



SOUTH YORKSHIRE
**FIRE & RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Sarah Norman, *Clerk*
Neil Copley, *Treasurer*

Town Hall
Church Street
Barnsley
South Yorkshire
S70 2TA

www.barnsley.gov.uk/syfra

NOTICE OF AUTHORITY MEETING

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority to be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Church Street, Barnsley, S70 2TA at 10.00 am on Monday 20 February 2023 for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the agenda.

Sarah Norman
Clerk

This Matter is being dealt with by: Daisy Thorpe Tel: 01226 787327
Email: daisythorpe@barnsley.gov.uk

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Distribution

Councillors T Damms (Chair), C Hogarth (Vice-Chair), S Sansome, T Smith, B Johnson, S Ball, D Hutchinson, S Ayris, A Khayum, P Turpin, A Cherryholme, S Alston and Dr A Billings

Terms of Reference of the Fire and Rescue Authority (Delegated Powers)

The Fire and Rescue Authority is responsible for the corporate strategy, e.g. vision, business and financial plans, financial monitoring and virement approval.

Contact Details

For further information please contact

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SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY- MONDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2023

TIME AND VENUE: 10.00 AM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, CHURCH STREET, BARNLEY, S70 2TA

Agenda: Reports attached unless stated otherwise

	Item	Page
1	Apologies	
2	Announcements	
3	<p>Urgent items</p> <p>To determine whether there are any additional items of business which by reason of special circumstances the Chair is of the opinion should be considered at the meeting; the reason(s) for such urgency to be stated.</p>	
4	<p>Items to be Considered in the Absence of the Public and Press</p> <p>To identify items where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press. (For items marked * the public and press may be excluded from the meeting).</p>	
5	Declarations of interest by individual Members in relation to any item of business on the agenda	
6	Reports by Members	
7	Receipt of Petitions	
8	To receive any questions or communications from the public, or communications submitted by the Chair or the Clerk and to pass such resolutions thereon as the Standing Orders permit and as may be deemed expedient	
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	<u>Items for decision</u>	
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13	Financial Performance Report Quarter 3 2022/23	115 - 128
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15	SYFR HMICFRS Inspection Report	155 - 164
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17	Serious Violence Duty	169 - 294
18	Industrial Action Update	Verbal Report
19	Draft Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 9 January 2023	295 - 304
20	Draft Minutes of the Appointments Committee held on 24 January 2023	305 - 306
21	Draft Minutes of the Appointments Committee held on 6 February 2023	307 - 308
22	Draft Minutes of the Local Pension Board held on 19 January 2023	309 - 318
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SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

9 JANUARY 2023

PRESENT: Councillor C Hogarth (Chair)

Councillors: S Sansome, T Smith, B Johnson, S Ball,
D Hutchinson, A Khayum, P Turpin, A Cherryholme, S Alston
and Dr A Billings

CFO C Kirby, DCFO T Carlin, S Kelsey, S Slater, P Heffernan
and AM M Gillatt (South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service)

J Field, D Nuttall, S Loach, M Potter, D Thorpe and L Belli
(Barnsley MBC)

M Buttery (Office of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime
Commissioner)

IN ATTENDANCE

REMOTELY: C Winter
(South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service)

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillor
T Damms, Councillor S Ayris, N Copley, S Ghuman and
S Norman

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Hogarth informed members that this would be J Field's last meeting and on behalf of the Authority and SYFR gave thanks and wished him well in the future.

3 URGENT ITEMS

Item 19 – People Director Post to be discussed in the absence of the public and press.

4 ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That agenda item 18 entitled 'Systel Current Financial Position Update' and item 19 entitled 'People Director Post' be considered in the absence of the public and press.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS IN RELATION TO ANY ITEM OF BUSINESS ON THE AGENDA

None.

6 REPORTS BY MEMBERS

Councillor Ball informed members that he had visited Kiverton Park Fire with AM Gillatt and was pleased to inform that the fire was now extinguished. A question was raised as to what the Fire Service could do going forward to prevent further fires. In response to Cllr Ball, it was reported that meetings were to take place with the Fire Service, Local Authority and Environment Agency on how to leave the site as there was a substantial amount of waste remaining. Work was being undertaken with the site owner to advise on maintenance, responsibility and processes around the Environment Agency. An update meeting with residents had also been organised.

Councillor Sansome raised a query as to whether anything could be done to prevent or give greater control to the Environment Agency, Fire Service or Local Authority to prevent these fires from happening and to provide residents with some assurance that where they are living can be kept safe if near one of these facilities.

In response, members were informed that the current legislation does not allow the fire service to enforce the regulations around sites. However, they could take an action for discussion to the local Resilience Forum with a view to a joint letter across partner agencies, local politicians and MPs to lobby for a change in legislation. Members acknowledged that this situation was not unique to South Yorkshire and lessons learned from these incidents would be shared at a national level.

7 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

None.

8 TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC, OR COMMUNICATIONS SUBMITTED BY THE CHAIR OR THE CLERK AND TO PASS SUCH RESOLUTIONS THEREON AS THE STANDING ORDERS PERMIT AND AS MAY BE DEEMED EXPEDIENT

None.

9 MINUTES OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 21 NOVEMBER 2022

CFO Kirby informed members that briefing sessions had been held, and continued to be held, with the 4 South Yorkshire Local Authority Chief Executives updating them of the situation around planned industrial strike action and where they were in the timeline and what the planned response would be to ensure continued service.

In response to the concerns Councillor Sansome raised regarding the financial settlement, S Slater responded by informing members that the settlement predicted was showing as a slightly better financial situation than had been forecast. S Loach informed members that due to the national re-evaluation of all business rates the Local Authority was unaware, at the time of the meeting, of the impact this would

have locally and on the fire authority funding. Once further details were known of more precise figures a briefing would be arranged to inform members.

CFO Kirby informed members that a Corporate Advisory Group Meeting was being held on 7th February 2023 to brief members on finance prior to a budget setting meeting to be held in at the full FRA meeting February 2023.

Councillor Hogarth queried how the settlement to the Fire Authority would be worked out given that each Authority would be eligible for different amounts from their business rates. In response, S Loach informed members that by law 1% is given to Fire Authorities from Local Authorities but that this figure was to be determined.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Authority meeting held on 21st November 2022 be signed by the Chair as a correct record

10 COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2021-2024

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was submitted which presented the annual review of the Community Risk Management Plan, 2021 to 2024.

An outline of the summary of updates were provided.

Councillor Sansome queried whether the evidence of findings from the period of intense weather that had been experienced in July 2022 would be integrated within the plan, and whether the findings would provide a clear picture of how to improve from the lessons learned.

With regards to the findings of the incidents faced on the 19th July 2022 and the prolonged heatwave, it had been agreed to take forward areas identified as part of the debrief process. The refresh captured updates on the wildfire programme and the successes. However, the 2024/2027 CRMP will cover in detail the Service response to likely prolonged incidents involving climate change. The Service were aware that resilience arrangements were being reviewed as part of this work.

In response Cllr Sansome asked whether all the information gathered would be integrated within the plan with a clear picture as to the findings and how improvements could be made from the lessons learnt.

In response, ACO Strelczenie commented that the next CRMP to be published for consultation in February 2024 for approval in April 2024 and would detail proposals around responses to climate change events which would include hot weather events.

Dr A Billings queried the lengthy timescale around acquiring electric vehicles and whether the strategy to install charging points would involve other bodies such as South Yorkshire Police.

ACO Strelczenie commented that 2 electric appliances were being trialled in London and Scotland and that legislation for larger vehicles would come into force in 2040. A further update would be provided in item 11 – Green Plan.

Members were provided with an update to home safety checks. They were informed that during the pandemic numbers had declined due to restrictions but that the visits were increasing and were at a similar number to pre-covid.

Dr A Billings enquired whether response times had been reviewed to attend freak fires caused by the extreme heat experienced in July 2022 and whether these fires had created a map of where fires generally happen.

In response ACO Strelczenie informed members that the weather experienced in July 2022 was unprecedented and whilst there was no freak events response times, there were stretch targets for the highest types of incidents which were monitored closely. Climate change event plans were in place and discussions were taking place for the forthcoming year should a heatwave occur. DCFO Carlin added that whilst a map of where fires had occurred had not been created, the Service did have this data and it can be turned into an incident map. In addition, data was being analysed in terms of any outliers such as a house fire in the hills. Members were informed that a community safety route would initially be taken followed by an emergency response if that proved not to be working. It was acknowledged that these events could become more frequent and the significant effects that the weather created in July 2022 highlighted that the Service did not have the level of resources on duty in normal circumstances to deal with the number of incidents. Work with the Fire Brigade Union was taking place to look at ways to stand up extra resources at short notice if required in the future. The SYFRA's ability to do this will support how the Service would deal with a high volume of calls associated with the significant weather events in July 2022.

It was highlighted by Dr Billings that efficiency savings had been omitted from the plan and concerns were raised as to whether it was intended to take future areas of growth out of the reserves.

Dr Billings was thanked for highlighting this issue and informed that the efficiencies plan would be taken away and further defined.

In response to a question received by Councillor Khayum around what the criteria is for home safety checks and how residents are chosen, AM Gillatt informed members of the various criteria. This included targeting those most vulnerable including age, number of people in the property, habits in the property such as drinking, smoking drug use, people who require oxygen tanks and with mobility issues. Work was undertaken with the Local Authority who provided data on people who have assisted bin collections or access Health and Social Care Services. Those residents visited who are deemed at very high risk can then be signposted to other agencies such as Smoking Cessation.

RESOLVED – That the contents be noted and the revised Community Risk Management Plan 2021 to 2024 (2023 refresh), be approved

11 GREEN PLAN

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive submitted a report presenting members with the Green Plan, the aim of which is to address the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority's impact on the environment and climate change and committing the Authority to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero carbon by 2040.

Members raised concerns as to the possible detrimental environmental impact of electric vehicles and whether hydrogen propulsion vehicles had been considered as an alternative.

Members were provided with a brief overview of the plan outlining what risks and challenges would be faced in reducing greenhouse gases. In response to councillors concerns, K Rocket informed members that for its reputation as a public sector organisation it would be expected to comply with the legislation mandated by Government. There would be a move to electric fleet vehicles by 2030 and larger vehicles by 2040. In addition to the measures outlined in the report, there would be encouragement to car share and cycle to work, manage water usage and biodiversity would be encouraged to reduce waste and recycling. It was acknowledged that there would be a need for people to understand what they are doing and why for it to work.

ACO Strelczenie informed members that 8 new diesel appliances had been ordered which were due to arrive shortly and a further 20 appliances over 4 years had been ordered all of which complied with euro compliance arrangements. It was noted that whilst London and Scotland had an electric appliance on trial with a run time of around 8 hours, their trial results would differ significantly to use in South Yorkshire as there are more rural areas. Conversations were ongoing with Fleet Managers, but electric vehicles would not be ruled out as technology would advance within the next 17 years.

Questions were raised as to what help was being given to land owners to deal with grass fires following the extreme heat in July 2022. They were informed that in collaboration with land owners, surveys were being undertaken which had shown that most fires had been caused by natural ignition. Regular patrols with landowners would be undertaken, met office monitoring and attending sites early to prevent spread. Campaigns would focus on communication and education within communities to aid prevention.

In response to a member question regarding insulation in Fire Authority buildings and whether it was up to standard, P. Fieldhouse informed members that investigations were ongoing and a report outlining the findings and solutions would be available by the end of March 2023.

Dr Billings raised concerns around the timescales of 2040 and enquired as to whether dates could be brought forward to raise ambitions. In response, ACO Strelczenie informed members that the Sustainability Committee produced and monitored the plan and that this would be raised in order to investigate reducing targets and timescales, but it was noted that a lot of dates were provided by the Government.

Councillor Ball raised the issue of the possibility of saving money and raising funds through electric vehicles' surplus electricity balance when not in use. P Fieldhouse informed members that investigations into the wiring infrastructure within SY Fire Authority buildings had been undertaken as it had been found to be deteriorating and insufficient to withstand the installation of charging points. They would be going out to tender in the near future for initial installation at South Yorkshire Fire HQ.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) approve the Green Plan and associated documents;
- ii) confirm that the progress towards the Green Plan be presented at the Stakeholder Planning Board.

12 LFB INDEPENDENT CULTURE REVIEW

CFO C Kirby presented members with an Independent Culture Review commissioned by the London Fire Brigade (LFB). Members were informed that within the report were a number of proposed actions that the South Yorkshire Fire Authority Service intended to take following the review.

The review was established following the tragic death of a firefighter that had not long since passed their training who had taken their own life. The review was difficult to read and made clear that the conduct of some staff was not what was expected of a modern fire and rescue service. It was acknowledged that this would not be an isolated issue unique to London.

Members were asked to consider the report and recommendations in detail so they could be incorporated into the Service Improvement Plan which would be included in future plans in South Yorkshire. SYFRA have been asking all new starters and Senior Leadership Team to sign up to pledge to support the 3 behaviours of Honesty, Integrity and Respect. Plans to roll this out across all staff groups were in place for 2023.

Specific actions were set out within the report and included a gap analysis against 23 recommendations in the London Fire Brigade report, a staff survey to better understand employee experiences working with SYFR and the delivery of a staff communication campaign amongst other actions. A review of the current process for discipline and grievances in work would be conducted with a view to exploring work with an interdependent third party as an additional route for staff members to raise concerns about behaviours.

CFO Kirby expressed his commitment to ensure the matter would continue to receive the level of clarity it needed and was taken seriously. The members of staff who intend to go to work and harass and bully others would be dealt with consistently and are being given a simple message that this behaviour is unwelcome in the Service. The aim was to raise confidence within staff to report such behaviours and support would be sought from colleagues and Trade Unions for a unified response to this matter.

Members welcomed the report and recommended actions contained within the report. A query was raised as to what proactive measures were in place such as being able to raise issues of concern during an annual work review. They were informed that there was no specific item currently in the review but this would be looked into. Work was being undertaken around an anonymous complaints procedure to make it more accessible for staff uncomfortable raising issues direct and analysis of trends of staff movements within the service and whether there is a pattern in certain areas and finding out why.

Members raised a query as to how vexatious complaints would be dealt with and how people would be protected against a personal vendetta. They were informed that this would be a case of having a fair and robust process for dealing with both informally and formally.

In response to Dr Billings question as to whether an independent review had been considered for the South Yorkshire Fire Service, CFO C Kirby informed the Committee that within South Yorkshire they had looked internally with openness and honesty. It was acknowledged that there was still the need to look carefully at themselves as an employer and the anonymous staff survey would aid this review and that the experience of the people was more important than the reputation of the Service. If the survey reveals significant concerns a more detailed cultural review could follow.

RESOLVED – that Members approve the Services proposed actions in response to the review.

13 ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 UPDATE

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive provided members with an update of the Annual Plan 2022/23. An overview of each priority was provided and it was felt that having 8 priorities in place helped to stay on track and it was believed that positive progress was being made in all the 8 priority areas.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the progress against the Annual Plan 2022/23.

14 INDUSTRIAL ACTION UPDATE

AM Heffernan provided members with update to the possible industrial action. A ballot had opened on 5th December, 2022 which was due to close on the 30th January, 2023. Following 2 weeks' notice the first possible date for industrial action to take place would be the week commencing 13th February, 2023. If the ballot was passed then it was unknown what the strike action would look like, previously strike action had varied including 2 hour ad hoc strikes or 8 days continuous action.

The South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority Industrial Action Business Continuity Plan (IABCP), which included a series of Acts and Regulations, had been reviewed and updated in August 2022 and was in place to enable the Service to deliver their statutory duties. Planning assumptions contained within the IABCP were based on Home Office expectations of for minimum service delivery. Priority

would be to maintain emergency response critical activities with impact in line with critical functions.

Contingency planning included:

- maintaining a pool of crew operatives, numbers had been bolstered in 2020 and 2022 with potential further recruitment in 2023.
- a pool of contingency crew drivers which was bolstered in 2022 with potential for recruitment in 2023
- a contract was in place with Securitas for Operational Incident Commanders for greater control
- continuous maintenance of skills training for contingency crews based on core requirements within legislation; and
- a range of deployment exercises had taken place at the training site in Handsworth with SY Fire and Rescue and contingency crews and drivers

Members heard how continued dialogue had taken place with National Resilience and the Home Office regarding industrial action preparedness from August 2022 to January 2023. Dialogue had also taken place with the military and how they could supplement what was already in place. The considered decision was that the benefits of working with the military would be minimal versus the arrangements that were already in place.

In the context of what was happening elsewhere in the Region, talks with partner Services in Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire had shown a commonality approach of a robust reason for providing statutory provision with the work being undertaken already and not with military involvement. However, regular dialogue with Joint Regional Liaison Officer as to what intentions are for example if it rolls into summer, was to keep dialogue going should they be able to offer additional provision if required.

Things that had been undertaken in this period:

- Built on Industrial Action Plan Business Continuity Plan
- Intensive periods of consolidation training for contingency crew operatives and drivers
- Introduced a Governance and Support Structure
- Enacted the Business Continuity Crisis Team
- Industrial Action Planning Group
- Significant Task and Finish Groups which have tackled complex areas such as Risk Management and Insurance implications
- Recovery Group in place.

Further contingency group joint training exercise was planned for the end of January, 2023 with Fire Officers and Securitas incident commanders to explore deployment type exercises. Exercises were taking place weekly across all levels of the organisation as it had been found previously that the Corporate side steps up to deliver for a blended team approach.

Members asked in the event of a cross border incident, would these contingency plans continue and provide services across the border. In response, members were informed that Officers and Area managers would have dialogue across the region to make these decisions. Contingency crews had been trained on a number of scenarios including water rescue response.

Members queried whether the insurance paid for contingencies would cover a cross border incident. Members were informed that the insurance would be valid and that it was hoped that if a major incident occurred striking firefighters would return to work, but that this detail was still to be agreed in talks with Unions.

CFO C Kirby placed his thanks on record for the work being undertaken by the planning teams and the officers in the challenging tasks involved. It was also added that dialogue and correspondence from the Trade Unions had been excellent.

CFO C Kirby reiterated to members to members that there would be 3 key things to focus on:

- To continue to protect the South Yorkshire Community through the industrial action
- To respect the decision of members of staff no matter what they decide to do
- The recovery of relationships following periods of industrial action.

RESOLVED – That Members note the update.

15 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 NOVEMBER 2022

RESOLVED – That Members noted the draft minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 21 November, 2022.

16 KEY ISSUES ARISING FROM THE PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2022

RESOLVED – That Members noted the key issues arising from the Performance and Scrutiny Board Meeting held on 17 November, 2022.

17 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and the public interest not to disclose information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

18 SYSTEL CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION UPDATE

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was submitted which provided Members with an overview of Systels current financial situation.

RESOLVED – That Members note the content of the report.

19 URGENT ITEM - PEOPLE DIRECTOR POST

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was submitted which provided Members with an overview of the policies and processes for recruiting to the People Director post.

RESOLVED – That Members approve the recommendation to ring-fence the recruitment and selection process for the post of People Director to the current Head of People and OD post holder.

No.	Action	Timescale	Officer(s)	Status/Update
1	To provide Members with a copy of the briefing for the active pension members regarding their pensions benefits.	In due course	S Kelsey	
2	To request that members of the Local Resilience Forum put together a joint letter across partner agencies and local politicians and MP's to lobby government to change legislation surrounding recycling plants	In due course	C Kirby	
3	To brief members prior to budget approval	In due course	S Loach	

	of the fire precepts expected for each South Yorkshire Area			
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CHAIR

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Meeting	SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
Meeting Date	20 FEBRUARY 2023
Report of	CLERK TO THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
Report Sponsor(s)	DEPUTY CLERK
Subject	APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER TO THE AUTHORITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Monitoring Officer to the Authority, Jason Field, who was Head of Legal Services at Barnsley MBC left the organisation in January 2023 and this report details the succession arrangements.

Members are recommended to appoint the new Monitoring Officer, Sukdave Ghuman, Service Director Legal & Governance, with effect from 1st February 2023 on a temporary basis until the new Head of Legal Services is in post.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Members are recommended to:-

- a) Appoint Sukdave Ghuman, Service Director Legal & Governance, as Monitoring Officer to the Authority on a temporary basis until the new Head of Legal Services is in post.

CONTENTS

Main Report

BACKGROUND

1. Jason Field, Head of Legal Services at Barnsley MBC, left Barnsley MBC on 11 January 2023. The Council has appointed Sukdave Ghuman , Service Director Law & Governance, as Monitoring Officer.

The Authority is, therefore, recommended to formally appoint Sukdave Ghuman as Monitoring Officer to the Authority on a temporary basis until the recruitment process for the new Head of Legal Services is completed.

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR ASPIRATIONS

- ☒ **Be a great place to work-** we will create the right culture, values and behaviours to make this a brilliant place to work that is inclusive for all
- ☒ **Put people first-** we will spend money carefully, use our resources wisely and collaborate with others to provide the best deal to the communities we serve
- ☒ **Strive to be the best in everything we do-** we will work with others, make the most of technology and develop leaders to become the very best at what we can be

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No

If you have ticked 'Yes' please provide brief details in the box below and include the third party/parties it would involve:

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY IMPLICATIONS

2. The appointment of a Monitoring Officer to the Authority ensures continuity of professional advice and guidance.

EQUALITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED

- ☐ Yes

If you have ticked 'Yes' please complete the below comment boxes providing details as follows:

Summary of any Adverse Impacts Identified:	Key Mitigating Actions Proposed and Agreed:

- ☐ No
- ☒ N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why an EA is not required/is outstanding:

This report does not relate to the introduction of a new policy, strategy or procedure.

HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED (tick relevant box)

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☒ N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why a Health and Safety Risk Assessment is not required/is outstanding:

This report covers governance arrangements and does not require a H&S / risk assessment.

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

3. Under the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority [Scheme of Delegation](#) a decision
*is required / *has been approved at Service level.

Delegated Power ☐ Yes
☒ No

This report is not submitted under delegated powers. It relates to the procedural / governance arrangements of the Authority.

IMPLICATIONS

4. Industrial Relations, Financial, Legal, Asset Management, Environmental and Sustainability, Diversity, Communications and Health and Safety implications have been considered in compiling this report.

List of background documents

Report Author:	Name:	Daisy Thorpe, Council Governance Officer
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SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

Meeting	FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
Meeting Date	20 FEBRUARY 2023
Report of	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER / CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CLERK AND TREASURER
Report Sponsor(s)	CLERK AND TREASURER
Subject	2023/24 ANNUAL REVENUE BUDGET & COUNCIL TAX SETTING

BACKGROUND

The Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) is required to approve the 2023/24 revenue budget and set the council tax and precept by the legislative deadline of 1st March each year.

This report sets out the implications of the Local Government Finance Settlement, the proposed 2023/24 revenue budget and an updated capital programme, including new 2023/24 capital investment schemes for member approval. Any new future years' investments will only be formally considered when the outcome of the next funding settlement, which is due late 2023, are known. Any essential additional investment decision over and above that requested in this report will be addressed separately by the FRA during the financial year, to avoid making decisions that may prove unaffordable and unsustainable. The impact on the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2023-26 (MTFP) and the strategy for the future use of the Authority's reserves are also considered.

In setting the council tax and budget, Members will need to consider the council tax options set out in the report and approve the 2023/24 Council Tax.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Current Medium Term Financial Plan

When the Authority set its 2022/23 Budget at this time last year, no one could really predict the global economic crisis the country and the world now finds itself in.

At the start of 2023 inflation was in excess of 10%, the highest level for over 10 years, predominantly driven by the significant rise in energy prices as a result of the war in Ukraine. Fuel prices and other general costs have also increased significantly over the last 12 months. Interest rates have also risen by 3.5% over the past 12 months to 4% in January.

Furthermore, the cost of employee pay has also increased to keep up with the cost of inflation. Included within the 2022/23 budget was a provision of 2% for the increase in pay. Whilst support staff reached an agreement averaging 5.72%% for this year, at the time of writing this report, the pay award for Operational staff (fire fighters) is an offer of 7% from 1 July 2022 and 5% from 1 July 2023. This has yet to be agreed, with industrial action a distinct possibility if no agreement is reached.

Therefore, the updated MTFP is yet again set within the context of a number of ongoing uncertainties, risks and concerns for the Authority to consider:

- A one - year only finance settlement for 2023/24, with significant uncertainty surrounding future funding;
- A council tax precept flexibility option of £5 for 2023/24 only agreed at this stage;
- Future public sector funding reforms coupled with the current position of national public finances;
- Ongoing, unprecedented, negotiations with regards to employee pay awards;
- Supply chain issues and inflationary pressures, including interest rates, and the impact this will have on the running of the service;

Key Policy Considerations

As Members are aware, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR) needs to have enough resources available to provide an emergency response even in times of exceptional demand. This includes the ability to deal with large scale emergencies, a range of smaller incidents that may happen together and / or incidents that are of an extended duration. This resilience is vital to ensuring safe systems of work for our people.

With damaged public finances and the ongoing review of public sector funding distribution (delayed by at least 2 years), the challenge remains to balance sparse resources against these emerging risks. Whilst a balanced position can be achieved for 2023/24 through a combination of increased government funding, use of reserves and a proposed £5 increase in council tax, a programme of efficiency and savings is required to achieve a balanced position in future years. Despite the extraordinary and challenging circumstances facing public services, the Service is committed to bringing forward this programme during the next year.

This MTFP captures the following key and significant operating investments, some of which have already been implemented:

- Recruitment of more firefighters to enable the Service to match its operational strength to its establishment posts and optimise fire engine availability on more occasions;
- Business Fire Safety – we have invested in additional posts to ensure we are able to deal with the extra demands placed across all Fire and Rescue Services in this area;
- Community Safety Partnership Team – we have established these posts after successful trials to ensure we are working effectively with partners to better identify vulnerable residents and groups and to provide more targeted risk reduction activity; and
- Continue to invest in our infrastructure and assets e.g. new fire appliances, new firefighting kit and equipment to ensure we have the best available equipment to keep firefighters safe.

Updated Reserves Strategy

The Authority's General Reserve (incl. Operational Contingency), available to support the budget, is estimated to be at around £15 million at the end of 2022/23, including a £5m Minimum Working Balance together with an emerging risk reserve of £2.2m agreed at the start of 2022/23 to help address the rising cost pressures reported and future risks.

The reserves balance also includes resources set aside to fund the costs of the Immediate Detriment Pension Liability together with future borrowing costs. Included within this report is an updated Capital Programme, which is set within the framework of the Authority's Capital Investment Strategy and aligned to the approved Reserves Strategy. In addition, there are a number of new, but significant schemes that are prioritised based on essential operational need aligned to improving operational effectiveness over the medium to long term. These schemes, if supported, will be financed from long-term borrowing, the cost of which has been factored into the revenue budget MTFP.

There is however, a drawdown of some of these reserves, as highlighted in Section C of this report is required in order to achieve a balanced position for 2023/24 and allow the Authority and Service to agree an efficiency programme to address funding gaps.

As in previous years, the Service will provide Members with a series of regular financial updates in the run up to refreshing its MTFP including the efficiency programme as highlighted. The overall financial position for the Authority will continue to evolve and develop over time and therefore needs to remain as flexible as it can as the outcomes and implications from a number of significant events emerge as well as taking cognisance of any further management actions.

SYFR continues to be committed to providing the best possible service to the people of South Yorkshire within the resources available to it. Decisions regarding the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) are determined by fire risk, but ultimately, they need to be affordable and sustainable thus ensuring that there is proper alignment of financial, operational and resourcing plans respectively.

Updated Medium Term Financial Plan 2023 - 2026

The current proposed budget for 2023/24 and future forecast has been updated. This is following the announcement, late December 2022, of the provisional settlement and as a result, early February 2023, of the increased pay award offer for Operational Staff of 7% from 1 July 2022 and 5% from 1 July 2023. Funding was higher than anticipated and further adjustments to expenditure have resulted in a reduction in non-pay costs. This is offset by the significant increase in employee costs. The current forecast position over the period is as follows:

	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Total Expenditure	64,280	66,515	67,633
Total Resources	(62,860)	(63,953)	(65,364)
(Surplus) / Gap	1,420	2,562	2,269

Key Assumptions

The above position is predicated on the following key assumptions:

- Provision for pay awards for Operations of 7% for 2022/23 and 5% for 2023/24 and Support 4% for 2023/24 and 2% hereafter;
- Government funding assumed at 2023/24 levels across the period, with inflation for the Revenue Support Grant and Top-Up grant only. This includes the continuation of the pensions grant;
- An increase in the operational staffing establishment in 2023/24 from 592 to 608;
- Contractual inflation assumed at 10% for 2023/24 reducing to 3% thereafter;
- Business rate income dependant on the 4 local districts;

- Average council tax base increases across the region of around 4,000 band D equivalent properties per annum;
- Total new planned capital investment of £28m over the period, of which £8m is required in 2023/24.

The above position is also based on council tax increases of 3% for 2024/25 reducing to 2% thereafter. Any change to this assumption will impact the above, particularly the future year gaps. For context each 1% increase in council tax precept equals £0.3m in additional resources.

The above is summarised further below and in more detail in Section's A-C of this document.

Area of Spend	2023/24 £m
2023/24 Opening Expenditure Budget	57.877
<i>Additional Cost Pressures</i>	
Employees	+5.114
Premises	+0.811
Transport	+0.325
Supplies and Services	-0.320
Capital Financing	+0.304
Other Expenses (incl. BMBC Recharge to FRA)	+0.062
Less: Income	+0.107
Total Cost Pressure	+6.403
Total Spending Requirement	64.280
<i>Funded by:</i>	
2023/24 Opening Resources	-58.827
Government's Finance Settlement	+1.006
Additional Council Tax	+1.845
Additional Business Rates	+1.182
Total Resources	-62.860
NET CONTRIBUTION FROM RESERVES	1.420

As a result of the cost pressures predicted in 2023/24 there is a net deficit of £1.420m. This will be addressed via a drawdown from the Emerging Risk reserve which was set aside specifically for this purpose. But there remains a deficit of £4.8m over the rest of the planning period. The Service has committed to bring forward an ongoing efficiency and savings plan to address this gap, for consideration during 2023/24. Available resources will also be continuously reviewed and updated once further details are announced following the ongoing funding review.

It is also worth noting that this position is predicated on an assumed maximum council tax increase of £5 in 2023/24, 3% in 2024/25 and a 1.99% increase thereafter. A £5 increase generates an additional £1.8m meaning that the overall deficit would increase should members be minded not to introduce the recommended council tax increase of £5. Further details are provided in Section C.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Members are recommended to:

- a) Approve the Authority's 2023/24 Revenue Budget at Appendix A;
 - b) Note the Treasurer's Section 25 Statement (Section H) in support of the budget;
 - c) Approve the Capital Investment Strategy (Appendix B) including the updated Capital Programme and new approvals as set out in Section E of this report;
 - d) Endorse the proposed approach for managing reserves as set out in Section D to this report, noting the decrease in reserves to address the funding gap in 2023/24;
 - e) Approve the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy at Section G;
 - f) Approve the fees and charges schedule for 2023/24 at Appendix D; and
 - g) Approve a Council Tax Increase of £5 for 2023/24 (Section C below).
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Main Report

- Section A – Revenue Budget 2023/24
- Section B - Local Government Finance Settlement
- Section C – Precept Income
- Section D – Medium Term Financial Forecast 2023 to 2026
- Section E – Capital Investment Strategy & Programme
- Section F – Reserves Position and Current Strategy
- Section G – 2023/24 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy
- Section H – Treasurer's Section 25 Report

Appendix A – 2023/24 Revenue Budget

Appendix B – Capital Investment Strategy incorporating the updated Capital Investment Programme

Appendix C – Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023/24

Appendix D – Fees and Charges 2023/24

SECTION A: REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24

1. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority (SYFRA) set a Net Revenue Budget for 2022/23 of £57.877m and this has formed the base of the current Budget Baseline spend for 2023/24, which is estimated to be £64.280m, a net increase of £6.403m or 11%.
2. The 2022/23 Baseline Budget has been rolled forward allowing for:
 - Inflation both contractual and the current economic impact, significantly on utilities and fuel;
 - Support Staff pay awards and the potential pay award for Operational Staff not yet agreed;
 - Recognised budget pressures, including the ongoing effects of the pandemic and changes in employment law;
 - The ongoing effect of agreed savings proposals and other known cost reductions; and
3. The above combined results in an indicative spend requirement for 2023/24 of £64.280m. This broadly reflects the agreed planning assumptions submitted and agreed with Members in November 2022 and the results of the Provisional Settlement announced in December 2022. A summary of the MTFP report is presented at Section D of this report.
4. The table below sets out the main changes since the approved MTFP:

	£m
MTFP November 22 Planned Overspend	3,090
Change in Govt Funding – Settlement Dec 22	-2,361
Additional Govt Funding – One-off Services Grant	202
Change in Local Funding – Business Rates	-165
Change in Local Funding – Council Tax	-4
Additional Budget Requirement	658
Additional Contribution from Reserves	-1420
Budget Setting February 23	0

5. This next section sets out a headline analysis of the Budget Baseline Requirement and provides a narrative commentary to help Members understand the assumptions made in deriving the proposed spend figures in each year. A more detailed analysis for each area of spend is presented at Appendix A.

Area of Spend	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	Change from 2022/23 (£m / %)
Employees	47.437	52.551	+5.114m / +11%
Premises	3.727	4.538	+0.811m / +21.7%
Transport	0.996	1.320	+0.324m / +32.5%
Supplies and Services	4.230	3.910	-0.320m / -7.6%
Capital Financing	2.270	2.574	+0.304m / +13.4%
Other Expenses (incl. BMBC Recharge to FRA)	0.447	0.510	+0.063m / +14.1%
SPENDING REQUIREMENT	59.107	65.403	+6.296m / +11%
Less: Income	(1.230)	(1.123)	+0.107m / +8.7%
NET SPENDING REQUIREMENT	57.877	64.280	+6.403m / +11%

REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24 – MAJOR VARIATIONS AGAINST 2022/23

6. The main variations between the 2023/24 proposed budget and the 2022/23 budget are outlined in the following paragraphs detailing each spend category. They are broadly reflective of the reasons presented in the recent MTFP update report approved by Members at its November 2022 meeting.
7. It should be noted that the following savings/efficiencies have been made within the 2023/24 budget. For 2024/25 onwards further savings/efficiencies will need to be identified to reduce the forecast deficit, which is currently identified, in order to maintain a balanced budget. This will be presented through an Efficiency Plan later in the year:
 - Employees – (£0.160m) Potential savings on the indirect pensions budget and employee insurance and work with budget holders to align budgets to trends;
 - Premises – (£0.451m) Estates and sustainability savings have been identified along with work with budget holders to align budgets to trends;
 - Transport – (0.020m) Savings have also been made on transport insurance;
 - Supplies & Services – (£0.320m) Reductions have been made in the areas of office equipment, furniture, services and ICT expenditure; and
 - Capital Financing – (£0.078m) – As a result of the MTFP review of the future capital programme.

Employees

8. Employee related costs account for c.82% of the forecast gross spending requirement. These are estimated to be £52.551m in 2023/24, an increase of £5.114m from 2022/23. The main changes are presented by each category of staffing:

Wholetime Staffing

2022/23 Budget:	2023/24 Budget:	Increase
£32,928,739	£36,841,493	£3,912,754

9. The main reasons which explain this projected increase in spend are:
- As reported in the MTFP the forecast pay award for 2022/23 was 2%. Effective from 1st July each year. At the time of this report an offer of 5% has been rejected and a further offer of 7% is now under consideration, which was approximately £2m above forecast. This new offer also includes 5% for 2023/24 and we have forecast 4% for 2024/25 reducing to 2% in 2025/26.
 - There has been a modest increase on the cost of overtime (£0.250m) to reflect the rising cost in this area. This will create a contingency in this area.
 - Forecast establishment is set to increase from 592 to 608, which is the full establishment and aligned to the current CRMP.
 - One further change, from the MTFP is an additional pressure as a result of the legal case Bear Scotland (£0.200m), relating to payments included within holiday pay calculations.

On Call Firefighters

2022/23 Budget:	2023/24 Budget:	Increase
£1,580,795	£1,879,632	£298,827

10. The increase from 2022/23, as with Wholetime Staffing, now reflects the full year effect of the forecast 2022/23 Operational pay award (7%) and the forecast 5% for 2023/24, reducing to 4% for 2024/25 and 2% for 2025/26.
11. Since November, as a result of continuous review of the deployment of On-Call firefighters, the budget has also been increased (£0.132m) due to nearing establishment numbers and the associated cost involved.

Control Staff

2021/22 Budget:	2022/23 Budget:	Increase
£1,374,201	£1,454,050	£79,849

12. There has been no change to the budget for Control from the MTFP other than the current pay award offer in line with Wholetime and On-Call Staffing. The increase is offset by a reduction aligning to the actual establishment.

Support Staff

2022/23 Budget:	2023/24 Budget:	Increase
£9,398,438	£10,410,716	£1,012,278

13. As reported in the MTFP, the increase reflects two main areas:

- The agreed pay award for support staff was an average 3.72% above the 2% forecast for 2022/23. The budget for 2023/24 includes the full year effect of this increase and a forecast 4% increase for 2023/24 and 2024/25 reducing to 2% in 2025/26.
 - There is an element of growth to reflect proposals detailed in the Service investment Plan approved by the Authority in November. This growth is offset by some savings and efficiencies and the end of a number of temporary posts.
14. There is a change since the MTFP of an additional £0.134m as a result of the legal employment law case Bear Scotland.

