

Efficiency & Productivity Plan 2023-2024



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Foreword

As one of the largest fire and rescue services (FRSs) in England, we understand the importance of continually striving to improve the efficiency and productivity to deliver the best possible value to the communities we serve.

The Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) Efficiency and Productivity Plan aims to enhance our ability to deliver an efficient and effective service to the community by introducing practical strategies to streamline processes, optimise resources, and improve productivity.

By embracing new technologies, investing in our workforce, and streamlining our operations, we will be better equipped to meet the evolving needs of our communities and ensure that we remain the effective and sustainable service that the public depend on.

Whilst our financial future remains uncertain we remain committed to delivering efficiencies and improvements without compromising our prevention, protection and response services.

This plan will help us on our journey to become a flexible, modern and resilient fire and rescue service that provides the best possible value to our communities.

Dave Russel, Chief Fire Officer – GMFRS

Introduction

This year marks the mid-point of the four-year Greater Manchester Fire Plan. The Fire Plan 2021-25 sets out a journey of continuing improvement in how we deliver our responsibilities, while providing greater value to the public.

Detailed within this plan are GMFRS' six strategic priorities:

1. Provide a fast, safe and effective response
2. Help people reduce the risks of fires and other emergencies
3. Help protect the built environment
4. Use resources sustainably and deliver the most value
5. Develop a culture of excellence, equality and inclusivity
6. Integrate our services in every locality with those of partner agencies

Each year we produce an Annual Delivery Plan that sets out our improvement programme for the upcoming year and details how we will continue to respond to risks and keep communities safe. We also produce a Medium Term Financial Plan which outlines the Service's financial position, specifically the revenue targets, capital investments, and funding requirements.

This report sets out GMFRS' Efficiency and Productivity Plan covering the period 2021/22 to 2024/25 as required by the National Framework.

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Local Government Association (LGA) have proposed that across FRSs in England, the sector could create 2% of non-pay efficiencies and to increase productivity by 3% in the period 2021/22 to 2024/25.

The Minister has requested detail around these plans, and how the individual fire and rescue authorities (FRA) plans will align with the national productivity and efficiency targets that have been set for the 2021/22-2024/25 Spending Review period. Details of this are set out in the Home Office template in Appendix A.

Our Journey So Far

The Service has a long-standing track record in delivering efficiency savings through a range of initiatives, including fire cover reviews, crewing arrangements, use of procurement to deliver savings, service reviews, management of ill-health retirement, predating our latest Efficiency Plan.

Since 2010 we have secured over £47m of annual savings:

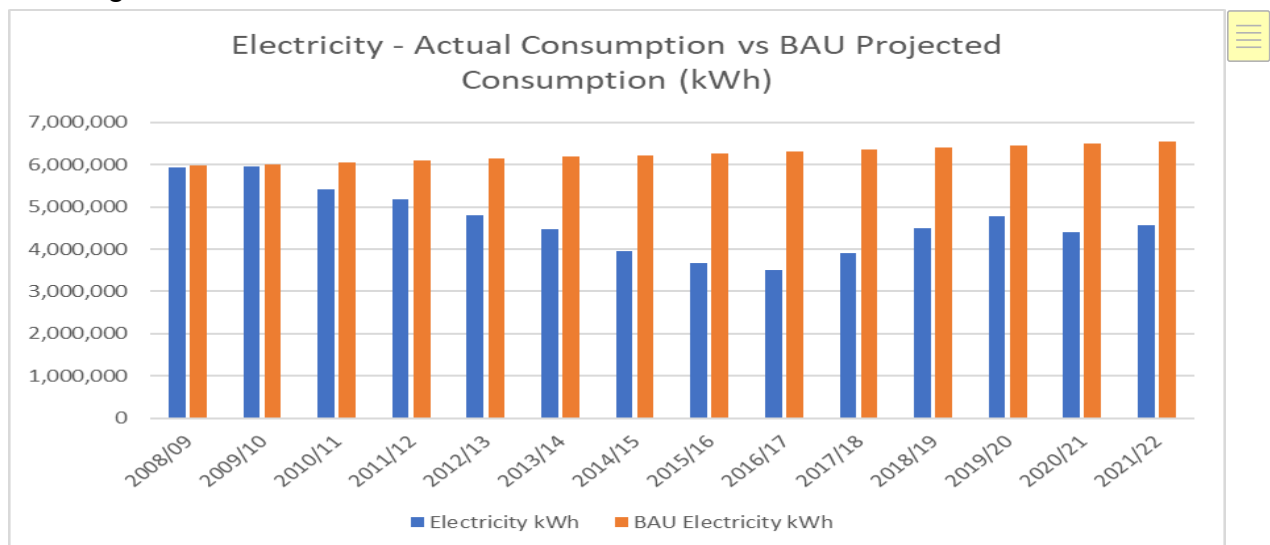
- Between 2009/10 and 2015/16 we delivered £28m of savings through changes to crewing arrangements, Control Room functions, flexible resource deployment and management and support services.
- Our subsequent Efficiency Plan for 2016-2019 delivered a further £13.3m annual savings.
- Our 'Programme for Change' undertaken in 2019/20 included a whole Service review and development and implementation of a new operating model. This has delivered additional savings of £5.8m per year.
- In 2021/22, savings of £1.458m were originally identified through Programme for Change, however, alternative savings were identified to replace those held against pump reductions. Further alternative savings of £1.394m identified via a line-by-line review include the reduction in employee budget because of pay award being lower than anticipated in 2020/21, resulted in total savings of £2.857m for 2021/22.

