastle Quayside, station open days and community events to provide water safety advice to the public.

We actively support national campaigns with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK), Her Majesty's Coastguard (HMC) and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). We regularly engage with news outlets and use our social media platforms to share safety messages. In 2020, we initiated the Throw Bag Challenge, where participants are asked to stand ten paces away from a water bottle, before aiming and throwing the bag, which is attached to a safety line, as close to the bottle as possible, ideally knocking it over. We recorded videos of these challenges as a way to raise awareness of water safety and how throw bags thrown accurately can save lives.

We regularly undertake throw bag training with staff and owners of businesses and premises located near rivers and other bodies of water. This training educates individuals about water safety and provides another resource to help those in danger. One bar at Gateshead Quayside has put their training in action, using their throw bag to rescue four people from the water. The outcome could have been very different if the bar staff had not received the throw bag and training to be able to help those people.

Prevention - RNLI feedback

'We have worked closely with our colleagues at Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service to deliver the Waterside Responder programme since 2017. The program has already helped to save five lives in the local area. The program includes advice on who to call if someone is in difficulty in the water, how to safely perform a rescue using a throwline and, most importantly, how to prevent such incidents in the first place by delivering a lifesaving message.'

Protection

Our Fire Safety team work with businesses to reduce the risk and impact of fire on the business community. The scope of their protection work covers all premises other than single private dwellings for example commercial premises, high-rise buildings, new builds and heritage assets.

Our aim is to educate and inform businesses about fire safety to promote compliance and minimise the need for prosecutions and enforcement activity under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Additionally, we are responsible for licensing applications, and the inspection of petroleum and explosives sites.

Throughout the pandemic, the Fire Safety team continued to deliver critical activities, those activities necessary for the protection of the public. New ways of working were introduced including remote audits, business self-assessments and virtual appointments. Pre-appointment screening reduced the time staff spent at premises to limit the risk of transmission of Covid-19.

Key Facts - Protection activity highlights 2020 / 21



588
Fire safety
audits on
commercial
premises



8
Prohibition
notices



472
Building
regulation
consultations



501
Other
consultations³



23
Petroleum
site
inspections



79
Storing explosives /
fireworks

³ Such as pre, building regulation consultations, licensing and gambling.

Fire safety staff are trained to a Level 4 Diploma, and to support their development they may work towards a Level 5 Diploma, or even a Fire Engineering degree. The team includes staff who work under different terms and conditions however, all training and development is mapped to their individual roles to ensure all staff receive role-appropriate training and acquire the skills they need.

Protection - Case study: NHS Nightingale Hospital North East, Washington

A temporary healthcare facility was required to provide additional capacity to treat patients, diagnosed with Covid-19 who required intensive care. The site at Washington was chosen because the unit could be converted easily into a Covid-19 facility, was central in the region and close to the A1 and A19 roads.

Our Fire Safety team carried out a programme of works with partners, at short notice and during lockdown to ensure the facility was complete on time. To meet the project demands, staff worked with two NHS trusts, Her Majesty's Armed Forces, building control officers, fire engineers, construction contractors Tolent and Geoffrey Robinson Limited, Northern Powergrid, Prodec Networks, Branksome Partners, Sunderland City Council and Sunderland University.

The project required the building and clinical bed stations to be developed, which included increasing the electrical capacity, auto-cut in generators in the event of power failure, provision of integrated heating, cooling and ventilation to provide clean, filtered and refreshed air at pre-determined and assured temperatures.

Pressurised medical gases and oxygen had to be delivered to all 460-bed stations, additional cold and hot water capacities were required, along with fire stopping, fire detection, enriched oxygen monitoring equipment, nurse calls and integrated data infrastructure, temperature-controlled wash stations with the necessary drainage, pumps, valve and filters.

Due to the immediate and critical need for this facility, and the nature of the facilities used, no existing guidance or regulation fully supported this kind of improvised facility. These challenges were overcome by working closely with partners and a proportionate and common sense approach adopted to support requirements. We were able to share our learning and provided information to the NFCC, which was used to enhance their field hospitals guides.