Indirect Employee Costs

2022/23 Budget:	2023/24 Budget:	Decrease
£2,154,818	£1,974,818	£180,00

15. There has been further savings identified since the MTFP (£0.020m). The reduction in budget relates to savings to offset growth in support staff salaries and continuous improvement work within individual budgets.
16. Members should note that there is a strong likelihood that such costs will increase principally resulting from the recent or likely outcomes from the significant pension legal cases including McCloud, Sergeant and Matthews. The complexity of the cases and the ongoing uncertainty regarding pension calculations will make financial planning more volatile until clarity of outcomes can be exemplified.

Premises Related Costs

2022/23 Budget:	2023/24 Budget:	Increase
£3,727,325	£4,537,367	£810,042

17. As reported in the MTFP, the cost of premises related spend, mainly related to utilities, is expected to increase during the period. This has been updated with a reduction in forecast expenditure:
- 2022/23 has seen an unprecedented national and global increase in the cost of utilities, with a forecast overspend of approximately £1m. We also reported, in the MTFP, a significant forecast increase for 2023/24. However this has now been adjusted and a reduction in forecast of £0.950m has been included above.
 - Savings to mitigate the increases are included with £0.250m included in 2023/24 as a result of work within the Estates team to reduce consumption and through the Sustainability Plan.
 - The Service continues to positively address backlog maintenance issues through more intuitive, condition-driven planned lifecycle maintenance programmes. The impact of this and other work is a reducing budget from 2023/24 to reflect the savings and efficiencies now being achieved (£0.200m over the MTFP period).

Transport Related Costs

2022/23 Budget: £995,427	2023/24 Budget: £1,320,255	Increase £324,828
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18. There has been no change since the MTFP. As with utility costs, fuels has seen a significant increase in 2022/23. The budget for 2023/24 reflects aligning costs to the 2022/23 level and a 10% inflationary increase. For the remaining of the MTFP inflation has been included as well as a reduction in fuel for the gradual, potential move to electric ancillary vehicles.

Supplies and Services Related Costs

2022/23 Budget: £4,230,047	2023/24 Budget: £3,910,047	Decrease £320,000
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19. The decrease reported in the MTFP has reduced slightly due to the revised forecast in relation to airwaves.
20. The main reductions are:
- £0.030m – Relating to ICT efficiencies to vire to support staff costs to fund the increase in establishment as agreed in the Service Investment Plan.
 - £0.280m – proposed savings/efficiencies under the equipment, furniture and materials budget, office expenses budget, services budget and the other miscellaneous budget.

Capital Financing Costs

2022/23 Budget: £2,269,531	2023/24 Budget: £2,574,032	Increase £304,501
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21. There has been no change since the MTFP. For 2022/23 the budget reflects the Interest and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) (Principal) payable in relation the Service's loan debt outstanding and capital financing requirement. This borrowing was a result of previous decisions on financing capital spend and takes account of a sensible reduction in the Authority's under borrowing position aligned to the approved Treasury Management Strategy.
22. The capital financing budget also reflects the change in the MRP policy that was reviewed a few years ago and the significant savings that are generated; albeit on a reducing basis beyond the period of this medium-term plan. Non-budgeted savings arising from the change of policy have been held back in an earmarked (unusable) reserve to ensure all future costs are provided for.
23. The Capital Programme, reported in the MTFP has not changed and is expected to be financed mainly from external borrowing and these likely borrowing costs of this are built into this plan.

Other Expenses (including Barnsley MBC Service Level Agreement with the FRA)

2022/23 Budget: £447,320	2023/24 Budget: £510,134	Increase £62,814
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24. This line of spend principally relates to the provision of SYFRA Members related allowances, development and expenses, fees relating to the appointed Internal Auditor's RSM, fees relating to the appointed External Auditors Deloitte and the provision of services to South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority (SYFRA) from Barnsley MBC officers.
25. The increase in budget from the MTFP relates to the inflationary increase of the service level agreement with Barnsley BMC and a forecast 150% increase in external audit fees.

Income

2022/23 Budget: (£1,229,566)	2023/24 Budget: (£1,123,391)	Decrease £106,175
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26. There is no change from the MTFP. The main constituent elements of income derive from secondments of firefighting personnel to other brigades or national programmes/projects, government grant and other contributions and investment income arising from cash balances invested in line with the approved Investment Strategy.
27. The reduction in income from Customer and Client receipts is forecast, however this is offset by an increase in investment income as a result of the increased interest rate. Government Grants are reducing over the term of the MTFP as the Firelink Grant is phased out 20% per year from 2022/23.
28. A schedule of proposed fees and charges for 2023/24 is presented at Appendix D for approval.

SECTION B: LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT

29. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority (SYFRA) receives an annual Settlement Funding Assessment via the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) that is comprised of Revenue Support Grant (RSG), Business Rates Top-Up Grant, the Government's projection of the Service's 1% share of the business rates income raised in South Yorkshire and any Section 31 Grant monies. The Home Office also fund the unreasonable cost element (estimated at 90%) of the firefighter pension superannuation costs in the form of a direct grant.
30. The provisional finance settlement was announced by DLUHC on 16th December 2022 and although SYFRA has not received any official notification on the pensions grant, it is anticipated that it will be the same as 2022/23. This has been assumed in the analysis provided below. Therefore, the overall position is largely the same as the one presented to the SYFRA in November's MTFP with the exception of the inclusion of the new "one-off" Service Grant" (further explanation is provided below).

31. The full position for 2023/24 is shown below compared to the 2022/23 settlement:-

	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	Change 22/23 to 23/24 £m
Revenue Support Grant	8.716	9.600	+0.884
Business Rates			
- Top Up	11.550	12.010	+0.460
- Retained	3.907	4.206	+0.299
	15.457	16.216	+0.759
S31 Grant	1.753	2.770	+1.017
Service Grant	1.081	0.609	-0.472
Pensions Grant	*2.756	*2.756	0.000
OVERALL GOVT. FUNDING	29.763	31.951	+2.188

32. The settlement does confirm that overall government funding will increase by £2.188m from 2022/23, predominantly as a result of a 10% inflationary increase in core funding. The component parts of the settlement are outlined in more detail below:

Revenue Support Grant (RSG)

33. Revenue Support Grant is a share of Total England Funding for Fire Authorities calculated by DLUHC. The share was originally derived from a baseline set in the 2013/14 Local Government Settlement. Whilst RSG has been regularly cut over recent years, there is an inflationary increase in 2023/24 based on the preceding September's Consumer Price Index (CPI) which was 10.1%.

Business Rates

34. Local Authorities collect all the business rates due on Commercial Properties in their area. As a way of partly devolving funding to Local Authorities, the Coalition Government agreed from 2013/14 that 50% of the business rates would be retained by local authorities and that as part of this new system, 2% of business rate income would fund Fire Authorities across England. As part of these system changes, the 4 South Yorkshire (SY) Districts pay over 1% of their retained business rate income directly across to SYFRA. The retained rates for 23/24 stands at £4.2m, an increase of £0.3m from 2022/23 reflecting business growth across the region.

Top Up grant

35. DLUHC also pay over a Top Up grant to SYFRA in accordance with the funding formula. This funds the difference between the spending needs in the SY area and the amount that is collected in business rates or received in RSG. Top-Up Grant has been increased by £0.5m and now stands at £12m in 2023/24.

Section 31 Grant

36. Section 31 income is paid by DLUHC to compensate for any policy changes they introduce (e.g. extending small business rate relief, capping inflation) so that Fire/ Local Authorities are not affected by any new burdens. S31 grant is expected to increase by £1m in 2023/24 reflecting inflation at 10% on the top up grant and the

business rate multiplier, both of which were frozen by government for the third year running.

Pension Grant

37. As mentioned previously, the Home Office also fund the additional superannuation costs of firefighters through direct grant based on 90% of the additional liability. It is anticipated that the Home Office will pay the pensions grant again in 2023/24 (£2.8m) although notification has yet to be received from the Home Office.

Service Grant

38. As part of the settlement, the Government announced a new one-off Service Grant. The Secretary of State for the DLUHC has made it clear that this resource should be treated as one-off pending a future review of its distribution.

Future LG Settlements

39. Government have yet again only provided funding certainty for 1 year. Future funding remains significantly uncertain especially given the damage caused to public finances following the COVID 19 pandemic and ongoing economic crisis.

SECTION C: PRECEPT INCOME

40. The Authority must set its precept and Council Tax by the prescribed legislative deadline. The precept income received by the Authority depends on the calculation of two factors - the Band D Council Tax set by the Authority multiplied by the Council Tax base estimated by each of the districts. The base for 2023/24 is estimated to be 370,064 properties, an increase of 4,111 properties since last year.
41. The settlement also confirmed that the Council Tax referendum limit would be set at £5 for Fire Authorities for 2023/24. This means that if the Authority wants to set a Council Tax above this level, it will need to undertake a referendum. The costs of carrying out a referendum are not known but are estimated at anywhere between £0.5m and £1m. Such costs would need to be taken into account when assessing income from Council Tax levels set above the referendum limit.
42. In considering whether to increase the Council Tax, Members need to be aware that the current financial plans are based on an assumption that the Council Tax would be increased by £5 in 2023/24, 3% in 2024/25 and a 1.99% increase thereafter. Illustrated in the table below are some of the potential options available to Members for 2023/24 and the impact this would have on the level of precept raised. Each 1% increase equates to additional income of around £0.3m (based on the current tax base).
43. Also shown is the impact on the taxpayer. It is also worth noting that any increase in the council tax has a compounding impact on the level of precept raised in future years and increases permanent resources available to fund any ongoing spending requirements.
44. The estimates for Council Tax Income are based on a composite collection rate of 95% (across all 4 South Yorkshire districts) to reflect the impact of the pandemic as well as other factors (e.g. Local Council Tax Support and additional Adult Social Care precept) and will require stringent monitoring during the course of the year.

	POTENTIAL COUNCIL TAX INCREASE					
	£0	£1	£2	£3	£4	£5
Council Tax Charge (£)	£77.58	£78.58	£79.58	£80.58	£81.58	£82.58
% Increase	-	1.29%	2.58%	3.87%	5.16%	6.44%
Council Tax Requirement	£28,709,592	£29,079,657	£29,449,721	£29,819,785	£30,189,850	£30,559,914
Additional Council tax raised	-	£370,064	£740,129	£1,110,193	£1,480,257	£1,850,322
MFTP Call on reserves	£3,640,386	£2,900,257	£2,530,193	£2,160,129	£1,790,064	£1,420,000

45. The current MFTP assumes a £5 council tax increase in 2023/24. This equates to an increase of less than 10p per week for a Band D household. It should be noted that the majority of properties in South Yorkshire are in Bands A or B meaning the annual and weekly increase will be less.
46. In addition to Council Tax increases, further funding is generated via the Collection Fund surplus account. A Collection Fund (CF) surplus is generated when Council Tax collection is higher than expected by the districts. A collection fund surplus of £0.348m has been included in the budgeted income for 2023/24.
47. A summary of the 2023/24 revenue budget, assuming an increase in council tax of £5, is outlined in the following table.

	£5 Council Tax Increase £m
Net Budget Requirement (from Appendix A)	64.280
Funding:	
RSG	9.600
Business Rates Top Up	12.010
Business Rates Retained	4.206
Section 31 Grant - Business Rates	2.770
Section 31 Grant - Pensions	2.756
One – Off Services Support Grant	0.609
Precept (based on a £5 increase in CT)	30.561
Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus	0.348
Total Resources	62.860
Estimated Budget Deficit	1.420
Band D Council Tax	82.58

48. It is recommended that the deficit estimated for 2023/24 be funded from the Emerging Risk reserve held in reserve pending an efficiency and savings plan for 2024/25 and beyond.

SECTION D: MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL FORECAST

49. The MTFP sets out the framework for understanding the strategic, service and financial challenges SYFRA faces. It is a key part of the Authority's Budget and Policy Framework intended to ensure that financial resources are aligned to the delivery of SYFRA's objectives and priorities and ensuring its longer-term financial sustainability. The most recent MTFP 2023-2026 was agreed by SYFRA Members at their meeting on the 21 November 2022. In so doing, this allowed the Service to move forward the financial forecasts in light of recent national developments and local circumstances, but also included the effects of the Service's ongoing and rolling budget and savings process.
50. The MTFP has been revised to reflect the changes following the finance settlement in December and other assumptions:

	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
<i>Expenditure</i>			
Employees	52.552	54.574	55.627
Premises	4.537	4.673	4.684
Transport	1.320	1.302	1.213
Supplies & Services	3.910	3.910	3.910
Capital Financing	2.574	2.618	2.717
Other Expenses	0.510	0.517	0.517
Income	-1.123	-1.079	-1.035
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	64.280	66.515	67.633
<i>Resources</i>			
Government Grant	-21.610	-22.258	-22.703
One-off Service Grant	-0.609	-	-
Pension Grant	-2.756	-2.756	-2.756
Business Rates	-6.976	-6.811	-6.811
Council Tax	-30.909	-32.128	-33.094
TOTAL RESOURCES	-62.860	-63.953	-65.364
NET DEFICIT	1.420	2.562	2.269

51. The following key assumptions have been built into the above plan:
- Provision for pay awards for Operational Staff of 7% for 2022/23 and 5% for 2023/24 and Support Staff 4% 2023/24 and 2024/25 and 2% thereafter;
 - An increase in the operational staffing establishment in 2023/24 from 592 to 608;
 - Service improvement investment as part of workforce planning;
 - Contractual inflation assumed at 10% for 2023/24 and 3% thereafter;
 - Forecast increases on utilities in line with providers information;
 - Government funding assumed at 2023/24 provisional levels across the period, adjusted for inflation, and continuation of the pensions grant);
 - Average council tax base increased across the region of around 4,000 band D equivalent properties per annum;
 - Council tax increases of £5.00 for 2023/24, 3% for 2024/25 and then 3% thereafter;
 - Total new planned capital investment of £28m over the period.

52. The above forecast indicates a deficit of £1.420m 2023/24 and a further £4.8m over the planning period that needs to be addressed, to ensure balanced budgets, through the efficiency and improvement programme referred to elsewhere in this report

FINANCIAL RISKS TO THE MTFP

53. It is important to recognise that the plan will need to be kept under continuous review given the pace of change, not only at a local level, but also at a national and international level.
54. The following issues and risks are particularly relevant:
- Changes to assumed workforce planning profiles for wholetime firefighter retirements, sickness and other absences / modified duties and unplanned leavers may create financial variances and pressures e.g. additional unplanned overtime / expenses.
 - The climate of Industrial Action provides uncertainties over additional costs
 - Future pensions' employer contribution rates are expected to rise sharply although the full extent of the rise will only be known when the GAD actuarial valuation reports are made available – the next valuation is due in 2023. In addition, there are several high-profile legal cases e.g. McCloud and Sergeant that could have a lasting and equally adverse impact on these valuations.
 - Inflation assumptions may change over the MTFP period. We are in an unprecedented time of high level of inflation. The impact on the current national and international situation has resulted in significant increases in gas and electric. These rates are susceptible to change, either through further increases or decreases. In addition, the higher than anticipated pay award offers, to which only the Support Staff offer has been accepted coupled with higher than normal forecast awards for future years.
 - Pension legal cases – there are as previously referenced a number of high profile cases that will increase future employer superannuation costs. For example the 'Immediate Detriment' cases arising out of the McCloud and Sargeant that will have a lasting and equally adverse impact on these valuations.
 - Council tax assumptions included in the MTFP assume an annual increase of £5.00 for 2023/24, 3% for 2024/25 reverting back to 1.99% for 2025/26. However, this may be subject to change by legislation (Excessiveness Rules).
 - The council tax base may change from assumptions leading to more or less precept income. The collection rates are also likely to be affected although this has been reflected in the assumptions.
 - Managing the outcomes from the inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), Round 2, which for SYFR were published in January 2023.
 - Managing the outcomes from the recent Government Consultation on the future governance and funding of England's Fire and Rescue Services.

SECTION E: CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY & PROGRAMME

55. The Authority's Capital Programme is set within the Authority's Capital Investment Strategy. The Capital Investment Strategy is a regulatory requirement and is attached at Appendix B to the report. It provides a mechanism by which capital expenditure and investment decisions are aligned over the medium-term planning period within the Authority's key annual and service improvement priorities and CRMP. It also sets the framework for the Authority's capital expenditure reflecting criteria including prioritisation, governance and asset and risk management. This also links to the Authorities other strategies and plans e.g. Treasury Management and Reserves Strategies.
56. As reported in the Authority's MTFP (November 2022), functional areas have been working up and refreshing their current Service and Asset Management plans, and as a result approval is required for the additional forecast of £25m, over the period of the plan and £6.6m for 2023/24 as shown in the table below.
57. The Capital Programme for 2022/23 was revised at Quarter 2 and reduced from £10.384m to £5.952m, which impacts the spend projections for 2022/23 – 2025/26. The latest spend projections for previously approved capital schemes and new proposals are shown in the table and narrative below. In summary, the Authority is continuing to look to invest in helping to ensure firefighters have the right, fit for purpose, emergency response appliances, equipment, support and training facilities and which will also help to future proof the infrastructure:

	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	Total 2023-2026
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
New Builds & Major Refurbishment	583,609	4,400,000	6,300,000	4,000,000	14,700,000
Station Improvement Programme	1,916,023	1,425,000	1,375,000	1,300,000	4,100,000
TOTAL PREMISES	2,499,632	5,825,000	7,675,000	5,300,000	18,800,000
Appliances	1,710,000	1,792,000	1,460,000	1,460,000	4,712,000
Ancilliary Vehicles	665,000	549,500	1,370,000	10,000	1,929,500
TOTAL TRANSPORT	2,375,000	2,341,500	2,830,000	1,470,000	6,641,500
ICT Development	542,634	655,000	505,000	200,000	1,360,000
Control Collaboration Project	45,000	0	0	0	0
ESMCP System	0	33,000	0	0	33,000
TOTAL INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION	587,634	688,000	505,000	200,000	1,393,000
Op Equip & Personal Protective Equip (PPE)	489,714	796,690	462,000	77,000	1,335,690
MTA PPE & Equipment	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL OPERATIONAL EQUIPMENT	489,714	796,690	462,000	77,000	1,335,690
TOTAL CAPITAL SPEND	5,951,980	9,651,190	11,472,000	7,047,000	28,170,190
TOTAL APPROVED	5,951,980	3,039,556	0	0	3,039,556
TOTA FORECAST FOR APPROVAL	0	6,611,634	11,472,000	7,047,000	25,130,634

58. **Premises** – the Service are proposing forecast investment of £18.8m over the 3-year period or which £16.6m requires approval. This programme includes:
- Capital maintenance and renewal works as identified through the yearly estates conditions surveys and the Sustainability Plan;
 - Major re-build at Elm Lane Station, as part of the modular build strategy;

- Major re-build/refurbishment works for a number of sites over the next three years;
 - Enhance identified local training assets / facilities; and
 - Further estates improvement works across the portfolio to continue to address health, safety, equality and welfare issues.
59. **Transport** – the Service are proposing £6.6m investment over the 3 year period, of which £6.5m requires approval. The Strategic Fleet Board have determined its replacement plans with focus on optimising appliance availability to best support future operational needs.
60. Aligned to the ongoing collaboration with South Yorkshire Police and the review of the Transport Strategy, the Joint Head of Vehicle Fleet Management continues to work with the Senior Leadership Team to determine future operational and resilience appliance needs. Annually the Service expects to order/receive 4 new appliances each year across the MTFP.
61. The investment put forward will also see the ongoing replacement of both Emergency Provided Cars for officers (where there is a contractual or business need), as well as aging ancillary vehicles that are required to support operations across the Service. This will include the potential for introducing electric vehicles where appropriate.
62. **ICT** - the Service are proposing investment, over the 3 year period of £1.4m. This investment includes ICT's continued work as part of the Digital Transformation Programme:
- ongoing upgrade and replacement of PC equipment, laptops, MDTs and tablets as part of the ongoing agile working provision and replacement programme;
 - ongoing planned upgrade and replacement of the network, software, applications and ICT infrastructure;
 - continuation of the digital transformation roadmap that is modernising and streamlining our ways of working including new solutions as part of the Sustainability Plan; and
 - ongoing ESN / Control collaboration project.
63. **Operational Equipment** –, the Service are proposing investment of £1.4m, over the 3 year period of which £0.6m is required for approval. Investment is part of the continued work of operational steering groups in reviewing the operational equipment needs through the Service's Operational Research and Development Board.
64. The Service continues to identify and evaluate new technological developments that will improve operational effectiveness and firefighter safety. The ongoing renewal and replacement of existing operational equipment linked to providing an emergency response function and keeping firefighters safe, for example and including: Heavy lifting equipment, personal protection equipment, replacement breathing apparatus, door openers, pedal cutters and general equipment replacement as part of a rolling programme.
65. Assuming Members are minded to approve the above, the planned total capital investment, including pre-approved schemes for 2023/24 would be £9.651m. The cost of this programme will need to be largely funded through borrowing and provision has already been factored into the Authority's forecasts to reflect this amount.

SECTION F: RESERVES POSITION AND CURRENT STRATEGY

66. The Authority currently maintains both earmarked and general reserves. The level of earmarked reserves are reviewed as part of the budget process and again as part of the final accounts. Members will recall that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy report 'reaffirmed' the planned approach to managing reserves this being:
- Step 1 Review the purpose and classification of each reserve held at 31 March 2023 to determine whether it still needs to be held or can be reduced/closed;
- Step 2 Any available reserves that are identified from the review (or additional balances generated in the interim) be 'ring-fenced' in General Reserves until greater certainty is derived on the funding position; and
- Step 3 The Section 151 Officer to review the level of minimum General Reserves required when greater certainty is acquired on the funding position for SYFRA.
67. It is both sensible and prudent for the Section 151 officer in formulating the updated Financial Plan to consider and reaffirm the level and adequacy of reserves after taking into account a number of considerations as outlined below:
- Excessive balances can be an opportunity cost to the tax payer leading to additional spending on services not taking place or Council Tax precept increases being higher than they would otherwise be;
 - Retained balances earn income and can provide internal funding e.g. for capital spend rather than borrowing; and
 - Reserve levels that are too low, may put the Authority at risk if unexpected demands and risks/events occur at a relatively short notice (as witnessed through the Covid-19 pandemic and current economic pressures and could lead to an adverse audit opinion).
68. Having assessed the potential financial risks and the extent of the Authority's likely exposure to those risks during the next 2 to 3 years, plus their impact on available balances, the Section 151 officer is able to propose the following approach to managing reserves, during the period 2023-2026.
69. In setting out and firming up this Plan, the Authority's Useable Reserves position is presented in the table below. The balances have been updated from the MTFP that was presented to Members in November 2022, to adjust for:
- The re-profiling of the potential costs of Immediate Detriment Pension liabilities;
 - The re-forecast of Government funding announced in late December 2022, which included inflationary increases for the RSG and Top-up Grant and a higher than forecast reduction in the Services Grant;
 - The re-forecast of expenditure as a result of changes identified since November, mainly the projection of utilities costs and the revised pay award offer for Operational Staff; and
 - The current (December 2022) forecast revenue underspend, which is detailed in the quarter 3 budget monitoring report.

Reserve	Forecast 31/03/2023 £'000	Forecast 31/03/2024 £'000	Forecast 01/04/2025 £'000	Forecast 01/04/2026 £'000
Insurance	1,242	1,242	1,242	1,242
Invest to Save	0	0	0	0
Budget Carry Forward Requests	711	0	0	0
Capital Investment - Committed	0	0	0	0
Safer Stronger Communities	252	0	0	0
Capital Reciepts Reserve	0	0	0	0
Revenue Grants Unapplied	0	0	0	0
Capital Grants Unapplied	0	0	0	0
Service Improvement Reserve	0	0	0	0
Rates Rebate Reserves	82	82	82	0
Immediate Detriment Pension Liability Reserve	3,548	2,048	328	0
Emerging Risk Reserve	2,262	842	0	0
USEABLE EARMARKED RESERVES	8,097	4,214	1,652	1,242
General	5,000	5,000	5,000	2,321
USEABLE GENERAL RESERVES	5,000	5,000	5,000	2,321
TOTAL USEABLE RESERVES	13,097	9,214	6,652	3,563
MRP	2,298	2,934	3,638	4,370
TOTAL UN-USEABLE RESERVES	2,298	2,934	3,638	4,370
TOTAL RESERVES	15,395	12,148	10,290	7,933

70. For the current financial year, the latest financial estimates suggest a deficit financial performance is expected, with a forecast overspend on the revenue budget of £1.693m. This is subject to the potential financial risks relating to the Operational Staff 2022/23 pay award, the potential of industrial action and associated costs and potential liabilities arising from pension and employment law legal cases.
71. Members will be subsequently asked to consider the short-term commitment to utilising the Emerging Risk Reserves, once audit confirmation as to the outturn performance is received (for the financial year ended 31 March 2023) and with due consideration of the Reserves Strategy and known / likely financial risks faced at that time and for the period up to 2024.
72. An updated Reserves Statement will form part of confirming the 2022/23 outturn position which will be disclosed in our year end Unaudited Statement of Accounts that are due to be published by the end May 2023.

SECTION G: TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2023/24

73. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement is attached at Appendix C for Members' approval. The key objective of the strategy include:
- Ensuring the Authority's capital expenditure plans are prudent, affordable and sustainable over the longer-term;
 - Ensuring that sufficient cash is available when needed to meet the Authority's spending commitments;
 - Managing the Authority's exposure to interest rate and refinancing risk whilst maximising value for money, and

- Managing the investment of temporary surplus cash in a way that preserves the capital invested.
74. The following elements of the strategy require specific approval:
- The Treasury Management Policy Statement which sets out the overall policies, practices and objectives in relation to treasury management;
 - The proposed Borrowing and Investment Strategies;
 - The Authorised Limit for External Debt and Prudential Indicators demonstrating the affordability of capital investment plans;
 - The Minimum Revenue Provision Statement setting out the proposed prudent method of charging the revenue account for the repayment of debt.
75. In accordance with the Revised CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice, the Strategy was discussed by the Audit and Governance Committee on 9 January 2022. The figures and indicators included within the Strategy reflect the approved and indicative 2022-2026 Capital Programme (including the new approvals outlined at Section E). Should capital expenditure plans change during the year, the prudential indicators included in the report will be recalculated.
76. The proposed Strategy, in summary, reflects the following:

Borrowing Strategy

77. Within the context of increasing economic uncertainty and interest rate volatility, the proposed strategy is to:
- a. **Maintain an appropriate proportion of fixed rate borrowing** in order to limit the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk (proposed targets in section 3 of the strategy);
 - b. **Maintain a balanced maturity profile on long and short-term borrowing** to limit the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk (proposed limits in Appendix C of the strategy), and
 - c. **Maintain an appropriate level of internal borrowing** in order to reduce the Authority's financing costs.

Investment Strategy

78. In order to safely manage the Authority's temporary surplus cash, the proposed strategy is to:
- **Invest in only secure products and counterparties** in order to minimise the risk of loss (proposed limits in section 4 of the Strategy);
 - **Maintain an appropriate balance of liquid funds** to ensure that sufficient cash is available when needed, and
 - **Within this context, seek to optimise performance** in terms of yield.

MRP Statement

79. The MRP Statement is required to be approved each year as part of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement. A review of the Authority's MRP Policy was undertaken during 2017/18 and the 2023/24 MRP Statement is a continuation of this revised approach.

SECTION H: TREASURER'S SECTION 25 REPORT

80. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer under the Local Government Act 1972) to report to the Authority when setting the Council Tax on:
- the robustness of the estimates in the budget, and
 - the adequacy of the proposed reserves
81. The Authority must have regard to this report when making decisions in respect of the budget and Council Tax (Precept).
82. The Budget proposed for 2023/24 has been framed within the Government's finance settlement.

Robustness of the estimates

83. A review of the estimating assumptions has been carried out in forming the 2023/24 budget in conjunction with the Chief Fire Officer. Whilst these assumptions are subject to risk, I consider that they are prudent at this stage based on the following comments:
- Pay inflation assumptions. The Service forecast a 2% pay award, in 2022/23, for both operational and support staff. The support staff award was agreed and implemented in December 2022, which equated to an average 5.72% increase. For operational staff, the revised offer of 5% was rejected with the potential for industrial action. Subsequently a revised offer of 7% has been made for 2022/23 and 5% for 2023/24. The Fire Brigade Union have since delayed industrial action and commenced a re-ballot of their members. At this point in time, these assumptions are considered to be prudent although negotiations have yet to be finalised.
 - Interest Rates. Interest rates have increased steadily in year with the most recent increase, in February 2023 to 4%. The Fire Authorities treasury advisors and other commentators are predicting further interest rate increases early in 2023/24 but then will begin to fall over the planning period to around 2.5% by March 2026, though the timing and pace of those remains subject to debate. In view of this my advice remains to set a target of 70% of fixed rate borrowing per the Treasury Management Strategy.
 - Inflation and supply chain issues. It is well publicised that inflation and supply chain issues have led to unprecedented increases in the cost of energy, fuel and construction costs. Current inflation stands in excess of 10% but this is expected to fall towards the end of 2023. The cost implications of such rises have been considered in the updated MFTP and are considered prudent.
 - Council Tax Income Assumptions. The current plan assumes the full take up of the £5 council tax flexibility awarded to Fire Authorities for 2023/24. There is no indication at this time that this flexibility will continue in future years. Whilst Council Tax bases across the region are starting to see signs of recovery from the impact of the rise in inflation, interest rates and the current cost of living crisis being experienced by many may well have an impact on both the timing of future housing development and collection rates moving forwards. Current collection

rates are averaging at 95% across the region. Given this risk, the position will need to be closely monitored during the year.

- Business Rates Income Assumptions. Under the current Business Rate Retention scheme, the Authority retains 1% of the total income collected. The current budget is based on the four SY districts own estimates of what they expect to collect. There continues to be high level of volatility to the business rates baselines. However, I do believe that the forecast business rates included within the budget are based on prudent assumptions although again the position will need to be closely monitored during the year.

84. The SYFRA's robust in year budget monitoring processes will ensure that the budget and the assumptions underpinning it are reviewed throughout the year. Any significant variations identified through this process will be brought to the Authority's attention.

Adequacy of the Authority's Reserves

85. A review of reserves has been carried out as an integral part of the 2023/24 Budget and the MTFP process. The conclusions from this review are set out elsewhere in this report.
86. The proposal to fund additional capital investment over the 3-year planning period via borrowing supports delivery of a sustainable balanced revenue budget and maintains general reserves at a level that I consider appropriate based on current assumptions.
87. I also consider the reserve already set aside to settle the potential Immediate Detriment Pension Liability cases to be still prudent based on the claims received to date although this will be monitored moving forwards.
88. The current MFTP shows a deficit in each year over the planning period. I recommend the use of reserves to bridge the gap identified for 2023/24. This will be allocated from the Emerging Risk Reserve that was set aside at the start of 2022/23 specifically for some of the cost pressures experienced during the year and into next. However, the use of this reserve is one-off and an efficiency programme is required to reduce the gap from 2024/25.
89. This position will be subject to continuous review and reassessment to ensure the current reserves utilisation remains appropriate. The current Minimum Working Balance (MWB) held by the Authority remains at £5.0m until 2025 based on current forecasts. However, an efficiency programme is required to maintain this thereafter, which I consider prudent.

Prudence & Affordability

90. The current Prudential Borrowing regime places a duty on the CFO to ensure that the financial impact of decisions to incur additional borrowing over and above that supported by Government are affordable both in the immediate future and over the longer term.
91. Consideration of all new capital schemes and their revenue impact (including the risk of changing interest rates) is therefore undertaken alongside other revenue service issues to ensure that resources are allocated in accordance with the Authority's overall priorities and within the overall funding available.

Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget Reduction Measures

92. As outlined at Section D, delivery of the Service's MTFP was considered in a separate report into SYFRA in November 2022. Their remains ongoing uncertainty of the future public sector financial landscape particularly the Government's announcement of yet another one year only settlement for 2023/24. Moreover the wider economic climate is also presenting challenges in terms of cost.
93. The current MTFP shows a cumulative deficit of £6.2m over the three year period. The deficit reported in 2023/24, as recommended in paragraph 88 above, can be addressed via a temporary drawdown of reserves however, I strongly recommend that the SYFRA, request an efficiency and savings plan be developed during 2023/24 by SYFRS to address future year deficits. Moreover, although further clarity may not materialise until the Government release its future funding intentions, further reports should also be brought to the Authority over the next year to the extent that these projections do change.
94. **In summarising my advice, I would stress that the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of the reserves are satisfactory at the point of setting the budget but will be subject to ongoing review over the coming financial year.**

CONTRIBUTION TO SERVICE PRIORITIES

- ☐ Community - Making people safer – working to prevent emergencies.
- ☐ Operations - Responding to emergencies – effectively and safely.
- ☐ People - Valuing people – those we serve and employ.
- ☒ Finance and Resources - Maximising efficiency – making our resources go further.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

If you have ticked 'Yes' please provide brief details in the box below and include the third party/parties it would involve:

Financial implications as a result of any known collaboration opportunities are included with financial predictions. All future implications will be included within future MTFP updates as and when known

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT & BUSINESS CONTINUITY IMPLICATIONS

95. The Corporate Risk Register is inclusive of the risk surrounding the medium term financial strategy. Proper financial planning ensures that the Authority will be made aware of any issues that have financial implications at the earliest opportunity.

EQUALITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED

- ☐ Yes

If you have ticked 'Yes' please complete the below comment boxes providing details as follows:

Summary of any Adverse Impacts Identified:	Key Mitigating Actions Proposed and Agreed:

- ☐ No
☒ N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why an EA is not required/is outstanding:

Equality impact assessments are carried out on individual proposals rather than on the funding of those proposals.

HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☒ N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why a Health and Safety Risk Assessment is not required/is outstanding:

There are no known risks in relation to Health and Safety.

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

96. Under the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority [Scheme of Delegation](#) a decision *is required / *has been approved at Service level.

Delegated Power
 ☒ Yes
☐ No

If yes, please complete the comments box indicating under which delegated power?

Financial regulations: The provision of budgets and funding

IMPLICATIONS

97. Consider whether this report has any of the following implications and, if so, address them below: Industrial Relations, Financial, Legal, Asset Management, Environmental and Sustainability, Diversity, Communications and Health and Safety implications have been considered in compiling this report.

list of background documents		
2022/23 Annual Revenue Budget and Council Tax Setting Report Financial Performance Report Quarter 3 2022/23 Medium Term Financial Plan 2023 - 2026		
Report Author:	Name:	Sara Slater, Financial Services Manager, SYFR Steve Loach, Head of Financial Services, BMBC
	e-mail:	sslater@syfire.gov.uk Steveloach@barnsley.gov.uk
	Telephone	0114 2532330

BUDGET DESCRIPTION	BUDGET 2023/24
Wholetime	36,841,493
Retained	1,870,632
Control	1,454,050
Support Staff	10,410,716
Indirect	1,974,818
TOTAL EMPLOYEES	52,551,709
Premises Repair, Alteration Mtn	1,104,894
Energy	1,700,103
Rents	0
Rates	1,078,651
Water Services	81,719
Fixtures & Fittings	0
Cleaning and Domestic	500,000
Premises Insurance	72,000
TOTAL PREMISES	4,537,367
Vehicle Repairs & Maintenance	322,756
Vehicle Running costs	727,496
Operational Lease & Contract Hire	650
Car Allowance & Public Transport	153,851
Transport Insurance	115,501
TOTAL TRANSPORT	1,320,254
Equipment, Furniture & Materials	804,299
Clothing, Uniform & Laundry	302,066
Office Expenses	51,258
Services	610,104
ICT & Network	1,837,422
Expenses	36,460
Other Miscellaneous	268,438
Stronger Safer Community Fund	0
TOTAL SUPPLIES & SERVICES	3,910,047
BMBC RECHARGE	292,344
CENTRAL EXPENSES	217,790
CAPITAL FINANCING COSTS	2,574,032
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	65,403,543
Government Grants	(455,978)
Customer & Client Receipts	(517,413)
Interest Receivable	(150,000)
TOTAL INCOME	(1,123,391)
NET EXPENDITURE	64,280,152

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APPENDIX B

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

**THE CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY
2023/24**

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This Capital Investment Strategy has been prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Prudential Code 2021 which local authorities must 'have regard to' when carrying out their duties in England under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003.

1.2 The Capital Investment Strategy forms a key part of the Authority's overall planning process. It provides a mechanism by which capital expenditure and investment decisions are aligned over a medium term planning period with the Authority's [Community Risk Management Plan](#) and the four core priorities that it looks to achieve:

- Valuing People – those we serve and employ;
- Maximising Efficiency – making our resources go further;
- Making People Safer – working to prevent emergencies; and
- Responding to Emergencies – effectively and safely.

1.3 This Capital Investment Strategy sets the framework for all aspects of the Authority's capital and investment expenditure including prioritisation, governance, planning, outcomes, management, funding and monitoring. It is also linked and cross-referenced to the Authority's other strategies and plans.

1.4 The objectives of the Capital Investment Strategy are to:

- Provide a framework together with a clear set of objectives, within the CIPFA codes and statutory legislation, by which new projects are evaluated to ensure that all new funding is targeted at meeting the priorities within the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan;
- Set out how the Authority identifies, programmes and prioritises funding requirements and proposals;
- Consider options available for funding expenditure and how resources may be maximised to generate investment in the area. To determine a prudent, affordable and self-sustaining funding policy framework, whilst minimising or mitigating the ongoing revenue implications of any such investment;
- Identify the resources available for investment over the planning period;
- Ensure the strategy has an overall balance of risk on a range of projects over time, funding mechanism and rate of return; and

- Establish effective arrangements for the management of expenditure including the assessment of project outcomes, budget profiling, deliverability, outcomes, value for money and security, liquidity and yield of investments.

2. STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 The framework established by the Prudential Code supports local strategic planning, local asset management planning and proper option appraisal.
- 2.2 The Capital Investment Strategy forms a fundamental part of the Authority's overall planning process and, like the other budget papers, is formulated within the context of the Integrated Risk Management Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy framework
- 2.3 The Capital Investment Strategy is an integral part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy as it complements and informs various elements of the budget setting cycle, predominately the Treasury Management and Reserves strategies respectively.
- 2.4 The graph below shows how the Capital Investment Strategy fits into the wider planning framework and the links into the budget process.



- 2.5 There are extensive connections between the Authority's various strategies and plans due primarily to the way they interrelate with and inform each other. Where applicable, these are cross-referenced throughout the Capital Investment Strategy and vice versa.

3 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

What is Capital Expenditure?

- 3.1 An understanding of what constitutes capital expenditure is fundamental to realising the benefits that an authority can obtain under the Prudential Framework.
- 3.2 The Local Government Act 2003, which includes the legislation for the capital finance system, does not specify what precisely constitutes capital expenditure. Instead it-:
- Refers to “expenditure of the authority which falls to be capitalised in accordance with proper practices; and
 - Enables the Secretary of State to prescribe by regulation that the spending of a particular local authority shall, or shall not, be treated as capital expenditure.
- 3.3 The Authority defines capital expenditure/investment as “Expenditure on the acquisition, creation, or enhancement of non-current assets”. Non-current assets include those items of land, property and plant/equipment, which have a useful life of more than one year.
- 3.4 The following categories of expenditure will require capital resources to fund their purpose:
- The acquisition, reclamation, enhancement or laying out of land exclusive of roads, buildings or other structures;
 - The acquisition, construction, preparation, enhancement or replacement of roads, buildings and other structures;
 - The acquisition, installation or replacement of movable or immovable plant, machinery, apparatus, vehicles and vessels;
 - The making of advances, grants or other financial assistance towards expenditure or on the acquisition of investments;
 - The acquisition of share capital or loan capital; and
 - The acquisition of computer software, plus the in-house preparation of it, provided that the intention is to use the software for at least 1 year.
- 3.5 Enhancement of an existing fixed asset means:
- To lengthen the useful life of the asset; or
 - To increase substantially the open market value of the asset; or
 - To increase substantially the extent to which the asset can be used for the purposes of or in connection with the functions of the Authority.

3.6 There are two additional situations where expenditure may be capitalised:

- The Secretary of State makes a direction that the expenditure is permitted to be treated as capital expenditure. For example, the Secretary of State issued a capitalisation direction to allow local authorities the opportunity to apply for redundancy expenditure to be treated as capital instead of revenue. These directions are only issued in exceptional circumstances; and
- Expenditure incurred on works to any land or building in which the Authority has no future direct control or benefit from the resultant assets, which would be capital expenditure if the local authority had an interest in that land or building. This is commonly known as (Revenue Expenditure Funded by Capital Under Statute) (REFCUS).

3.7 Unless expenditure qualifies as capital, it will normally fall outside the scope of the framework and therefore be charged to revenue in the period that the expenditure is incurred. If expenditure meets the definition of capital, there may be opportunity to finance the outlay from available resources (reserves / receipts) or by spreading the cost over future years' revenues (borrowing) where it is prudent to do so.

De Minimis

3.8 The Authority operates a de-minimis limit of **£10,000**. This means that, whilst expenditure may meet the definition of capital expenditure, the Authority will treat that expenditure as revenue, if the amount is below the de-minimis threshold.

Flexible Use of Capital Receipts

3.9 The Authority also has the opportunity to utilise its capital receipts (which are ordinarily to be used on capital expenditure), on revenue expenditure relating to service transformation projects that are expected to generate revenue savings to the Authority.

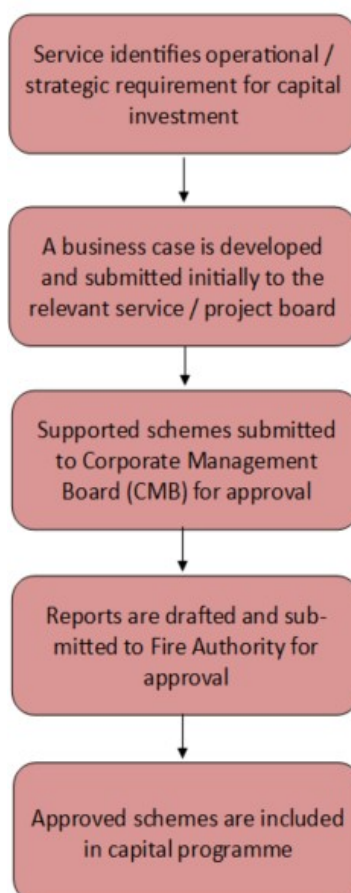
3.10 Some examples include: funding the cost of service reconfiguration, restructuring or rationalisation, sharing the costs of senior management, improving systems and processes to tackle fraud and corruption and setting up commercial or alternative delivery models to deliver services more efficiently and bring in revenue.

3.11 The Authority, has, at this time, not exercised this flexibility.

Capital Programme Governance & Prioritisation Process

- 3.12 For any new schemes, the Function or Service Lead will need to work with Finance Lead to prepare a Business Case for consideration and support initially by a relevant Service or Project Board and then by the Executive (and Corporate Management Board). If supported, the scheme is presented to Members for consideration and included in the Capital Programme. This is illustrated in the diagram below:

CAPITAL PLANNING PROCESS



- 3.13 The Authority has a rolling four year capital programme that is subject to an annual update process. As part of the FRA's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Financial Regulations, it is a requirement to refresh the forward capital programme. To do this, a review of each scheme in the existing approved capital programme is completed and where necessary, considers making amendments or progress possible new inclusions, aligned to strategic and service priorities. This annual review enables the FRA to ensure that the capital programme is moving in the right direction and is targeted towards meeting the key strategic priorities. This approach supplements the regular reporting in of schemes to relevant SYFR Boards e.g. Property Board, and ultimately to the SYFR Programme, chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.
- 3.14 Once approved, each scheme is monitored by the relevant Service or Project Board and by CMB and the Authority as part of routine financial and project performance reporting. In addition, on the completion of a project, a project closure report is required to be presented to the Programme Board to enable an evaluation of the project to be completed,

the extent to which expected outcomes and benefits have been delivered and whether any lessons could be learned.

- 3.15 The Authority's capital investment programme is summarised in the table below, which includes capital schemes that are put forward for approval as part of the budget setting report and future indicative proposals.

	LATEST CAPITAL PROJECTION 2022/23 £m	LATEST CAPITAL PROJECTION 2023/24 £m	LATEST CAPITAL PROJECTION 2024/25 £m	LATEST CAPITAL PROJECTION 2025/26 £m
Estates	2.500	5.825	7.675	5.300
Transport	2.375	2.341	2.830	1.470
ICT and Communications	0.587	0.688	0.505	0.200
Operational Equipment	0.490	0.797	0.462	0.077
TOTAL	5.952	9.651	11.472	7.047

4 THE AUTHORITY'S CAPITAL ASSETS & MANAGEMENT OF THOSE ASSETS

What Type of Capital Asset Does The Authority Control?

- 4.1 The Authority is responsible for a wide variety of capital assets, which are located physically throughout South Yorkshire. The Authority controls, but not necessarily legally owns these assets, for a number of reasons:
- firstly, the Authority may have inherited them as part of local government reorganisation and by virtue of the existence of the Authority in its legal capacity as a local authority;
 - secondly, the assets could have been purchased or enhanced by the Authority through capital investment via its capital programmes over the years e.g. new fire stations and software packages;
 - thirdly, the Authority could have leased the assets e.g. leased vehicles.
- 4.2 These assets are shown in the table below, with their respective value to the Authority as at the 31st March 2022, in accordance with the regulatory reporting requirements. It must be noted that these values do not necessarily constitute what the Authority actually paid for these assets as the asset base are valued regularly to their current existing use value and depreciated over its useful life.
- 4.3 It is important to understand the make-up of the overall Authority asset base when considering this Capital Investment Strategy from the contextual viewpoint that ultimately the Authority's capital (and revenue) programmes contribute towards maintaining, enhancing and adding to this asset base. A synopsis of each category, together with illustrative examples and commentary of any specific issues is shown in the subsequent paragraphs.

Asset Category	Value as at 31 March 2022 £M
Land & Buildings (Inc. Under Construction)	50.147
Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment	7.112
Surplus & Held for Sale Assets	-
Intangible Assets	0.174

Land & Buildings

- 4.5 Land and buildings represent other operational assets of the Authority, used in the provision of services, with the main category being obviously fire stations.

Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment

- 4.6 The vehicles, plant, furniture & equipment category is relatively self-explanatory and includes both leased and owned assets including fire engines and pump equipment.

Surplus & Held for Sale Assets

- 4.7 Surplus assets are assets that are deemed surplus insofar as they are no longer providing services on the Authority's behalf, but they are not designated held for sale.
- 4.8 Assets Held for Sale are assets that are, in financial reporting terms, designated held for sale which means they are actively being marketed and there is an expectation that these assets will be sold within the next 12 months.

Intangible Assets

- 4.9 Intangible assets are non-physical; capital assets held by the Authority; examples include software packages. The Service has an ICT asset management strategy to cover these types of assets.

The Authority's Asset Management Strategy

- 4.10 The Authority / Service continues to be committed to continuous improvement and is putting in place robust future asset and financial plans to ensure its infrastructure is fit for purpose and is able to effectively support the Service over at least the next 5 to 10 years.
- 4.11 Work is already underway across the four service areas: Estates, Transport, ICT and Operational Equipment and will help inform and update financial and investment plans for the next 5 to 10 years. This work is timely given the ongoing collaboration work for Transport.

5 CAPITAL FUNDING

How is Capital Expenditure Funded?

- 5.1 The Authority's Capital Programme is currently funded from a variety of sources, which are explained in the paragraphs below, together with the process by which these sources are used/prioritised and any wider implications moving forwards.
- 5.2 The Authority's overall strategy with regards capital funding is to bring together the resources that it can control i.e. not ring-fenced / time limited and considers them collectively against the Authority's capital priorities holistically.
- 5.3 Each funding source and the specific variants on each funding source that is available to the Authority are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Funding Sources

Capital Receipts

- 5.4 The Authority is able to generate capital receipts through the sale of surplus assets such as land and buildings.
- 5.5 Such receipts are received with no restrictions as to their use.

Reserves

- 5.6 The Authority holds reserves on its balance sheet that are generally an accumulation of previous years' underspends against approved budgets.
- 5.7 Reserves can be used to fund / support any type of expenditure, but the Authority follows an 'in principle' approach of using its 'one off' reserves to fund one off expenditure.
- 5.8 The Authority's Reserves Strategy adopts this principle and allocates its reserves on the following basis:
- Establish a Minimum Working Balance as a contingency for unforeseen events as determined by the S151 officer. This is currently £5.0M; then
 - 'Ringfenced' until such time as the Authority is in a position to present and approve a prudently balanced MTFP 2023-2026; then
 - Subject to the above, support new capital investment schemes which minimises / avoids the 'need to borrow'.

Revenue Funding (RCCO)

- 5.9 The Authority can use revenue resources to fund capital projects on a direct basis and ordinarily, this is done on a specific scheme/project basis,

usually of relatively small scale. This is due to the impact of austerity measures imposed by the Government, which has seen the Authority's revenue budget reduced and therefore, has limited options in this area.

Capital Grants

- 5.10 A proportion of the capital funding that the Authority receives relates to capital grants, usually received from Central Government.
- 5.11 Capital grants may have conditions and restrictions regarding what it can be used on and the time limit in doing so, where applicable.
- 5.12 *Grants with Restrictions* – where restrictions are applied to grants, this means that the Authority is restricted as to what they can spend the grant on. Therefore, the Authority aligns these specific grants to the schemes that satisfy the inherent conditions of the grants.
- 5.13 *Grants with No Restrictions* – where the Authority receives any grant that is not subject to any conditions or restrictions, these resources are held corporately, pending the Authority's Reserve Strategy and MTFS, which makes them available for consideration against the Authority's corporate capital priorities.

Capital Contributions

- 5.14 The Authority may receive capital contributions that fund elements of the capital programme.
- 5.15 In a similar manner to grants, capital contributions can be either recurrent or one-off and they can either be subject to restrictions and conditions. Typically, most contributions tend to be restricted and one-off in nature, though these characteristics are determined by each individual agreement.
- 5.16 Where contributions are received with conditions, specific schemes are proposed to spend the contribution accordingly, in line with the restrictions stipulated. In the event of an unrestricted contribution being received, these resources are held corporately, pending the Authority's Reserve Strategy and MTFS, which makes them available for consideration against the Authority's corporate capital priorities.

Leasing

- 5.17 The leasing route in respect of funding capital expenditure allows those capital costs to be spread over a number of years where prudent and affordable to do so and is commonly compared with borrowing in respect of a value for money assessment over the life of a scheme.
- 5.18 Leasing is a series of rental payments in exchange for use of an asset and they tend to be specific to certain elements of the capital programme, specifically buildings, vehicles and equipment.
- 5.19 In accounting terms, there are currently two types of lease, an operating and a finance lease, the treatment of which are very different in the context of capital financing.

- An operating lease is one where the risk and reward remains with the lessor and therefore the asset remains on the lessor's balance sheet, with the annual rentals being expensed through the revenue budget.
- A finance lease is one that does transfer the risks and rewards to the lessee, and therefore the asset does transfer to the lessee's balance sheet via a capital transaction. At the point of inception of the lease, a liability is created to finance the asset over the lease term, with the annual rental being split notionally between interest and principal.

5.20 The implications on the capital position of the Authority of finance leases is that the debt requirement is increased as a result, albeit, it's a funded credit facility in its own right, nevertheless it does increase that requirement.

5.21 In 2024/25, the accounting requirements are changing in respect of leasing, through a revision to accounting standard IFRS 16. The change means that there will no longer be the distinction of finance and operating leases – all leases will be now effectively finance leases which means that the Authority's debt requirement will increase as a result. Decisions to lease in the future will be considered against this new accounting standard.

Prudential Borrowing

5.22 The introduction of the Prudential Code in 2004 allowed the Authority to undertake government funded borrowing itself. This borrowing is subject to the requirements of the Prudential Code for Capital Expenditure for Local Authorities, which ensures that any unsupported borrowing is affordable, prudent and cost effective. This type of borrowing has revenue implications for the Authority in the form of financing costs from both an MRP and interest point of view. The Authority's Reserves Strategy is to ostensibly fund new capital requirements rather than borrow in the first instance.

Capital Funding Approach

5.23 The Authority will look to actively follow an approach to capital funding as set out below, although may make changes to this approach if it is deemed necessary in order to deliver priority outcomes and/or maximise its resources.

- Time limited funding – funding that must be used within a specified time period will usually be applied first, assuming that there is expenditure that it can be legitimately be applied to. This is subject to any requirements for match funding.
- Ring-fenced funding – funding linked to a particular scheme or type of scheme will be allocated in full to the relevant capital projects.
- Where the Authority has discretion over how the funding can be spent, including non-restricted grants and contributions and its internally generated resources (capital receipts, revenue contributions, reserves etc.), these resources are considered holistically together and prudently used against the Authority's corporate priorities.
- Match funding – where match funding of the Authority's own resources is required to lever in external funding, the match element will be considered as a capital priority in its own right and is therefore subject to the same capital prioritisation process as other capital priorities.

6 TREASURY MANAGEMENT

What is Treasury Management?

6.1 CIPFA defines treasury management as:

“The management of the organisation’s borrowing, investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks”

6.2 The definition above immediately explicitly links this Capital Investment Strategy (“*capital market transactions*”) to the Authority’s Treasury Management Strategy (“*Borrowing, investment and cash flows*”). The Capital Investment Strategy and Capital Programme determines the borrowing need of the Authority, essentially the longer term cash flow planning, to ensure that the Authority can meet its capital spending obligations. This management of longer-term cash may involve arranging long or short-term loans or using longer-term cash flow surpluses. On occasion, any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Authority risk or cost objectives.

The Treasury Management Strategy

6.3 The Authority’s Treasury Management Strategy, which is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, that stipulates that local authorities must ‘have regard to’ a number of statutory codes, including the CIPFA Prudential Code & Treasury Management Code, is approved annually by full Authority as part of the budget setting process.

6.4 In broad terms, the TM Strategy sets out the following:

- the Authority’s Treasury Management Policy (the key objectives for its treasury management activities);
- the Authority’s capital expenditure plans and related indicators;
- the Authority’s MRP Policy (how its debt repayments will be provided for over time);
- the Authority’s borrowing strategy (how the Authority’s borrowings are to be organised);
- the Authority’s Annual Investment Strategy (the parameters on how investments are to be managed); and
- the Authority’s Prudential and Treasury Indicators (the limits and indicators designed to help monitor and control TM risk)

The Authority’s Borrowing Need, The External Debt Position & Associated Debt Limits

The Authority’s Borrowing Need (The CFR)

6.5 The measure that the Authority assesses its debt position is the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), which is essentially a measure of the Authority’s underlying borrowing need. Included in the Treasury Strategy, Members are asked to approve the CFR projections below, which include both approved and anticipated capital expenditure that are not financed by using available resources i.e. Prudential Borrowing:

Estimated CFR	2022/23 (£M)	2023/24 (£M)	2024/25 (£M)	2025/26 (£M)
Opening Balance	29.814	34.896	43.936	54.711
Add Net Financing Need	5.486	9.518	11.372	6.947
Less Amounts Set Aside to Repay Debt	(0.404)	(0.487)	(0.597)	(0.741)
Closing Balance	34.896	43.936	54.711	60.917

6.6 By the end of the 2025/26 financial year, it is estimated that the Authority's debt requirement will total £60.9M, an overall net increase of £31.1M from the estimated opening 2022/23 position.

6.7 The capital expenditure decisions that are made in the context of this Capital Investment Strategy inform the estimated CFR position in future years, which are only approved if they meet the prudent and affordable criteria.

External Debt

6.8 The table below measures the Authority's overall external debt position (including leasing) against its underlying estimated borrowing need or CFR.

	2022/23 (£M)	2023/24 (£M)	2024/25 (£M)	2025/26 (£M)
Borrowing CFR	34.896	43.936	54.711	60.917
Gross Borrowing	(23.168)	(22.168)	(20.259)	(18.809)
Under-Borrowed Position	11.728	21.768	34.452	42.108
Support from Useable Reserves	(11.728)	(11.481)	(7.919)	(8.651)
External Borrowing Requirement	-	10.287	26.533	33.457

6.9 This measure is designed to ensure that total debt does not exceed the total of the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for the current and the following two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years but ensures that borrowing is not undertaken for revenue purposes.

Debt Limits

6.10 *The Operational Boundary* is the Authority's limit beyond which external debt is not normally expected to exceed. This limit is set to match the Capital Financing Requirement as shown above:

Operational Boundary	2022/23 (£M)	2023/24 (£M)	2024/25 (£M)	2025/26 (£M)
Debt	34.896	43.936	54.711	60.917

- 6.11 *The Authorised Limit* represents a control on the maximum level of borrowing and provides an absolute limit beyond which external debt is prohibited, and this limit needs to be set or revised by the full Authority. It reflects the level of external debt, which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term. The Authorised Limit has been set at £4M above the Operational Boundary. This is the statutory limit determined under Section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

Authorised Limit	2022/23 (£M)	2023/24 (£M)	2024/25 (£M)	2025/26 (£M)
Debt	38.896	47.936	58.711	64.917

Borrowing Strategy

- 6.12 The Authority's general policy objective is to ensure its level of debt is prudent, affordable and sustainable over the longer term (i.e. **keeping financing costs to a minimum whilst addressing the key associated risks**):
- Interest Rate Risk
 - Refinancing Risk
- 6.13 To limit the impact of a future rise in interest rates, the proposed strategy is to maintain a minimum proportion of fixed rate borrowing of 70%. In order to achieve this target, the Authority is likely to require £23.8M of fixed rate borrowing over the period. The remaining 30% could be funded through temporary borrowing and internal cash resources.
- 6.14 To protect the Authority from refinancing risk, officers will operate within the maturity limits set out in the TM Strategy. The Authority has a balanced maturity profile which is currently well within these limits.

Debt Repayment Policy

- 6.15 The method by which the Authority's underlying borrowing requirement is reduced over time, is through the Authority's adopted minimum revenue provision policy.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

- 6.15 The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is a charge to the revenue account in relation to (current and residual) General Fund capital expenditure financed by borrowing, as required by the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations 2003. The Authority is required to determine an amount of MRP, which it considers prudent - this amount reduces the CFR.
- 6.16 The Authority has to approve the MRP Policy on an ongoing, annual basis which sets out the rationale and approach to the MRP charge, which is submitted as an appendix to the Treasury Management Strategy and considered accordingly.

Other Long-Term Liabilities

- 6.17 The Authority also holds some other long-term liabilities on its balance sheet, which mainly relate to financing of leasing schemes.

- 6.18 In accounting terms, finance leases are accounted for as 'on balance sheet', which means that the Authority, though not legally owning the associated assets, recognise them on its balance sheet as they have deemed control – which increases the CFR as they haven't yet been financed fully.
- 6.19 What the accounting rules also requires is that a liability is recognised at the time of control to recognise that these arrangements are effectively funding the capital cost of the asset over the length of the lease. In effect, the long-term liability is a credit facility in its own right.

7 COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY / INVESTMENTS & RISK APPETITE STATEMENT

What is Commercialism?

- 7.1 Since 2010, Central Government's austerity measures have hit fire authorities' financial position particularly hard with significant loss of government funding over that period. Whilst difficult decisions have been, and continue to be, made, this pressure has also acted as a driver for creative solutions right across the country.
- 7.2 Fire Authorities are identifying and are using approaches that are more enterprising in nature, in order to balance their budgets. These include actively seeking new and innovative revenue streams to plug the funding gaps.
- 7.3 In response to this 'commercial' activity, the Government decided to reissue a piece of statutory guidance around investments, that was originally issued as part of the 2003 Local Government Act, in an attempt to try and improve transparency and openness relating to some of the non-traditional local authority investments.
- 7.4 A range of new disclosures and reporting mechanisms were introduced as a result, which included a requirement for local authorities to clarify how "non-core investments" contribute towards their core objectives to deliver services to residents.
- 7.5 Fire authorities are also required to consider a list of quantitative indicators, which will highlight the total risk exposure from borrowing and commercial investment decisions and aid the decision making process for members. Where a fire authority is or plans to become dependent on yield bearing investment activity to achieve a balanced revenue budget, disclosures should be made detailing the extent to which funding expenditure to meet the core functions of the fire authority is dependent on achieving the expected net yield.

Risk Appetite Statement

- 7.6 This outlines South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority's risk appetite with regard to its investment and commercial activities.
- 7.7 For the purpose of this statement, the Authority has adopted the Orange Book (UK government publication on the strategic management of risk within government) definition of Risk Appetite, namely "the amount of risk that an organisation is prepared to accept, tolerate, or be exposed to at any point in time." It is important to note that risk will always exist in some measure and cannot be removed in its entirety.
- 7.8 Additionally, in order to realise investment and commercial gains, risks need to be considered both in terms of threats to the Authority as well as positive opportunities. It is worth noting that the Public Accounts Committee supports well-managed risk taking across government, recognising that innovation and opportunities to improve public services requires risk taking, providing

that the ability, skills, knowledge and training to manage those risks well exist within the organisation or can be brought to bear.

- 7.9 The Authority's risk appetite statement sets out how it balances risk and return in pursuit of achieving our objectives. It is intended to aid careful decision-making, such that the Authority takes well, thought through risks to aid successful delivery of its services and obligations, while also understanding the adverse aspects of risk undertaken and taking appropriate measures to mitigate these in line with its stated goals. Thereby, the Authority's risk judgements are more explicit, transparent and consistent over time.
- 7.10 The risk appetite statement forms a key element of the Authority's governance and reporting framework and is set by full Authority, which also reviews the statement annually. In addition, the risk appetite will be considered annually and monitored on an ongoing basis by senior management, external risk advisors and the Audit & Governance Committee as appropriate.
- 7.11 The following points give indication of the Authority risk appetite:
- The Authority does not invest in any assets / investments purely for commercial return.
 - The Authority does not invest in any assets / investments that are outside of South Yorkshire with all investments contributing towards the corporate priorities for the residents of South Yorkshire.

Treasury Management Investments

- 7.12 The investments made in respect of the Treasury Management Strategy relate to ones that assist the Authority in managing timing issues concerning general, day-to-day management of its cash and bank balance positions. These investments are not included within the Authority's capital programme and therefore do not form part of the capital financing requirement.
- 7.13 The Authority's general policy objective is to invest its surplus funds prudently, which involves managing a number of associated risks. The Authority's investment priorities (in order) are as follows:
- the security of capital;
 - the liquidity of investments; and
 - optimum yield commensurate with the above.

Non-Treasury Investments

- 7.14 On the contrary to the treasury management investments, the non-treasury investments are included in the Authority's capital programme and are subject to the capital financing regulations as set out in law. If such investments are funded from borrowing, then like any other scheme, they would increase the Authority's capital financing requirement and the revenue budget would incur an ongoing obligation for both MRP and the interest charge over the long term.

8 SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

In House Resources

8.1 The successful implementation of the Capital Investment Strategy necessitates the availability of people with the necessary experience of:

- developing capital projects;
- acquiring and selling properties;
- commissioning partners to deliver the capital programme;
- managing properties as a landlord;
- sourcing suitable opportunities that match the criteria set under the adopted strategy.

8.2 The Fire Service's Asset Management team covers a number of sections that reflects its operational and non-operational asset portfolio. This team comprises:

- Estates & Facilities Management;
- Joint Head of Vehicle Fleet Management;
- ICT and Digital Manager; and
- Group Manager – Operational Support & Technical Services.

Internal Finance Team

8.4 The Capital Programme is managed and monitored by South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service's finance team, which is headed up by the Director of Finance and Procurement and consists of:

- Financial Services Manager;
- Accountancy Manager;
- Two Finance Business Partners; and
- Assistant Accountant

8.5 The internal finance team is led by two CCAB Qualified professionals who together have a significant number years of finance experience in the public sector.

Externally Available Resources

8.6 The Authority's Section 151 Officer is the officer with overall responsibility for the financial stewardship of the Authority and is a professionally qualified accountant and follows an ongoing Continuous Professional Development programme.

8.7 The Authority's Treasury Management operational and strategic activities are carried out by the Barnsley MBC finance team which comprise of professionally qualified accountants with extensive Local Government finance experience between them. They all follow a Continuous Professional Development Plan and attend courses on an ongoing basis to keep abreast of new developments and skills.

8.8 The Authority (via Barnsley MBC) also uses external treasury management advisors, Link Asset Services for bespoke advice and guidance.

Members

- 8.9 Members are familiar with the budget process and approve the Treasury Management Strategy and overall Authority Budget. Any additional training requirements will be discussed with the Authority's Governance team.
- 8.10 Internal and external training is offered to members on an annual basis to ensure they have up to date skills to make capital and treasury decisions. A register is also kept on member attendance.
- 8.11 The knowledge and skills of officers and members are commensurate with the Authority's risk appetite.

9 REFERENCES

DOCUMENT	
1.1	<u>Budget Papers:</u>
	Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2023-2026
	2023 - 2026 Capital Programme
	Reserves Strategy
	Treasury Management Strategy
1.2	<u>Asset Management Strategies:</u>
	Estates Plan
	Vehicle Management Plan
	ICT & Digital Strategy
	Operational Equipment Strategy
1.3	<u>Other Financial Documents:</u>
	2021/22 Statement of Accounts

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SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND POLICY STATEMENT
2023/24

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This document has been prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, which stipulates that local authorities must 'have regard to' the following guidance:

- The **Prudential Code** (CIPFA);
- The **Treasury Management Code** (CIPFA);
- **Statutory Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision** (DLUHC), and
- **Statutory Guidance on Local Authority Investments** (DLUHC).

- 1.2 In line with the recommendations of these codes, the Treasury Management Strategy sets out the following each year for approval by the Fire Authority:

The Treasury Management Policy Statement The Authority's overall policies, practices and objectives in relation to treasury management
The Authority's Capital Expenditure Plans The Authority's indicative capital programme over the next few years
The MRP Policy Statement How residual capital expenditure will be charged to revenue over time
The Authority's Borrowing Strategy How its ongoing borrowing requirement will be managed, with regard to interest rate and refinancing risk
The Annual Investment Strategy How any surplus cash will be managed, with regard to the principles of Security, Liquidity and Yield
The Authority's Prudential and Treasury Indicators The limits and indicators designed to help monitor and control treasury management risk

- 1.3 CIPFA published updated Treasury Management and Prudential Codes in December 2021 and full implementation of the reporting changes is required by local authorities from 2023/24. To comply with the code changes, the Authority must have regard to these Codes of Practice when preparing the following Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy, and also related reports during the financial year which are taken to Fire Authority for approval. The updates and changes are summarised as follows:

- The Authority's risk appetite and our governance processes for managing risk are defined;
- The adoption of a new liability benchmark treasury indicator to support the financing risk management of the capital financing requirement (CFR);

- No borrowing is undertaken to finance capital expenditure to invest primarily for commercial return;
 - Increases in CFR and borrowing are undertaken solely for purposes directly related to the functions of the Authority;
 - The Authority's capital plans and investment plans are affordable and proportionate, and all borrowing is within prudent and sustainable levels;
 - The inclusion of a high-level summary of the Authority's investment policy in relation to environmental, social and governance aspects;
 - The risks and rewards of significant investments are assessed over the **long term** (20 to 30 years);
 - Treasury Management decisions are in accordance with good professional practice;
 - A review of the knowledge and skills register for officers and members involved in the treasury management function. Ensuring that the Authority has access to expertise in all areas of investment and capital expenditure, and to involve members in making informed decisions.
- 1.4 In addition, the DLUHC are planning to provide further clarity in relation to the Minimum Revenue Provision regulations and guidance so that all local authorities understand the need and value in ensuring revenue is set aside annually in respect of their Capital Financing Requirement. The latest indications are that any changes will take effect from 2024/25 at the earliest.
- 1.5 If required, the Strategy will be revised to reflect any changes to legislation outlined in the paragraphs above.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.6 The objectives of the Treasury Management Strategy are to:
- Ensure the Authority's capital expenditure plans are prudent, affordable and sustainable over the longer-term;
 - Ensure that sufficient cash is available when needed to meet the Authority's spending commitments;
 - Manage the Authority's exposure to interest rate and refinancing risk whilst maximising value for money, and
 - Manage the investment of temporary surplus cash in a way that preserves the capital invested.

THE AUTHORITY'S BORROWING STRATEGY

- 1.7 Within the context of increasing economic uncertainty and interest rate volatility, the proposed strategy is to:
- **Maintain an appropriate proportion of fixed rate borrowing** in order to limit the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk (proposed targets in section 3);

- **Maintain a balanced maturity profile on long and short-term borrowing** to limit the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk (proposed limits in Appendix C), and
- **Maintain an appropriate level of internal borrowing** in order to reduce the Authority's financing costs.

THE ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

- 1.8 In order to safely manage the Authority's temporary surplus cash, the proposed strategy is to:
- **Invest in only secure products and counterparties** in order to minimise the risk of loss (proposed limits in section 4);
 - **Maintain an appropriate balance of liquid funds** to ensure that sufficient cash is available when needed, and
 - **Within this context, seek to optimise performance** in terms of yield.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORTING

- 1.9 The Authority is currently required to receive and approve the following treasury reports each year, which incorporate a variety of policies, estimates and actuals. From 2023/24 this will include reports to be completed on a quarterly basis, previously semi-annually, in order to comply with the updated treasury management code.
- Prudential and treasury indicators and treasury strategy** (this report) - The first, and most important report is forward looking and covers:
 - the capital plans (including prudential indicators);
 - a minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy (how residual capital expenditure is charged to revenue over time);
 - the Treasury Management Strategy (how the investments and borrowings are to be organised), including treasury indicators; and
 - an Annual Investment Strategy (the parameters on how investments are to be managed).
 - Quarterly treasury management reports** – These are primarily progress reports and will update members on the capital position, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and whether any policies require revision.
 - An annual treasury report** – This is a backward-looking review document and provides details of a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators and actual treasury operations compared to the estimates within the strategy.

TRAINING

1.10 The CIPFA Treasury Management Code requires that staff and members with responsibility for treasury management receive adequate training. The Authority carries out the following to monitor and review knowledge and skills:

- Provide training sessions for new Authority members together with periodic training sessions at Audit and Governance Committee.
- Keep the CIPFA Treasury Management Skills Assessment up to date to identify any gaps in knowledge, plus regular communication with officers and Authority members to encourage them to highlight training needs on an ongoing basis.
- The training needs of treasury management officers are periodically reviewed through the Personal Development Review process.
- A formal record of the training received by officers central to the treasury function is maintained within the Treasury Management Practices.

2 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PLANS

- 2.1 The Authority's capital expenditure plans are a key driver of its treasury management activities. This section covers a range of prudential indicators designed both to inform members of future activity and to assess whether those plans are prudent, affordable and sustainable over the longer term and reflect the framework as set out in CIPFA's Prudential Code. The full suite of indicators can be found in Appendix C.

Estimates of Capital Expenditure

- 2.2 This indicator summarises the capital expenditure plans set out in the Authority's Capital Investment Strategy. These plans are funded from a variety of sources including £33.3M from borrowing (see Appendix C for further details).

Table 1 - Estimates of Capital Expenditure

	2022/23 (£M)	2023/24 (£M)	2024/25 (£M)	2025/26 (£M)	Total (£M)
Indicative Capital Programme	5.952	9.651	11.472	7.047	34.122
Total Capital Expenditure	5.952	9.651	11.472	7.047	34.122
Funded from Borrowing	5.486	9.518	11.372	6.947	33.323
Funded from Other Resources	0.466	0.133	0.100	0.100	0.799

Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

- 2.3 This indicator sets out the Authority's CFR, which reflects the capital expenditure (both historic and planned) being funded from borrowing or other long-term liabilities. This includes the £33.3M identified in paragraph 2.2:

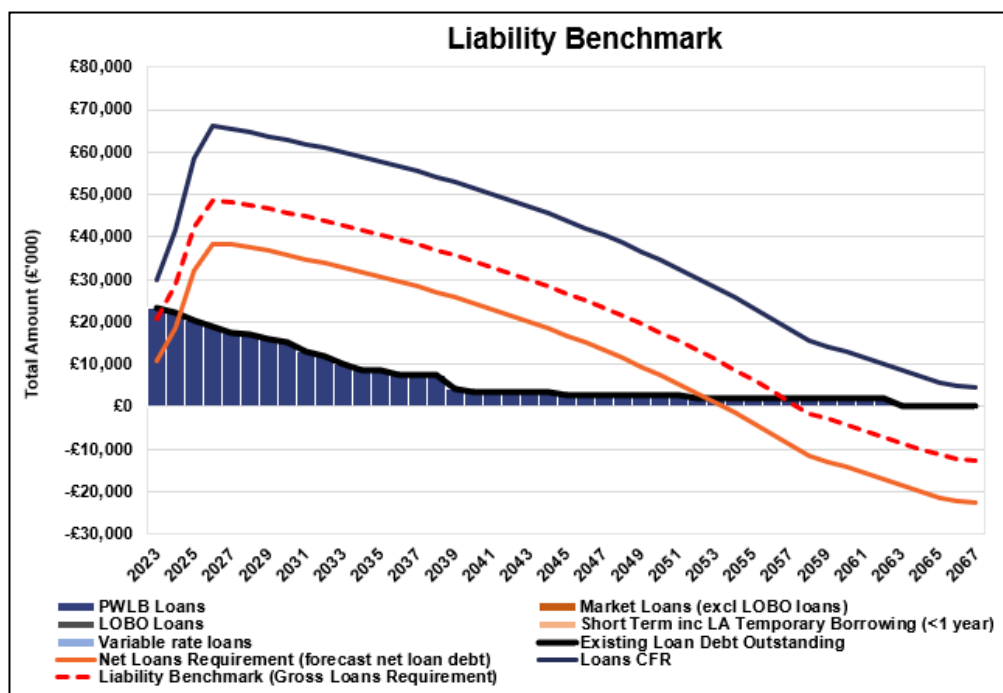
Table 2 - Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement

	2022/23 (£M)	2023/24 (£M)	2024/25 (£M)	2025/26 (£M)
Estimated Closing CFR	34.896	43.936	54.711	60.917

- 2.4 New expenditure aside, the CFR will reduce over time via a statutory annual charge to the revenue account, known as the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The Authority's MRP policy is included in Appendix B.

Liability Benchmarking

- 2.5 A new prudential indicator for 2023/24 is the Liability Benchmark (LB) which has been developed by CIPFA to provide a longer-term view of a local authority's debt position. The Authority is required to estimate and measure the LB and report this to members within the quarterly treasury management updates. The LB is effectively the Net Borrowing Requirement of the Authority plus a liquidity allowance.