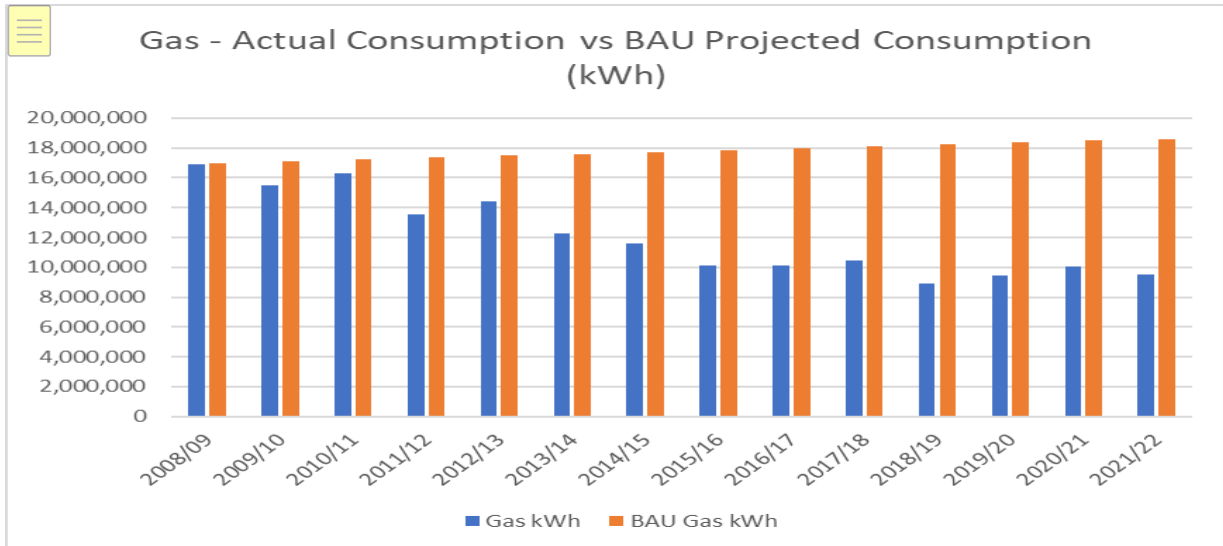
- We continue to set a non-pay savings target for future financial years. A target of £1.5m was agreed to be delivered across two financial years, with £0.788m in 2022/23, followed by a line-by-line review and Business Rates payable review, and a further £0.712m in 2023/24.
- Our Efficiency Plan covering the period 2021/22 to 2024/25 comprises initiatives relating to crewing models, procurement, line by line budget reviews and service reviews to deliver the savings required. Savings plans are smoothed using reserves to allow for appropriate review of the potential implications.