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High-rise and operational risk

Following the Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017, we established a Grenfell Working Group to identify areas for improvement and to address the safety requirements of the Government and the NFCC. As part of this work, we visited high-rise properties, conducted fire safety audits, and provided building owners and managers with advice to enable them to assess the fire safety measures in place within their buildings. Initial visits were undertaken in 2017; with Fire Safety Inspectors conducting audits and providing information to the operational crews to help them better understand the practicalities of fighting fires in high-rise premises, in addition to engaging with residents to provide assurance on how we would deal with a fire in a high-rise premise.

We continue to ensure the safety of residents through a number of activities, including closer working with other inspecting authorities and responsible persons, the provision of up-to-date operational risk information and realistic training for our Firefighters. In 2021, we commenced a data-gathering exercise for the NFCC of over 220 high-rise residential buildings in Tyne and Wear.

We continue to work with housing authorities, to help them interpret and apply recommendations from Dame Hackitt's report: Building a Safer Future. Staff have been supporting housing associations, businesses and residents with planning for the commencement of the Fire Safety Act 2021 and new regulations on high-risk buildings including high-rise residential buildings and the progression of the Building Safety Bill through Parliament.

RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS

We operate a risk-based approach that prioritises how and where resources are focused. We regularly assess our operational capability against risks to ensure we respond to incidents with the right resources, procedures and skills and within targeted response times.

Key Facts - Emergency response highlights in 2020 / 21



28
Fire Control
staff



26,555
Calls to
control



1 min 32 s
Average call
handling time



364
Firefighters⁴



24
Fire
appliances



15,142
Number of
incidents
attended



6 mins
Average
response time

Fire Control

Fire Control staff play a vital role in our emergency response and are trained to deal with any call they may receive. They are responsible for the end-to-end management of an incident from the first call, to responding to the needs of the Firefighters by dispatching further resources as required, arranging relief crews, liaising with other agencies and providing operational information for the duration of the incident.

Fire Control is staffed 24 hours a day and there are 28 staff working a four-watch shift system that comprises of two nine-hour days and two 15-hour nights over an eight-day cycle. Each watch consists of a Fire Control Watch Manager, Crew Manager and five Operators, with a minimum of five staff on duty at any time. In addition, three day-shift support staff assist the function managerially with a remit of system management, learning and development.

Emergency response

Our service area is divided into three districts, North, East and West and our 17-community fire stations, staff, fire appliances and other resources

are strategically placed across the districts to ensure an efficient and effective response to fires and other emergencies. Fire appliances work across station areas and can be mobilised whilst away from their home station. Our fire stations operate a variety of shift patterns and operational resources are reviewed regularly using community risk and incident data to inform our deployment strategies and our Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP).

Our Firefighters are equipped to fight and prevent fires and to respond effectively to other emergency incidents, for example, a building collapse, water rescue, hazardous materials incidents and mass decontamination and national and international rescue. We operate 24 fire appliances and a range of special appliances from our community fire stations. Each fire appliance is crewed by four Firefighters and is equipped with radio and computer technology, which provide vital communication links between operational crews and Fire Control. Our Targeted Response Vehicles attend lower risk incidents with a crew of two.

⁴ Excluding on-call Firefighters.

Emergency response establishment

For 2020/21, the Service Delivery operational establishment⁵ (excluding 'on-call' staff) was 518 and comprised of 364 Firefighters, 94 Crew Managers and 60 Watch Managers. During the pandemic, we introduced strict cleaning regimes and provided additional PPE to maintain the safety of our staff. 'Work bubbles' with covid-secure risk assessments were developed so staff could work safely and resiliently without unnecessary outside risk. To maintain our operational response capacity we only focussed on the delivery of essential training for staff around risk critical activities.

Firefighter safety

We continue to promote Firefighter safety by investing in equipment such as body worn cameras, which, provide improved safety and reduced exposure for casualties and members of the public. We have introduced technology to suppress fires without crews needing to enter unstable buildings for example thermal scanners and ultrahigh-pressure cutting extinguishers.

In addition, our new fire appliances have dedicated storage for clean and dirty PPE and Breathing Apparatus (BA) sets. This storage is demountable and can be taken to the cleaning room with contaminated sets inside, preventing contamination of the rear cab and station. There are also gas detectors in all appliance cabs to provide another level of monitoring atmosphere within the appliance.

Operational performance

We respond to a variety of emergencies and ensure the right people, skills and equipment are available to resolve the incidents in the most effective way, with the lowest risk to lives, businesses and property.

Further information about our operational performance can be viewed in our quarterly performance reports. In addition, the Home Office collects fire statistics about every fire and rescue service in England, and our performance can be benchmarked.