2.6 The graph above shows the Authority's Liability Benchmark as at 2022/23 which includes the following four balances:

- **Existing loan debt outstanding (blue stacked bars):** the Authority's existing loans that are still outstanding in future years.
- **Loans CFR (blue line):** the loans CFR projected into the future based on approved prudential borrowing and planned MRP.
- **Net loans requirement (orange line):** the Authority's gross loan debt less treasury management investments at the last financial year-end, projected into the future based on approved prudential borrowing, planned MRP and any other major cash flow forecasts.
- **Liability benchmark (broken red line):** the net loans requirement plus a short-term liquidity allowance.

2.7 It should be noted that only approved prudential borrowing (£33M as detailed in table 1) is included in the above calculations. In practice this means that the Loans CFR will peak after four years, as is demonstrated in the graph above. This creates a slight anomaly in the model given that all other inputs are projected forward to 40 years+.

2.8 CIPFA recommends that the optimum position for external borrowing should be at the level of the LB (i.e. all balance sheet resources should be used to maximise internal borrowing). If the outputs show future periods where external loans are less than the LB, then this indicates a borrowing requirement, thus identifying where the Authority is exposed to interest rate, liquidity and refinancing risks. Conversely, where external loans exceed the LB then this will highlight an overborrowed position which will result in excess cash in the organisation requiring investment, thus exposing the Authority to credit and reinvestment risks and a potential cost of carry.

- 2.9 Members are also asked to note that the LB calculation does not include any targets for interest rate exposure and measures to mitigate the risk of rising borrowing costs. Further calculations are provided in the following borrowing strategy section which sets out the Authority's interest rate exposure targets and plans to create cost certainty.
- 2.10 Additional updates on the LB position will be provided throughout the year and included as part of the treasury management training sessions delivered to members.

3 BORROWING STRATEGY

- 3.1 The capital expenditure plans set out in section 2 provide details of the capital activity across the Authority and more detailed information can be found within the Capital Investment Strategy 2023/24.
- 3.2 The treasury management function will ensure that the Authority's cash is organised in accordance with the relevant professional codes, so that sufficient cash is available to meet service activity and the plans included in the Capital Strategy. This will involve both the management of the cash flow and, where capital plans require, the organisation of appropriate borrowing facilities.
- 3.3 The Authority's general policy objective is to ensure its level of debt is prudent, affordable and sustainable over the longer term (i.e. keeping financing costs to a minimum whilst addressing the key associated risks):
- Interest Rate Risk
 - Refinancing Risk

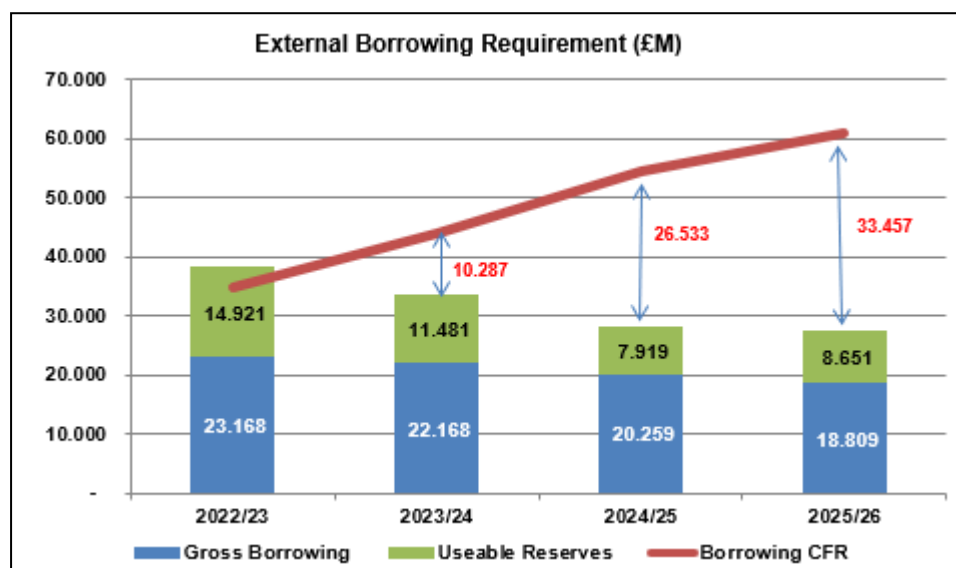
Gross Borrowing and the Capital Financing Requirement

- 3.4 This indicator compares the Authority's expected borrowing position to its underlying borrowing need (**referred to as the Borrowing CFR**), to identify the extent to which the Authority is under or over-borrowed.
- 3.5 As outlined below, the Authority is expected to be significantly under-borrowed throughout the period to 2025/26. This position is supported by the Authority's usable reserves which largely represent the resources set aside for investment in future years. By utilising the cash supporting these resources temporarily, the Authority has the option to defer long-term borrowing until the related spending commitments occur (**also referred to as internal borrowing**).
- 3.6 Whilst this is a cost-effective position which can help to reduce investment counterparty risk, it is one that needs to be actively monitored and managed considering the Authority's planned capital investment, particularly in the current economic climate.

Table 3 - Gross Borrowing and the Capital Financing Requirement

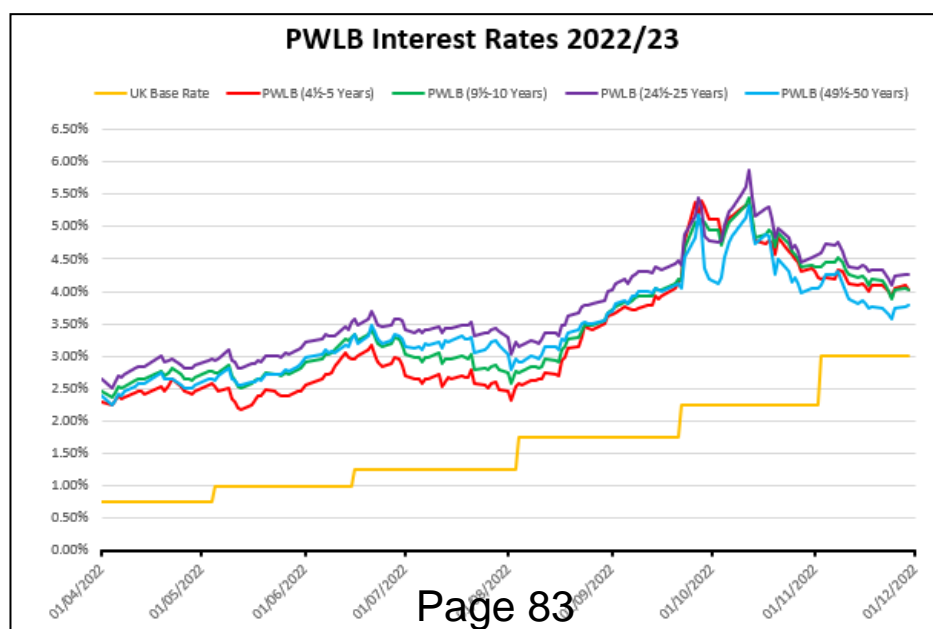
	2022/23 (£M)	2023/24 (£M)	2024/25 (£M)	2025/26 (£M)
Closing CFR	34.896	43.936	54.711	60.917
Gross Borrowing	(23.168)	(22.168)	(20.259)	(18.809)
Under-Borrowed Position	11.728	21.768	34.452	42.108
Support from Usable Reserves	(11.728)	(11.481)	(7.919)	(8.651)
External Borrowing Requirement	-	10.287	26.533	33.457

- 3.7 As illustrated by the chart below, the external borrowing requirement (represented by the blue arrows) is the cumulative amount required over the period:



Interest Rate Risk

- 3.8 This is the risk of an adverse movement in interest rates which leads to a rise in borrowing costs or lost opportunity costs. The Authority measures this risk against its temporary and variable-rate borrowing and any requirement which has yet to be financed (i.e. its under-borrowed position).
- 3.9 Interest rates are a key driver of the Authority's treasury management activities and as such are monitored by officers on a regular basis. As shown below, PWLB borrowing rates reacted to events in the financial markets during 2022 and have been on an upward trajectory since the beginning of the year. A period of high volatility occurred at the end of September 2022 following the 'mini budget' announcement by former Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng. Movements in rates have become less volatile under the Sunak/Hunt government.

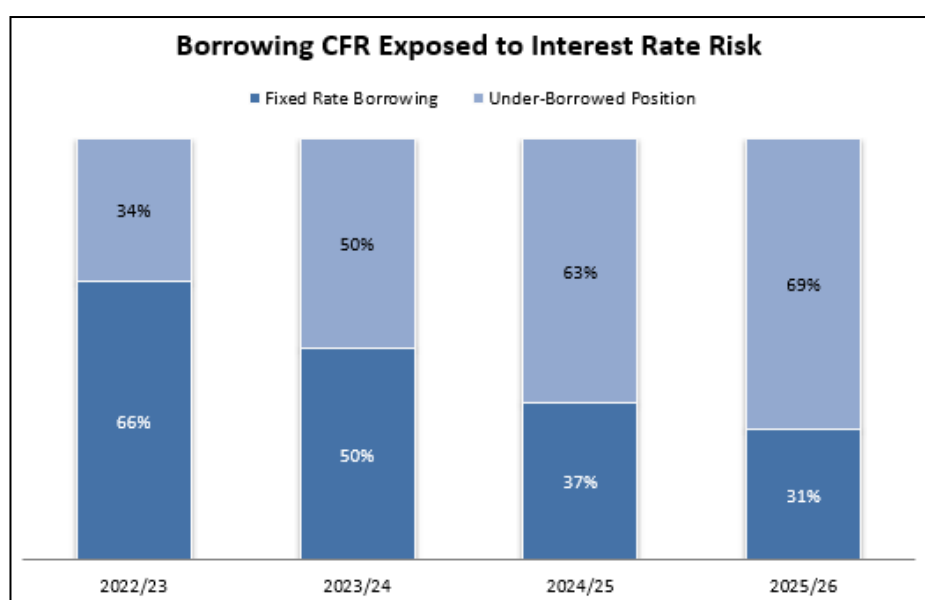


3.10 The Authority appointed LINK Group as its treasury advisor and part of their service is to assist the Authority to formulate a view on interest rates. The table below includes the latest view (as at 8th November) which is for interest rates to remain elevated and peak at around 4.5% in Spring 2023, before falling back to lower levels by 2025/26. As there are so many variables at this time, caution must be exercised in respect of all interest rate forecasts.

Table 4 - Latest Interest Rate Projections (*Provided by Link Asset Services 8th Nov 22*)

	Latest	Mar-23	Sep-23	Mar-24	Mar-25	Mar-26
UK Base Rate	3.00	4.25	4.50	4.00	3.00	2.50
PWLB Certainty (50 Years)	4.00	4.40	4.20	4.00	3.40	3.20

3.11 As shown below, it is anticipated that 34% of the Authority's borrowing requirement will be exposed to interest rate risk at the end of 2022/23. This could rise to 69% by the end of 2025/26, should no further fixed rate borrowing be undertaken:



3.12 To limit the impact of a future rise in interest rates, the proposed strategy is to maintain a minimum proportion of fixed rate borrowing of 70%. In order to achieve this target, the Authority is likely to require £23.8M of fixed rate borrowing over the period. The remaining 30% could be funded through temporary borrowing and internal cash resources.

Table 5 - External Borrowing Requirement

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	(£M)	(£M)	(£M)	(£M)
Fixed Rate Borrowing	1.259	8.587	18.038	23.833
Temporary / Variable Rate Borrowing	-	1.700	8.494	9.624
Total Requirement (Cumulative)	1.259	10.287	26.533	33.457

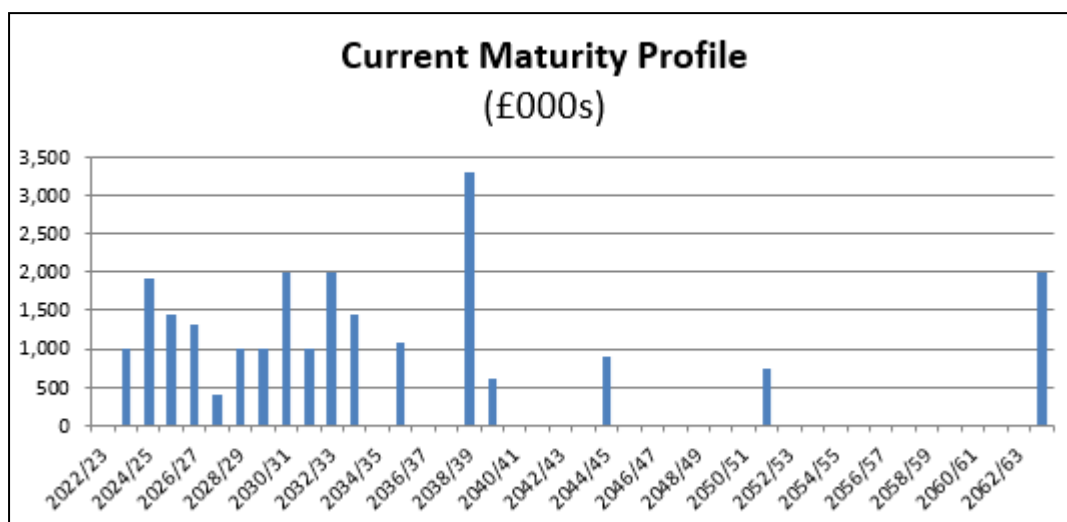
3.13 The levels of borrowing required is set to increase significantly compared to previous reporting periods. This is due to combination of capital spend projections increasing, whilst useable reserves levels fall and current borrowing matures (see table 3). As such officers will look to address the requirement through a combination of the following:

- **Deferred loans** - these would allow the Authority to borrow from financial institutions such as banks and pension funds at a fixed rate and draw down the cash up to two years in advance. Whilst they may no longer be cheaper than the PWLB, deferred loans help to protect the Authority from interest rate risk without the additional cost of carry and credit risk. Lenders tend to have a minimum size of £10M however officers will continue to explore any potential opportunities
- **PWLB borrowing** - the Authority has access to long-term PWLB funding at the certainty rate (providing loans at 0.2% below the usual rate). The latest forecasts (at table 4) show a gradual decline in PWLB rates during the forecast period to March 2025. There is likely to be unpredictable volatility during this period, as detailed previously in the report, and officers will continue to monitor PWLB closely to take advantage of the best possible rates. Any such borrowing would be carried out in small tranches to minimise the cost of carry and mitigate credit risk and assessed against alternate options available.
- **Local authority loans** - the Authority could look to secure an element of its borrowing requirement with some medium-term funds from other local authorities, which would help to spread refinancing risk typically at a cheaper rate than the PWLB. This would be carried out in small tranches to minimise the cost of carry and mitigate credit risk.

Refinancing Risk

3.14 This is risk of refinancing debt on unfavourable terms, due to either a lack of availability of replacement financing or an increase in interest rates. The Authority measures this risk against the maturity profile on long and short-term borrowing.

3.15 To protect the Authority from refinancing risk, officers will operate within the maturity limits set out in Appendix C. As shown overleaf the Authority has a balanced maturity profile which is currently well within this limit:



- 3.16 The recommendation is to borrow in small tranches to spread refinancing risk and to allow officers to invest the cash safely whilst required to meet the Authority's spending commitments.

4 ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

CONTEXT

- 4.1 The Authority's general policy objective is to invest its surplus funds prudently, which involves managing a number of risks as outlined later in this section. The Authority's investment priorities (in order) are as follows:
- the **security of capital**;
 - the **liquidity of investments**, and
 - **optimum yield commensurate with the above**
- 4.2 The borrowing of monies purely to invest or on-lend and make a return is considered unlawful. As such the Authority will not engage in such activity and as per table 3 (paragraph 2.8) will keep external borrowing beneath the CFR.

STRATEGY

- 4.3 As outlined in the previous section, the Authority is proposing to undertake around £23.8M of fixed rate borrowing over the next three years, which may result in a temporary increase in cash balances. Within this context, the Authority's investment strategy will be to: -
- **Invest any temporary surplus cash in secure products and counterparties** in order to minimise the risk of loss;
 - **Maintain an appropriate balance of liquid funds** to ensure that sufficient cash is available when needed, and
 - **Within this context, seek to optimise performance** in terms of yield.

Credit and Counterparty Risk (Security)

- 4.4 This is the risk of a third party being unable to meet its contractual obligations to the Authority, which put simply is the risk of default on any principal or interest payable. This would clearly have a detrimental impact on the Authority's resources.
- 4.5 In order to mitigate this risk, the Authority maintains a list of approved counterparties and investment limits based on the creditworthiness service provided by Link Asset Services (further details are available on request). This approach combines the credit ratings assigned by the three main rating agencies (Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's) with a range of market factors to provide a suggested duration for investments, including:
- Credit 'watches' and 'outlooks' from the main rating agencies;
 - Credit Default Swap (CDS) spreads to give early warning of likely changes in credit ratings, and
 - Sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries.
- 4.6 Members are asked to approve the investment counterparties and limits below:

Institution	Minimum Long-Term Rating (Fitch or Equivalent)	Maximum Amount	Maximum Duration
UK Government	AA-*	Unlimited	1 Year
Barclays Bank PLC (the Authority's own bank)	A	£10M	Overnight
Banks	A+	£10M (£20M per group)	1 Year
	A	£10M (£20M per group)	6 Months
	A-	£10M (£20M per group)	100 Days
Building Societies	A	£5M	6 Months
	A-	£5M	100 Days
Local Authorities	AA-**	£5M	1 Year
Money Market Funds (including VNAV)	AAA	£10M per fund	Overnight***

** The UK Sovereign Debt Rating has been placed on Negative Outlook by the three major rating agencies. The outcome of these reviews is currently unknown; should the UK's rating be downgraded the minimum rating will be amended accordingly.*

*** Not all Local Authorities are separately rated, but they are deemed to be in line with the UK Government reflecting the likelihood of intervention in the event of severe financial difficulty.*

**** Money Market Funds may be invested for longer periods than overnight, however funds can be withdrawn daily if required.*

- 4.7 It is recommended to increase the maximum investment amount in banks to £10M per investment and £20M per group. This reflects the expected increase in borrowing identified in section 3, with cash balances likely to increase as a result. This gives the authority an opportunity to seek optimum return whilst still ensuring security of funds.
- 4.8 In addition to the use of credit ratings, the Authority will be advised of information in movements in CDS and other market data on a weekly basis, which will be used to inform the amount and duration of new investments. If a downgrade results in the counterparty / investment scheme no longer meeting the Authority's minimum criteria (e.g. a credit rating below A-), it will be withdrawn from the approved list immediately and any outstanding investments not re-invested at maturity.
- 4.9 Members are also asked to approve the limits overleaf which consider the Authority's total exposure to loans, non-specified investments and foreign countries. These limits are designed to protect the Authority from undue credit / counterparty risk and are additional to those set out in paragraph 4.6:

Type	Maximum Amount	Comments
Total loans or investments with unrated entities / entities rated below A-	N/A	The Authority has no intentions to invest with entities without credit ratings or those with credit ratings below A-.
Total long-term investments	N/A	The Authority has no intentions to invest long term (i.e. for periods of more than 12 months).
Total non-specified investments	N/A	The total of the two limits above.
Total investments with institutions domiciled in foreign countries	£5M	This limits the overall amount that can be invested with institutions from outside the UK and is subject to a minimum sovereign credit rating of AA- (equivalent to the UK).

- 4.10 The process for approving such investments is detailed in Treasury Management Practice Document 5: Organisation, Clarity and segregation of Responsibilities and Dealing Arrangements, which requires prior authorisation from the Treasurer.

Price Risk (Security)

- 4.11 This is the risk of a reduction in value of funds invested, due to an adverse change in market conditions. Owing to the low-risk strategy that the Authority has adopted, the risk of credit loss is deemed immaterial (therefore no impact on the general fund), however officers will continue to monitor this position on a regular basis to identify any potential risks going forwards.

Legal and Regulatory Risk (Security)

- 4.12 This is the risk that the Authority or an organisation which it is undertaking treasury management activities with, fails to act in accordance with its legal powers or regulatory requirements, causing reputational damage and / or resulting in financial loss.
- 4.13 In order to mitigate this risk, the Authority adopts the recommendations of the statutory guidance and receives professional advice from its Treasury Management advisers (Link Asset Services). Officers attend and / or receive regular training updates to keep up with the latest developments and regulatory changes.

Liquidity Risk

- 4.14 This is the risk that cash is not available when needed to meet the Authority's spending commitments, causing reputational damage, compromise service objectives and / or leading to additional unbudgeted costs.
- 4.15 In line with the DLUHC investment advice on the liquidity of investments, the Authority will aim to maintain an appropriate balance of liquid funds (i.e. the Barclays Flexible Interest-Bearing Current Account and Money Market Funds).

- 4.16 In accordance with the Authority's low risk appetite, the majority of investment maturities are to be kept relatively short i.e. for periods less than 12 months (further details in the table at paragraph 4.6).

Yield

- 4.17 The pursuit of optimum returns is a secondary priority to security and liquidity. This is particularly important in a period of significant political and economic uncertainty. The Bank Rate is forecast to rise to around 4.0% by the end of 2023/24 (see table 4 – Latest Interest Rate Projections) and investment yields are therefore likely to increase as a result.

Diversification

- 4.18 Although the Authority currently has a good spread of investment instruments, officers will continue to evaluate alternative investment options that meet the principles of security, liquidity and yield. Consideration will be given to alternative investment instruments and whether they are suitable for the investment portfolio. Advice will be sought from Link prior to the use of any new investment instruments.
- 4.19 In addition to the core investment principles of security, liquidity and yield the Authority will also seek to diversify investments to avoid concentration in specific banks, types of instrument, sovereign state etc. Consideration will also be given to the overall concentration of investments within each sector.
- 4.20 In order to diversify a portfolio largely invested in cash, investments will be placed with approved counterparties over a range of maturity periods. Maximum investment levels are set to ensure prudent diversification is achieved and these, together with minimum ratings and cash limits, are shown in the table at paragraph 4.6.

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Considerations

- 4.21 Changes to the CIPFA TM Code 2021 include ESG investment considerations which should be incorporated into the Authority's treasury management practices and procedures. This is a developing area and the measurement of ESG considerations is more widely used in equity and bond markets rather than for short-term cash deposits that the Authority uses.
- 4.22 Where possible, treasury officers will consider ESG investment options which are consistent with the Authority's own environmental and climate change policies although it is recognised that this is currently difficult. Further information on this matter will be provided once it becomes available and any updates to the Annual Investment Strategy will be made as necessary.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT 2023/24**1 Introduction & Background**

- 1.1 Treasury management activities are defined as “the management of the organisation’s borrowing, investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks”.
- 1.2 The Authority regards successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority (SYFRA) and any financial instruments entered into to manage these risks.
- 1.3 The Authority adopts the principles outlined in the CIPFA Code which requires the responsible officer to ensure that members with responsibility for treasury management receive adequate training in treasury management. This especially applies to members responsible for scrutiny.
- 1.4 The Authority uses Link Asset Services, Treasury Solutions as its external treasury management advisors and recognises that the responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the organisation at all times and will ensure that undue reliance is not placed upon our external service providers. It also recognises that there is value in employing external providers of treasury management services in order to acquire access to specialist skills and resources.
- 1.5 The training needs of the Authority’s treasury management staff are assessed on a regular basis. Key members of staff attend training courses, seminars and conferences, the majority of which are provided by the Authority’s Treasury Management Advisers, Link, as appropriate. In addition, members are encouraged to attend treasury management awareness / refresher sessions, provided by Link.
- 1.6 The Authority acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management, and to employing suitable comprehensive performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.

2. Policies and Objectives of Treasury Management Activities

- 2.1 The Authority’s high-level policies for borrowing and investments are summarised overleaf:

2.2 Policy on Borrowing

The borrowing strategy will balance the need to reduce the risks in holding high levels of cash with obtaining value for money in borrowing activities, which may involve postponement of borrowing. However, against this background, and the risks within the economic forecast, caution will be adopted:

- If it was felt that there was a significant risk of a fall in long and short term rates, for example due to a marked increase in risks around relapse into recession or of risks of deflation, then long term borrowings will be postponed, and potential rescheduling from fixed rate funding into short term borrowing will be considered.
- If it was felt that there was a significant risk of a much sharper rise in long and short term rates than currently forecast, perhaps arising from a greater than expected increase in world economic activity or a sudden increase in inflation risks, then the portfolio position will be re-appraised with the likely action that fixed rate funding will be drawn whilst interest rates were still relatively cheap.

2.3 Policy on Investments

The investment strategy has as its primary objectives to protect principal sums invested from loss and to ensure adequate liquidity so that funds are available when needed. SYFRA also has a secondary aim to achieve the optimum return in investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity. In the current economic climate, the risk appetite of this Authority is low in order to give priority to the over-riding risk consideration of counterparty security. SYFRA will therefore continue to invest only with high quality counterparties.

2.4 Policy on Borrowing in Advance of Need

The Authority's policy on borrowing in advance of need is that it will not borrow more than or in advance of its needs, purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. Any decision to borrow in advance will be within forward approved Capital Financing Requirement estimates, and will be considered carefully to ensure that value for money can be demonstrated and that the Authority can ensure the security of such funds.

2.5 Policy on the use of Derivatives

The general power of competence in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 removes much of the uncertainty over local authorities' use of financial derivatives. The CIPFA Code requires authorities to clearly detail their policy on the use of derivatives in the TMSS. The Authority will only use derivatives where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of financial risk. Derivatives may be arranged with any organisation that meets

the Authority's approved investment criteria. The Authority will only use derivatives after seeking a legal opinion and ensuring that officers have the appropriate training to effectively manage their use.

2.6 The Authority will provide the following reports as required by the Prudential and Treasury Management Codes:

- The Capital Investment Strategy

This sets the framework for all aspects of the Authority's capital and investment expenditure including prioritisation, governance, planning, outcomes, management, funding and monitoring.

- Treasury Strategy and Prudential and Treasury Indicators

This report covers:

- the Authority's capital expenditure plans;
- the MRP Policy Statement;
- the Authority's borrowing strategy;
- the Annual Investment Strategy, and
- the Authority's Prudential and Treasury Indicators.

- Quarterly Treasury Management Reports

This will update members with progress on the capital and treasury position, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and on whether treasury management activities are meeting the strategy or whether any policies require revision.

- An Annual Treasury Report

This provides details of a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators and actual treasury operations compared to the estimates within the strategy.

3. Treasury Management Scheme of Delegation

3.1 The Authority will:

- receive and review reports on treasury management policies, practices and activities;
- approve the annual strategy, and
- approve amendments to the adopted clauses within Financial Regulations and the treasury management policy statement.

3.2 The Audit and Governance Committee will:

- scrutinise and make recommendations to the Authority on the treasury management strategy and policies,
- monitor the implementation of policies and practices, and
- receive and review regular monitoring reports.

3.3 Treasury Management Role of the Treasurer:

The Treasurer has overall responsibility for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions and will be responsible for:

- recommending clauses, treasury management policy/practices for approval, reviewing the same regularly, and monitoring compliance;
- submitting regular treasury management policy reports;
- receiving and reviewing management information reports;
- reviewing the performance of the treasury management function;
- ensuring the adequacy of treasury management resources and skills, and the effective division of responsibilities within the treasury management function;
- ensuring the adequacy of internal audit and liaising with external audit, and
- the appointment of external service providers.

2023/24 MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION (MRP) STATEMENT

The Authority is required to make a prudent provision for debt repayment known as the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). Guidance on MRP has been issued by the Secretary of State and local authorities are required to “have regard” to such Guidance under Section 21(1A) of the Local Government Act 2003. The four MRP options available are:

Option 1: Regulatory Method;
 Option 2: CFR Method;
 Option 3: Asset Life Method, and
 Option 4: Depreciation Method.

NB This does not preclude other prudent methods

MRP in 2023/24: Options 1 and 2 may only be used for General Fund supported expenditure. Methods of making prudent provision for General Fund self-financed expenditure include Options 3 and 4 (which may also be used for supported expenditure if the Authority chooses).

The MRP Statement is required to be submitted to the Authority before the start of the financial year for approval. Any revision of which must also be submitted to the Authority for approval. The Authority is recommended to approve the following statement:

- **For capital expenditure incurred before 1st April 2008, MRP will be determined in accordance with Option 3;**
- **For supported capital expenditure incurred after 1st April 2008, MRP will be determined in accordance with Option 3;**
- **For non-supported (prudentially borrowed) capital expenditure incurred after 1st April 2008, MRP will be determined in accordance with Option 3;**
- **Within Option 3, MRP is permitted to be calculated in one of two ways - equal instalments or on an annuity basis. The Authority has chosen to calculate MRP on an annuity basis, and**
- **MRP will normally commence in the financial year following the one in which expenditure is incurred. However, MRP Guidance permits local authorities to defer MRP until the financial year following the one in which the asset becomes operational. The Authority has chosen to employ this option for significant qualifying projects.**

MRP in respect of on balance sheet leases will match the annual principal repayment for the associated deferred liability. This approach will produce an MRP charge comparable to that under Option 3 in that it will run over the life of the lease term.

Changes introduced by the revised (DLUHC) guidance on MRP mean that any charges made over the statutory minimum revenue provision (MRP) can, if needed, be reclaimed in later years if deemed necessary or prudent. To date no such voluntary overpayments have been made.

PRUDENTIAL AND TREASURY INDICATORS 2022/23 – 2025/26**Estimates of Capital Expenditure**

This prudential indicator is a summary of the Authority's capital expenditure plans, both those agreed previously, and those forming part of this budget cycle. Members are asked to approve the capital expenditure forecasts:

	2022/23 (£M)	2023/24 (£M)	2024/25 (£M)	2025/26 (£M)
Indicative Capital Programme	5.952	9.651	11.372	7.047
Total Capital Expenditure	5.952	9.651	11.372	7.047

Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement

This indicator sets out the Authority's CFR, which reflects the capital expenditure (both historic and planned) being funded from borrowing or other long-term liabilities (e.g. PFI schemes, finance leases). The Authority is asked to approve the CFR projections below:

Estimated CFR	2022/23 (£M)	2023/24 (£M)	2024/25 (£M)	2025/26 (£M)
Opening Balance	29.814	34.896	43.936	54.711
Add Net Financing Need	5.486	9.518	11.372	6.947
Less Amounts Set Aside to Repay Debt	(0.404)	(0.478)	(0.597)	(0.741)
Closing Balance	34.896	43.936	54.711	60.917

The Operational Boundary

This is the limit beyond which external debt is not normally expected to exceed, based on the Authority's CFR (see above). The Authority is asked to approve the limits set out below:

Operational Boundary	2022/23 (£M)	2023/24 (£M)	2024/25 (£M)	2025/26 (£M)
Debt	34.896	43.936	54.711	60.917

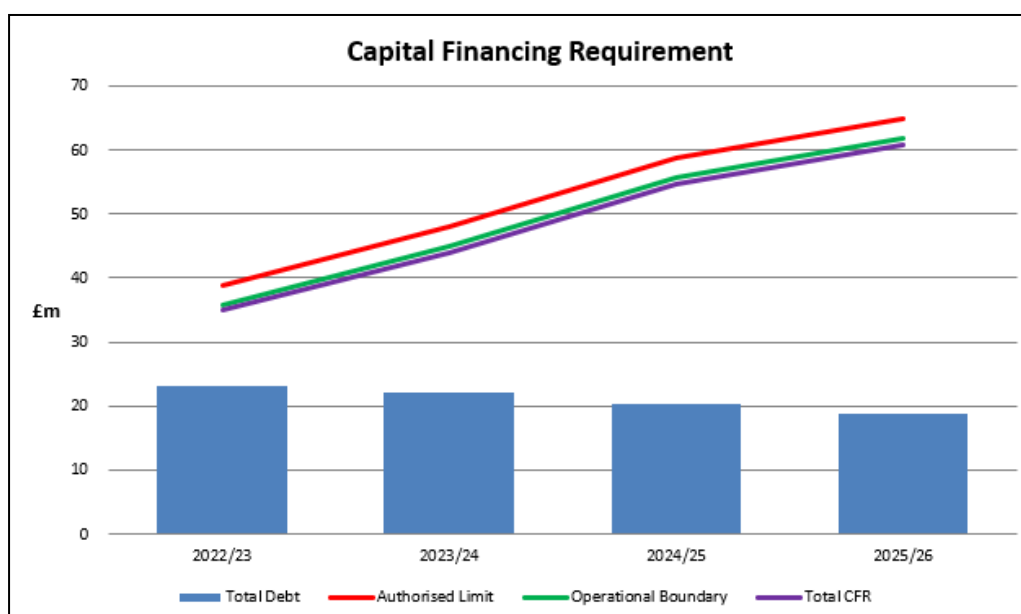
The Authorised Limit for External Debt

A further key prudential indicator represents a control on the maximum level of borrowing. This represents a limit beyond which external debt is prohibited, and this limit needs to be set or revised by the full Authority. It reflects the level of external debt which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term. The Authorised Limit has been set at £4M above the Operational Boundary.

This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003. The Government retains an option to control either the total of all authorities' plans, or those of a specific authority, although this power has not yet been exercised. The Authority is asked to approve the following authorised limit:

Authorised Limit	2022/23 (£M)	2023/24 (£M)	2024/25 (£M)	2025/26 (£M)
Debt	38.896	47.936	58.711	64.917

The CFR and limits identified in the tables above are also shown in the below graph.



From 1st April 2024 the Authority will be required to implement IFRS 16 which is replacing the previous accounting standard applied for leases. This standard removes the distinction between finance and operating leases which means that many of the Authority's existing leases will now be brought onto the balance sheet, potentially increasing the Authority's CFR and therefore increasing the operational boundary. The effect of this for the Authority is currently projected to be minimal, however this will be monitored on an ongoing basis.

Maturity Structure of Borrowing

These gross limits are set to reduce the Authority's exposure to large, fixed rate sums falling due for refinancing and are required for upper and lower limits. The authority is asked to approve the following limits overleaf:

Loan Maturity Structure (All Years)		
	Lower	Upper
Under 12 months	0%	30%
12 months to 2 years	0%	15%
2 years to 5 years	0%	45%
5 years to 10 years	0%	75%
10 years and above	25%	100%

Maximum Principal Sums Invested for more than 365 Days

These limits are set with regard to the Authority's liquidity requirements and the expected availability of funds after each year-end. At present the Authority has no intentions to invest for periods of more than 365 days.

Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Streams

This indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital (borrowing and other long-term obligation costs net of investment income) against the net revenue stream.

Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Streams	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
General Fund	2.5%	3.0%	2.9%	3.0%

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Treasury Management refers to the management of the organisation's borrowing, investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.

CIPFA is the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy - the leading accountancy body for the public services providing education and training in accountancy and financial management.

DLUHC is the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (formerly the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) - a ministerial department responsible for UK Government policy on housing and public services.

MRP refers to the Minimum Revenue Provision - a statutory annual charge to the revenue account for the repayment of debt (as measured by the Capital Financing Requirement).

Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) represents the Authority's underlying indebtedness for capital purposes, based on historic capital expenditure which hasn't yet been financed (e.g. from grants, capital receipts or revenue contributions).

Debt refers to the sum of borrowing and other long-term liabilities.

Other Long-Term Liabilities mean the liabilities outstanding under credit arrangements (e.g. PFI contracts or finance leases).

Internal Borrowing / Under-Borrowed refers to the temporary use of cash resources (e.g. reserves earmarked for future capital expenditure or grants received in advance of expenditure) to avoid borrowing immediately, which seeks to reduce investment counterparty risk and create a short-term budget saving. The Authority will replace these cash resources with external borrowing as these spending commitments occur.

Specified Investments are short-term investments (i.e. less than 12 months) denominated in pounds sterling with a high credit quality.

Non-Specified Investments refers to any financial investments (excluding loans) that do not meet the criteria to be treated as a specified investment.

Investments in Foreign Countries refer to investments placed with counterparties from countries outside the UK (subject to a minimum sovereign rating of AA-).

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SCHEDULE OF FEES AND CHARGES 2023/24

APPENDIX D

Appliance and Crew	£381.49 per hour
Testing of Fire Extinguishers	£34.65 per extinguisher
Testing Private Hydrants	£29.22 per hydrant
COMAH Site	£7,619.00 per site
Fire Awareness / Fire safety Training	£192.50 per candidate
ARC Course	Fee individually determined based on nature / cost of course

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SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

Meeting	FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
Meeting Date	20 FEBRUARY 2023
Report of	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER / CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Report Sponsor(s)	ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER / DIRECTOR OF SERVICE IMPROVMENT
Subject	SERVICE PLAN 2023/24

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the Service Plan for 2023/24.

This plan has been developed following consultation with our staff and corporate planning events involving senior leaders to identify the service's short and medium term priorities.

There are six priorities identified in the plan, which the Service wishes to focus on in the next three years, with some immediate actions for each during 2023/24. The priorities are:

- Efficiency
- Sustainability
- Leadership
- Performance information
- Diversity, inclusion and culture
- Service delivery improvements

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Members are recommended to:-

- a) Approve the Service Plan 2023/24

CONTENTS

Main Report

Appendix A - Service Plan 2023/24

BACKGROUND

1. We published annual plans for 2021/22 and 2022/23 which set out key areas the Service would focus on across a 12-month period to improve the service, both for the public we serve, and those who work for us.
2. It has since become clear that many of the areas we decided to focus on are not quick fixes, requiring longer-term focus, energy and resources. Staff also told us they wanted us to publish a smaller number of priorities, with clearer actions supporting them, to help them focus their own areas of work.
3. For these reasons, we are now publishing a three year Service Plan, made up of longer-term priorities for the Service. Each priority will contain some shorter-term actions, which we will update annually.