Efficiency and Productivity Gains

The Service continues to build on the successful introduction of our GMFRS Improvement Programme in 2021, delivering efficiencies and improving productivity across a range of areas. As summary of the key areas can be found below.

- Launched a new Sustainability Strategy across Greater Manchester Combined Authority. (GMCA) focused on reducing our emissions and driving down our fuel costs. This builds on our GMFRS Sustainability Strategy which we have had in place since 2008 and have delivered significant reductions in gas and electricity usage, as illustrated below:





- We are installing electric vehicle (EV) charging points at locations across Greater Manchester and are investing in several electric vehicles to reduce our carbon emissions.
- Successfully bid for £0.620m of grant funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) Phase 1 and installed LED lighting schemes at 18 fire stations and solar PV (photovoltaic) schemes at two fire stations. These will reduce carbon emissions by approximately 32 tonnes per year and contribute to cost reduction in areas subject to significant inflationary pressures. The return on investment is anticipated over 4 years, with cost reductions of £135k pa contributing to an area subject to significant inflationary pressures.
- We have invested in solar photovoltaics across our estate. In 2022/23 this has generated 453,691 kWh of electricity, delivering Feed in Tariff Income of £54,466 and utility savings of £102,125, contributing to cost reduction in an area subject to significant inflationary pressures.
- Delivered an Estates Programme to create a fit-for purpose estates portfolio that is responsive to current and future needs, supports the delivery of our strategic objectives, and is focused on improving public confidence and reducing costs. We will have two new fire stations in Quarter 4 of 2024/25 at Blackley and Whitefield. These are being built with zero carbon principles and will deliver carbon reduction and cost avoidance / reduction in our Efficiency Plan for 2024/25 and onwards, contributing to cost reduction in an area subject to significant inflationary pressures.
- Our Contact Centre has made savings and efficiencies with the decommission of an ageing system (CFRMIS) and the move to in-house systems through collaboration with SafeLincs. This has made substantial improvements in internal administration and processing, whilst also saving approximately £20k pa.
- The introduction of Safelincs, which is our online assessment tool for home fire safety, targets those most at risk. By targeting in this way, it creates capacity for our operational crews, ensuring households where the risk of fire is deemed to be lower are directed to important safety advice, whereas those identified as

higher risk receive a physical visit, known as a Home Fire Safety Assessment (HFSA).

- Invested £0.200m in new audio-visual technology installed across all our fire stations, addressing some of the barriers of bringing staff together and providing opportunities to deliver debriefs remotely, undertake training and sharing key messages. It has reduced the amount of time and money staff are spending travelling, reduced the amount of fuel used and pollution generated.
- Shared our Training and Development Centre with other local authorities for the joint Places for Everyone inquiry. This has generated a one-off saving in running costs of £150,000 in 2022/23..
- Partners in North West Fire Control, our Control Room function, jointly owned by ourselves, Lancashire, Cumbria and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Services.
- We use collaborative procurement opportunities where we can, using national, regional, and local frameworks and we work regularly with local partners on specific commodities. When procuring goods and services we work collaboratively with FRSs across the Northwest to explore opportunities for shared contracts that would deliver savings and foster innovation by offering added capacity, expertise, and coordination.
- Introduced shared premises with other emergency services partners at several locations across Greater Manchester. Irlam Fire Station is a tri-service station providing both shared accommodation for Fire, Police and Ambulance Service, along with Philips Park Fire Station being a bi-service station providing shared accommodation for Fire and Ambulance Service. Wigan Community Fire and Ambulance station is a newly built facility for both Services. Bolton Central Fire Station shares accommodation with Ambulance Patient Transfer Services. All of these shared premises provide significant opportunities for collaborative work.
- We undertake procurement exercises in line with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Constitution, Financial Regulations, Contract Procedure Rules and Public Contract Regulations.
- We collaborate with other northwest FRAs, GMP (Greater Manchester Police) and Greater Manchester local authorities. Collaboration is always considered when undertaking procurements and GMFRS will also make use of regional and national frameworks where appropriate. Specific examples include:
 - Laundry, Maintenance and Repair of FRS PPE – Managed by GMFRS on behalf of northwest regional FRAs. In 2021 we agreed a fixed price contract extension meaning prices were held for 7 years.
 - Smoke alarms – we use the national framework operated by West Midlands FRS for this commodity. This generates savings on a volume basis of £30,000 per annum. In addition, we benefit from productivity gains through familiarity with fixing methods for our operational staff, and easy / quicker processes for replacement of faulty items.
 - Learning Management System (LMS) – we have recently used the Crown Commercial Services G-Cloud framework for our LMS, this will save us £35,000 from December 2022 for the next four years.