⁵ Source: Internal HR data. Correct at 22 March 2021.

Key Facts - Emergency response incidents



0

Deaths from accidental fires



38

Injuries from accidental fires in dwellings



156

Number of injuries from all fires



501

Accidental fires in dwellings



3661

Deliberate secondary fires



141

Malicious false alarm calls attended



1632

Primary fires attended



173

Fires in non-domestic premises

ANNUAL REPORT
OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

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Below are examples of two complex incidents our Firefighters attended during 2020/21:

Emergency response - Case study: Household waste and recycling centre, Gateshead

On 28 February 2021, crews responded to a large fire in a household waste and recycling centre. The centre consisted of two areas, one that housed recycled metals and the other household rubbish. The crews were able to contain the fire to one area, the piled household rubbish where approximately 300 tonnes of waste was on fire. Crews used cold cutting technology, the high volume pump and hydrants / water supplies to extinguish the fire. Onsite machinery was also used to bring rubbish out of the building to further dampen it down. There were no casualties or structural damage so the building was able to return to function in a short space of time.

Emergency response - Service user feedback

'I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and all your crew members that attended our site...in relation to a fire that you quickly extinguished, controlled and monitored helping the safe return of our workforce. Due to your swift reaction time and professionalism, we suffered no structural damage, which enabled us to remain fully operational, helping us provide a full service to the client...and its residents. I understand the high demands placed upon your organisation, and during these difficult times, it's easy to forget about the constant amazing job that you do. Always placing others before yourself, which displays numerous traits, selfless, commitment, courage, heroism, team work to name a few. Thank you once again for outstanding service.'

Emergency response - Case study: Redheugh Court, Gateshead

On 24 October 2020, crews were deployed to a well-developed fire with persons reported on the 8th floor of Redheugh Court. Crews were committed to the building to search for the missing persons and to extinguish the fire. Due to the complexity of the building the Incident Commander requested a further two appliances and an aerial ladder platform (ALP) to assist with the incident. Once crews located and entered the fire compartment, the window of the compartment failed, intensifying the fire. This information was relayed to the Incident Commander who made the decision to withdraw all other personnel to the 4th floor for safety. Crews were able to extinguish the fire and ensure that the property was left with minimal damage as this was then treated as a crime scene due to suspected malicious ignition. All persons were accounted for and no lives were lost. Due to the extent of the damage sustained, we worked with partners to re-house the residents from the 8th floor, in temporary accommodation.

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All fires we attend have a Tier 1 fire investigation conducted by operational crews. Some staff are trained in fire investigation and work alongside the police and forensic experts to collect and examine evidence to determine the origins and causes of fire. If further investigation is required for potential arson-related fires, coroner hearings or insurance purposes, then a trained fire investigation officer will conduct a Tier 2 fire investigation. During 2020/21, our fire investigation officers participated in 45 Tier 2 fire investigations.

Special Service Incidents

We respond to a wide range of emergencies including specialist service incidents and during 2020/21, we attended 2,436⁶ and below is a selection of those incidents.

We have forced entry arrangements in place to help ambulance crews gain entry to properties in medical emergencies. Our Firefighters are well placed to carry out this role as they have the skills and experience to gain entry to a property in an emergency and have medical training to assist ambulance crews in treating a patient. Below is an example of this work:

Emergency response - Service user feedback: Effecting entry / exit

'A crew attended to our grandmothers property last night and helped the ambulance service gain access. Unfortunately, our grandmother has suffered several injuries and is currently being treated in hospital. I just want to thank them for how they approached the situation and the professionalism shown. The family greatly appreciate it.'

We conduct water rescues led by our team of specialist Swift Water Rescue Team, using our fire boat. We keep our communities safe on both the Tyne and the Wear Rivers, as well as on other inland waterways. Our Firefighters can carry out rescues on ice, mud and other unstable ground and all are trained to national standards (Level 1 Water Awareness).

Emergency response - Case study: Wearmouth Bridge, Sunderland

On 14 August 2020, crews attended Wearmouth Bridge, Sunderland following reports of a person threatening to jump. The person had climbed the bridge structure and had to be rescued by rope rescue personnel. This was a difficult and technical rescue, in which crews showed great patience and pragmatism to not only manoeuvre their way to the casualty but to then secure the casualty to the harness and lowered down to the ground level.