DEVELOPMENT

4. The Service engaged team, function and district managers as part of a consultation exercise in mid-2022 to discuss the short and medium term priorities for improving the Service.
5. The Service's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) then met to discuss this feedback, alongside their own immediate priorities. They also analysed the threats and opportunities facing the Service, the organisation's strengths and weaknesses and the political, social and economic influences, which might affect the Service in the future.
6. These discussions generated a list of six priorities, which the Service wishes to focus on in the next three years, together with some immediate actions for addressing them in 2023/24. We then carried out a further period of consultation with our staff on the contents of the draft plan.
7. A blog from the Assistant Chief Fire Officer introduced staff to the contents of the draft plan and an intranet and staff bulletin article pointed staff towards a survey where people could submit their feedback. Managers also led feedback sessions with watches and teams as part of a 'team brief'.
8. Where appropriate, we have made changes to the contents of the plan based on this feedback and these are described on page seven of the plan.

NEXT STEPS

9. Following Member approval, the Service Plan will be published on the Service's website and intranet.
10. Progress towards achieving the priorities within the plan, will be regularly monitored by the Service's Corporate Management Board and as per the progress reporting for the current plan, we will provide Members of the Fire and Rescue Authority with a formal update report twice a year.
11. The Service Plan will be reviewed annually to check it still reflects our priorities.

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR ASPIRATIONS

- ☒ **Be a great place to work-** we will create the right culture, values and behaviours to make this a brilliant place to work that is inclusive for all
- ☒ **Put local people first-** we will spend money carefully, use our resources wisely and collaborate with others to provide the best deal to the communities we serve
- ☒ **Strive to be the best in everything we do-** we will work with others, make the most of technology and develop leaders to become the very best at what we can be

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

If you have ticked 'Yes' please provide brief details in the box below and include the third party/parties it would involve:

We expect opportunities for collaboration to be proactively considered as each priority is delivered.

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY IMPLICATIONS

12. There are no business continuity implications associated with this report.

EQUALITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED

- ☐ Yes

If you have ticked 'Yes' please complete the below comment boxes providing details as follows:

Summary of any Adverse Impacts Identified:	Key Mitigating Actions Proposed and Agreed:

- ☐ No
- ☒ N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why an EA is not required/is outstanding:

We expect Equality Analyses to be completed as each priority is developed further.

HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☒ N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why a Health and Safety Risk Assessment is not required/is outstanding:

We expect health and safety risk assessments to be completed if required, as and when individual priorities are progressed.

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

13. Under the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority [Scheme of Delegation](#) a decision *is required / *has been approved at Service level.

Delegated Power

☒
☐

Yes
No

If yes, please complete the comments box indicating under which delegated power.

D: Legislation
D2: Consultations

IMPLICATIONS

14. Consider whether this report has any of the following implications and if so, address them below: , Diversity, Financial, Asset Management, Environmental and Sustainability, Fleet, Communications, ICT, Health and Safety, Data Protection, Collaboration, Legal and Industrial Relations implications have been considered in compiling this report.

List of background documents		
Appendix A - Service Plan 2023/24		
Report Author:	Name:	Zander Mills, Corporate Communications Manager
	e-mail:	zmills@syfire.gov.uk
	Tel no:	0114 2532353



**South Yorkshire
FIRE & RESCUE**

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE

SERVICE PLAN

2023-24

Making
**SOUTH
YORKSHIRE
SAFER &
STRONGER**

ABOUT THIS PLAN

South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue aims to be one of the best fire and rescue services in the UK.

To help us achieve this, we published annual plans for 2021/22 and 2022/23 which set out key areas the service would focus on across a 12-month period to improve the service- both for the public we serve, and those who work for us.

It's since become clear that many of the areas we decided to focus on are not quick fixes- requiring longer term focus, energy and resources.

Staff also told us they wanted us to publish a smaller number

of priorities, with clearer actions supporting them, to help them focus their own areas of work.

Lastly, the government's Fire Reform White Paper is likely to introduce new areas of focus for us.

For these reasons, we are now publishing a three year service plan, made up of longer term priorities for the service. Each priority will contain some shorter-term actions which we will update annually.

We will continue to report our progress against each of these areas to our governing Fire and Rescue Authority.

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OUR STORY

In 2021, we published an update to our strategic narrative- called Our Story- which established our vision to become one of the UK's leading fire and rescue services.

Our Story clearly sets out our purpose which is 'making South Yorkshire safer and stronger'. It also explains the behaviours we expect our staff to display, regardless of rank or role, and describes our aspirations for the future. Together with the national Core Code of Ethics for fire and rescue staff, this forms an essential part of everything we do.



As well as Our Story, another other important document is our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

All fire and rescue authorities must produce a CRMP, which sets out the steps they will take to identify all foreseeable risks within their respective areas and how they will organise their service delivery resources to best reduce that risk. The plans should ensure the right resources are in the right places at the right time to provide the best service to local communities with the resources that are available.

We published our current CRMP in 2021/22 and review it annually. The way we do this is set out in our CRMP methodology document. This document explains the various ways in which we analyse local risk, the types of risk we consider, the data sets we consider and the ways in which we engage the public, partners and staff in this process.

This Service Plan seeks to complement the work already set out in our CRMP- and the other strategies and plans which support it.

HOW DO WE MAKE DECISIONS?

Decision-making is managed through three main routes- internal governance, Corporate Management Board (CMB) and the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA).

The parameters for this are set out within our Constitution. The Constitution sets out how the Authority works, how decisions are made and procedures to ensure efficiency, transparency and accountability to local people.

Our internal governance structure ensures that effective risk, project and performance management is built into the most suitable board, committee or group. Monitoring and decision-making can be made at this level, with decisions largely focused on projects, performance, risk and service delivery. We have reviewed the terms of reference for all meeting groups, committees and boards so that delegated areas of responsibility and accountability are clear.

The Corporate Management Board (CMB) functions as a strategic board meeting to make high-level decisions for the service, within the 'scheme of delegation'. It also operates as an assurance process for reports that are due to be presented at Fire and Rescue Authority meetings.



South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority is a statutory body made up of 12 local Councillors from the four South Yorkshire Districts of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield, plus South Yorkshire's Police and Crime Commissioner. The Authority meets regularly throughout the year, using a structure which allows them to discuss, consider, scrutinise, challenge, monitor and question the Chief Fire Officer and their leadership team on the way the service is run.

“ The Corporate Management Board (CMB) functions as a strategic board meeting to make high-level decisions for the service, within the 'scheme of delegation'. ”

WHO IS OUR SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM?

The service's decision making is supported by a senior leadership team, made up of key leaders from across the service.

Our Senior Leadership Team is made up of our principal officers (Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer) and heads of function. Our Corporate Communication Manager and other managers where necessary also attend Senior Leadership Team meetings to provide strategic advice in these areas.



CFO Chris Kirby, Chief Executive

Chris joined the service as Deputy Chief Fire Officer in 2020. He'd previously served with West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue for more than two decades, having joined as a firefighter in 1998. As Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, he is responsible for the vision and strategic direction of the service and the effective delivery of its core functions.



DCFO Tony Carlin, Director of Service Delivery

Tony joined South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue in 2000, having begun his career as a firefighter in North Yorkshire in 1992. During his career, he has overseen areas including community and business fire safety, workforce development, training and data and performance. He is responsible for our key service delivery areas- prevention, protection and response.



ACFO Andy Strelczenie, Director of Service Improvement

Andy has worked within the fire and rescue service for 26 years, originally at Hereford and Worcester Fire & Rescue Service before transferring to South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue. He leads on the delivery of South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue's service improvement plan and community risk management plans. He is also responsible for operational training, health and safety, estates and fleet management.



Sue Kelsey, Head of People & Organisation Development

Sue's career in HR in the public sector spans 35 years, working in the fire and rescue service for nearly five years. She oversees the delivery of the service's People Strategy.



AM Simon Dunker, Head of Emergency Response

Simon has worked for over 24 years in South Yorkshire Fire Rescue in many departments. His current responsibilities include working with district command teams to ensure the efficient and effective running of our fire stations and operational crews.



AM Matt Gillatt, Head of Service Improvement

Matt has worked for SYFR for 27 years in a number of roles across the organisation. He is now responsible for our Business Intelligence team, Governance, Performance and Collaboration and Community Risk Management Planning.



AM Paul Heffernan, Head of Service Delivery Support

Paul has worked in the fire and rescue service for 25 years, having started his career in Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service. As Head of Service Delivery Support he is responsible for Firefighter Safety Team, Tech Services, Health & Safety and Resilience, Planning and Contingencies.



Zander Mills, Corporate Communication Manager

Zander has worked in the fire and rescue service for 13 years, with a background in journalism and public relations. He oversees delivery of the service's campaigns and its public and staff engagement work.

WHAT WE ACHIEVED LAST YEAR

In 2022/23 we set out eight immediate priorities for the service.

Our 2022/23 plan set specific targets for the service to undertake within the year and we've made good progress against all eight of these.

For example, crews have helped to devise 'minimum expectations' within station plans to ensure all time is used productively, whilst our activity levels have returned to pre-pandemic levels across most service delivery areas.

This is supported by Orca (an online data hub) which hosts an electronic version of the quarterly performance report. A response standards report is also now published for scrutiny by staff and the Fire Authority.

An interim equality, diversity and inclusion strategy and action plan has identified key actions to support this important area of work-including a review of HR policies and practices, particularly in relation to recruitment.

Work is underway to establish a leadership programme, including the service's first talent management strategy. Our coaching and mentoring offers are being reviewed.

A new agile working policy is now live and embedded through training and support for managers. A review of the estate for agile working purposes is underway.

New software has been purchased and also developed in-house to track and capture operational



training and learning. This includes live incidents and links into our exercise programme. This all forms part of our operational training delivery plan, which maps out our work in this area across three years. Significantly, 2022 has seen the refresh of incident command training and delivery that aligns

our service with regional partners and is a notable move towards interoperability.

We've signed up to the emergency services' sustainability charter, set up a staff sustainability committee and have created a new green plan for the service.

Previously approved investments in business and community fire safety have been made, human resources has undergone a restructure and we are recruiting to our driver training and fleet maintenance teams. Efficiencies have been generated in estates, whilst our capital programme includes upgrades across our property estate and the procurement of new fire engines.

WHAT STAFF TOLD US

Before drafting our service plan, we invited function and district managers to tell us what they thought we should be focusing on in the next period.

Many said they thought that priorities we'd identified the previous year should be carried over into this plan as they remained important issues for the service. Others fed-back that we should have fewer priorities supported by clearer actions and we have tried to reflect that in this plan.

Further consultation with wider staff was carried out on the draft plan- including an all staff survey and watch and team brief. Amendments or additions requested by staff included the areas around efficiency, culture and service delivery, as well as minor changes to wording. These changes are now reflected in this- the final plan.



OUR SERVICE PLAN PRIORITIES

Efficiency

The service faces significant financial challenges over the next few years, including cost pressures caused by energy prices, inflation and increased wage costs.

At the same time, we know there are inefficiencies which are costing the service money which might better be spent elsewhere. Inefficiency also contributes to issues around operational staffing and fire engine availability.

We therefore intend to **identify and remove inefficiencies across the service and prioritise our capital spending where it is most needed.**

This is about making the service as financially sustainable as possible, so that it is best placed to meet uncertain financial challenges in the future.

In 2023/24 we will:

- Identify inefficiencies and prioritise
- Review our capital spending programme
- Assess all non-pay budgets to identify revenue savings where possible



Sustainability

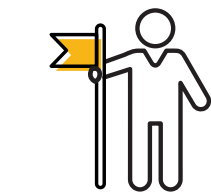
Sustainability benefits are not only environmental.

That's why we want to **reduce waste of goods, energy, fuel and other resources across the service.**

If done properly, we expect this to support our priority around financial efficiency, as well as contributing to our green objectives- including our commitment to be carbon net zero by 2040.

In 2023/24 we will:

- Identify areas of greatest waste and develop plans to reduce these
- Analyse our energy use and put plans in place to reduce it where appropriate
- Begin to implement the service's green plan



Leadership

Good leaders help to set the culture, drive performance and develop others.

We've made strong progress in offering development programmes for senior leaders, such as the Executive Leadership Programme, and we support moves by the National Fire Chief's Council to develop a national leadership programme for the sector.

However, we recognise that we must also urgently **prioritise leadership development for junior supervisory managers**- including Watch and Crew Managers and corporate team managers.

This important group of staff represent our future leaders and they are also fundamental to creating a positive workplace culture where everyone can thrive.

In 2023/24 we will:

- Review our existing development pathways for junior officers and supervisory managers
- Develop a revised leadership development offer to this important group of staff
- Further support the development of sector leadership programmes at a national level



Performance information

We've already improved the way we provide data to our staff, with new tools available to access and analyse real-time information.

However, this improved data is not yet fully utilised to drive performance and set priorities at a station or team level.

We want to change this to support the continual improvement of our service delivery, improve productivity and to ensure our work is targeted where it is most needed.

In 2023/24 we will:

- Better use real time data and intelligence to inform decisions of leaders and drive improvements across the service
- Improve staff understanding of Orca and the ways it can support their work
- Establish forums to better scrutinise the service's performance at a strategic level
- Better use data to inform local plans, performance measures and frontline work



Inclusion, diversity and culture

Equality, diversity and inclusion remains a major area of focus for the service and we've already made good progress- but culture reviews in other parts of the country highlight that there is still much for us to do.

However, we believe there is still more to be done to create an inclusive culture, whilst our workforce still does not adequately represent the communities we serve.

We want to **embed inclusion across the service so all staff can thrive and ensure positive action is translating into genuine recruitment outcomes.**

In 2023/24 we will:

- Implement commitments we made to the Fire Authority following London's independent culture review
- Identify and implement better support for neurodiverse staff and those with disabilities
- Further empower staff networks to help us drive workplace improvements
- Set realistic goals for positive action initiatives across all recruitment areas
- Establish a corporate induction programme to further support inclusion
- Continue our improvement journey around staff wellbeing support, including embedding investment in Occupational Health and compliance with our requirements around employee health screening



Service delivery improvements

Our previous commitment to **ensure the outstanding delivery of our core services- prevention, protection, resilience and response**- remains.

Much of our work in this area is already captured elsewhere- such as the strategies for each function, or our service improvement plan. However, we want to prioritise certain things to drive improvement at a strategic level.

In 2023/24 we will:

- Implement our action plan around incident ground contaminants
- Improve the resilience of our emergency response vehicle fleet
- Quality assure our prevention and protection work at a local level to ensure it is meeting the needs of our communities
- Further align our protection work to local risk
- Use the Specialisms Programme to drive further improvements
- Improve on-call availability
- Improve operational learning and debriefing
- Progress National Operational Guidance implementation
- Improve interoperability via cross border exercises
- Ensure operational risk information is relevant and up to date



RISKS TO ACHIEVEMENT

We believe the objectives we've set out in this plan are realistic and achievable.

However, we're also aware that there are some risks to achieving them all- such as impacts on our budget, or further disruptions caused by pandemics, major incidents or other events.

We will take steps to monitor and mitigate all risks, in accordance with our usual risk management processes and record these on our corporate risk register.

MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

We will continue to measure the success of our work through our performance indicators, plus internal measures like staff satisfaction survey scores. Progress towards achieving the priorities within the plan will be regularly monitored by our Corporate Management Board.

As with our previous Annual Service Plan, we will also publish updates explaining our progress against each of the priorities we've set ourselves for this period and these will be reported twice a year to our governing fire and rescue service.

The results of inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabularies and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) are another indicator of how well the service is performing against the goals it sets itself.



Arabic	"الطلب ترجمة لهذه المنشورة أو للمزيد من المعلومات عن خدمة الإطفاء والإنقاذ في جنوب يوركشاير، يرجى إرسال رسالة الكترونية إلى: customercare@syfire.gov.uk أو الاتصال بالرقم 0114 253 2209"
Cantonese	倘若您需要本出版物的翻譯件，或希望瞭解有關南約克郡消防與救援服務處的其他資訊，請發送電郵至： customercare@syfire.gov.uk ，或致電 0114 253 2209
Farsi	"برای درخواست ترجمه این بروشور و یا اطلاعات بیشتر در مورد بخش خدمات آتش نشانی و نجات منطقه جنوب یوركشاير، لطفا به این آدرس به ما و یا به شماره تلفن 01142532209 زنگ بزنید." customercare@syfire.gov.uk ایمیل بزنید:
French	"Pour demander une traduction de cette publication, ou pour obtenir davantage d'informations sur South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue, veuillez envoyer un e-mail à customercare@syfire.gov.uk ou téléphoner à : 0114 253 2209"
Kurdish	"بۆ داواکردنی ئەم بلاوکراوەیە بەزمانێکی تر یاخود بۆ زانیاری زیاتر لەبارەی دەزگای ناگروکارێاندەووە و فریاکەوتنی ساوت یۆرکشايرە تکایە ئیمیل بنێرە بۆ customercare@syfire.gov.uk یان پەیوەندی بکە بە ژمارە تەلەفۆنی 0114 253 2209"
Mandarin	“如果您需要本出版物的翻译件，或希望了解有关南约克郡消防与救援服务处的其他信息，请发送电子邮件至： customercare@syfire.gov.uk ，或致电 0114 253 2209”
Pashto	"ددۍ خپرونې د ژباړې د غوښتنو لپاره، يا د ساؤته يارک شاپر فاير اينډ ريسکيو په باب د نور معلوماتو تر لاسه کولو لپاره ، لطفآ په دې پته اې ميل وکړئ customercare@syfire.gov.uk يا په دې شمېره زنگ ووهئ: 0114 253 2209 ."
Polish	"Aby uzyskać tłumaczenie tego materiału lub otrzymać więcej informacji o Straży Pożarnej South Yorkshire (South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue) prosimy o wysłanie e-maila na adres customercare@syfire.gov.uk lub zadzwonić pod numer telefonu: 0114 253 2209"
Slovak	"Ak požadujete preklad tejto publikácie alebo ďalšie informácie o South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue (Hasičskej a záchrannej službe grófstva South Yorkshire), zašlite prosím e-mail na adresu customercare@syfire.gov.uk alebo zavolaťte na číslo: 0114 253 2209"
Somali	"Haddii aad rabtid in daabacaddaan lagu turjumo, ama haddii aad rabtid macluumaad dheeraad ah ee ku saabsan adeegga Gurmadka & Dab-demiska Koonfurta Yorkshire (South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue), fadlan e-mail u soo dir customercare@syfire.gov.uk ama telefoon u soo dir: 0114 253 2209"
Turkish	"Bu yayımın tercümesini talep etmek veya South Yorkshire İtfaiye ve Kurtarma Hizmetleri hakkında ayrıntılı bilgi almak için lütfen customercare@syfire.gov.uk adresine e-posta gönderin veya aşağıda verilen numarayı arayın: 0114 253 2209"
Urdu	اس دستاویز کا ترجمہ حاصل کرنے یا 'ساؤتھ یارکشاير فاير اينڈ ريسکيو' سے متعلق مزید معلومات کے لیے برائے مہربانی ای میل بھیجیں : customercare@syfire.gov.uk یا فون کریں : 0114 253 2209



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SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Meeting	FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
Meeting Date	20 FEBRUARY 2023
Report of	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER / CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CLERK AND TREASURER
Report Sponsor(s)	DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER / CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
Subject	FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3 2022/23

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the third in a series of reports Members will receive throughout the financial year which details the likely financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2023. It routinely includes an estimated revenue outturn position when compared to the annual budget set on the 21 February 2022, an updated reserves position statement and an update on the capital programme alongside a narrative commentary to help explain the key financial changes that are contributing to each of them.

The 2022/23 approved operating budget, was £57.877m, funding was £58.827m resulting in a planned contribution to reserves of £0.950m, reflecting the one-off services grant for 2022/23 only.

Based on the latest income and expenditure forecasts the Authority is projecting a net operating spend of £59.379m, net contributions to reserves of £0.191m and funding of £57.877m. The forecast result is an overall operating overspend of £1.693m or 3% of the budget. The net contributions, as at Quarter 3 are the use of previously earmarked reserves (£0.331m) offset by the planned contribution to the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) reserve of £0.521m.

Members should note that the forecast overspend could still worsen, based on risks and uncertainties detailed within the report. However, pre-empted measures taken through the earlier setting aside of funds in the Emerging Risk reserve mitigate some cost pressures such as inflation.

The 2022/23 approved Capital Programme was £8.773m, funded predominantly by external borrowing. Following the 2021/22 Outturn Report, approved 20 June 2022, the programme has been adjusted to £10.384m. Quarter 2 reported a significant review as part of medium term planning that resulted in a reduction to £5.952m. This forecast remains unchanged.

Based on the projections in this report, there would be a net decrease in general reserves of £1.693m, this being the in-year estimated overspend, which is detailed further in section C of this report.

It should be noted that the current outturn position is a forecast and work is constant to review all non-pay budgets to mitigate forecast overspends during this financial year and future years. The Annual Council Tax and Budget Report 2023/24, presented later on the agenda, is based on a number of assumptions that reflects the pressures currently being experienced that are highlighted both in this report and the Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-26, which was approved in November 2022. The current outturn position and reserves position specifically excludes known business and sector risks where the financial implications are yet to be quantified:

- Pay Inflation –The budget provided for pay increases at 2% across the service. The support staff offer was accepted with an average increase of 6.44%. The operational staff offer of 5%, which was rejected, has now been superseded with an offer of 7%. A ballot to strike was undertaken and due to the increased offer is now delayed. Both place significant cost increase to the service, compared to those originally budgeted. The Annual Council Tax and Budget Report 2023/24 details assumptions over the medium term plan.
- Industrial Action – The potential risk of periods of strike by members of the Fire Brigade Union has and may result in increased cost pressures within this financial year and potentially next.
- Inflation – currently inflation in the UK is still around 10% and the future forecast is unknown. The £1.2m overspend on utilities and fuel reported at Quarter 2 remains unchanged at this time.
- Potential future uncertainty of revenue funding from council tax and business rates.
- Any operational and financial impact from the McCloud and Sargeant pension legal case and other current pension legal cases along with changes to Employment Law.
- The full extent on the national and local economy of the UK leaving the European Union and the war in Ukraine are uncertain.
- The ongoing impact of the Grenfell enquiry and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the outcome of the governments 'white paper' reform.
- The current situation with Government and the next Comprehensive Spending Review and the expectation that the Sector will have to put forward a compelling case to secure growth in its long-term funding.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Members are recommended to:-

- a) Note the emerging underlying estimated revenue performance which is showing a potential operating overspend of £1.693m for the financial year ended 31 March 2023;
- b) Note the underlying and significant financial risks and uncertainties facing the Service and Sector during the remainder of this financial year and into 2023/2024 and beyond;

- c) Note the latest estimated change in General and Earmarked Reserves as set out in Section C of this report; and
 - d) Note the updated position of the capital programme for the financial year ending 2022/23, which is in line with expectations.
-

CONTENTS

Main Report

Appendix A - Projected Outturn Monitoring report – December 2022, Quarter 3

BACKGROUND

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW YEAR TO DATE 2022/23

1. As previously reported the 2022/23 budget had been adjusted to take account of the 2021/22 approved budget carry forward funding of £0.060m and the forecast spend for the Safer Stronger Communities (SSC) fund (£0.180m), together with the approved transfer to reserves for Capital Financing of £0.521m. Slight changes at Quarter 3 has increased the forecast spend for the SSC fund to £0.262m with an addition amount from revenue grants (£0.010m) This will result in a revised revenue budget of £57.686m.
2. Funding continues to be forecast at the approved £57.877m with a planned contribution to reserves of £0.950m, which is as a result of a one-off specific grant, earmarked to the Emerging Risk reserve. The projected net operating spend of £59.379m against this funding will result in an operating deficit (overspend) of £1.693m. However, after the net contributions from reserve this reduces to a deficit of £1.502m.
3. The following sections (A to C) to this report (supported by Appendix A) provides a summarised narrative commentary to assist Members understand the primary reasons for the potential operating overspend and highlight the potential, future significant risks and uncertainties that could adversely impact on this position.

Section A – Changes in Estimated Spend

Summary Outturn Position as at the end of December 2022

	2022/23 Budget £m	2022/23 Outturn £m	Variance £m
Employee Costs	47.447	48.564	1.117
Premises Costs	3.727	4.576	0.849
Transport Costs	0.995	1.228	0.233
Supplies and Services	4.542	4.453	(0.089)
Central/Capital Costs	2.205	1.937	(0.268)
Total Expenditure	58.916	60.758	1.842
Income	(1.230)	(1.379)	(0.149)
Net Expenditure	57.686	59.379	1.693

EMPLOYEES – Budget £47.447m, Estimated Spend £48.564m – Overspend £0.1.117m

4. Employee related costs account for circa 80% of the £58.916m budget for 2022/23. The budget set in February 2022 was based on projected staffing establishment levels, forecast pay inflation at 2%, additional on-costs relating to the employment of firefighters, full year effects of substantive changes, including final pay awards for both operational and support staff reported in 2021/22 and any other known changes or assumptions.

5. Based on the latest workforce numbers and activity data the forecast variance against the employee budget is an emerging potential overspend of £1.117m (2% of budget). The overspend has increased since last quarter and below is further detail for each of the different categories of staff. Since Quarter 2 the Support Staff pay award has been actioned with an increase of £1,925 per pay grade, backdated to 1 April 2022. The forecast for Operational Staff has been increased from quarter 2, which forecasted a 5% increase, to the current offer of 7% (budgeted forecast 2%). Below is further detail for the different categories of staff costs.

- Wholetime – Budget £32.929m, Projected Spend £33.913m – Overspend £0.984m

In Quarter 2 we reflected the potential pay award of 5%, with the outcome of the Fire Brigade Union ballot to strike unknown. Currently, potential strike action is on hold pending a further ballot regarding an increased offer of 7%.

Quarter 3 has also seen a slight increase in the overspend as a result of increased overtime and contingency crew costs.

Work continues with Human Resources and Emergency Response to monitor and adjust forecasts to take cognisance of any further changes in strength, terms and conditions and the ongoing impact of staff availability and sickness on overtime, detached duty levels etc.

- On-Call - Budget £1.581m, Projected Spend £1.714m, Overspend £0.133m

The current position at Quarter 3 is an increase from Quarter 2 in relation to recruitment, holiday pay and the increased pay award offer. The Service are continuing with a number of improvement projects in this area to ensure full establishment is maintained and this is monitored closely.

- Control - Budget £1.374m, Projected Spend £1.481m, overspend £0.107m

The movement from Quarter 2 is an increase in the overspend due to the revised pay award offer and a reduction in the work on the Emergency Services Network project funding an element of the Station Manager's post. Work continues with HR and Control monitoring the establishment.

- Support Staff – £9.398m, Projected Spend £9.409m, Overspend £0.011m

In Quarter 2 we reported the potential pay award for support staff of £1,925 per pay grade. This was agreed by 2 of the 3 unions and processed in December 2022, with back payment to 1 April 2022. The reduction in the overspend (£0.126m) from Quarter 2 is as a result of the finalisation of the award and the increase in vacancies during the period.

- Indirect Employee Costs – Budget £2.165m, Projected Spend £2.047m – Underspend £0.118m

No significant change to the forecast which relates to underspends on operational costs offset by an increase in costs relating to accessibility measures for staff and a realised saving on insurance.

PREMISES – Budget £3.727m, Projected Spend £4.577m, overspend £0.850m

6. There has been no change to the overspend reported in Quarter 2, which is a result of significant increases in utilities due to the current economic situation globally relating to fuel. This is offset by savings on repairs and maintenance and rates.
7. The utilities, amongst other areas are being monitored closely and significant work is ongoing within Estates in regards to the Service's Sustainability Plan. A decrease in the future forecast is reported in the Annual Council Tax and Budget Report 2023/24 later on in the agenda.

TRANSPORT - Budget £0.995m, Projected Spend £1.228m, overspend £0.233m

8. The forecast overspend, as reported in Quarter 2 relates primarily to the cost of fuel, as with utilities this has seen a significant increase and fluctuation over this financial year. The increase from quarter 2 (£0.006m) is a result of further savings on vehicle repairs and staff mileage forecasts offset by increased fuel usage.

SUPPLIES AND SERVICES – Budget £4.541m, Projected Spend £4.453m, Underspend £0.088m

9. In Quarter 3 we have increased the forecast for the Safer Stronger Communities fund, which is fully offset by a contribution from reserves. This is as a result of increased activity on the sprinkler project.
10. There has been a slight increase in the underspend in supplies and services in Quarter 3 as work continues with budget holders. The main areas continue to be:
 - Equipment, Furniture & Materials – savings are being realised under furniture and fittings with minimal replacements now planned,
 - Office Expenses – savings are being realised on office equipment with minimal spend now forecast,
 - Professional Services – savings are being realised based on trend to date and historical spending,
 - ICT & Network – Savings are realised, however these are offset by increased costs in our communication network as work continues to upgrade lines and replace the network. Further work is ongoing with BT to ensure charges are appropriate.

OTHER EXPENSES AND CAPITAL FINANCING COSTS – Budget £2.205m, Projected Spend £1.937m, Underspend £0.268m

11. In Quarter 2 we updated the capital financing costs, in Quarter 3 there is no change to this forecast.
12. Central expenses and the BMBC Services to the Authority has been updated to reflect the inflationary increase within the Service Level Agreement with BMBC.

INCOME – Budget £1.230m, Projected Receipts £1.379m, Overachievement £0.149m

13. There has been no change to income forecasts since Quarter 2, with the main overachievement of income due to the increase in the interest rate through the year.

Section B – Changes in Estimated Funding

14. The approved funding still remains at the end of Quarter 2 at £57.877m, based on information known at this time. As more information is provided in relation to business rates, council tax and Section 31 funding the position will be updated.
15. Included on the agenda at this Authority meeting is the Annual Council Tax and Budget Report 2023/24. This report details the provisional funding that is expected to be received by the Authority in the next financial year. Members will continue to receive timely briefings on any changes as soon as the implications are known.

Section C - Impact on Reserves

16. The final position of the reserves as at 31 March 2022, approved by the Authority was £18.751m split between Useable Reserves (£16,974m) and Un-useable Reserves (£1.771m). The current forecast, based on the quarter position is showing the forecast final balance at 31 March 2023 of £15.395m, split between Useable Reserves (£13.097m) and Un-useable (£2.298m). This is a slight change from last quarter due to both the Budget Carry Forward reserve and the Safer Stronger Communities reserve forecast to have remaining balances, which will now be utilised in 2023/24.
17. The current reserves position is after the approved contributions to the Emerging Risk reserve and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) reserve and the approved revised use of the Stronger Safer Community (SSC) reserve, Revenue and Capital Grant reserves, Service Improvement reserve, Invest to Save reserve and the Capital Receipts reserve.
18. The reported forecast overspend outturn position (£1.693m) will be a call on useable reserves after taking into account both capital and revenue forecasts. This will be split between the Rates Rebate Reserve and the Emerging Risk Reserve.
19. It should continue to be noted that the current forecast outturn position excludes financial implications that are not yet clear or quantifiable with any certainty at this point in time:
 - Economy - There is significant economic uncertainty as a result of the current climate. The increasing price inflation, the position of the current government, the full extent of the UK's decision to withdraw from the European Union and the ongoing war in Ukraine are all uncertain and unquantifiable risks at this time and in the future.
 - Pay Inflation – The current financial year is potentially seeing the highest increase in pay inflation for a number of years and this could continue for future years. The 2022/23 pay award for Support Staff was 4.44% above forecast and for Operational Staff this is yet to be confirmed, however based on the current offer of 7% (5% above budget) this may result in a significant and possibly unfunded cost to the service.

- Industrial Action – The potential risk of strike action by members of the Fire Brigade Union may result in increased costs within this financial year and potentially next.
- COVID-19 – The current pandemic will have a lasting effect on the financial position of the Service and Sector. This could potentially affect the level of funding from government and local authorities. The latter will likely be due to down turns on the local economy, which will reduce both the council tax and the business rates bases as well as the level of surpluses on the collection fund accounts.
- Pension Legal Cases – There are several high profile legal cases with the most significant being McCloud & Sargeant and Matthews. The Authority has set aside reserves for the potential costs of processing Immediate Detriment cases in relation to McCloud and Sargeant. To date a number of category 1 cases have been processed and at the time of writing we have a large number of category 2 applications currently being processed. In addition, there are related legal claims to this case that may have a potential financial impact on the service.
- Employment Law – We are currently working through the cost implication of the legal case Bear Scotland and assessing the impact in future years of the national living wage on our current support staff pay scales.
- Future long-term capital investments needs, with indicative expectations presented in the MTFP 2023-2026, approved in November 2022 and the Annual Council Tax and Budget Report 2023/24 later in this meeting.

Section D – Capital Programme Monitoring

20. The original approved Capital Programme for 2022/23 was £8.773m. Taking into account, the 2021/22 capital outturn reported to the Authority on 25 June 2022 the profiled capital programme for 2022/23 increased to £10.384m. The programme was reviewed in detail as part of the medium term financial planning and a reduction to £5.952m was reported at Quarter 2. This projection continues with no change at Quarter 3:

CAPITAL PROGRAMME	APPROVED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 £m	UPDATED CAPITAL PROJECTION 2022/23 £m	CHANGE £m
Property	5.532	2.499	-3.033
Transport	2.484	2.375	-0.109
ICT and Communications	0.932	0.588	-0.344
Operational Equipment	1.426	0.490	-0.936
TOTAL	10.374	5.952	-4.422

21. Most of the spend in 2022/23 is to be financed from new approved borrowing, except for funding which is forecast from external grants, capital receipts, agreed funding from other earmarked reserves. As above no changes since last quarter are required:

CAPITAL FINANCING	APPROVED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 £m	UPDATED CAPITAL PROJECTION 2022/23 £m	CHANGE £m
Capital Receipts	0.295	0.295	0
Capital Grants	0.359	0	-0.359
Grenfell Grant	0	0.010	0.010
Covid Grant	0	0.008	0.008
Service Improvement	0	0.012	0.012
Invest to Save Reserve	0.041	0.041	0
Direct Revenue Funding	0.100	0.100	0
Borrowing	9.579	5.486	-4.093
TOTAL	10.374	5.952	-4.422

22. The significant changes at Quarter 2, reflected in the MTFP which was approved in November 2022 are also reflected in the Annual Council Tax and Budget Report 2023/24 later on the agenda for this meeting.

PROPERTY

23. No change to Quarter 2 projections as investment continues to maintain the fabric and integrity of the building assets as specified as part of the Estates Condition and Fire Risk Assessment surveys. Work continues as planned on the multi-purpose building at Barnsley Fire Station, the estates strategy renewal work and the new Building Management System.
24. The modular build strategy, which was approved in October 2022 has started and the Energy based decarbonisation project is underway supported by funding from Salix, which will be reflected in the 2022/23 capital outturn presented to the Authority later in the year. Other sustainability work is ongoing with most of the Estate now fitted with more energy efficient LED lighting.

TRANSPORT

25. No change to Quarter 2 projections as the transport strategy continues with regards to a number of replacement ancillary vehicles and the new rescue pumps. The latter due into service before the end of the financial year. As previously reported advance orders have been placed to ensure the rolling programme of replacement is not affected.

ICT AND COMMUNICATIONS

26. No change to Quarter 2 projections work continues with the ongoing upgrade replacement of equipment, network, software, applications and infrastructure and the continuation of the digital transformation roadmap (DT3).

OPERATIONAL EQUIPMENT

27. No change to Quarter 2 projections as investment continues as part of the operational steering groups' review of the operational equipment needs through the Service's Operational Research and Development Board.

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR ASPIRATIONS

- ☐ Be a great place to work- we will create the right culture, values and behaviours to make this a brilliant place to work that is inclusive for all
- ☒ Put people first- we will spend money carefully, use our resources wisely and collaborate with others to provide the best deal to the communities we serve
- ☒ Strive to be the best in everything we do- we will work with others, make the most of technology and develop leaders to become the very best at what we can be

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

If you have ticked 'Yes' please provide brief details in the box below and include the third party/parties it would involve:

The report makes reference to joint working with South Yorkshire Police

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY IMPLICATIONS

28. Delivering the medium term financial plan and annual budget is a strategic risk that is proactively managed by the Executive and the FRA as is the delivery of the Capital Programme.

EQUALITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED

- ☐ Yes

If you have ticked 'Yes' please complete the below comment boxes providing details as follows:

Summary of any Adverse Impacts Identified:	Key Mitigating Actions Proposed and Agreed:

- ☐ No
- ☒ N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why an EA is not required/is outstanding:

Financial Report based on the income and expenditure of the Service

HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☒ N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why a Health and Safety Risk Assessment is not required/is outstanding:

There are no risks in relation to Health and Safety.

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

29. Under the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority [Scheme of Delegation](#) a decision *is required / *has been approved at Service level.

Delegated Power ☒ Yes
☐ No

If yes, please complete the comments box indicating under which delegated power?

Financial regulations: the provision of budgets and funding, carry forward requests, reserves management

IMPLICATIONS

30. Consider whether this report has any of the following implications and, if so, address them below: Industrial Relations, Financial, Legal, Asset Management, Environmental and Sustainability, Diversity, Communications and Health and Safety implications have been considered in compiling this report.