Other examples include:

- Supply of Station Wear and Supply of Water PPE – Managed by GMFRS on behalf of northwest regional FRAs.
- Maintenance Services for Station End Mobilisation Equipment – Led by GMFRS and including Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire FRSs.
- E-tendering system – Collaboration with other northwest public sector bodies.
- Security Services and Waste Recycling– GMFRS collaboration with GMP.
- Clinical Governance & Trauma / First Aid training – Collaboration with other Northwest regional fire authorities, led by Lancashire FRS.
- Type B Appliances - NFCC Emergency Response Vehicles framework
- Liquid Fuels – Collaboration with Greater Manchester local authorities utilising Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation framework.
- Cleaning and Janitorial Products and Groceries and Frozen Food – Collaboration with Greater Manchester local authorities.
- We have installed new high specification Mobile Data Terminals in all our fire appliances, giving firefighters enhanced remote access to critical information. The new terminals give firefighters direct access to up-to-date risk information at an incident. They have a faster, clearer, and more responsive touch screen interface; more reliable hardware; newer satellite navigation software; and access to a range of apps providing vehicle schematics at road traffic collisions, and hazardous material information at chemical spills. Other key features include incident command software to help the recording of key information and the ability to manage large scale incidents affectively, this has made the devices a key tool for operational crews.
- Microsoft Teams was rolled out at the start of the pandemic, and the continued investment in this area has assist in long term benefits, supporting hybrid working arrangements that increase flexibility, reduce expense claims and reduce vehicle emissions – enabling the Service to realise benefits in both productivity and efficiency and air quality.
- Introduced GovWifi, developed and managed by Government Digital Service (GDS). It is a single Wi-Fi login which can be simply and cheaply installed by government departments over their existing infrastructure. Anyone who registers with GovWifi will have access to Wi-Fi at any participating public sector location. This is available to civil servants, consultants, and visitors to government departments, and replaces user and guest Wi-Fi with a single secure Wi-Fi connection, supporting our hybrid working arrangements and reducing travel.
- Our most recent Email Hygiene rating report (07/03/23) shows that we've maintained our 'Epic' rating of 100/100 – first placed FRS, joint first placed authority in Greater Manchester with two others (Oldham and Salford).
- Equality Impact Assessments and People Impact Assessments are undertaken as part of Service reviews. Through specific engagement and consultation arising from Service Reviews, we ensure there is no disproportionate impact on operational performance and service to the public.

Our Plan for the Future

With increasing financial pressures, this plan aims to identify areas where we can make efficient use of our resources while maintaining the highest standard of service delivery. Through effective budgeting, resource allocation, and proactive measures to identify cost-saving opportunities, we aim to improve our financial efficiency without compromising on delivering our vision and mission.

This plan represents our commitment to sustainable financial management, ensuring that we are well-equipped to meet the needs of our community and maintain our role as a trusted and efficient FRS.

Budget

The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to 2025/26 has been updated to reflect pay and price inflation, known cost pressures and agreed savings. The Chancellor announced the Spending Review in December 2022 which presented a one-year settlement as part of the three-year government Spending Review. In relation to FRSs, the announcements covered the following:

- FRSs receiving a 7.4% increase in core spending power
- Flexibility on council tax precept for stand-alone FRSs of £5 for a one-year period.