...

⁶ Source: TWFRS Incident Recording System (IRS) 2020/21.

Key Facts - Special service incidents



Emergency response - Case study: High Level Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne

On 20 October 2020, crews received a report of an individual who had fallen or jumped from the High Level Bridge into the River Tyne. Our drone, fire boat and Swift Water Rescue Team were mobilised to carry out a search of the river and other fire service personnel searched either side of the river, up and down stream with thermal scanners and hand lamps. The casualty was located, taken to the NE1 pontoon and passed to the North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS) for assessment. We recently purchased our second drone and this resource further enhances our search and rescue capability. Our drones are able to access aerial data of a large area, giving our crews the ability to expedite the process of finding a missing person by mapping the search zone and pinpointing possible places where a missing person might be. The drones have sensors and thermal imaging cameras that can identify and detect ground objects and heat sources.

We operate a high volume pump that can pump 7,000 litres of water across big distances using up to three kilometres of hose and work with other agencies to support flooding.

Emergency response - Case study: Eslington Court, Gateshead

On 31 March 2021, we received reports of large volumes of water coming from a high-rise building. Our crews identified that a three-inch pipe on the 5th floor had catastrophically failed and was flooding the floors below.

This incident involved joint working with our emergency partners, Northumbrian Water, and Northern Powergrid. Gateshead Council declared this to be a major incident and the building was isolated of electricity and water. The 230 residents were temporarily re-housed until the utilities and properties could be safely restored.

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The compliments below are examples of other specialist service incidents we attended in 2020/21:

Emergency response - Service user feedback: Release of persons

'Sincere thank you to [name], who came to the rescue of my toddler and newborn baby trapped in my car in Newcastle city centre...what a kind and helpful team and so much appreciated'

Emergency response - Service user feedback: Animal rescue

'I attended an incident...where a herring gull was caught on some fishing line and hanging from a chimneystack. Unfortunately, the appliance didn't have the right ladders for the rescue so a second appliance was requested which arrived promptly. Both teams worked quickly and efficiently to get the bird down and as he was unhurt I was able to release him straight away. I just want to pass on my gratitude to both engine teams for them coming out and dealing with the incident so quickly and efficiently. I really appreciate all your help with these types of jobs'

Emergency response - Service user feedback: Removal of object from person

'The carers and family of [name] would like to say thank you for how you quickly responded and the absolute lovely way with total respect treat[ed] her that afternoon...she is a disabled young lady and had a ring stuck on her finger it totally made her smile you coming out...keep up the great work'

Resilience

We help protect our national infrastructure in the event of a major emergency such as a terrorist attack, an industrial accident or a natural disaster and have specialist teams who enhance our ability to respond. In times of need, we may be called upon to help communities in other parts of the country as part of our 'national resilience responsibilities'. We are signed up to the national Mutual Aid Protocol; this agreement establishes the terms under which we may expect to request assistance from, or assist to, another service in the event of a serious national incident.

In sections, 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, there is also a legal requirement for neighbouring fire and rescue authorities to enter into formal reinforcement and provide support in emergencies. We have arrangements with neighbouring fire and rescue services, Northumberland, County Durham and Darlington and Cleveland. These arrangements provide for regular cross-border support and assistance in the event of an emergency.

Deployments for 2020/21 show that we were mobilised to 156 cross border incidents. This is a 10% decrease from 2019/20. The number of incidents attended by neighbouring services for incidents in Tyne and Wear was 22, a 51% decrease since 2019/20.

We host national assets that enable us to respond to any foreseen incidents and we continually test our effectiveness by conducting regional and national multi-agency incident response exercises. We work with partners to optimise our multi-agency response and resilience through enhanced working relationships in line with the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) principles. Our national assets include:

- Urban Search and Rescue Specialists (USAR)
- Hazardous materials detection, identification and monitoring abilities
- Mass decontamination facilities
- Swift Water Rescue Team
- High volume pump

We ensured Covid-secure working through appropriate risk assessments, adapting working spaces, additional PPE and the variation of relevant policy and procedures through a new Covid alert process. Throughout the pandemic, we actively participated in the LRF's strategic and tactical coordination groups, ensuring our contribution to multi-agency working to support the wider community response to Covid-19 and assist other services where required.