List of background documents		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-2025• Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-2026• 2022/23 Annual Revenue Budget and Council Tax Setting• Year-end Outturn Report 2021/22• Financial Performance Report Q1 and Q2 2022-2023		
Report Author:	Name:	Sara Slater – Financial Services Manager
	e-mail:	sslater@syfire.gov.uk
	Tel no:	0114 253 2330

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OUTTURN MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 3 2022/23

BUDGET	CURRENT BUDGET	USE OF RESERVES	REVISED BUDGET	FORECAST OUTTURN	OPERATIONAL POSITION (UNDER) / OVER SPEND
Wholetime	32,928,739		32,928,739	33,912,648	983,909
Retained	1,580,795		1,580,795	1,714,186	133,391
Control	1,374,201		1,374,201	1,481,535	107,334
Support Staff	9,398,438		9,398,438	9,409,007	10,569
Indirect	2,154,818	10,000	2,164,818	2,046,689	(118,129)
TOTAL EMPLOYEES	47,436,991	10,000	47,446,991	48,564,065	1,117,074
Repair, Alteration & Maintenance	1,204,894		1,204,894	1,157,621	(47,273)
Energy	711,103		711,103	1,647,830	936,727
Rents	-		-	9,402	9,402
Rates	1,142,216		1,142,216	1,072,608	(69,608)
Water Services	74,290		74,290	74,290	-
Fixtures & Fittings	18,050		18,050	23,050	5,000
Cleaning & Domestic	519,772		519,772	519,772	-
Premises Insurances	57,000		57,000	71,934	14,934
TOTAL PREMISES	3,727,325	-	3,727,325	4,576,507	849,182
Vehicle Repairs & Maintenance	293,415		293,415	275,012	(18,403)
Vehicle Running Costs	431,360		431,360	690,000	258,640
Operational Lease & Contract Hire	1,300		1,300	222	(1,078)
Car Allowance & Public Transport	133,851		133,851	156,121	22,270
Transport Insurance	135,501		135,501	106,693	(28,808)
TOTAL TRANSPORT	995,427	-	995,427	1,228,048	232,621
Equipment, Furniture & Materials	897,054		897,054	811,079	(85,975)
Clothing, Uniform and Laundry	302,066		302,066	350,630	48,564
Office Expenses	81,258		81,258	63,378	(17,880)
Services	710,104	18,209	728,313	598,063	(130,250)
ICT & Network	1,867,422	31,000	1,898,422	1,994,236	95,814
Expenses	46,460		46,460	40,001	(6,459)
Other Miscellaneous	325,683		325,683	333,008	7,325
Stronger Safer Community Fund	-	262,303	262,303	262,303	-
TOTAL SUPPLIES AND SERVICES	4,230,047	311,512	4,541,559	4,452,698	(88,861)
BMBC SERVICES TO FRA	265,000		265,000	278,423	13,423
CENTRAL EXPENSES	182,320	9,050	191,370	184,725	(6,645)
CAPITAL FINANCING COSTS	2,269,531	(521,423)	1,748,108	1,473,613	(274,495)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	59,106,641	(190,861)	58,915,780	60,758,079	1,842,299
Government Grants	(529,434)		(529,434)	(501,297)	28,137
Customer & Client Receipts	(680,132)		(680,132)	(697,241)	(17,109)
Interest Receivable	(20,000)		(20,000)	(180,000)	(160,000)
TOTAL INCOME	(1,229,566)	-	(1,229,566)	(1,378,538)	(148,972)
NET OPERATING EXPENDITURE	57,877,075	(190,861)	57,686,214	59,379,541	1,693,327
FUNDING					
Business Rates	(15,458,000)		(15,458,000)	(15,458,000)	-
Revenue Support Grant	(8,716,000)		(8,716,000)	(8,716,000)	-
Council Tax	(29,064,075)		(29,064,075)	(29,064,075)	-
Section 31 & Other Funding	(5,589,000)		(5,589,000)	(5,589,000)	-
Contribution to Reserves	950,000		950,000	950,000	-
NET OPERATING EXPENDITURE	(57,877,075)	-	(57,877,075)	(57,877,075)	-
NET (SURPLUS) / DEFICIT	-	(190,861)	(190,861)	1,502,466	1,693,327

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SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

Meeting	FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
Meeting Date	20 FEBRUARY 2023
Report of	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Report Sponsor(s)	DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/ DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY
Subject	SERVICE IMPROVEMENT BOARD UPDATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on progress against the actions on the Service Improvement Plan. The Service Improvement Plan includes actions relating to South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection Report, Grenfell Tower Inquiry, State of Fire and Rescue Reports and published Professional Fire Standards. The plan also captures improvements generated through local and national learning from emergency incidents and this includes learning through the pandemic.

Note that the HMICFRS inspection report actions discussed in this report relate to the 2019 inspection, not the latest SYFR inspection report published on 20 January 2023.

The Service Improvement Plan is monitored by the Service Improvement Board, who seek to ensure objectives on the Service Improvement Plan are being progressed and delivered in good time. The Board also have a delegated budget, to support the delivery of Service Improvement Plan objectives and will consider resource requests to support the delivery of key service improvements.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Members are recommended to:-

- a) Note the contents of the report and provide further scrutiny and support to enable continual service improvement.

CONTENTS

Main Report

Appendix A - Areas for Improvement (AFI) from the 2019 HMICFRS inspection report for SYFR – Action updates as of December 2022.

Appendix B - Grenfell Tower Inquiry – High Priority Action updates as of December 2022.

Appendix C - State of Fire and Rescue Report – High Priority Action updates as of December 2022.

Appendix D - Professional Standards areas for improvement – Action updates as of December 2022.

BACKGROUND

1. The Service Improvement Board is an internal meeting that monitors progress of objectives that sit on the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR) Service Improvement Plan. These objectives are generated from various local, regional and national events and reports that have influence in the activities at SYFR. The Service Improvement Board has committed to provide quarterly updates to the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority (SYFRA).
2. SYFR changed the frequency of Service Improvement Board meetings from quarterly to monthly to assist the drive of continuous and sustainable improvement across the Service, in particular, actions relating to HMICFRS Report in the run up to HMICFRS Inspection. Following the May 2022 Service Improvement Board meeting, and SYFR's second HMICFRS Inspection, meetings have reverted to quarterly and are now Chaired by ACO Strelczenie.

HMICFRS Inspection Report For SYFR

3. HMICFRS inspection report for SYFR identified 17 Areas for Improvement (AFIs). All of these areas for improvement have been determined to be high priority. Of these priority actions, 13 are completed, 1 is on schedule and 3 are behind schedule.
4. We are aware that HMICFRS have expected to see progress against these areas for improvement. Further information for all 17 AFIs can be found in Appendix A.

Grenfell Tower Inquiry

5. Following analysis of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI) Phase 1 Report Overview, seven actions were determined to be of high priority. All seven actions have been completed.
6. A number of these areas for improvement are reliant on the recommended changes in legislation that to date have not occurred. Although some of these areas are not aimed at Fire and Rescue Services specifically, SYFR continue to work with responsible persons and encourage improvements based on the recommendations from the GTI report. However, in many areas, the lack of legislation to enable enforcement is proving to be a significant barrier to achievement.
7. The decision has been made to include the remaining 23 recommendations from the GTI Phase 1 Report. Until now, most recommendations from the GTI report that have been placed on the Service Improvement Plan, are for the attention of fire and rescue services. Although these additional recommendations are not aimed at fire and rescue services, it is thought that SYFR may be able to influence this work by working with the managers and responsible persons of high-rise buildings.
8. Further information regarding the high priority actions can be found in Appendix B.

State of Fire and Rescue Reports

9. Following analysis of the State of Fire and Rescue Reports, 3 actions have been determined to be of high priority. Of these, 2 are completed and 1 is behind schedule.

10. Further information regarding the high priority State of Fire and Rescue actions, can be found in Appendix C.

Professional Fire Standards

11. All 14 published fire standards have been placed on the Service Improvement Plan. All standards have been determined to be of high priority. Of these, 9 are on schedule, 2 are completed and 1 is behind schedule. There were two new standards published in December 2022.
12. Further information regarding the Professional Fire Standard actions, can be found in Appendix D.

Fire and Rescue Service HMICFRS Inspection Updates

13. Our second HMICFRS inspection report was published on 20 January 2023. The State of Fire and Rescue 2022 report was published on 20 January 2023. A separate report has been provided to the Fire and Rescue Authority on these matters.
14. The inspection programme is reviewed at the end of each cycle to consider changes in the fire and rescue landscape and findings from inspections. A number of changes have been made.
15. Firstly, activity will be focused on the evidence needed to demonstrate the 'characteristics of good' and there will be a move to a 5-tier grading system, with an additional grade of 'adequate'. This will provide a greater degree of information on where service improvements are needed, better reflect the performance of each service, and provide a common grading approach throughout FRS and policing inspections.
16. Graded judgements at pillar level will be removed for effectiveness, efficiency and how a Service looks after its people, to better focus service improvements on the 11 principal areas of inspection. The 11 questions within the pillars will still be graded.
17. To report in a timelier fashion, HMICFRS will report their inspection findings in smaller batches, rather than the larger tranches used for previous rounds of our inspections.
18. A preliminary inspection schedule has also been provided. It is anticipated that we will be inspected in Spring 2024.

FIRE STANDARDS

19. The latest published Fire Standards are:
 - Leading and Developing People: Launched 21 December 2022
 - Leading the Service: Launched 21 December 2022
20. Two standards are currently in the consultation phase:
 - Fire Control
 - Communications, Engagement and Consultation

21. All future standards will be placed on the Service Improvement Plan.
22. More information on all the fire standards can be found at:
<https://www.firestandards.org/standards/approved/>

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR ASPIRATIONS

- ☒ **Be a great place to work-** we will create the right culture, values and behaviours to make this a brilliant place to work that is inclusive for all
- ☒ **Put people first-** we will spend money carefully, use our resources wisely and collaborate with others to provide the best deal to the communities we serve
- ☒ **Strive to be the best in everything we do-** we will work with others, make the most of technology and develop leaders to become the very best at what we can be

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

If you have ticked 'Yes' please provide brief details in the box below and include the third party/parties it would involve:

SYFR will work closely with fire and rescue services and other organisations to continuously benchmark against the recommendations and inspection criteria.

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY IMPLICATIONS

23. SYFR need to ensure they have the capacity and capability to implement any recommendations in the SYFR inspection report and continuously improve. There also needs to be the capacity to ensure all the inspection work is completed.

EQUALITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED

- ☐ Yes

If you have ticked 'Yes' please complete the below comment boxes providing details as follows:

Summary of any Adverse Impacts Identified:	Key Mitigating Actions Proposed and Agreed:

- ☐ No
- ☒ N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why an EA is not required/is outstanding:

If required, an equality impact assessment has will be completed for the agreed recommendations.

HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☒ N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why a Health and Safety Risk Assessment is not required/is outstanding:

If required, a health and safety risk assessment will be completed for the agreed recommendations

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

24. Under the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority [Scheme of Delegation](#) a decision *is required / *has been approved at Service level.

Delegated Power

☐
☒

Yes

No

If yes, please complete the comments box indicating under which delegated power.

IMPLICATIONS

25. Consider whether this report has any of the following implications and if so, address them below:., Diversity, Financial, Asset Management, Environmental and Sustainability, Fleet, Communications, ICT, Health and Safety, Data Protection, Collaboration, Legal and Industrial Relations implications have been considered in compiling this report.

List of background documents		
Report Author:	Name:	Carolyn Winter, Strategic Improvement Manager
	e-mail:	cwinter@syfire.gov.uk
	Tel no:	07825 753137

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Areas for Improvement (AFI) from the 2019 HMICFRS inspection report for SYFR – Action updates as of December 2022

Effectiveness:

AFI: The Service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information.

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: A process has been put in place for ensuring the submitted Operational Risk Information (ORI) returns are audited and published. It allows for the information to be verified and accessible on the mobile data terminals for operational personnel. Although this system has been in place for some time, the Service Improvement Board were not prepared to deem this action as completed until ORI completions returned to pre-pandemic numbers. Completed ORI numbers are now above pre-pandemic numbers, and the action has been closed.

Please note this is an AFI in our HMICFRS Inspection report published on 20 January 2023. We are currently reviewing this AFI and the actions required to make further improvements in this area.

AFI: The Service should ensure it addresses effectively the burden of false alarms.

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: Business Fire Safety have an unwanted fire signals (UwFS) policy in place, which details a number of steps that can be taken with the business to address UwFS. The revised UwFS policy was put in place 6 January 2020, which also outlined new call challenge criteria. SYFR will continue to engage with businesses and highlight UwFS in the media as appropriate.

AFI: The Service should ensure it has effective arrangements for providing specialist protection advice out of hours.

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: The Out of Hours (OOH) provision pilot finished on the 14 March 2022. OOH is now considered business as usual. A dedicated Protection Inspecting Officer is available through control 24/7. The Policy and Procedure have now been published.

AFI: The Service should ensure it understands what it needs to do to adopt national operational guidance (NOG) and put in place a plan to do so.

Action update: This action is completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: Since our previous inspection in 2019, the Service has created a NOG Implementation Plan. However, largely due to the pandemic, the plan has not been followed as originally planned. As a result, an updated plan has been completed in draft format. This was taken to People Board for formal sign off on 7 June 2022. The plan reflects both the implementation and embedding phase of NOG.

There will also be an increased focus on training around NOG, with a plan for all Watches to receive NOG awareness training and an aim to improve NOG compliance in Training and Development Centre training courses.

Please note that an AFI relating to NOG is in our HMICFRS Inspection report published on 20 January 2023. We are currently reviewing this AFI and the actions required to make further improvements in this area.

AFI: The Service should ensure it has an effective system in place to capture operational learning so as to improve its operational response.

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: A full and comprehensive process is in place. Currently experiencing capacity issues within Operational Support Team to manage the increasing amount of information that is being submitted, both internally and externally. Evidence has been submitted to show the process for updating the Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA) for vehicle in water.

Please note that an AFI relating to operational learning is in our HMICFRS Inspection report published on 20 January 2023. We are currently reviewing this AFI and the actions required to make further improvements in this area.

AFI: The Service should make sure its operational staff have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information. This should include cross-border risk information.

Action update: This action is behind schedule. Progress so far:

This action is 85% complete.

Over the border risk information for all neighbouring services is available to crews via the mobile data terminals. Despite attempts to collect a wide range of over the border risk information from all neighbouring services, some services have provided very little risk information. All shared information is collected on Resilience Direct.

Work has been started on developing a method of sharing all risk information on demand when over the border assistance is required within South Yorkshire. We are waiting for replies from the region in regards to sharing over the border risk information and the plan created earlier in the year.

ORI's in general are going to be reviewed in 2023 and over-the-border risk information will form part of that review.

The ORI review/revisit policy will not be released until early 2023. The review/revisit schedule will be launched the same time as the station plans (April 2023). This is so that the review/revisits can be factored in to the operational crew capacity.

AFI: The Service should make sure it participates in a programme of cross-border exercises, sharing the learning from these exercises.

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: An exercise plan and schedules are in place. Limited exercising due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Exercise Planning Group have revised and released the policy. The 2021 plan expresses to district that joint exercising must be done and the means of creating an exercise and reporting will capture where this occurs. We have evidence of this from this year but due to COVID a number of exercises have understandably been postponed or some have been delivered as a table top exercise. The exercise plan is available on Resilience Direct (RD) and Station District plans.

Please note that an AFI relating to cross-border exercises is in our HMICFRS Inspection report published on 20 January 2023. We are currently reviewing this AFI and the actions required to make further improvements in this area.

Efficiency:

AFI: The Service should ensure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration.

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: RSM internal 'collaboration and benefits realisation' audit report produced and finalised. Internal audit rated SYFR collaboration and benefits at the highest assurance possible - 'substantial assurance'. The following is the internal audit's summary opinion: "Taking account of the issues identified, the Board can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage the identified risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and operating effectively".

AFI: The Service should ensure it has sufficiently robust plans in place which consider the medium-term financial challenges beyond 2020 so it can prepare to secure the right level of savings.

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: The revised and approved Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) clearly articulates the savings and the plans, along with the 'what ifs' should funding not be secured in line with expectations.

AFI: The Service should assure itself it fully exploits external funding opportunities and options for generating income.

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: The revised and approved MTFP clearly articulates savings and plans through scenario planning. Grants are being utilised where available and there is a view to apply for funding through the decarbonisation fund. Due to COVID, income generation is limited. We do have special services and generate income through hydrants, secondments etc but this is limited.

People:

AFI: The Service should assure itself that staff understand how to access wellbeing support.

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: Health and wellbeing support need reviewed using various intelligence sources e.g. health and wellbeing survey, staff pulse survey. Partnered with the British Red Cross Psycho-Social Support Team to develop a training programme to enable in-house Critical Incident Wellbeing (CIW). Supporters to deliver peer-to-peer support to personnel following critical incidents. On station learning developed by CIW Supporters and issued to station Oct 2020.

AFI: The Service needs to ensure that staff involved in protracted operational incidents have adequate welfare facilities.

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: A review of the welfare offer to SYFR personnel at incidents has been carried out. Operational Information Note (OIN) 'Managing Fatigue & Welfare at Operational Incidents' developed. NEW joint SYFR/British Red Cross welfare vehicle procured. Welfare unit (4-5 persons) (joint SYP & SYFR) will complement / back-up the new SYFR/BRC vehicle.

Group Managers have been issued with SYFR credit cards meaning they are able to source / fund food and refreshments at protracted incidents as appropriate. Since issue they have been used on a number of occasions successfully. Larger welfare units and providers have been identified should additional welfare capability be required.

Getting the right people with the right skills

AFI: The Service should ensure its workforce plan addresses any gaps in capability which affect the availability of fire engines.

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: The Service has now embedded a Workforce Planning Policy that sets out governance of workforce planning and the process for engaging managers to support this. This culminates in an annual workforce plan. The governance of workforce planning is via the Workforce Planning Board, chaired by the DCFO and attended by senior managers and all representative bodies. This is underpinned by a workforce planning group chaired by the Head of HR and attended by senior managers and HR Business Partners. The workforce planning annual process commences in Spring each year when managers are asked to review and refresh their workforce planning arrangements (included skills gaps and succession planning proposals) and to submit these to HR.

Please note this is an AFI in our HMICFRS Inspection report published on 20 January 2023. We are currently reviewing this AFI and the actions required to make further improvements in this area.

AFI: The Service needs to assure itself that all staff are appropriately trained for their role. It needs to ensure all staff keep their skills up to date and have a consistent method of recording when they have received training.

Action update: This action is behind schedule. Progress so far:

This action is 40% complete.

There is an increased focus on this work area with the Maintenance of Competence (MOC) project, Core Learning Pathways, NFCC Leadership Framework, Fit for the Future and other identified requirements. This will be supported by the additional resource within workforce development. It is a priority in our annual plan 2022/23 and is a proposed priority in the next Service Plan.

A Leadership Priority Programme is being established, which will develop the Service's first Talent Management strategy and will oversee the development of a SYFR leadership development programme and a range of projects that will support this. The programme will review and enhance our coaching and mentoring offer and link with regional and national initiatives to extend opportunities to learn and develop.

The Training Needs Analysis for each role is being assessed to ensure it matches the relevant training framework and action plan.

Further training frameworks and associated action plans have been approved at the People Board.

We have significantly improved on call availability and are working on filling skills gaps through recruitment.

We continue to work with MOC and Mako projects, along with the On Call Programme, all of which will significantly fulfil the requirements of this AFI.

AFI: To identify and tackle barriers to equality of opportunity, and make its workforce more representative, the Service should ensure the value of positive action is well-understood by staff.

Action update: This action is behind schedule. Progress so far:

This action is 75% complete.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) conversations are still taking place for on-call, control and corporate staff.

Dates have been confirmed in the draft Positive Action plan Jan – Dec 23 for Have a Go Days, Female Fitness Sessions and Female Fitness Emails and Have a Chat Sessions.

Attendance at a number of school careers events by Community Safety, Operational Crews and EDI Team.

We have booked additional external EDI training sessions for on-call and corporate staff. Prepared analysis to show numbers / percentages for workgroups in/out of ticket.

We have reviewed the mandatory EDI LearnPro modules.

We have started to conduct a gap analysis against the Fit for Future improvement objectives related to ED&I.

We continue to develop work around attendance at careers events and carry out analysis on resources needed for careers and other positive action activities.

We will carry out consultation on the Positive Action Toolkit.

Please note that an AFI relating to equality of opportunity is in our HMICFRS Inspection report published on 20 January 2023. We are currently reviewing this AFI and the actions required to make further improvements in this area.

AFI: The Service should identify and implement ways to improve staff confidence in the grievance process.

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: If the timescales of the Grievance process are not met this is usually because the case has been more complex or a mutual extension to the timescale have been agreed. Managers have been reminded to keep to the timescales and offered support where required. The culture of the organisation is changing and improvements are being made in relationships between managers and staff. The Service will continue to be open and transparent in its communications about how decisions are arrived at. Although grievances are confidential, where possible and with agreement, improvements that have arisen as a result of grievances will be shared. The role of the First Contact Advisors (FCA) is being reviewed and refreshed. Once this is confirmed, details of the scheme and the contact details of the FCA's will be communicated throughout the Service.

Please note that an AFI relating to grievance procedures is in our HMICFRS Inspection report published on 20 January 2023. We are currently reviewing this AFI and the actions required to make further improvements in this area.

AFI: The Service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.

Action update: This action is on schedule. Progress so far:

This action is 40% complete.

We have updated the Personal Review (PR) process to enhance discussions and the information held. We will finalise these improvements to the PR system for launch in 2023.

We have a clear process for applications for the Executive Leadership Programme (ELP) gateway and for successful applicants to progress on to ELP. We now have a clear pathway for operational and corporate managers choosing to use this development opportunity.

We are meeting with Sheffield University to understand other pathways available for level 7 training.

The Project Initiation Document was approved for the Leadership Priority Programme at the People Board meeting on 6/12/22. Work on the programme and associated projects has begun and will now move at pace.

Leadership is one of the proposed priorities in this year's Annual Plan which will give us a focus on this area. It will also be a priority in the new Service Plan.

Please note this is an AFI in our HMICFRS Inspection report published on 20 January 2023. We are currently reviewing this AFI and the actions required to make further improvements in this area.

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Grenfell Tower Inquiry – High Priority Action updates as of December 2022

Fire and Rescue Services knowledge and understanding of materials used in high-rise buildings. Ensure that their personnel at all levels understand the risk of fire taking hold in the external walls of high-rise buildings and know how to recognise it when it occurs.

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: An e-learning package has been created by Training and Development Centre (TDC) and Operational Support Team (OST), this is now available on Learnpro. Instructions were sent out at the start of November for all operational personnel to complete this training. Completion rates for the e-learning module are currently at 516 completed assessments, and 51 not completed assessments for operational staff (up to but not including Senior Leadership Team). This equates to a 91% completion rate. The majority of the remaining 9% of staff can be accounted for by long term sickness and new on-call recruits.

The inspection of high-rise buildings and obtaining information needed for the purposes of extinguishing fires and protecting life and property. Ensure that all officers of the rank of Crew Manager and above are trained in carrying out inspections of high-rise buildings.

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: Business Fire Safety (BFS) continue to work with emergency response in regards to providing adequate training to all staff around fire safety concepts. BFS currently working on an overall training strategy to identify and confirm where fire safety training should sit within the overall operational training requirements. At the Service Delivery meeting held on 15 September the decision was made to merge Point Block Inspections with Operational Risk Inspections.

Handling Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) calls in an appropriate or effective way. Develop policies for handling a large number of FSG calls simultaneously.

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: All current Control staff have received FSG training. This forms part of ongoing Maintenance of Competence schedule.

FSG National Operational Guidance has now been produced and circulated. FSG training will be reviewed to align with NOG once completion of recruit training is done, and then undertaken as part of ongoing Control MOC training schedule.

The Fires in Tall Buildings Guidance was consulted on in January and went live on 12 April 2022.

**Handling Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) calls in an appropriate or effective way.
Develop policies for managing a transition from “stay put” to “get out”.**

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: Action card and training material are in place. A Control Training PowerPoint that references this action been created and is in the process of being delivered to all staff. FSG policy has been developed with the Control Fire in Tall Buildings working group. A training exercise was run in November 2021 to test existing procedures and identify gaps. The Fires in Tall Buildings Guidance was consulted on in January and went live on 12th April 2022.

**Lack of plans in place for evacuating a high-rise building should the need arise.
Develop policies for partial and total evacuation of high-rise residential buildings and training to support them.**

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: The 'evacuation from buildings involved in fire' policy is complete and has been out for 28 days consultation. A Fires in Tall Buildings 1-day evacuation course has been developed, trialled and amended accordingly. All operational and control staff will attend it.

**Lack of plans in place for evacuating a high-rise building should the need arise.
SYFR crews to be equipped with smoke hoods to assist in the evacuation of occupants through smoke-filled exit routes.**

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: Smoke hoods have been purchased and all training and documentation secured. Training smoke hoods also purchased and will be issued to Training and Development Centre (TDC) and stations. All training documents, videos and smoke hoods have been issued to Central and Edlington Station crews for their feedback on the training instructions. Following feedback, the training packages and smoke hoods will be sent out to the rest of the service. Smoke hoods have been issued to station for use.

Liaise with the owner and manager of every residential building containing separate dwellings (whether or not they are high-rise buildings) carry out an urgent inspection of all fire doors to ensure that they comply with applicable legislative standards.

Action update: This action has been completed.

Last update at Service Improvement Board: Although this is an Action for the responsible person (RP) or owner of a High Rise Residential Building (HRRB), SYFR have a responsibility to be able to collate, store and share the information with the operational staff at an incident. BFS have written to all RPs / owners to inform them of their responsibilities, and to offer advice.

The Tetra Hazard Alert system is live. It is a system for recording temporary risk information for our staff attending either incidents or premises that may present additional unexpected risk to our staff. Staff within Community Safety, Fire Safety Team and BFS have been trained on the system. A User guide will be available, as well as the Data Protection Impact Assessment. Emergency Response and Control staff will be trained throughout December.

There are various processes for the public and RPs to pass additional risk information to the Fire Service. In the New Year a NFCC template will be added to our Internet page to allow a more user friendly collation of premises information.

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State of Fire and Rescue Report – High Priority Action updates as of December 2022

Crews should be doing checks to make sure the service has current information on the buildings in the area that present heightened risks.

Completed

Last update at Service Improvement Board: Business Fire Safety (BFS) continue to work with emergency response in regards to providing adequate training to all staff around fire safety concepts. BFS are currently working on an overall training strategy to identify and confirm where fire safety training should sit within the overall operational training requirements. At the Service Delivery meeting held on 15 September the decision was made to merge Point Block Inspections with Operational Risk Inspections.

The sector would benefit from a code of ethics. That way, everyone will know how they should be treated and how they should treat others, and staff at all levels will be empowered to challenge any behaviour contrary to the code.

Completed

Last update at Service Improvement Board: The Dignity at Work Policy which clarifies our expected levels of behaviour and provides examples of where behaviour may not comply has recently been reviewed and updated in liaison with a working group of staff members from all areas of the Service. The policy provides guidance for individuals to assist them in recognising behaviours and actions that could be considered or believed to be bullying or harassment.

The SYFR code of conduct also provides very clear cut expectations in terms of behaviours and actions and has recently been reviewed.

In October the Service contributed to the draft Code of Ethics but were satisfied that our Code of Conduct and values cover what is proposed. The following statement was added into the new starter pack referenced in the consultation that individual staff will be required to sign up to: 'My Commitment I will respect and encourage the ethical values and vision set out with the SYFRS Code of Conduct. As a representative of SYFRS, it is my personal responsibility to act and promote the principles within the Code of Conduct, supplemented by SYFRS's values'.

Research has been carried out on the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) against the Core Standards and principles to ensure the Project EqIA reflects and embodies the same impacts and mitigations and has been updated accordingly.

The Code of Ethics has been incorporated into the new Personal Review process specifications for ICT, but the updates will not be released until further communications have been shared and the general understanding of the code has been increased.

Discussion regarding HMICFRS expectations regarding to embedding the Core Code of Ethics also took place on the 7 March, where the links into the Fire Standards Board standards were discussed and that we can give evidence against those standards.

A Benefits Realisation workshop has been held, notes from the session are currently being prepared, once complete, a further meeting will be held to confirm our priorities.

Work has commenced to review Standards and prepare a gap analysis to inform the project.

More needs to be done to attract, recruit and, most importantly, retain women and BAME people into the sector. To provide the best possible response to the public services need to be able to choose from the widest talent pool possible.

Behind schedule

This action is 75% complete.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) conversations are still taking place for on-call, control and corporate staff.

Dates have been confirmed in the draft Positive Action plan Jan – Dec 23 for Have a Go Days, Female Fitness Sessions and Female Fitness Emails and Have a Chat Sessions.

Attendance at a number of school careers events by Community Safety, Operational Crews and EDI Team.

We have booked additional external EDI training sessions for on-call and corporate staff. Prepared analysis to show numbers / percentages for workgroups in/out of ticket.

We have reviewed the mandatory EDI LearnPro modules.

We have started to conduct a gap analysis against the Fit for Future improvement objectives related to ED&I.

We continue to develop work around attendance at careers events and carry out analysis on resources needed for careers and other positive action activities.

We will carry out consultation on the Positive Action Toolkit.

Professional Standards areas for improvement – Action updates as of December 2022.

Emergency Response Driving professional standard.

Behind Schedule. 60% complete.

Several meetings and discussions around development of contractual situation for Emergency Response Driver Training (ERDT) Instructors have taken place. A presentation was delivered to the Senior Leadership Team around contractual changes required for ERDT Instructors.

We attended a national Driver Training and Advisory Group meeting on 6 December for more detail on progression of Fire Standard requirement.

This action is behind schedule. The timescales for completion were set by the NFCC and have been recognised as unrealistic. The advice from the NFCC was to have this implemented by 1 April 2022. However, SYFR took the decision to wait for it to go through Parliament and become a legislative requirement before proceeding.

Operational Competence professional standard.

On Schedule. 60% complete.

The gap analysis has now been completed against this fire standard. Actions will be allocated to function/ department leads. We will continue to track progress of work to become compliant with the standard, using the NFCC tracker tool.

Task Based Risk Assessments have been reviewed and work is being done to progress the risk assessments to make them suitable.

The Operational Assurance policy is currently still being implemented in Service.

The National Operation Guidance (NOG) project is still progressing well. We are working to get the Training and Development Centre to NOG compliance.

Due to differing factors the roll out of MAKO has been delayed fully until July 2023. There will be a soft launch in January and this will be phased across all operational watches by July 2023.

TETRA system is now live and currently being used by the Service.

Command hours 'live launch' is still planned for January 2023. We are working on linking command hours to an individual's MAKO account. This will mean that they can see how many command hours they have logged within Effective Command. The Fire Safety Team have the ability to monitor command hours through Effective Command directly.

The Business Case for specials and specialisms has been completed and is awaiting approval at Service Improvement Board.

Operational Learning professional standard.

Completed

Last update at Service Improvement Board: Nationally a SYFR Area Manager (AM) chairs the National Operational Learning User Group. A Group Manager (GM) Risk Manager sits on National Operational Learning Users Group to represent a Metropolitan Fire Service.

Full learning mechanisms in place. National Operational Learning (NOL) is fully utilised and actively attended by head of Service Delivery Support and Operational Risk Manager.

All Fire Standard objectives have been met.

Operational Preparedness professional standard.

On Schedule. 65% complete.

The gap analysis has now been completed against this fire standard. Actions will be allocated to function/ department leads. We will continue to track progress of work to become compliant with the standard, using the NFCC tracker tool.

The work outlined in the Operational Competence professional standard above links also to this professional standard.

Additionally, the projects team are conducting a review of the operational foreseeable risk register and how it is governed with SYFR.

Code of Ethics professional standard.

On Schedule 100% complete. To be reviewed for closure at next the Service Improvement Board meeting.

The final project meeting was held on the 16th November. A review was carried out of all the key documentation (Log of actions and milestones supported by a risk register and benefits profile and use of the FSB Implementation Tool. All of which looked at how we can measure the impact of the code, particularly the benefits profile). Work has commenced on the close down of the project and transfer to business as usual.

Any outstanding actions that cannot be completed within the project (and handed over) will be reviewed during the Post Implementation Review which will be conducted 6 and 12 months after the project is officially closed.

The Core code of Ethics LearnPro module has been launched.

We have completed the NFCC mini questionnaire on the Core Code of Ethics.

Prevention Professional Standard

On Schedule. 65% complete.

The prevention standard has been fully reviewed utilising the NFCC toolkit. Actions have been identified and these will be captured and reported on via the prevention standard database and also individual action plans that the department work towards.

Community Safety (CS) are fully compliant in two areas, partially compliant in eight areas criteria and non-compliant in two areas. We have actions to work towards compliance and aim to be compliant in more areas over the next quarter. This were previously three red areas which demonstrates we are working to be compliant in as many areas as possible.

Work has commenced within CS on quality assurance, with an interim framework that will be used by the CS Watch Managers on district. All Fire Community Safety Officers (FCSOs) are quality assured through their probation. As part of the new framework being developed within the Home Safety Check (HSC) review, all staff carrying out home visits will have periodic reviews.

The Safelincs system is working well. This is an online home fire safety check developed through a partnership between the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Fire Kills and Safelincs. We have now had over 1024 visits to the system, 820 have completed the questionnaire and out of those over 350 were high or very high risk.

CS attended a Prevention and Protection conference at the beginning of November and it is believed that the prevention standard will be a large part of the HMICFRS next inspection along with Equality Diversity & Inclusion. We got information around the Person Centred Framework (PCF), which we will begin to work on in Q4 as part of the HSC review.

Protection Professional Standard

On Schedule. 80% complete.

Progress is being reviewed against the areas for improvement in the Standard.

The Business Support and Training Officer post is now filled, so we will be able to start working on and signing off the criteria that pertain specifically to Business Engagement and Primary Authority.

We have confirmation that Premises Information Boxes, as previously known, are now referred to as Security Information Boxes, as per the Fire Safety Regs 2022. All Business Fire Safety (BFS) staff will have received in house training by the end of December on the new Fire Safety Regs and how they impact upon premises, as well as how we will incorporate the Regs into the fire safety audit.

The Personal Effectiveness suite of documents is now out for consultation. These documents will be used by BFS District Managers in monthly performance management meetings with staff.

A new Training and Development Pathway for BFS staff has been approved. The new training pathway and our chosen training provider means staff will acquire their qualifications faster, a cost saving is made to the Service as we are now dispensing with the Level 4 Certificate. The pathway allows for Business Safety Advisors to progress with their learning,

beyond the Level 3 Certificate, onto the Level 4 Diploma. This builds resilience into the Department, in that we can uplift staff on a temporary basis to backfill vacancies, as well as staff who are promoted on a permanent basis, only need to prove competency as they already have their qualification. This cuts down on the amount of time it takes to currently backfill vacancies and overall makes a cost saving to the organisation.

We are finalising our KPI's and LPI's which will be used to benchmark expected performance. These will be used by Managers in performance management meetings, as well as being reported on at Service Delivery for scrutiny.

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Professional Standard

Completed

The Service Improvement Board formally closed this Fire Standard at the meeting held on 28 September 2022. The members were satisfied that the criteria had been met.

Safeguarding Professional Standard

On Schedule. 50% complete.

There has been a Safer Recruitment meeting with the People Team in relation to their responsibilities. Five outstanding tasks are to be progressed during the next quarter.

We plan the roll out of Operational face-to-face Safeguarding refresher training. Safeguarding Officers have selected two watches to trial the training prior to rolling out for all Operational staff. We have approximately 85 sessions to complete. Safeguarding training covers their responsibilities: what constitutes a safeguarding concern, contextual safeguarding, adverse childhood experiences, case studies from Safeguarding Adult Reviews and professional curiosity. Each session lasts approximately 3 hours.

Quarterly update meetings are to commence with Safeguarding Officers and Responsible Person for Safeguarding.

A safeguarding responsibility is included in job descriptions for both responsible and named person (including other staff assigned to safeguarding responsibilities) and included in their annual personal review. Communication is ongoing with the People Team to progress this action.

Fire Investigation Professional Standard

On Schedule. 90% complete.

We have attended regional fire investigation meetings and a regional approach to the implementation of the Fire Standard has been agreed.

We have introduced two new Senior Fire Investigation Officers (SFIO) onto the Regional Fire Investigation Development Workbook (satisfies requirements of SFIO Fire standard)

SYFR SFIO continual professional development day held on 17/11/22 (3rd of year). Next one booked for 1/2/23

Eleven SYFR SFIO Officers are booked to attend West Yorkshire FRS in Feb/Mar 2023 for Tier1 Practical Training

SFIO National Competency Assessments are booked for Jan/Feb 2023 as per ISO 17020 requirements.

The witness statement pro-forma is being used within SYFR

Development towards improved Critical Incident Wellbeing Support for SFIO Officers as per the Fire Standard.

Data Management Professional Standard

On Schedule. 50% complete

The Data Standard has 12 criteria, but within that there are a further 22 sub categories, making this a huge standard to implement and achieve.

We have started the mapping process, using the implementation tool, and of the 16 areas identified to meet the standard, we are fully compliant in nine of those areas. RAG rating will be updated when we fully understand all the criteria and what is required to implement.

We have offered training to all operational crews, and fire authority members in the use of ORCA and Power BI. All team members have been trained in Power BI Desktop, to ensure all have had the same level of training.

The asset register for Business Intelligence is up to date and reviewed on a 6 monthly basis.

Business Intelligence only receive requests for work through data requests inbox, meaning we are streamlined in our working. We ask for a business case to be completed with all the customer's requirements on to ensure we are presenting to them what they want. We now include timescales, priority and audience before beginning any work.

Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Professional Standard

On Schedule. 95% complete

A gap analysis has been completed.

We continue to collaborate with partners to develop site-specific emergency plans which are based on a shared and common understanding of local risks.

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SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

Meeting	FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
Meeting Date	20 FEBRUARY 2023
Report of	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Report Sponsor(s)	DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/ DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY
Subject	SYFR HMICFRS INSPECTION REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report introduces the second His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection report for South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR). The Service was rated 'Requires Improvement' in the effectiveness and efficiency pillars and 'Good' in the people pillar. Seven out of eleven sub categories were rated as 'Good', with four rated as 'Requires Improvement'. The report provides a summary of the main findings for effectiveness, efficiency and people. The inspectors have identified some areas for improvement; appropriate measures will be put in place to address all of these.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to:-

- a) Discuss and note the outcome of the SYFR HMICFRS inspection.

CONTENTS

Main report

BACKGROUND

1. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has assessed and reported on the efficiency and effectiveness of all Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) in England for a second time.
2. The inspection is based around three core pillars; effectiveness, efficiency and people, with the overall aim of driving a culture of continuous improvement throughout the sector.
3. The categories of graded judgment are:
 - Outstanding;
 - Good;
 - Requires Improvement; and
 - Inadequate.

Good is the 'expected' graded judgment for all FRSs. It is based on policy, practice or performance that meet pre-defined grading criteria, which are informed by any relevant national operational guidance or standards.
4. SYFR were inspected in Spring / Summer 2022 and the report was published on 20 January 2023. All the individual Service reports, including SYFR, can be found on the [HMICFRS website](#).
5. The State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2022 report was also published on 20 January 2023.

South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue HMICFRS Inspection Report

6. Inspectors found that South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue:
 - is 'Requires Improvement' in effectively keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks
 - is 'Requires Improvement' in operating efficiently
 - is 'Good' at looking after its people
7. The Service was rated as 'Good' in seven out of eleven sub categories.
8. If HMICFRS identify a more serious, critical or systemic shortcoming in a Service's practice, policy or performance, they will report it as a cause of concern. A cause of concern will always be accompanied by one or more recommendations. SYFR did not receive any 'Cause for Concern(s)'.
9. However, inspectors did identify 20 Areas For Improvement (AFIs).

Key Messages

10. The details for SYFR are provided below:

Effectiveness	Requires Improvement
Understanding the risk of fires and other emergencies	Good
Preventing fires and other risks	Good
Protecting the public through fire regulation	Requires Improvement
Responding to fires and other emergencies	Requires Improvement
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	Good

Efficiency	Requires Improvement
Making the best use of resources	Requires Improvement
Making the FRS affordable now and in the future	Good

People	Good
Promoting the right values and culture	Requires Improvement
Getting the right people with the right skills	Good
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	Good
Managing performance and developing leaders	Good

11. Some key comments that illustrate the positive findings in the inspection report are quoted below. These reflect the wide range of high levels of professionalism, commitment and expertise displayed by the Service's staff.

Effectiveness:

Understanding fires and other risks:

- The Service are good at identifying and assessing the fire and rescue-related risks to our communities.
- The Service has an effective Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).
- The Service has used learning from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry to reduce risk.

Preventing fires and other risks:

- The Service has an integrated prevention strategy and we work well with partners.
- Staff understand how to identify vulnerable people and take action to safeguard them.
- The Service has effective processes to tackle fire-setting behaviour.
- The Service is good at evaluating its prevention work.

Protecting the public through fire regulation:

- The Service's protection work has supported businesses as pandemic restrictions were lifted.
- Audits of all high-rise buildings have been completed.
- The Service is good at enforcement action when appropriate.
- The Service works well with other agencies in regulating fire safety.
- The Service has an effective strategy that has reduced unwanted fire signals.

Responding to fires and other emergencies:

- The Service aligns resources to the risks identified in its CRMP.
- The Service has improved its response standards.
- Staff have a good understanding of how to command incidents safely.
- Risk information is easily accessible to staff.
- The Service is good at keeping the public informed about ongoing incidents and help keep them safe during and after incidents.

Responding to major and multi-agency incidents:

- The Service is well prepared for major and multi-agency incidents and we have the capability to respond.
- The Service works well with other fire services.
- Firefighters have a good understanding of JESIP.
- The Service is a valued partner in the Local Resilience Forum.

Efficiency:***Making the best use of resources:***

- The Service shows sound financial management.
- The Service's financial planning, financial systems and audit arrangements are all satisfactory.
- The Service collaborates well with the police in the joint delivery of community safety activity.
- The Service share resources effectively as it collaborates with others.
- The Service has robust business continuity arrangements.

Future affordability:

- The Service understands the future financial challenges.
- The Service has identified savings and investment opportunities to improve the service to the public and generate further savings.
- The Service has a sensible and sustainable plan for using its reserves.
- The Service has invested well in technology and capacity to support future change.

People:***Promoting the right values and culture:***

- The Service has well-defined values that are understood by staff and behaviours reflect these values.
- Senior leaders consistently model and maintain the Service's values.
- There is a positive working culture throughout the Service.
- The Service has implemented measures to improve incident welfare provisions.
- Staff understand and have confidence in health and safety policies and procedures.

Getting the right people with the right skills:

- The Service has appropriate systems to record and monitor staff training.
- The Service promotes learning and improvement.
- Staff can explore development opportunities through the personal review process.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity:

- The Service engages with staff on matters that affect them.
- Improvements have been made to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).
- The Service provides education and training on EDI, and it has developed several ways to involve staff.

Managing performance and developing leaders:

- The Service manages individuals' performance well.
- Open and consistent processes are in place for promotion.
- The Service has effective succession planning processes in place that allow it to manage high-potential staff into leadership roles.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

12. SYFR received 20 Areas For Improvement (AFI). These are detailed below:

Effectiveness:

Understanding fires and other risks:

13. AFI: The Service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to date risk information.

Preventing fires and other risks:

14. AFI: The Service should make sure it puts in place measures so it can catch up on the home fire safety checks identified and awaiting a visit that have built up during the pandemic.

15. AFI: The Service should make sure it puts in place measures so it can catch up on the home fire safety checks identified and awaiting a visit that have built up during the pandemic.

Protecting the public through fire regulation:

16. AFI: The Service should assure itself that its risk-based audit programme prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk.

17. AFI: The Service should assure itself that its risk-based audit programme prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk.

18. AFI: The Service should make sure it works with local businesses and large organisations to share information and expectations on compliance with fire safety regulations.

Responding to fires and other emergencies:

- 19. AFI: The Service should improve the availability of its on-call crewed fire engines to respond to incidents in line with its community risk management plan.
- 20. AFI: The Service should ensure it understands everything it needs to do to adopt national operational guidance and it should ensure its plan is resourced to do so.
- 21. AFI: The Service should ensure it has an effective process in place to obtain operational learning so as to improve its operational response.

Responding to major and multi-agency incidents:

- 22. AFI: The Service should arrange a programme of cross-border exercises, sharing the learning from these exercises.

Efficiency:

Making the best use of resources:

- 23. AFI: The Service needs to make sure that it uses its resources across prevention, protection and response functions in a more joined up way to meet the priorities in its community risk management plan.
- 24. AFI: The Service should have effective measures in place to assure itself that its workforce is productive and that their time is used as efficiently and effectively as possible to meet the priorities in its community risk management plan.

Future affordability:

- 25. AFI: The Service needs to make sure that its fleet strategy is regularly reviewed and evaluated to maximise potential efficiencies.

People:

Promoting the right values and culture:

- 26. AFI: The Service should make sure staff have access to services to support both their mental and physical health via an effective occupational health service.
- 27. AFI: The Service should make sure that it has effective absence/attendance procedures in place.

Getting the right people with the right skills:

- 28. AFI: The Service should ensure its workforce plan addresses any gaps in capability, which affect the availability of fire engines.
- 29. AFI: The Service should address the high number of staff in temporary promotion positions.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity:

- 30. AFI: The Service should address the high number of staff in temporary promotion positions.
- 31. AFI: The Service should make sure that it has effective grievance procedures. It should identify and implement ways to improve staff confidence in the grievance process.

Managing performance and developing leaders:

- 32. AFI: The Service should make sure that it has effective grievance procedures. It should identify and implement ways to improve staff confidence in the grievance process.
- 33. SYFR were already aware of some of the areas for improvement identified by the inspection team, and have already taken steps to address these since the inspection team visited us last summer.
- 34. The SYFR inspection report will be analysed in detail, and any areas for improvement will be properly considered and measures put in place to address all of these. These will be reported to the Fire and Rescue Authority via the quarterly Service Improvement Board update report.

State Of Fire And Rescue: The Annual Assessment Of Fire And Rescue Services In England 2022

- 35. The latest State of Fire and Rescue report has been published on the HMICFRS website. It provides an update on the six recommendations made by the HMI.
- 36. The State of Fire and Rescue report will be fully reviewed to understand any learning points from the sector. A report will be presented to the Fire and Rescue Authority.

Tranche 3 Reports

- 37. As with tranche 1 and tranche 2 HMICFRS reports, we will review all the tranche 3 inspection reports to understand any learning points from individual fire and rescue services. A report will be presented to the Fire and Rescue Authority.

Future HMICFRS Inspections

- 38. HMICFRS intend on inspecting all Fire and Rescue Services in England for a third time. It is anticipated that we will be inspected in Spring 2024.
- 39. They will expect to see significant progress on the Areas for improvement identified in the inspection report.

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR ASPIRATIONS

- ☒ **Be a great place to work-** we will create the right culture, values and behaviours to make this a brilliant place to work that is inclusive for all
- ☒ **Put people first-** we will spend money carefully, use our resources wisely and collaborate with others to provide the best deal to the communities we serve
- ☒ **Strive to be the best in everything we do-** we will work with others, make the most of technology and develop leaders to become the very best at what we can be

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

If you have ticked 'Yes' please provide brief details in the box below and include the third party/parties it would involve:

SYFR will work closely with fire and rescue services and other organisations to continuously benchmark against the recommendations and inspection criteria.

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY IMPLICATIONS

40. SYFR need to ensure they have the capacity and capability to implement any recommendations in the SYFR inspection report and continuously improve. There also needs to be the capacity to ensure all the inspection work is completed.

EQUALITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED

- ☐ Yes

If you have ticked 'Yes' please complete the below comment boxes providing details as follows:

Summary of any Adverse Impacts Identified:	Key Mitigating Actions Proposed and Agreed:

- ☐ No
☒ N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why an EA is not required/is outstanding:

If required, an equality impact assessment has been / will be completed for the agreed recommendations.

HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☒ N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why a Health and Safety Risk Assessment is not required/is outstanding:

If required, a health and safety risk assessment has been/ will be completed for the agreed recommendations

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

41. Under the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority [Scheme of Delegation](#) a decision *is required / *has been approved at Service level.

- Delegated Power ☐ Yes
☒ No

If yes, please complete the comments box indicating under which delegated power.

IMPLICATIONS

42. Consider whether this report has any of the following implications and if so, address them below: Diversity, Financial, Asset Management, Environmental and Sustainability, Fleet, Communications, ICT, Health and Safety, Data Protection, Collaboration, Legal and Industrial Relations implications have been considered in compiling this report.

List of background documents		
Report Author:	Name:	Carolyn Winter, Strategic Improvement Manager
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SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

Meeting	FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
Meeting Date	20 FEBRUARY 2023
Report of	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER & CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Report Sponsor(s)	DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER / DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY
Subject	PEOPLE BOARD UPDATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the items raised and discussed at the People Board in Quarter 3 2022/23. One meeting was held during this period on 6 December 2022.

The People Board provides a strategic and critical role as a guardian of the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR) People Strategy, in safeguarding and promoting a positive culture and ensuring a modern, sustainable and healthy working environment for our staff and volunteers.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to:-

- a) Note the contents of the report and provide further scrutiny and support to enable continuing effective management of people issues.

CONTENTS

Main Report

BACKGROUND

1. The People Board is an internal meeting that monitors progress of the SYFR People Strategy, culture change and the health and wellbeing of all our employees. The People Strategy is aligned to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) national People Strategy and also determines and oversees delivery of requirements at a local level. The People Board has committed to provide quarterly updates to the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority (SYFRA).
2. SYFR's People Board meets quarterly to monthly to monitor progress of the People Strategy and to scrutinise information from the four SYFR committees that report to the People Board:
 - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Committee
 - Workforce Planning Committee
 - Health, Safety & Wellbeing (HSW) Committee
 - Workforce Development Committee

PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE

3. The current SYFR People Strategy is for the period 2018 to 2022. The Service has progressed very well against the strategic objectives. The FRA have received an evaluation of progress each year.
4. Work is underway on the development of the next People Strategy for the period 2023 to 2026. This will be a consultative process, engaging with key stakeholders and the content will reflect local, regional and national priorities.

DECEMBER MEETING UPDATE

5. The Board received verbal reports from all four committee meetings in Q3, which are summarised below.
6. At the Health, Safety & Wellbeing committee, it was noted that the current priority is planning for industrial action, particularly risk management related to emergency response and different incident types. Working with Securitas to provide relevant risk information and safe systems of work, familiarisation training, information on operational preparedness, deployment plans etc. Almost every CM & WM now trained in IOSH. The Committee received an update on fire contaminants work being undertaken in SYFR.
7. The EDI committee received the quarterly update on EDI progress across the Service and specific updates on actions from Emergency Response and the People Function. The schedule of department reports for 2023 were agreed and the committee scrutinised performance against the EDI Local Performance Indicators (LPI's).
8. The Workforce Planning committee reviewed the operational and corporate establishment profile and projections for the next 10 years. A deeper dive was undertaken into the workforce plans for Governance, Projects & Collaboration team, Community Safety team and ICT team.

9. The Workforce Development committee scrutinised the current operational training statistics and noted there were no issues of concern as the majority were within tolerances. Training frameworks and delivery plans for HazMat, operational assurance and power boats were agreed and recommended to the Board for approval. Updates were received on the Middle Manager Maintenance of Competence project and the National Operational Guidance project.
10. Casework (grievances & discipline) statistics and trends were presented and discussed. It was agreed that statistics relating to Occupational Health referrals, etc, should also be a standing item at the Board, when the new OH & Wellbeing Manager is in post and able to provide this information.
11. The Board noted the risks to the national fire and rescue sector from the recent LFB culture report and agreed this would be a standing item at future People Board meetings.
12. The Board approved the Project Initiation Document for the Leadership Programme, the FF Maintenance of Competence project and the revised Business Case for the Middle Manager Maintenance of Competence project.
13. The Board received three closedown reports from the On Call Programme and agreed to the closing of these elements of the Programme.
14. An update was provided on the roll-out of the new campaign for corporate staff recruitment and future reports will provide an evaluation of the impact.

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR ASPIRATIONS

- ☒ **Be a great place to work-** we will create the right culture, values and behaviours to make this a brilliant place to work that is inclusive for all
- ☒ **Put people first-** we will spend money carefully, use our resources wisely and collaborate with others to provide the best deal to the communities we serve
- ☒ **Strive to be the best in everything we do-** we will work with others, make the most of technology and develop leaders to become the very best at what we can be

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

If you have ticked 'Yes' please provide brief details in the box below and include the third party/parties it would involve:

SYFR will work closely with fire and rescue services and other organisations to continuously benchmark against the recommendations and inspection criteria.

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY IMPLICATIONS

15. SYFR need to ensure they have the capacity and capability to implement any recommendations in the SYFR inspection report and continuously improve. There also needs to be the capacity to ensure all the inspection work is completed.

EQUALITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED

☐ Yes

If you have ticked 'Yes' please complete the below comment boxes providing details as follows:

Summary of any Adverse Impacts Identified:	Key Mitigating Actions Proposed and Agreed:

☐ No

☒ N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why an EA is not required/is outstanding:

If required, an equality assessment has been/will be completed for the agreed recommendations.

HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

☐ Yes

☐ No

☒ N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why a Health and Safety Risk Assessment is not required/is outstanding:

If required, a Health and Safety risk assessment has been/will be completed for the agreed recommendations.

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

16. Under the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority [Scheme of Delegation](#) a decision *is required / *has been approved at Service level.

Delegated Power

☐

Yes

☒

No

If yes, please complete the comments box indicating under which delegated power.

IMPLICATIONS

17. Consider whether this report has any of the following implications and if so, address them below:., Diversity, Financial, Asset Management, Environmental and Sustainability, Fleet, Communications, ICT, Health and Safety, Data Protection, Collaboration, Legal and Industrial Relations implications have been considered in compiling this report.

Report Author:	Name:	Sue Kelsey, Director of People and Culture
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SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

Meeting	FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
Meeting Date	20 FEBRUARY 2023
Report of	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Report Sponsor(s)	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Subject	SERIOUS VIOLENCE DUTY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper is to update members on the progress of the Serious Violence Duty ('the Duty') which was introduced by the Government in May 2021 to ensure relevant services including Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) work together to share data and knowledge and allow them to target their interventions to prevent serious violence together.

The Home Office are planning to launch Serious Violence Duty measures in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (Chapter 1 of Part 2) on the 31 January 2023. This is when the requirement for specified authorities to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence will begin. This programme of work is broken down into two core parts 1) assessing readiness and 2) providing support to areas for implementation. Partnerships will then need to prepare a Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) and local strategy and implement this strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence in their area. Strategies will need to be published by the 31 of January 2024.

It will also ensure relevant services including Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) work together to share data and knowledge and allow them to target their interventions to prevent serious violence together. Ongoing support and guidance is also provided by the NFCC on how FRS can assist.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Members are recommended to:-

- a) Note the contents of the report.

CONTENTS

Main Report
Appendix A Statutory Guidance December 2022

BACKGROUND

1. Serious violence has a major impact on victims and their families, instils fear within communities and is extremely costly to society. Incidents of serious violence have increased in England and Wales since 2014. For example, offences involving knives or sharp instruments increased by 84 percent between the year to June 2014 and the year to June 2020.
2. The Introduction of a new serious violence duty requires the police, fire and rescue authorities, councils, youth offending teams, specified Clinical Commissioning groups, Integrated Care Systems, and probation services to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence as part of core service provision.
3. This new undertaking by FRSs will include the need to prepare and implement a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence in local neighbourhoods, having consulted with education authorities, prison services and youth custody authorities in their area. It will require FRSs to work together with these agencies and others to identify and publish what actions they need to take collectively to reduce violent crime.
4. The legislation will grant FRSs and other authorities the power to share data and information with each other for the purpose of preventing and reducing serious violence. Emphasis on early intervention with young people is central to complying with the duty. There is a clear requirement in the duty to work with partners to formulate an evidence-based analysis of the problems associated with serious violence in a local area, and then produce and implement a strategy detailing how they will respond to those particular issues. Prisons, youth custody agencies and educational authorities may also need to work with these core partners.

The impact of the Duty on Fire and Rescue Services

5. As stated, the Duty applies to the Fire and Rescue Authority for all Authority areas, including Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners, metropolitan Mayors in their capacity as fire and rescue authorities and in the exercise of those functions. The Fire and Rescue Authority may wish to identify a representative, which may be the operational FRS lead for the area, as this may be the body that will have the greatest local knowledge, however the Authority as the duty holder will remain responsible for compliance with the requirements of the Duty. The Authority should therefore, ensure that any suitable representative has responsibility and authority for ensuring full participation with the partnership arrangements.
6. Emergency Services are already subject to a statutory duty to collaborate with one another, and FRS have a key role in these partnerships, often occupying a very trusted position by community groups. Collaboration with partners can aid early identification and diversion from involvement in serious violence, which are both crucial in reversing the increase in harm, which may be caused by and against young people in the local community.
7. The duty will ensure that serious violence is made a focus within existing multi-agency arrangements, such as multi-agency safeguarding arrangements or Community Safety Partnerships and will allow for collaboration between a much wider set of partners. This duty will also introduce a requirement for local partnerships to establish their local problem profile and produce a local strategy specifically aimed at preventing and reducing serious violence.

8. The primary role for FRS in the Duty centres on well-established work that FRS have undertaken with Children and Young People (CYP) to support early intervention to keep young people safe and away from violence. There is a clear role for FRS to support this work and this should be explored nationally and locally. Fire plays a big role here and is probably better established than most agencies, increased trust of FRSs should be used more widely through local partnerships.

The role of FRS in supporting the Duty

9. The following section of this report sets out in greater detail the potential reach of FRS and the NFCC in supporting the Serious Violence Duty as part of local delivery partnership but also through the NFCC role as sector leader to support and promote an evidence-based approach to developing the prevention, protection, and response functions of FRS.

Children and Young People (CYP)

10. FRSs have a tradition of engaging with local communities to promote fire safety as well as wider models of community and individual engagement to support citizenship, community cohesion and direct support to vulnerable individuals and communities. FRS work with CYP is well established as a model to work with partners to use intelligence to identify CYP who are at higher risk of serious violence and engage them in interventions, activities and education which will reduce their likelihood of becoming involved with serious violence and associated anti-social behaviour.
11. FRSs have the capability to deliver trauma informed interventions, engagement activities and safety education to targeted CYP which supports the personal development and social and emotional learning of the child to reduce their vulnerability and increase their resilience in line with current practice and evidence of what works to reduce serious violence. Leading to the development of engagement activities and safety education which will develop life skills and inspire CYP to make positive choices about their futures. By engaging CYP early with professional, evidence-based interventions, FRS can enhance CYP life chances and resilience, to lead productive lives, improving their outcomes and creating stronger, safer, and more cohesive communities now and in the future.

Safeguarding

12. There is a clear expectation that FRSs develop partnerships to support risk reduction services to those identified as vulnerable and at risk from exploitation or abuse. Safeguarding within the fire sector is one that is wholly immersed in collaborative approaches with the majority of FRS represented at Local Authority Safeguarding Children and Local Authority Safeguarding Adult Boards.

Deliberate Fires

13. FRSs are often able to identify the early stages of anti-social behaviour associated with deliberate fire setting. Data sharing and working across boundaries with partners can help to recognise, assess, and tackle anti-social behaviour and some of the underlying causes. FRS often hold a trusted position within partnerships and communities and can take a joined up, problem solving approach to find a solution to the core problems caused by anti-social behaviour. While FRS hold no anti-social related powers, working in partnership with other agencies to target harden locations can help to reduce the impact the behaviour is having and can ensure the victim is put first.

14. The trusted and dependable reputation that Services hold within communities can be used to provide educational programmes that encourage young people and adult Firesetters away from behaviours that can lead to anti-social behaviour. While partnerships with educational establishments and community groups can ensure that interventions are delivered at the earliest opportunity, working with probation services also provides the opportunity for children and adults to take responsibility for their behaviour and repair the harm caused by some of their actions.

Actions and next steps

15. Area Manager Service Improvement to be SPOC (single point of contact) for SYFR and NFCC contact. Further to the Initial Serious Violence Duty meeting, held 25/01/2023 work will begin with Crest Advisory: Readiness Assessment (Serious Violence Duty).
16. Crest Advisory has been commissioned by the Home Office to reach out and work with the organisations specified in the Serious Violence (SV) Duty (police, local authorities, fire and rescue authorities, youth offending teams, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and probation services) and their local partners, to both enable and assess readiness nationally and to provide tailored support to specific local areas to develop readiness and compliance in line with the requirements of the Duty. Throughout 2023, and until the duty is established, Crest Advisory will be working to embed the SV duty and establish local engagement on behalf of the Home Office.
17. CREST will conduct an initial review, including sending over relevant documentation to partners. Conduct 1:1 interviews at a leadership level and at a practitioner survey and focus groups. Provide a Readiness scale: Crest Advisory propose to assess local areas with a view of placing them on a five-point scale, ranging from 'not ready' to 'mature, best practice'. This is to inform support - there will be no further indexing between local areas.
18. Crest Advisory will also be running a series of four online workshops over the next three months to help local areas understand their obligations under the Duty and gain the most from implementing the readiness assessment.

Understanding the Duty

19. This workshop will set out what the Serious Violence Duty is and how it can help prevent violence, as well as explaining the public health approach. It will also cover how the Duty can be met within the context of existing local partnership arrangements.

Evaluation and Data

20. Workshop two looks at building an evidence base to inform a local response to serious violence, including how to gather evidence and share data across agencies to inform a strategic needs assessment.

Developing Strategies

21. Workshop three will cover how to develop a strategic response in a local area based on the evidence, including developing a theory of change and performance framework. It will also discuss when and how to evaluate interventions.

Sharing Good Practice

22. The final workshop will be an opportunity to reflect on the findings of the joint readiness assessments at a ROCU (Regional Organised Crime Unit) level, and for areas to share examples of good practice that they have developed. Existing toolkits of interventions will also be shared

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR ASPIRATIONS

- ☒ **Be a great place to work-** we will create the right culture, values and behaviours to make this a brilliant place to work that is inclusive for all
- ☒ **Put people first-** we will spend money carefully, use our resources wisely and collaborate with others to provide the best deal to the communities we serve
- ☒ **Strive to be the best in everything we do-** we will work with others, make the most of technology and develop leaders to become the very best at what we can be

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

If you have ticked 'Yes' please provide brief details in the box below and include the third party/parties it would involve:

SYFR will work closely with SYP, Criminal Justice system, Integrated Care Board, the four Local Authority's and other groups who are required to co-operate with Specified Authorities when needed.

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY IMPLICATIONS

23. SYFR need to ensure they have the capacity and capability to implement any recommendations that arise from the Serious Violence Duty process.

EQUALITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED

- ☐ Yes

If you have ticked 'Yes' please complete the below comment boxes providing details as follows:

Summary of any Adverse Impacts Identified:	Key Mitigating Actions Proposed and Agreed:

- ☒ No
☐ N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why an EA is not required/is outstanding:

If required, an equality impact assessment has been / will be completed for the agreed recommendations.

HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

- ☐ Yes
☒ No
☐ N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why a Health and Safety Risk Assessment is not required/is outstanding:

If required, a health and safety risk assessment has been/ will be completed for the agreed recommendations

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

24. Under the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority [Scheme of Delegation](#) a decision *is required / *has been approved at Service level.

Delegated Power ☐ Yes
☒ No

If yes, please complete the comments box indicating under which delegated power.

IMPLICATIONS

25. Consider whether this report has any of the following implications and if so, address them below:., Diversity, Financial, Asset Management, Environmental and Sustainability, Fleet, Communications, ICT, Health and Safety, Data Protection, Collaboration, Legal and Industrial Relations implications have been considered in compiling this report.

List of background documents		
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Home Office

Serious Violence Duty

Preventing and reducing serious violence
Statutory Guidance for responsible
authorities

England and Wales

December 2022



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Executive Summary

About this guidance

1. This guidance is issued by the Secretary of State as statutory guidance under Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (“the PCSC Act”) and has been produced to support organisations and authorities exercising functions in relation to the Serious Violence Duty.
2. The guidance sets out case studies demonstrating effective partnership working, advice on data sharing, information on monitoring and inspection and advice on working with the voluntary and community sector and young people. This guidance also provides links to existing guidance and information rather than repeat or reproduce it here.
3. The guidance also outlines the changes made to section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, ensuring preventing and reducing serious violence is a priority for Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs).
4. This guidance is for specified authorities defined in section 11 of, and Schedule 1 to, the PCSC Act (Chief Officers of police, fire and rescue authorities, Integrated Care Boards¹, Local Health Boards, local authorities, youth offending teams and probation services).
5. The guidance is also for a secondary group known as the relevant authorities who are able to co-operate with the specified authorities as necessary. This includes prison authorities, youth custody authorities and educational authorities (defined in section 12 of and Schedule 2 to the PCSC Act). It is also for any organisation or person prescribed in regulations under section 10 of the PCSC Act.

¹ Clinical Commissioning Groups replaced with Integrated Care Boards from 1 July 2022 as part of the Health and Care Act 2022.

6. Local policing bodies (a police and crime commissioner, the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime and the Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a police authority) may assist a specified authority for the purposes of the Duty.
7. Specific guidance is also included for authorities operating in Wales, which reflects the distinct Welsh legislative, policy and operational context.

Chapter One: The Duty

Introduction

8. Following public consultation in July 2019², the Government announced that it would bring forward legislation introducing a new Serious Violence Duty (“the Duty”) on a range of specified authorities. This will ensure relevant services work together to share information and allow them to target their interventions, where possible through existing partnership structures, collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities.
9. The Government also announced that it would amend the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to ensure that serious violence is an explicit priority for Community Safety Partnerships and by making sure they have a strategy in place to explicitly tackle serious violence.

The Duty

Why has the Duty been introduced?

10. Serious violence has a devastating impact on lives of victims and families, and instils fear within communities and is extremely costly to society. Incidents of serious violence have increased in England and Wales since 2014. For example, offences involving knives or sharp instruments increased by 84 percent between the year to June 2014 and the year to June 2020.
11. The Duty is a key part of the Government’s programme of work to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence: taking a multi-agency approach to understand the causes and consequences of serious violence, focusing on prevention and early intervention, and informed by evidence.
12. In addition to tough law enforcement, we need to understand and address the factors that cause someone to commit violent crime in the first place, this includes where

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/serious-violence-new-legal-duty-to-support-multi-agency-action>

coercion is a factor regarding vulnerable children and adults. The Duty aims to ensure that agencies are focussed on their activity to prevent and reduce serious violence whilst also providing sufficient flexibility so that the relevant organisations will engage and work together in the most effective local partnership for any given area.

What is the Duty?

13. The Duty covers the requirements set out in Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the PCSC Act. It requires specified authorities³ for a local government area to work together and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence (so far as it is possible to do so), and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing, and reducing serious violence in the area. The Duty also requires the specified authorities to consult educational, prison and youth custody authorities⁴ for the area in the preparation of their strategy.
14. The Duty does not require the creation of new multi-agency structures. Local senior leaders, as set out in this guidance, may use existing local structures where possible to comply with the requirements of the Duty to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence in their local areas and, ultimately, to improve community safety and safeguarding.
15. The Duty requires the specified authorities to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence. In doing so, local areas are encouraged to adopt the World Health Organisation's definition of a public health approach, which can be summarised as follows:
 - Focussed on a defined population; the specified authorities will need to agree a defined geographic boundary within which they will operate for the purposes of the Serious Violence Duty. Meanwhile, the Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) will include a common understanding of the cohorts that are most vulnerable to serious violence and the local strategy will need to demonstrate how each area is focussing resources on the defined population most in need of support.

³ As defined in section 11 of and Schedule 1 to the PCSC Act.

⁴ As defined in section 12 of and Schedule 2 to the PCSC Act.

- With and for communities; localities will be required to embed the voices and lived experiences of the communities they serve in their Serious Violence Duty-related activity. Both the SNA and local strategy should reflect the voices and lived experiences of the communities they intend to support. Not constrained by organisational or professional boundaries; in order to successfully deliver the Serious Violence Duty, duty holders are required to work across professional and organisational boundaries in order to deliver a truly multi-agency approach.
- Focussed on generating long term as well as short term solutions; localities must consider both long and short term solutions to addressing the drivers of serious violence in their areas when developing the SNA and local strategy. Identification of solutions should always give due consideration to the delivery of the most effective and impactful services available, which will vary depending on the local context of violence.
- Based on data and useful information to identify the burden on the population, including any inequalities; the specified authorities are recommended to pool the data they hold individually to create new insights and a more complete understanding of the local drivers of serious violence. It is through effective partner data sharing and collaboration that the most informed SNAs and local strategies can be developed.
- Rooted in evidence of effectiveness to tackle the problem.⁵ Where possible, localities must learn from the experiences of others to guide their activity to that which is most effective. When developing the local strategy, duty holders should use resources such as the YEF Toolkit⁶, Early Intervention Foundation⁷ Guidebook and the College of Policing, among others, to ensure they are commissioning activities which are known to deliver the greatest impact for people at risk of, or already involved in, serious violence. Considering evidence of impact does not prevent duty holders from pursuing innovative approaches but, where this is the case, duty holders must

⁵ [who_2022_plv_strategy_2022-2026_finalfile.pdf](#)

⁶ [Youth Endowment Fund Toolkit](#)

⁷ [Home | EIF Guidebook](#)

consider the balance they are striking between delivery with strong evidence of impact and delivery that may have good potential but is less well-evidenced. This will help to ensure that the risk of failing to achieve impact is appropriately managed.

16. The World Health Organisation provides a useful framework with four steps⁸ for implementing a public health approach to understanding and preventing serious violence.
17. It should also be recognised that enforcement and criminal justice-based activity is a critical part of a public health approach. In adopting a public health approach, this should not be seen to in any way undermine or prevent the need for the valuable and vital work of the police and other partners in relation to enforcement and criminal justice-based activity. This is clear in advice from the College of Policing and Public Health England⁹ concerning public health approaches in policing¹⁰.
18. Specified authorities across England and Wales must identify the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, and, so far as it is possible to do so, identify the causes of that violence. To do so, specified authorities should undertake an evidence-based analysis of the causes of serious violence within their area and use this analysis to develop a local strategic needs assessment which should inform the local strategy. The strategy, which specified authorities must prepare and implement, should contain bespoke solutions to prevent and reduce serious violence in their area. This must be kept under review, which should be done on an annual basis and updated when necessary.
19. The Duty is intended to create the right conditions for authorities to collaborate and communicate regularly, using existing partnerships where possible and to share information and take effective coordinated action in their local areas. All organisations and agencies subject to the Duty will be accountable for their activity and co-operation.

⁸ [Violence Prevention Alliance Approach \(who.int\)](https://www.violencepreventionalliance.org.uk/)

⁹ On 1 October 2021, Public Health England transitioned to the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, within Department of Health and Social Care, and the UK Health Security Agency (a new executive agency of DHSC).

¹⁰ <https://www.college.police.uk/about/public-health>

Who must comply with the Duty?

20. The Duty requires the following specified authorities within a local government area to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence:

- Police
 - Chief Officers of police for police areas in England and Wales
- Justice
 - Probation Services
 - Youth Offending Teams
- Fire and Rescue
 - All fire and rescue authorities operating in England and Wales¹¹
- Health
 - Integrated Care Boards¹² in England
 - Local Health Boards in Wales
- Local authorities
 - A district council
 - A county council in England
 - A London borough council
 - The Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a local authority
 - The Council of the Isles of Scilly
 - A county council in Wales
 - A county borough council in Wales

Schedule 1 to the PCSC Act sets out the local government area for which each authority is a “specified authority”. Some of these authorities will be devolved in

¹¹ This includes Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners solely in their capacity as fire and rescue authorities and in the exercise of those functions, as set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, as amended.

¹² Clinical Commissioning Groups replaced with Integrated Care Boards from 1 July 2022 as part of the Health and Care Act 2022.

Wales. This guidance includes a specific chapter on the Welsh context, which will be relevant to any authority (devolved or non-devolved) delivering the Duty in Wales. Chapter 1 of this guidance 'Delivery in Wales' captures the distinct legislative and policy background in Wales, as well as the partnership agreements in place across Wales.

21. The Duty does not specify a 'lead' authority to be responsible for coordinating activity or prescribe a structure within which specified authorities are expected to work. It is for the specified authorities to come together to decide on the appropriate lead and structure of collaboration for their area. Local policing bodies will be responsible for allocating grant funding for authorities under the Duty.
22. Some localities may choose to use Violence Reduction Units (VRU) to lead on the work (if there is one present) or their local Community Safety Partnership (CSP), whilst others may use other partnerships such as the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements such as adult and child safeguarding partnerships, Local Criminal Justice boards, Integrated Care Boards or Health and Wellbeing boards. It may also be the case that collaboration via a number of different partnership structures is preferred depending on the local context such as local boards who may have an interest in the Duty.
23. To complement the overarching Duty, amendments to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 ensure that Community Safety Partnerships have an explicit role in evidence based strategic action on serious violence. These amendments require CSPs to formulate and implement strategies to prevent people from becoming involved in, and reduce instances of, serious violence in the area. As CSPs are subject to both the new Crime and Disorder Act requirements and the Duty, this will enable them to escalate local serious violence issues to a higher strategic level where necessary. This will ensure that CSPs have accountability for ensuring that a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence is in place even if they are not the partnership arrangement chosen to deliver the Duty.
24. Local policing bodies, being Police and Crime Commissioners, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a police authority, are not specified authorities under the Duty. However, they are strongly encouraged to take on a role as lead convener for the local partnership arrangements for the Duty in order to support the development and implementation of

the local strategy. In line with the current arrangements within CSPs, specified authorities must co-operate with the local policing body if that local policing body chooses to assist or monitor the specified authority in exercising its functions under the Duty. This also applies to Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners in their capacity as local policing bodies and in the exercise of those functions.

25. In recognition of the vital role schools and colleges play in safeguarding children and young people, educational authorities including; local authority maintained schools, academies, independent schools, free schools; including primary schools, alternative provision education and further education providers, must be consulted by the specified authorities in the preparation of the strategy. Section 15 of the PCSC Act also provides that these educational authorities must collaborate with specified authorities to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area, if their involvement is requested. Educational authorities can also request to participate in partnership arrangements and in this event the specified authorities would be required to collaborate with them. A strategic education representative(s) or representative education group for the local area should be chosen by the partnership to provide a link between the specified responsible authorities and individual institutions. Educational authorities may also be required under the Duty to carry out actions specified in a strategy which have been widely consulted on and agreed by the partnership in collaboration with the strategic education representative(s) or representative group. They may also be required under the Duty to collaborate with another education authority, or a prison or youth custody authority in the local government area. However, in certain circumstances those duties do not apply¹³.