The table below presents the budget requirements incorporating pressures and savings from 2022/23 onwards:

Medium Term Financial Plan	Original 2022/23	Revised 2022/23	Proposed Budget 2023/24	Indicative Budget 2024/25	Indicative Budget 2025/26
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Fire Service	107,956	107,956	115,365	124,275	128,220
Pay and price inflation	2,625	5,385	5,955	4,080	2,031
Savings	-788	-788	-712	0	0
Cost pressures and variations	2,812	2,812	3,667	-135	-426
Cost of service	112,605	115,365	124,275	128,220	129,825
Capital Financing Charges	1,692	1,692	2,082	3,096	3,755
Transfer to Earmarked Reserves	5,245	5,245	1,752	0	0
Net Service Budget	119,542	122,302	128,109	131,316	133,580
Funded by:					
Localised Business Rates	9,368	9,521	9,521	9,521	9,521
Baseline funding	40,922	40,922	43,275	43,275	43,275
SFA - Services Grant	2,209	2,209	1,244	1,244	0
Section 31 - Business rates	5,452	5,300	6,847	6,847	6,847

Section 31 - Pension related	5,605	5,605	5,605	5,605	5,605
Precept (at £76.20 Band D)	55,429	55,429	60,463	60,463	60,463
Collection Fund sur/def	-2,637	-2,637	332	0	0
	116,348	116,349	127,287	126,955	125,711
Shortfall	3,194	5,953	822	4,362	7,869
Shortfall Funded by:					
Earmarked Reserves	3,194	3,194	822	426	0
Reserves/Precept Increase	0	2,759	0	3,936	7,869
Total	3,194	5,953	822	4,362	7,869

Funding is based on the details from the Provisional Settlement, released in December. The baseline funding from Revenue Support grant and Top-up grant has increased by £2.353m from the 2022/23 position with a reduction in Services Grant of £0.965m. Localised business rates are assumed at the same level of income as last year, with information from Districts not yet available to determine next year's position at this stage. This represents an increase in total Government funding for the service of just over 3%. Whilst this is higher than in previous years, it falls some way short of the pay and non-pay inflation pressures faced by the service.

Reserves

Taking account of the budget outlined in this paper, the reserves for GMFRS for 2023/24 are as follows:

GMFRS Reserves	Closing Balances 31 March 2022	Transfer out/(in) 2022/23	Projected Balance March 2023	Transfer out/(in) 2023/24	Projected Balance March 2024
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
General Reserve - GMFRS	-11,782		-11,782		-11,782
Capital Reserve	-9,615	-5,245	-14,860	-2,637	-17,497
Capital Grants Unapplied	-299	0	-299		-299
Earmarked Budgets Reserve	-2,025	146	-1,879	122	-1,757
Revenue Grants Unapplied	-6,228	3,257	-2,971	700	-2,271
Insurance Reserve	-2,849		-2,849		-2,849
Business Rates Reserve	-1,414		-1,414		-1,414
Restructuring Reserve	-418		-418		-418
Innovation and Partnership CYP	-127		-127		-127
Transformation Fund	-3,604		-3,604		-3,604

Total GMFRS Reserves	-38,361	-1,842	-40,203	-1,815	-42,018
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The current General Fund Reserve balance stands at £11.782m, this is considered an appropriate level and there is no planned use of this reserve.

Precept

The precept of FRS functions in Greater Manchester is set as part of the Mayoral General precept under our devolution arrangements. The GMCA – made up of the 10 council leaders in Greater Manchester, and the Mayor – have approved a £5.00 increase in a Band D Council Tax Precept for 2023/24, in line with the Council Tax Referendum Principle. The GMCA decision was taken on 10th February 2023.

While reluctant to add to the burden of local council taxpayers, our £5 increase in the Band D Council Tax Precept allows us to continue our journey of improvement and maintain our headcount and the current levels of service that we deliver to our communities, while dealing with the record high inflation and energy costs which are impacting on the Service’s estate and fleet.

Following detailed assessment of risk within the region, the Greater Manchester Mayor has committed to maintaining at least 50 fire engines throughout 2023/24 with crewing at the current level of five firefighters at one pump stations and four firefighters on each engine at two pump stations. Precept income has therefore been included in our MTFP at the increased rate of £50.80 per Band A property, equivalent to 98 pence per week (£76.20 per household at Band D equivalent, or £1.47 per week) which ensures frontline fire cover is maintained.