7 Source: Incident Recording System and Mobilising System.
1 April 2020-31 March 2021.

Operational training

Our purpose-built Brigade Training Centre (BTC) provides facilities for operational staff to train and exercise in a realistic and challenging environment to maintain their competency and capability to carry out their roles effectively and safely. As our crews respond to a wide range of incidents including specialist rescue such as the rescue of people or animals from inaccessible places like cliffs, cranes, bridges and confined spaces. It is important that they regularly train to ensure they are equipped to deal with any emergency. Below is an example of specialist training:

Case study - Joint Operational Training: Rope rescue Trow Quarry, South Shields

Crews from South Shields Community Fire Station participated in joint rope rescue training at Trow Quarry with HM Coastguard and NEAS' Hazardous Area Response Team. The training was conducted in a live environment using rescue dummies to practice and develop a multi-agency approach to rope rescue. This exercise refreshed each services' understanding of partner priority cliff rescue, rope capabilities and advanced casualty care in a resource-limited environment. This training expanded participant knowledge of access, stabilisation, extraction and transportation methods, which included casualty care at a place of safety. Northumbria Police negotiators attended to increase their awareness of partner capability and safe work restraint systems for clifftop working.

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Joint training and exercise have proved successful in embedding the JESIP principles to improve service delivery at all levels of command to prepare a response to major or complex incidents. Multi-agency training is planned in conjunction with neighbouring fire and rescue services through regional training managers and with Category 1 and 2 partners through the LRF exercising group.

Our incident command suite uses modern technology to immerse incident commanders into an environment where they are assessed, validated and developed to act as safe and competent incident commanders on a live incident ground. Our incident command trainers are qualified to deliver at Levels 1 and 2, and we bring independent qualified trainers for Level 3 and 4. All incident commanders are validated and assessed to Skills for Justice recognised standards.

Collaboration

We have built on our partnership approach to ensure we remain one of the safest, inclusive and high performing public services. To support greater collaboration we have formalised arrangements in place with a number of partners to set out opportunities to achieve the following objectives:

- **Provide improved outcomes** - maintaining or improving the services to local people and communities;
- **Reduce demand** - contributing towards strategic objectives of decreasing risk in communities by reducing demand on services;
- **Deliver better value for money** - producing quantifiable efficiencies.

We continue to work with partners to identify better ways of working together to ensure we keep our community safe, improve services and deliver value for money.

Below are examples of collaborative working in practice:

Collaboration - Case study: Fire Investigation

We have an agreement with Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service and Northumbria Police to collaborate on fire investigation activities. This collaboration ensures there is a robust and transparent process in place to establish the origin and cause of the fire. It also ensures there is a consistent methodology to determine whether the cause of the fire was deliberate, accidental, natural or undetermined. The arrangement ensures vital information for insurance claims, prosecution and defence cases can be provided and that lessons are learned, lives are saved and significant future business losses are being avoided.

The agreement ensures fire investigations are conducted consistently and that data and information obtained from the scene of an investigation is used as part of the arson reduction strategy. Sharing information has been crucial in keeping our communities safe. Our partnership has a dedicated team of fire investigators who are on call 24/7 and are qualified in the Skills for Justice Level 2 fire investigation course, and Level 5 certificate in fire investigation. The competence of our fire investigation officers is crucial and continual professional development is maintained by joint training sessions, which allow investigators to become 'expert witnesses' in fire investigations. All fire investigation officers are security cleared with Northumbria Police.

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By regularly training and exercising with partners we are able to ensure our services remain of a high standard and that operational staff can work together effectively at incidents. The case study below demonstrates the importance of collaborative working for the end user:

Collaboration - Case study: Patient extrication

On 28 February 2021, crews attended a complex and challenging incident in Newcastle upon Tyne. This incident required a rescue of a bariatric patient to be conducted from a first floor flat, with the bay window removed in order to provide access. The casualty was placed onto the bariatric stretcher, with a crane used to bring them out of the window horizontally before lowering them to ground level. Crews worked closely with the NEAS throughout the incident, with casualty care and the rescue being coordinated between both services.

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Collaboration - Partner feedback

'Staff from both of our Services attended a case at [address] to assist with the extrication of a patient from an upstairs flat as they needed to be conveyed to the RVI for admission. I believe that crews had attended the address at 0100 hours however, it was agreed that it would be safer to return during daylight hours. Crews duly returned at 0930 hours to further assess the scene and to review the options available to extricate the patient safely and in a dignified manner. Working together, the staff on scene decided that the patient would need to be extricated through the sitting room window using specialised equipment from both Services.