Efficiency and Productivity Forward Plans

The Service continues to build on the successful introduction of our GMFRS Improvement Programme in 2021. Our future plans set out how we will continue to deliver efficiencies and improving productivity across a range of areas, including:

Fire Cover Review

- We plan to undertake a fire cover review to improve our response to the risks across Greater Manchester. These proposals will implement more cost-effective shift systems, limiting negative impacts on performance and creating efficiency savings that will be used to reinvest in key areas of the Service specifically:
 - Introduce further day crewing stations

- Improve our special appliance capabilities
- Increase our frontline operational fleet
- These proposals form part of our community risk management planning and will be consulted upon during Q1 2023/24.

Service Reviews

- We plan to review our current call handling arrangements and explore options that consider a co-located control room to deliver a more efficient and effective joint incident management model.
- We intend to conclude the strategic review of Special Appliances and implement recommendations in relation to aerial appliances, water rescue units and technical rescue units. This activity will be linked, where appropriate, to our Fire Cover proposals consultation.
- Review of Operational Training provision to deliver a more efficient training delivery model, with an annual training plan to ensure all staff receive necessary training to support competency.
- Implement recommendations from the review of fleet and logistics to streamline structures and increase transparency and improve resilience across teams.
- The future requirements for FSHQ accommodation will be reviewed.

Partnership Working

- Continue to implement our new Integrated Place-Based Working framework that is assisting with driving continuous improvement and working in partnership with other key services.
- Implement an Integrated Place-Based Working 'What Works Forum' to share best practice and identify and prioritise initiatives that deliver the best value.
- Enhance Blue Light Service collaboration to improve service delivery and provide greater value, through initial areas of focus including leadership and development, recruitment, estates, and operational opportunities.
- GMFRS is driving the creation of England's first regional strategic water safety partnership. We are bringing together local authorities, police and ambulance services, landowners, and water safety specialists to reduce the risks posed by our waterways.
- The devolution arrangements in Greater Manchester allow us to align GMFRS priorities more closely with those of the rest of the GMCA. We are using our resources to deliver wider ambitions for the region such as the reduction of violent crime; improved outcomes for young people; the delivery of apprenticeships; the fight against modern slavery; support for community safety partnership initiatives; and more.

Technology

- We will introduce a Prevention and Protection digital programme to provide a single digital method for recording all activities, significantly improving our ability to accurately record interactions and expand capability of operational crews.
- Following the successful installation of the new Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) in all our fire appliances, we are developing new applications and forms to assist in streamlining processes and procedures whilst attending operational emergencies and incidents i.e., Patient Transfer Forms, High Rise Evacuation procedures.
- To assist operational crews in the delivery of simultaneous prevention activities, we are investing in new mobile devices (Surface Pro) for all our fire appliances. These devices will provide additional flexibility, alongside the new MDTs, ensuring resources are used more effectively.
- Implement Phase 2 of our crewing system 'Gartan', and App development providing improvements and more efficient resource management of our operational staff, including their usage of the system.
- We are exploring the use of technology to undertake equipment and appliance checks and inventories, which will reduce administrative time and improve the quality of information held about our operational assets.
- We will develop a digital platform to support planning, performance, and project management to streamline processes and provide quick and easy access to key information and data.

Governance

- Develop processes and governance in respect of benefits within project business cases, benefits tracking and benefits realisation – all of which are crucial to create the culture to drive out productivity improvements across the Service.
- Implement the Organisational Learning Framework and system to improve our ability to effectively assure and evaluate our organisational learning.
- We will implement a refreshed Service Delivery Governance structure which will reduce the number of meetings and also improve the productivity of a large section of our middle management cohort.

Operational Productivity

GMFRS have been exploring opportunities to improve the level of operational productivity across the Service.

Resourcing bubbles have been introduced in order to reduce the movements of operational personnel from one station to another, reducing the cost of detachment and travelling payments as well as ensuring operational staff are based at their home location more often to aid with the completion of training. This will also reduce vehicle emissions and improve air quality.

To provide a clearer understanding on where improvements and efficiencies could be made, a project was initiated to determine the current operational activities across our 41 fire stations.

Data was collected from each station through self-reported activity logs that operational crews completed during the period 30th September 2022 to 16th October 2022. The data was collected for each individual member of the watch and collated into one large dataset.

Project Findings

Through the completion of the project to understand our current operational productivity, we were able to quantify time spent on activities. Most areas are aligned to our assumptions, with general “Station Routines” being identified to provide an opportunity to release capacity and increase productivity by operational crews.

Analysis of the data highlighted an opportunity to reduce the time spent on “Station Routine” activity which covers such areas as shift handover, checking and testing of

equipment, and cleaning; by amending and updating current practices and procedures but without compromising safety.

Reducing the Station Routine by 30 minutes to four hours per day will release 6,500 hours per year across the Service that can be repurposed into productive activity.

A proportion of these hours will be ringfenced for *reactive* public safety interventions whilst the remaining hours will be used for *proactive* prevention and protection work by operational crews.

Reactive Prevention and Protection Activities

Reactive activities can be described as prevention or protection work undertaken by operational crews at short notice in response to an unplanned event or developing situation, in particular severe weather events.

Such an example is the wildfire and water safety prevention activities carried out by operational crews during the severe hot weather period in July and August 2022. The Met Office had issued an Amber warning, followed for the first time ever in the UK, by a Red Extreme Heat Warning. Operational crews were deployed at short notice to 35 high risk water and wildfire sites to undertake patrols engage with the public to deter high risk activities such as unauthorised open water swimming, and use of BBQs.

Following an evaluation of this activity, it is proposed to introduce Heatwave Business Continuity Management (BCM) prevention plans that will be activated on the issuing of a Met Office of Amber and Red Heat Warning. This will deploy operational crews to known risk sites to carry out short notice prevention intervention activities.

Reactive hours will also be used to deploy operational crews for other climate change prevention activities such as response to flood warnings.

During the 23/24 and 24/25, 2,000 hours will be allocated to reactive productive work.

The amount of outstanding reactive hours will be reviewed on a quarterly basis. Any build-up of surplus hours will be either carried forward to the next quarter or reallocated into proactive prevention or protection work.

Productivity Measure: details of all prevention activities undertaken by operational crews *except HFSA*s are entered onto the GMFRS “Community Engagement App” by

the Watch Officer. Details of HFSA's completed are entered onto the "HFSA Intervention Tool" by the member of the crew who led the HFSA visit.

Both tools can provide data to measure productivity across prevention and HFSA activities in terms of hours used by crews or number of HFSA's completed within a reporting period.

Proactive Prevention and Protection Activities

Proactive prevention and protection activities covers pre-planned work, visits, inspections, and campaigns to be delivered by operational crews throughout the twelve-month period.

Table 1 below provides a summary of completed activities by operational crews for the reporting periods of 21/22 and 22/23, and the projected growth in productivity for the periods 23/24 and 24/25 across six prevention/protection activities.

Activity	21/22*	22/23	23/24	24/25
HFSA's	4,977	18,498	27,800	29,000
School Visits	268	466	1,314	1500
Hydrant Inspections	884	1,447	2,500	3,000
7(2)(d) Visits**	1,522	1,213	1577	863
Fire Safety Checks**	NA	NA	NA	1000
Firework Licensing Visits**	304	282	250 to 330	250 to 330

Table 1

* Figures for 21/22 were impacted by COVID restrictions

** Protection activity figures are estimated and may be subject to change as a result of the introduction of new legislative / regulatory requirements

Home Fire Safety Assessments (HFSA's)

Operational crews will continue the trajectory of increasing the number of HFSA's, in particular in high-risk households.

Productivity Measure: An increase in the 18,498 HFSA's completed in 22/23 to 27,800 in the years 23/24. A further increase to 29,000 in 24/25 is anticipated as a result of regarding increasing operational frontline resources that will be part of the Fire Cover Review 2023, due to be consulted upon in May 2023. Data entered onto the "HFSA Intervention Tool" on completion of site visit by Watch Officer will be used to verify increase in productivity.

School Visits

The move from the universal Year 6 school visit to a targeted approach focusing on Years 2,4 and 8 will be adopted from 23/24.