The patient was carefully assisted onto the floor and was secured to avoid any injuries to them and was then placed onto the fire evac sheet for further stability and security. The patient was successfully extricated from the flat and into the awaiting ambulance. The NEAS staff who were in attendance felt that the two Services worked together effortlessly to ensure that the patient was safe and secure at all times and all on scene ensured that everything was explained to the patient and their family throughout whilst ensuring at all times that the dignity of the patient was meticulously respected. They noted that the Fire Service staff were amazing'.

We co-locate at a number of our sites and 24 partners currently operate from our estate. Co-location enables us to maximise our estate footprint, support collaboration and generate revenue income. The utilisation of our estate by partners supports the sustainability of the buildings and demonstrates a proactive approach to managing our infrastructure and building environment.

OUR INSPECTION RESULTS

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) assess and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of the 45 fire and rescue services in England.

HMICFRS undertakes a crucial assurance function to consider how effective and efficient fire and rescue services are, how well they manage their people and whether they are fulfilling their statutory obligations. We were graded as 'Good' by HMICFRS in its initial inspection in 2018/19.

In October 2020, HMICFRS carried out a virtual thematic inspection of our planning arrangements, response and ability to demonstrate effective service during the coronavirus pandemic. This resulted in a positive outcome letter (dated 22 January 2021) which praised our planning and response to the pandemic and recognised that we had continued to deliver our statutory duties whilst adhering to the principles of good governance and scrutiny. We act on areas identified for improvement during the inspections and a post-inspection improvement plan is used to progress these actions.

SERVICE USER SATISFACTION

The views of service users and the public are important as this allows us to hear first-hand experiences of the service and how our staff performed at an incident, during a visit or audit.

Key Facts - Service user satisfaction rates and data requests 2020 / 21



This information is collected through post-attendance surveys. We also operate a complaints and compliments process where the public are able to notify us of any feedback in the form of praise, or when we do not get things right.

Service user satisfaction surveys

For 2020/21, our After the Incident Surveys (ATIS) recorded a 98% user satisfaction rate for domestic incidents and a 100% user satisfaction for non-domestic incidents. In comparison, our Fire Safety audit survey was significantly impacted by the pandemic, as physical visits to premises were suspended for a large part of the year, which saw a reduction of 82% in the number of surveys completed.

However, of those returned 89% of respondents were satisfied. Similarly, our Safe and Well public perception surveys were suspended during the early stages of the pandemic as this work was primarily conducted by telephone. The survey was reintroduced in July 2020, to coincide with the increase in delivery and the easing of lockdown restrictions. The data for July 2020 to March 2021, recorded an average satisfaction rate of 99.21% with 100% being achieved in six of the nine months since July 2020.

Complaints

Whilst we strive for operational excellence, there may be occasions where we do not deliver to the standards expected and when this occurs, we welcome the opportunity to investigate, correct and learn from circumstances of underperformance to improve the quality of our services. During 2020/21, 27 complaints were received and following investigation, 48% were upheld. Two appeals were received as two complainants were dissatisfied with the outcome of their investigations and appealed the decision to the CFO. As a result, two secondary investigations were initiated; the outcome of both was to uphold the original decision. No Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaints were received.

Access to information

During 2020/21, we received 93 Freedom of Information requests (FOIs) from a range of requesters including, members of the public, journalists and enquiries relating to contractual arrangements. 81% (75) were responded to within the required 20-days and the remaining 19% (18) required further clarification and were answered within a communicated extended time limit. Nine subject access requests (SAR) from nine individuals were received and we achieved 100% compliance against the Information Commissioners Office guidance of one calendar month. Each SAR was received from either a current or a serving member of staff.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENTS

To support our commitment to continuous improvement we participate in a number of external assessments, which have resulted in accreditations, and awards. This process allows the Service to be measured against a variety of quality standards and permits a third-party evaluation from an impartial organisation to assess the work we have undertaken.



2019-2021

We are White Ribbon accredited and mark White Ribbon Day on the 25 November each year. We have worked to improve staff knowledge and skills in addressing male violence against women.



2020-2021

The CIPS corporate ethics kite mark and certificate was awarded to our Procurement team following their demonstration of our commitment to ethical sourcing and supplier management.



2019-2021

SafetyWorks! is accredited with the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge. This is the only national award, which combines learning and safety, into an accreditation scheme.



2019-2021

We are a Stonewall Champion Member having embedded lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender + (LGBT+) inclusion in the workplace, where staff are free to be their whole selves at work.



2019-2022

We are a disability confident leader, demonstrating our commitment to challenging and educating attitudes towards disability, including removing barriers to ensure disabled staff have opportunities to fulfil their potential.

The following accreditation re-assessments took place during 2020/21:



May 2020

Our Prince's Trust team participated in a review, achieving the matrix standard accreditation. This is the Department for Education's standard for ensuring the delivery of high-quality information, advice and guidance.



December 2020

Gold award status was maintained following a reassessment. The standard sets the criteria for high performance through people and effectiveness of leadership management practices.



July 2020

We achieved Gold in the RoSPA Health and Safety Awards following the submission of a self-assessment and a range of evidence to demonstrate performance against a health, safety and welfare criteria.



March 2021

Certification was maintained following Learning and Development team participation in an audit to review compliance against the ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System.



October 2020

We were awarded Gold in the Better Health at Work Award. The award recognises our achievements in managing health at work by promoting healthy lifestyles and considering the health of our staff.

PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

During 2020/21, we continued to implement actions across our estate and fleet to protect our environment.

Our estate

We were successful in bidding for SALIX funding of £30k. This grant funding was utilised for the compilation of an in-depth analysis of our 'built' estate. The findings will form the basis of our decarbonisation strategy. We have established an Environmental Task Group, which meets bi-monthly and will steer us towards our objective of carbon neutrality by 2035.

We are developing plans for a new carbon tri station in Hebburn to meet our ongoing commitment to energy conservation and minimising our carbon footprint. The building will be designed using modern technology in the form of photovoltaic roof panels and ground source heat pumps to satisfy the energy requirements of a facility of this size.

We are in the process of replacing our training centre 'fire behaviour units' with new bespoke units including smoke filtration and carbon capture systems.

Our Fleet

We replaced 14 fire appliances this financial year and a further ten will be replaced during 2021/22. All of our new appliances meet the latest emissions standard, Euro 6. The NOx limit for Euro 5 diesel vehicles was 180mg/km which has been reduced to just 80mg/km, a 55% reduction. In addition, portable tools carried as operational equipment are all battery driven rather than through generators, which we have disposed of.

We have a small number of electric vans in our fleet. We conducted a review, which involved carrying out a comparison of emissions and we will be looking to replace some of our cars and vans with electric versions and / or lower emission vehicles.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY

Revenue Expenditure and Income Summary.

The following table summarises the financial position for the year:

2020 / 2021	£'000
Community Safety	3,031
Fire Fighting and Rescue Operations	27,463
Corporate and Democratic Core	188
Non Distributed Costs	201
Net Cost of Services	30,883
Other Operating Income and Expenditure	21,615
Net Operating Expenditure**	52,498
Capital Financing	1,296
Transfer from Pension Reserve**	-5,250
Net Transfer to Reserves	2,375
Net Budget*	50,919
Financed by:	
Revenue Support Grant and General Grants	-8,939
Top Up Grant	-11,457
Business Rates and Collection Fund	-4,248
Council Tax Precepts and Collection Fund	-24,691
Section 31 Non-Specific Grants	-1,584
Total Resources*	-50,919
Increase/Decrease in General Fund Balance in the year	0
Opening General Fund Balance	-3,943
Closing General Fund Balance	-3,943

*The Net Budget of £50.919m is adjusted for a difference in the government Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA), an amendment required under the Code in respect of the Collection Fund Account, section 31 non-specific grant income, and a debtor for section 31 non-specific grant income to fund the deficit on the Business Rates Collection Fund Account.

**The 'Net Operating Expenditure' includes actuarial pension valuations required under accounting standards which has resulted in a large variation in year. However, this has a neutral impact on the accounts, adjusted through a transfer from the Pension Reserve.

The Revenue Budget Outturn for 2020/2021 showed a net overall underspend of £0.814m. During the year the Authority has made a positive drive to achieve this level of savings with a number of significant initiatives. These are detailed in the Narrative Statement to the Statement of Accounts along with the main budget variations.