Productivity Measure: An increase in school visits from 466 in year 22/23 to 1314 for year 23/24 and 1500 for 24/25. This includes a further growth in school visits alongside an anticipated reduction in the number of watches due to the fire cover review. Data entered onto the “Community Safety App” on completion of school visit by Watch Officer will be used to verify increase in productivity.

Hydrant Inspections

An increased level of simultaneous activity by operational crews will increase capacity to complete hydrant inspections.

Productivity Measure: Continue to increase the upward trajectory of hydrant inspections to 2,500 in 23/24 and 3,000 during 24/25. Data entered onto the fire appliance mobile phone “Hydrant App” on completion of the hydrant inspection will be used to verify increase in productivity.

7(2)(d) Visits

The Fire Services Act 2004 Section 7(2)(d) - *making provision for obtaining information needed to extinguish fires and protect life and property in the event of fire* - requires operational crews to gather and record premises information to be available for use at operational incidents.

To do this, operational crews gather risk information about buildings and undertake visits to ensure that this information is up to date. The level of information gathered, and the frequency of inspections is determined by the level of risk in the building. There is significant planned development across the city region including commercial and residential growth and this will increase the workload in this area.

In 2021/22, 1,522 premises were inspected. In addition to routine inspections more frequent inspections are undertaken of high rise and other residential buildings which are operating a temporary simultaneous evacuation strategy. Since then there has been a revision of the Policy and a revised inspection frequency developed.

During 23/24, we will increase the number of operational intelligence records as new premises are completed and continue to refine our assessment of risk. We are introducing the capability to accurately record the time spent on this activity and will use this to inform improvements in productivity.

With the implementation of revised policy and inspection frequencies, during 24/25 we expect a reduction in inspection numbers, albeit anticipate an increase in capacity for operational crews.

Fire Safety Checks

From 2023 we have committed to an ambitious plan to train all frontline crews to obtain a Level 2 Fire Safety qualification – this supports the commitments in our Protection and Response strategies to developing the knowledge of our staff in relation to the built environment and equip them to undertake basic fire safety checks. We will utilise fire safety checks to increase and maximise opportunities to capture risk information to inform the Strategic Assessment of Risk, our Risk Based Inspection Programme and Operational Intelligence, better support businesses by providing advice and better protect our communities by identifying risks that need further investigation. Our intention is to utilise fire safety checks following incidents, in response to emerging risks and as part of operational intelligence gathering in a flexible way that recognises the different risk profiles. As this is a two year plan to train Operational crews, we will commence fire safety checks in 2024.

We anticipate that following training we will utilise fire safety checks to gather up to date risk information for at least 1000 premises per year and provide advice on fire safety to at least half of these. We anticipate that this will increase incrementally each year.

Firework Licensing Visits

Retail premises that apply for a license to sell fireworks are inspected by operational crews, with much of the work taking place in the lead up to Bonfire Night. In recent years the amount of firework licenses applied for has varied from 250 to 330, with the number of inspections carried out by operational crew's dependent on demand for licenses.

Productivity Measure: Data entered on mobile “Firework App” on completion of site visit by Watch Officer will be used to verify increase in productivity from 282 visits in 22/23, to 304 visits for years 23/24 and 24/25 respectively.

Volunteering

With increasing demands on resources, it is essential to explore alternative ways of enhancing the service we provide. One way to achieve this is through our new Volunteering Strategy that aligns with our strategic priorities. This Strategy aims to provide a framework which maximises the potential of volunteering and enhances the services we deliver to our communities.

The Strategy will initially focus on developing volunteer support in seven key areas:

1. Community and Business Engagement Volunteers to support our corporate and area campaigns, activities and initiatives
2. HFSA targeted activity
3. Prevention Education – BTSC support, Cadets, Prince’s Trust
4. Operational Training support – live casualties for realistic scenarios
5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity function for volunteers to support delivery of our EDI Strategy
6. Community Response Volunteers – the ability to flex to meet evolving needs
7. Integration of pastoral support volunteers in to Wellbeing and Occupational Health to assist signposting to support channels

This Strategy will allow us to work collaboratively with volunteers, improving our productivity and providing efficiencies through the delivery of these seven key areas.

Appendix A – Efficiency Plan

- [Efficiency template \(Excel, 31.5 KB\)](#)