Balance Sheet Position

The balance sheet shows the value at the balance sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Authority. The net assets of the Authority (assets less liabilities) are matched by reserves held by the Authority. The table below summarises the balance sheet position.

31 March 2021	£'000
Property, Plant and Equipment and other Assets	80,993
Short Term Investments	40,428
Money owed to the Authority - (debtors)	12,980
Money owed to the Authority - (creditors/borrowing)	-1,009,863
Provisions	-765
Net Assets / (Liabilities)	-876,227
Revaluation Reserve and Capital Adjustment Account	52,264
Pension Reserve	-967,256
Other Unusable Reserves	-1,974
Earmarked Reserves	35,224
Capital Reserves	1,572
General Fund Balance	3,943
Total Reserves	-876,227

The Authority is a going concern due to the fact that, whilst recognising that it has a negative net worth of £876.227m on its Balance Sheet, most of the 'deficit' relates to the pensions deficiency of £966.910m which must be disclosed as part of the international financial reporting standard IAS19 (Accounting for Pensions) requirements.

The fact that all pension costs would never be incurred in one year (as implied by IAS19), coupled with the fact that the Authority is addressing this potential in accordance with pension regulatory requirements by making additional annual pension deficiency payments, means the Balance Sheet Net Worth is effectively being distorted by this reporting standard.

If this element is removed, the Authority has a 'real' net worth of £90.683m. The Authority also has assets worth £80.993m and cash backed reserves of £40.739m, which support the view that the Authority's Balance Sheet and finances are in fact healthier than implied by the published accounts.

Capital Expenditure

The Fire Authority spent £3.563m on capital schemes during 2020/2021. The main schemes were:

	£'000
Equipment including Operational Equipment, ICT Hardware, Smartphones, Body Worn Video Cameras, Smoke Detectors	1,310
Property Improvements	72
Fire Appliances, Vehicles, Fire Boat	2,181
	3,563
Financed by:	
Revenue Contribution to Capital	535
Grants/Capital Contributions	349
Earmarked Reserves	1,713
Capital Receipts Applied	966
	3,563

Further information on the financial performance can be found in the Authority's Audited Statement of Accounts 2020/2021.

FEEDBACK AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Your views and opinions are important to us and having had the opportunity to read this report, we would welcome any comments or feedback that you may have. This would assist in our evaluation and future publication of this document.

If you would like our plan in another format or language, please contact us so we can discuss your needs.

For further details, please contact
0191 444 1500

or you can write to:

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Alternatively, if you would like more information regarding Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, you can visit our website:
www.twfire.gov.uk



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ANNUAL REPORT OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

2020 / 2021

**Tyne and Wear Fire
and Rescue Service**
Creating the Safest Community



MEETING: 17 JANUARY 2022

**SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION FIRE CONFERENCE AND
EXHIBITION 15 & 16 MARCH 2022**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER /CHIEF EXECUTIVE (THE CLERK TO THE
AUTHORITY) THE FINANCE DIRECTOR AND THE PERSONNEL ADVISOR TO THE
AUTHORITY**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Annual Fire Conference of the Local Government Association (LGA) is scheduled to be held at The Hilton, Gateshead on 15 and 16 March 2022. This report proposes Authority representation at the conference.

2. LGA ANNUAL FIRE CONFERENCE 2022

- 2.1 The LGA Annual Fire Conference is the key conference for Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) as it deals with issues of direct concern to the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) as a whole.
- 2.2 The themes of the conference are designed to address current issues and key challenges facing FRS' nationally. Although the full programme for the conference had not yet been released, we are aware that the white paper, climate change and workforce engagement will be topics for consideration and discussion at this conference.
- 2.3 Speakers will be drawn from FRS', FRA's, central government and other key stakeholder organisations. In addition, there will also be a number of breakout and plenary sessions available, with opportunities to question speakers on the issues put forward at the conference.
- 2.4 Members and officers of FRAs as well as key figures from central government will be in attendance, which will provide an opportunity to develop an understanding of emerging issues, and promote collaborative working.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The cost to attend the conference for LGA member authorities, which covers the main conference and workshop sessions is £395 + VAT.
- 3.2 Members may wish to discuss attendance at the conference and advise the Chief Fire Officer accordingly.

4. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Authority is recommended to discuss the numbers attending this year and advise the Chief Fire Officer to proceed with booking the LGA Annual Fire Conference.
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