26. Prisons and the Children and Young People Secure Estate play an integral role in protecting the public, both in the rehabilitation of those people in prisons and young children who have committed violent offences and are in custody, and people on probation or children supervised by Youth Offending Teams in the community. As with

¹³ Section 15(7) of the PCSC Act provides that an educational authority is not subject to a duty to collaborate or carry out actions (otherwise required by section 15(3), (4) or (5)(b)), if or to the extent that compliance with the duty: (a) would be incompatible with any other duty of the authority imposed by an enactment (other than subsection (5)(b)), (b) would otherwise have an adverse effect on the exercise of the authority's functions, (c) would be disproportionate to the need to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area to which the duty relates, or (d) would mean that the authority incurred unreasonable costs. Subsection (8) provides that in determining whether subsection (7) applies to an authority, the cumulative effect of complying with duties under this section must be taken into account.

educational authorities, prison and youth custody authorities are required to be consulted by the specified authorities in the preparation of the strategy. Section 15 of the PCSC Act also provides that they must collaborate with specified authorities if their involvement is requested. This means that individual institutions are required to collaborate and actively participate when requested to do so by the specified authorities for the area. Prison and youth custody authorities can also request to participate in partnership arrangements, and in this event the specified authorities would be required to collaborate with them. Prison and youth custody authorities may also be required under the Duty to carry out actions specified in a local strategy, and to collaborate with an educational authority, or another prison or youth custody authority in the local government area. However, in certain circumstances those duties do not apply¹⁴. The duties described above are placed on the governor or director of the relevant custodial institution. However, for adult prisons, Prison Group Directors may ensure engagement between prison authorities and specified authorities where it is considered relevant and necessary for the prevention and reduction of serious violence. They may also be nominated to represent relevant youth custody authorities.

27. Specified authorities may wish to engage with educational, prison and/or youth custody authorities in order to:

- Seek local useful information which may contribute to the diagnosis of the local strategic needs assessment.
- Access relevant data to feed into an evidence-based analysis of local causes of serious violence.
- Deliver any actions resulting from the strategy at an individual institution level which have been pre-agreed with the relevant institution/s.

¹⁴ Section 15(7) of the PCSC Act provide that a prison authority and a youth custody authority is not subject to a duty to collaborate and carry out actions (otherwise required by section 15 (3), (4) or (5)(b)) , if or to the extent that compliance with the duty: (a) would be incompatible with any other duty of the authority imposed by an enactment (other than subsection (5)(b)), (b) would otherwise have an adverse effect on the exercise of the authority's functions, (c) would be disproportionate to the need to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area to which the duty relates, or (d) would mean that the authority incurred unreasonable costs. Subsection (8) provides that in determining whether subsection (7) applies to an authority, the cumulative effect of complying with duties under this section must be taken into account.

- Assess the effectiveness and outcomes of any actions resulting from the strategy involving or delivered by individual institutions.

Defining Serious Violence

28. Specified authorities will need to work together to identify the kinds of serious violence that occur in their area as far as possible.
29. The PCSC Act does not define serious violence for the purposes of the Duty. In determining what amounts to serious violence in their local area, the specified authorities must take into account the following factors listed in Section 13 (6) of the PCSC Act:
- a) the maximum penalty which could be imposed for any offence involved in the violence;
 - b) the impact of the violence on any victim;
 - c) the prevalence of the violence in the area, and
 - d) the impact of the violence on the community in the area.
30. Section 13 of the PCSC Act makes clear that violence is not limited to physical violence against the person. It provides that, for the purposes of the Duty, violence includes domestic abuse, sexual offences, violence against property and threats of violence but does not include terrorism. This does not mean that specified authorities will be compelled to take action on these crime types specifically linked to the Duty alone, but instead that they should consider whether violence of these kinds amounts to serious violence in their area, in accordance with the factors set out above.
31. This approach allows the strategy to take account of new and emerging forms of serious violence as they develop and are identified and recognises the geographical difference in the prevalence of different types of serious violent crimes.
32. In considering how to define serious violence within their area and taking into account the factors in section 13(6), specified authorities should include a focus on public space youth violence including; homicide, violence against the person which may include both knife crime and gun crime, and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in county lines drug dealing.

33. However, there is flexibility for specified authorities in local areas to take account of their evidence-based strategic needs assessment when defining serious violence and, taking into account the factors in section 13(6), they can include in their strategy actions which focus on other related types of serious violence, including (but not limited to) alcohol related violence, criminal exploitation, modern slavery and violence against women and girls¹⁵, including domestic abuse and sexual offences, and male and LGBTQ+ victims.
34. Section 13(3)(a)(i) of the PCSC Act specifies that domestic abuse is defined as per section 1 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 ('the DA Act')¹⁶. The DA Act defines domestic abuse as behaviour (either single incidents or a pattern of behaviour) between those who are aged 16 years old or over, 'personally connected', which is abusive. Abusive behaviour, goes beyond just physical violence to also include violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, sexual abuse, economic abuse, and psychological, emotional or other abuse. The Domestic Abuse Act Statutory Guidance provides clear information on what domestic abuse is and how to identify it¹⁷. The DA Act also places a duty on local areas to provide support services in safe accommodation to domestic abuse victims and survivors and their children. Over the past two years, £125 million has been allocated to support local areas to provide these services. They are also supported in delivering these services by statutory guidance¹⁸.
35. Sexual violence is defined in section 13(4) and (5) of the PCSC Act as meaning an offence under the law of England and Wales specified in Schedule 3 to the Sexual Offences Act 2003, other than the offence of fraudulent evasion of excise duty. In determining whether an offence is specified in Schedule 3 to the Sexual Offences Act 2003, any limitation in that Schedule referring to the circumstances of a particular case

¹⁵ The Tackling VAWG Strategy 2021 defines VAWG as acts of violence or abuse that disproportionately affect women and girls. Crimes and behaviour covered by this term include rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, 'honour'-based abuse (including female genital mutilation forced marriage, and 'honour' killings), as well as many others, including offences committed online. While we use the term 'violence against women and girls', this refers to all victims of any of these offences.

¹⁶ [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/32/section/1)

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-act-2021>

¹⁸ [Domestic abuse support within safe accommodation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-support-within-safe-accommodation)

(including the sentence imposed) is to be disregarded. This definition includes rape and indecent assault. Specified authorities should refer to Chapter 2: Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences of this guidance for further information on conducting needs assessments for domestic abuse and sexual offences.

Defining the Local Area

36. The “local area” within which specified authorities in respect of which the Duty applies is at a minimum, within a local government area being a district, a London borough, the City of London or the Isles of Scilly when in England, and as a county or county borough in Wales.

37. However, a local partnership can extend its coverage to a wider area such as a police force area, if that is what is agreed for the area. The strategy can cover an area broader than a county so long as all of the specified authorities for that area are involved in its preparation, implementation and retain oversight of delivery.

38. The legislation is intentionally flexible to allow specified authorities to determine the geographical extent of their collaboration (subject to the minimum specified area). There is no universally “correct” approach when determining the size of the area within which the partnership will operate. The chosen area will most likely align with the local partnership through which the Duty is delivered. Representatives from the specified authorities should collectively decide on the appropriate partnership through which they will work together to undertake the requirements of the Duty.

39. In order to comply with the Duty, it is not necessary to create a new partnership. Instead, the specified authorities can use existing partnerships where possible and with appropriate modifications. For example, specified authorities may wish to create a sub-committee to an already established partnership, such as a Community Safety Partnership or Child Safeguarding Partnerships. Alternatively, they may wish to strengthen the connections between multiple existing partnerships operating within a geographic area. For example, connecting the work of multiple Community Safety Partnerships operating in the same police force area to develop a more effective strategic approach to tackling serious violence. CSPs will still need to be satisfied that this approach delivers their requirements under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 amendments. The Duty is an opportunity to simplify and add focus to existing

partnership arrangements rather than add additional complexity to the current multi-agency landscape.

40. Section 9 of the PCSC Act allows two or more specified authorities to collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence in a “relevant area”¹⁹. This means that authorities are permitted to work across local government boundaries and in doing so, collaborate on strategies which cover areas greater than that which they primarily provide services in. This could include collaboration with authorities in neighbouring areas or those further afield. Where appropriate, bodies and agencies may choose to work across local government boundaries and even nationally where there is the need to tackle specific serious violence issues (e.g. in the case of county lines drug dealing or instances where individuals are placed in custody or care outside of the local authority responsible for them).

What are specified authorities expected to do?

41. Once the specified authorities have identified a partnership structure, the core elements of the Duty are:

- a. Understanding local issues: In order to identify the kinds of serious violence that occur in their areas, and so far as it is possible to do so, the causes of that serious violence, the partnership should work together to establish the local ‘strategic needs assessment’ – identifying the drivers of serious violence acting in the local area and the cohorts of people most affected or at risk. This will require the sharing of relevant data and useful information held by the individual organisations subject to the Duty.
- b. Preparation, publication and implementation of a strategy: In order to prepare and implement a strategy for exercising their functions to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area, the partnership must collectively develop a strategy which should outline the multi-agency response that the partnership will take to address the drivers identified in the strategic needs assessment

¹⁹ “relevant area”, in relation to a specified authority, educational authority, prison authority or youth custody authority means an area made up of: (a) all or part of a local government area for which it is a specified authority, educational authority, prison authority or youth custody authority, and (b) all or part of one or more other local government areas (regardless of whether, in the case of a specified authority or educational authority, it is also a specified authority or educational authority for the other area or areas).

and work to prevent and reduce serious violence in the local area. The strategy should set out how the proposed actions will enhance and complement existing local arrangements responding to serious violence. Part of this work may include consideration of joint funding or investment to support local early interventions and responses. Partnerships will also need to consult with any and all educational authorities, prisons and youth custody authorities situated in the local area, that they consider necessary, as part of this process. Strategies must be published and must not include any material that the specified authorities consider might jeopardise the safety of any person, prejudice the prevention or detection of crime or the investigation or prosecution of an offence or compromise the security or, good order or discipline within, an educational, prison or youth custody authority. Regulations made by the Secretary of State prescribe further requirements for the publication and dissemination of such strategies.

- c. Review: The Duty requires that once a strategy has been prepared and published, it must be kept under review and, from time to time, revised. The partnership should review the strategy on at least an annual basis. A review should specifically consider how the interventions and solutions have impacted on serious violence within their area – considering for example crime statistics and accident and emergency data. The review may highlight the need for a refreshed strategic needs assessment and strategy, for example where new and emerging crime types are identified.

42. These core elements are explored in further detail throughout this guidance. All specified authorities, as well as any education, prison or youth custody authorities who are tasked with actions under the strategy, will be accountable for their activity and co-operation in implementing the strategy. Any and all actions set out in a strategy should be pre-agreed by all specified authorities and any relevant agencies which they may impact. They may wish to identify a senior officer in their agency to have responsibility and authority for ensuring compliance with the requirements of the Duty.

Delivery in Wales

Introduction

43. Although crime and justice are not devolved to Wales, key services which help to prevent crime such as health and social care, accommodation, education, employability and substance misuse are devolved. This means that Welsh crime and justice activity happens in a unique delivery and legislative context.
44. Devolved and non-devolved organisations work in partnership in Wales to deliver the best possible outcomes for people and to reflect relevant Welsh Government legislation and strategies in the delivery of services. Organisations such as the Welsh Government, Public Health Wales, local authorities, Local Health Boards, Substance Misuse Area Planning Boards, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service in Wales, Policing in Wales, the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice work closely together in Wales to deliver effective services.
45. This supports a distinct approach to the delivery of crime and justice provision in Wales. This approach focusses on recognising the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's), working together to keep communities safe and preventing reoffending and further harm to victims through adopting trauma-informed practice.
46. This is formalised and sustained by a memorandum of understanding between Public Health Wales, Policing in Wales and criminal justice partners. It is also evidenced through joint strategic work such as the Framework to support positive change for those at risk of offending in Wales²⁰, the Youth Justice Blueprint²¹, the Women's Justice Blueprint²² and work in areas such as anti-racism and Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV). This work is being delivered within the context of the Welsh Ministers' executive powers and the legislative competence of the Senedd as set out in the Government of Wales Act 2006.

²⁰ [Supporting those at risk of re-offending | GOV.WALES](#)

²¹ [youth-justice-blueprint_0.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

²² [female-offending-blueprint_3.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

47. Drawing on this context, this chapter outlines the specific factors which will need to be considered by relevant bodies when they are delivering on the Duty in Wales.

The partnership context in Wales

48. Every Welsh local area will have a range of existing multi-agency arrangements in place. These existing partnerships will include Public Service Boards (under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015), Regional Partnership Boards (Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014), Regional Safeguarding Boards²³ for both Adults and Children (Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014), Regional or Local Community Safety Partnerships, Regional Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Boards (VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015).
49. Partnership arrangements may also include Regional Housing Support Collaborative Groups, Serious Violence and Organised Crime Boards, Local Criminal Justice Boards, Integrated Offender Management Groups, Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), Health Board Stakeholder Reference Groups, Children and Young People Partnership Boards and Learning Disability Partnership Boards.
50. The PCSC Act does not specify the partnership model through which specified authorities must fulfil their obligations to collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence. Representatives from the specified statutory organisations should collectively decide on the appropriate partnership in which they will work together to undertake the requirements of the Duty. Public Service Boards, Regional Partnership Boards, Community Safety Partnerships and (for parts of the Duty) the VAWDASV Board will already include most or all of the partners who need to be involved.
51. In order to comply with the Duty, it may not be necessary to create a new partnership, and existing partnerships should be used where possible. Where there are strong partnerships that already exist in Wales, they are in a strong position to deliver the Duty

²³ The National Independent Safeguarding Board for Wales has two duties in relation to Regional Safeguarding Boards that are set out in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014; to provide support and advice to Safeguarding Boards with a view to ensuring that they are effective and to report on the adequacy and effectiveness of arrangements to safeguard children and adults in Wales.

in most local areas. As the Duty can include domestic abuse and sexual violence within its remit, where it is considered to be serious violence in the area (per s.13(6)), organisations with responsibilities under the Duty may consider how they can address both the Duty and their responsibilities under the VAWDASV Act (see paragraphs 62 below) without setting up parallel or duplicative arrangements. Specified authorities may wish to consider adapting and revising their current arrangements under the VAWDASV Act, to ensure that these arrangements also address serious violence more broadly in line with the Serious Violence Duty.

52. This may require regional VAWDASV boards to review their membership to ensure that all relevant bodies are engaged and potentially to revise their existing strategies. The Serious Violence Duty strategy can then make suitable reference to regional VAWDASV strategies.

53. The specified authorities within the partnership area should come together, provide information and data, and collaborate in the formulation and agreement of the strategic needs assessment, as already takes place for the Strategic Assessment, Wellbeing Plans and Population Needs Assessment and Action Plans.

Relevant current statutory duties in Wales

54. Services being delivered in Wales need to consider the distinct legislative and policy background in Wales, as well as the partnership agreements in place across Wales. This section outlines some of the relevant duties which partners will need to consider when fulfilling their responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty in Wales.

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFG Act)

55. The WFG Act puts a responsibility on specified public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, and to work to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. In particular, the WFG Act places a duty on specified public bodies in Wales to carry out sustainable development, acting in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

56. When delivering on their responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty, authorities should consider how they can maximise their contribution to the seven well-being goals²⁴ specified in the WFG Act. They should also consider how to best embed sustainable development principles, or the five ways of working in the WFG Act: prevention, integration, collaboration, long term and involvement.
57. Since the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, there has been a statutory obligation for Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to produce evidence-based strategies referred to as Strategic Assessments. In Wales these can be stand-alone documents or incorporated into the Population Needs Assessments and Action Plans or the Wellbeing Plans. The PCSC Act amended the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, to require CSPs to prepare strategies addressing two further matters, namely preventing people from becoming involved in serious violence in the area and reducing instances of serious violence in the area. The Strategic Assessment for the amended Crime and Disorder Act duty and the Serious Violence Duty will need to similarly ensure the requirements of the WFG Act are met as set out above.

A Healthier Wales

58. Health is a devolved service in Wales but Health Boards across NHS Wales will work with their partners in supporting the Serious Violence Duty. They are responsible for meeting the needs of urgent and emergency care, working with police and other crime agencies and third sector to treat and support individuals. Pressures on urgent care services can be reduced if serious violence can be addressed in the locality so it is important that partnerships are working to tackle the reasons for and interventions to reduce serious violence. Health Boards should use their regional partnership board links with social care as well as their safety partnerships to ensure that there is join up between the agencies to best support those suffering from serious violence. Their strategic plans and integrated medium-term plans should reflect the need to play an active part in supporting and delivering against the Duty.

²⁴ [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015: the essentials \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

59. Wales takes a public health approach to addressing the underlying causes of crime and the Healthier Wales Strategy seeks to create a better health outcome for all people. The Strategy seeks to fundamentally change Welsh health care in five main ways:

- Health and social care system will work together.
- Prevention by detecting earlier intervention within community settings.
- Get better at measuring what really matters to identify what support is needed.
- Make Wales an attractive place to work in health and social care.
- A single system with everyone working together.

60. Advice services, such as the 111 service, need to develop appropriate signposting to community facilities and support services so that callers seeking help at an early stage are able to be directed to appropriate services for support, including those offered by statutory services and the third sector.

61. Primary and community care services need to be aware of the signs and signals of serious violence, and also be aware of the need to provide safe and secure advice and treatment, and as well as knowing the alternative pathways open to individuals.

Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015

62. The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (the VAWDASV Act) sets out a duty for local authorities and Local Health Boards to prepare a strategy for the local authority area for tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV). The purpose of the VAWDASV Act is to improve:

- Arrangements for the prevention of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- Arrangements for the protection of victims of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- Support for people affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

63. This duty is exercised through regional VAWDASV partnership boards which operate under guidance from Welsh Government. The requirements under the VAWDASV Act,

particularly the requirement for the local authorities and Local Health Boards to jointly develop a local strategy, align strongly with the responsibilities placed on organisations under the Serious Violence Duty.

64. As noted above, where appropriate and possible specified authorities should seek to avoid setting up parallel arrangements to cover the VAWDASV Act and the Serious Violence Duty separately. Instead, organisations should look to adapt and revise their current arrangements under the VAWDASV Act to ensure that these arrangements also address serious violence more broadly in line with the Serious Violence Duty. This will require regional VAWDASV boards to review their membership to ensure that all relevant bodies are engaged, and potentially to revise their existing strategies.
65. Welsh Ministers also have a statutory requirement under the VAWDASV Act to prepare and publish a National Strategy to prevent gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence and to protect and support victims following a general election. The Welsh Government has developed its next five-year VAWDASV National Strategy alongside a group of key partner organisations including the police, specialist sector and survivors.
66. The strategy was published in May 2022²⁵ and is being delivered through a Blueprint approach, which brings together devolved and non-devolved organisations, as well as strengthening the partnership between public private and specialist sectors. It will be overseen by a National Partnership Board co-chaired by the lead Police and Crime Commissioner for Wales. Relevant authorities should consider this revised National Strategy when undertaking their responsibilities under the Duty.
67. The prevention of VAWDASV is seen as an increasingly critical and feasible component to tackle issues of serious violence. The Violence Prevention Unit systematic evidence assessment on VAWDASV identifies a range of effective practice to prevent VAWDASV that can be considered for implementation as part of the delivery of the national VAWDASV strategy²⁶.

²⁵ [Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: strategy 2022 to 2026 \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

²⁶ [REPORT \(violencepreventionwales.co.uk\)](#)

Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

68. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales. The fundamental principles of the Act are:

- Well-being – supporting people to achieve their own well-being.
- People – giving people an equal say in the support they receive.
- Partnership – co-operative service delivery.
- Prevention – right need at the right time.

69. Specified authorities, including safeguarding Boards should consider the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the distinct Welsh legal framework for social services when considering how they will fulfil their functions in reducing and preventing serious violence under the Serious Violence Duty in Wales.

70. The Wales Safeguarding Procedures and All Wales Practice Guides²⁷ are owned by the Regional Safeguarding Boards and were launched in 2019. The Procedures help practitioners apply the legislation and statutory safeguarding guidance Working Together to Safeguard People.

71. The Wales Safeguarding Procedures promote consistent, evidence-based safeguarding practice across agencies and across Wales. Training has been provided on the Procedures and guides, facilitated by the Safeguarding Boards. These procedures should be considered in developing any new practice pertaining to safeguarding children and adults in Wales.

Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011

72. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)²⁸ is an international agreement setting out the rights of children. The rationale for the UNCRC

²⁷ [Safeguarding Wales](#)

²⁸ [United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child: poster | GOV.WALES](#)

is that children's rights need specific consideration due to the special care and protection often needed by children and young people.

73. Children's rights are enshrined in Welsh law under the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 - underlining Wales' commitment to children's rights and the UNCRC. The Measure places a duty on Ministers to have due regard to the UNCRC when developing or reviewing legislation and policy.

74. Where the Serious Violence Duty impacts children and young people, plans should be grounded in a rights-based approach.

Housing (Wales) Act 2014

75. Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places responsibilities on local authorities in relation to the prevention and alleviation of homelessness. This includes:

- A duty on local authorities to take reasonable steps where someone is at risk of homelessness within 56 days (s66).
- A duty to take reasonable steps to secure accommodation for someone who is homeless (s73).
- A duty to accommodate for someone who is homeless and falls within a priority need category (s75).
- A duty to provide interim accommodation for someone who is homeless and who may be priority need (s68).

76. Section 70 of the Housing (Wales) Act outlines the list of categories which are considered for priority need status, including a person subject to domestic abuse and a person between 18 and 21 who is at risk of sexual or financial exploitation. The Act is clear that anyone at risk or is being subjected to abuse or domestic abuse should be considered as homeless and be eligible for support to find alternative accommodation.

77. The Code of Guidance²⁹ was updated and published in 2016 and provides advice in relation to the duties.³⁰ As a result of the pandemic, supplementary guidance from the Welsh Government included a wider definition of vulnerability to include anyone at risk of rough sleeping from a public health position. This approach will continue beyond the end of the pandemic as the Welsh Government prioritises complete transformation of homelessness services in this term of Government.

78. The responsibilities should be considered by organisations as they take measures to implement the Serious Violence Duty.

Socio-economic Duty – The Equality Act 2010

79. The Socio-economic Duty (contained in Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010), which has been commenced in Wales but not in England, requires that public authorities, including local authorities, local health boards, and fire and rescue services, should:

“When making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.”

80. The purpose of the Socio-economic Duty is to encourage better decision making, ensuring more equal outcomes. When developing an approach to delivering on their responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty, leads in Wales should consider how the plans reduce the inequalities of outcomes resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.

Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021

81. In recognition of the vital role schools and colleges play in safeguarding children and young people, educational authorities must be consulted by the specified authorities in the preparation of the strategy. The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act

²⁹ [allocation-of-accommodation-and-homelessness-guidance-for-local-authorities.pdf \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/allocation-of-accommodation-and-homelessness-guidance-for-local-authorities.pdf)

³⁰ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/allocation-of-accommodation-and-homelessness-guidance-for-local-authorities.pdf>

2021³¹ (“CA(W)”) established the Curriculum for Wales in law and replaced the basic curriculum (which includes, for example, the national and local curricula set out in Part 7 of the Education Act 2002³²). The CA(W) Act makes provision about progression and assessment in connection with the curriculum for 3 to 16 year olds. It also has some limited effects on the curriculum for learners above compulsory school age at maintained schools.

82. In Wales, schools must follow the guidance Keeping learners safe: the role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools³³ under the Education Act 2002. Arrangements for safeguarding children are set out in section 175 of the 2002 Act.

83. Organisations should consider the 2021 Act in the context of the Serious Violence Duty when taking forward work which impacts on education settings. The new Curriculum for Wales³⁴, which was introduced from September 2022, will include a Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience (Area) which has equal status in law to the five other area of the curriculum. It will enhance the new curriculum’s focus on the health and wellbeing of learners which includes mandatory Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)³⁵.

Relevant National Strategies in Wales

84. The following strategies and action plans impact on the strategic context for work to prevent serious violence in Wales. They should be considered by specified authorities when delivering their responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty. This includes the National Strategy for VAWDASV, which is covered under the section on statutory duties above; specified authorities are encouraged to consider where preventative activity is directed at risk factors that domestic abuse and sexual offences share with public space youth violence:

³¹ [Curriculum and Assessment \(Wales\) Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/12/section/1)

³² [Education Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/26/section/1)

³³ [Keeping learners safe | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe)

³⁴ [Curriculum for Wales - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales)

³⁵ [Cross-cutting themes for designing your curriculum - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/cross-cutting-themes-for-designing-your-curriculum)

Substance Misuse Delivery Plan 2019-22

85. The Welsh Government published their Substance Misuse Delivery Plan (2019-22)³⁶ in October 2019. The plan is rooted in a harm reduction approach which recognises substance misuse as a health and care issue as opposed to one that is solely related to criminal justice. However, close work is required, and takes place, with the criminal justice sector in order to take forward aspects of the Plan.
86. The overall aim of the Plan is to ensure that people in Wales are aware of the harm and the impact of substance misuse and to know where they can seek information, help and support. The Plan was revised in response to Covid-19 to reflect the work that has been, and will be, undertaken as a result of the pandemic. The plan will be revised in 2023 and the Welsh Government will ensure the criminal justice sector is involved in this process.
87. Close partnership working in Wales, particularly between Welsh Government, Area Planning Boards, the substance misuse third sector, HMPPS and the police, ensures that the needs of the most vulnerable substance misuse population are met and the appropriate guidance is in place.
88. We would expect relevant partners to consider the Substance Misuse Delivery plan when considering the Serious Violence Duty.

The whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing

89. The Welsh Government has published a Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being. The Framework is intended to support schools, including pupil referral units and education settings in reviewing their own well-being landscape and in developing plans to address their weaknesses and build on their strengths. The Framework recognises that the school alone cannot meet all the needs of a complex population of children and young people, and sets out the role of regional bodies, the NHS and others such as the third sector, in supporting the school.

³⁶ [Substance Misuse Delivery Plan 2019-22](#)

90. Schools and local authorities must consider the Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being when developing action plans, strategies and other policies that impact on the well-being of learners, staff and others working within the school environment. Local authorities will also need to consider the Framework in relation to education other than in a school setting.

Youth Work Strategy for Wales

91. Youth work in Wales promotes and actively encourages opportunities for all young people aged 11-25. Effective youth work plays a significant role in helping young people understand their rights, socialise, develop, and access support with a range of issues, including their mental and emotional health or wellbeing. It supports young people to play an active role in their communities and offer support with their engagement in education, employment or training.

92. The Youth Work Strategy for Wales³⁷ sets out a shared vision for the future of youth work in Wales and is supported by an Implementation Plan³⁸. These documents will be revised to reflect work being undertaken in response to recommendations set out in the Interim Youth Work Board's report, Time to Deliver for Young People in Wales³⁹, to develop a sustainable delivery model for youth work services in Wales. A new Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board has been appointed to help take forward the report recommendations. Authorities with responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty should consider the Strategy and Implementation Plan.

Youth Engagement and Progression Framework and Young Person's Guarantee

93. The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework aims to ensure young people make a positive transition into education, employment or training when they leave school, reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training and prevent youth homelessness. The Framework is, built around early identification and prevention, and should be considered by authorities as they discharge their duties under the Serious Violence Duty.

³⁷ [Youth Work Strategy for Wales](#)

³⁸ [Youth work and engagement | Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#)

³⁹ [Interim Youth Work Board: final report | GOV.WALES](#)

94. The Young Person's Guarantee is the Welsh Government's key commitment to everyone under the age of 25, living in Wales, to be supported to gain a place in education or training, and help to get into work or become self-employed. Providing meaningful opportunities for education, training and employment can divert young people away from perpetrating crime, and this should be considered when delivering on responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty.

An Anti-racist Action Plan for Wales

95. The Welsh Government recognises that it is time for urgent action to tackle racism. Together with partners and stakeholders, the Welsh Government has published an Anti-racist Action Plan for Wales⁴⁰, supporting a vision for an anti-racist Wales where partners take a pro-active approach to tackling racism in all of its forms.

96. This is complemented by a Criminal Justice Anti-Racist Plan for Wales⁴¹ jointly led and owned by Criminal Justice in Wales partners including, Policing in Wales, HMPPS Wales, Youth Justice Board Cymru, HMCTS, CPS, Public Health Wales and Welsh Government. The plan sets out a range of joint actions to address race inequalities and create system wide change

97. When undertaking their duties under the Serious Violence Duty, authorities should take an anti-racist approach and ensure they proactively take steps to address racism in all of its forms.

LGBTQ+ Action Plan

98. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, non-binary, intersex or people with variations in sexual characteristics (VSC), asexual, and aromantic people, in short all LGBTQ+ communities face very real struggles against disadvantage, inequality and discrimination. The Welsh Government has consulted on an ambitious, cross-government LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales, which will seek to tackle the existing

⁴⁰ [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan | GOV.WALES](#)

⁴¹ [c22-0119 criminal-justice-anti-racism-action-plan-for-wales report criminal-justice-in-wales interactive.pdf \(southwalescommissioner.org.uk\)](#)

structural inequalities experienced by LGBTQ+ communities, to challenge discrimination and to create a society where LGBTQ+ people are safe to live and love authentically, openly and freely as themselves.

99. When undertaking their duties under the Serious Violence Duty, authorities should consider the Plan and seek to challenge discrimination and violence against LGBTQ+ people. This complements existing responsibilities under the Equality Act.

Together for Mental Health

100. Together for Mental Health is the Welsh Government's strategy to improve the quality and accessibility of mental health services. It sets out a number of high-level outcomes aimed at achieving a significant improvement to both the quality and accessibility of mental health services for all ages. The strategy recognises that the causes and effects of poor mental health are complex, challenging and multi-faceted and therefore require an integrated, cross-government and cross-sector partnership approach if we are to achieve these outcomes. This should be considered by authorities as they fulfil their duties under the Serious Violence Duty.

Information sharing in Wales to support the Serious Violence Duty

101. Data sharing is a cornerstone in delivering on the Serious Violence Duty in Wales. Organisations in Wales directly concerned with health, education, safety, crime prevention and social well-being of people have signed up to the Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) which provides a tool to enable the sharing of personal information effectively and lawfully.
102. We would expect WASPI to form the basis of information sharing to support the Serious Violence Duty. Please also see specific guidance on information sharing in Chapter 2 of this guidance.

Wales partnerships and partners

103. It will be for the specified authorities to decide how best to work together to deliver their responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty. However, we have highlighted

some partnerships in this section that will contribute to the Duty in Wales at a local and/or strategic level.

Substance Misuse Area Planning Boards

104. Within Wales the commissioning of substance misuse services rests with seven Area Planning Boards (co-terminus with health boards). However, substance misuse treatment for offenders in the community remains the responsibility of HMPPS though in several APB areas this is co-commissioned. The membership of the APBs includes representatives from the 'responsible authorities', which comprise CSPs, to enable statutory responsibilities in respect to substance misuse to be discharged at a regional level.

The Wales Safer Communities Network

105. The Wales Safer Communities Network (The Network) was created following a Welsh Government Review into Community Safety. The Network is there to support future Welsh community safety policy and practice development and to help to build the appropriate skills and knowledge required to implement changes and reflect evidence-based best practice across Wales⁴². This is delivered through the ongoing development of an online community safety library and resources database for Wales, which includes the strategic assessments.

106. The Network provides support to the Wales Data Analysis Innovation and Improvement Network; Wales Association of Community Safety Officers; All Wales Anti-Social Behaviour Practitioners Network; and Community Justice Cymru all of whom are likely to have information, data and existing service delivery and development that is important to the delivery of the Serious Violence Duty.

107. The Network, Criminal Justice in Wales and Violence Prevention Unit all provide a range of support and information for local specified authorities. Working together to reduce gaps and the risk of duplication, they will work together to provide a range of support utilising the individual remits to support partners to deliver the Duty.

⁴² [Safer Communities for Wales - Wales Safer Communities](#)

The Violence Prevention Unit

108. The Wales Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) is a partnership of people from an alliance of organisations working together to prevent all forms of violence in Wales through a public health approach. The Violence Prevention Unit are a multi-agency team, including members from Police Forces, Police and Crime Commissioners', Public Health Wales, Local Authorities, and the voluntary sector. The VPU is supported by additional commitments from over 30 Welsh partners, under the remit of the All Wales Violence Prevention Board. The mission of the VPU is to prevent Violence in Wales through a public health approach.
109. The VPU Website⁴³ has greater detail of work undertaken by the VPU, including research that helps identify effective practice for violence prevention and some of the services they directly commission to prevent violence. Part of the role of the VPU is utilising multi-agency data, research and analysis to better understand and prevent serious violence. The VPU will be supporting partners to address the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty.

Wales Police Schools Programme (WPSP)

110. The Wales Police Schools Programme (WPSP) operates in all primary and secondary schools in Wales, focussing on early intervention and prevention in relation to a range of issues with children and young people, based in the school environment. The WPSP delivers a balanced programme across all key stages of the curriculum, including topics such as substance misuse, anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, bullying, online safety, sexting, child sexual exploitation and consent.

Partnership Agreement for Prison Health

111. In Wales a Partnership Agreement for Prison Health is in place. This work is monitored by a Prison Health and Social Care Oversight Group which is jointly chaired by Welsh Government and HMPPS in Wales. The Partnership Agreement for Prison

⁴³ [Violence Prevention Unit \(violencepreventionwales.co.uk\)](https://violencepreventionwales.co.uk)

Health is a collaborative agreement between Welsh Government, HMPPS, Health Boards and Public Health Wales. It sets out agreed priorities for improving prison health. The priorities are built around the agreement that this is a whole prison approach to improving the health and wellbeing outcomes of prisoners in Wales. They are:

- The wider prison environment and its contribution to improving health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Mental health and the development of agreed standards for mental health services in prisons.
- Substance misuse and the development of a new Substance Misuse Treatment Framework for prisons.
- Medicines Management.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and the Adverse Hub for Wales

112. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) refer to traumatic childhood experiences which can continue to have an impact on people's well-being across their life course. Research shows there is a strong association between ACEs and crime, as both victim and perpetrator. Research by Public Health Wales (ACEs Study 2015) found that those with four or more ACEs were: 14 more times likely to have been the victim of crime in the last 12 months; 15 more times to have been the perpetrator of violence in the last 12 months; and 20 times more likely to have been incarcerated in their lives. Public Health Wales' research into the prevalence and impact of ACEs in Wales was one of the main drivers behind the establishment of the ACE Hub for Wales.
113. Funded by the Welsh Government since 2017, the ACE Support Hub (the Hub), supports individuals, organisations and communities to become ACE aware. The Hub has adopted a strengths based approach to preventing ACEs, focussing on sharing evidence and learning from best practice, developing the knowledge and skills of professionals, and driving change and system transformation at both local and national levels.
114. The Hub has worked with Traumatic Stress Wales to develop a common trauma-informed practice framework for Wales, which will be of interest to authorities delivering

the Serious Violence Duty⁴⁴. The framework aims to support a coherent, and consistent, approach to developing and implementing trauma-informed practices.

Community and Voluntary sector (Third sector)

115. The Third sector contributes widely to supporting people in Wales. As recognised in the general guidance, their support in delivering a Serious Violence Duty that properly reflects local issues should be properly considered. This includes the VAWDASV specialist sector, who play an integral part in tackling VAWDASV in Wales.

116. Community and Voluntary Sector (Third Sector) in Wales are a key and important partner across partnerships, including Regional Partnership Boards, Regional Safeguarding Boards and Public Service Boards. Attendance is, as an equal partner, acknowledging the important trusted and independent role that the organisations play in local communities and in providing links with all sectors of local communities. Utilising the skills of the sector is an important element of delivering Welsh legislation. This is supported through Third Sector Support Wales, a partnership of the local Community Voluntary Councils across Wales and the national body Wales Council for Voluntary Action. The collaboration, integration and engagement with this sector will be a key element for delivery of the Serious Violence Duty (for example providing input into the analysis of the problems associated with serious violence in the local area and solutions for tackling them).

Engaging with children and young people, victims, survivors and perpetrators of crime

117. Engagement and involvement with all parts of the population across Wales is a key requirement of existing legislation: the SS&WB Act, WFG Act and VAWDASV Act to name a few. We expect the existing arrangements to be expanded to include all groups who are currently not engaged with, or to adapt the questions and data gathered to include an element of serious violence and its impact on all parts of the community. This should include children and young people, adults including older people, those from marginalised groups, victims and survivors in the case of violence against women,

⁴⁴ [Trauma-Informed Wales \(traumaframeworkcymru.com\)](https://traumaframeworkcymru.com)

domestic abuse and sexual violence, as well as perpetrators. This can and should include the collection of data sets and information from community and voluntary groups who are already working in these fields and are engaging with communities in ways that statutory bodies may not be able to.

118. A National Survivor Engagement Framework will be developed in Wales as part of the National VAWDASV Strategy and Blueprint. This will combine multiple ways in which survivors can influence work in Wales and provide a vehicle for survivors to advocate for themselves to educate their peers, communities, colleagues and wider stakeholders. The insight provided by the Framework will be an important source of insight for authorities as they deliver the Serious Violence Duty in Wales.

Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales

119. The Serious Violence Duty applies to Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales. Specific guidance for Fire and Rescue Fire Authorities is provided in Chapter 4, subject to exceptions noted in the text in that Chapter.

Strategies that apply in relation to Wales

120. The serious violence strategies must be submitted to the Secretary of State for the Home Department within 7 days of publication. It should be sent to: Seriousviolenceduty@homeoffice.gov.uk. In addition, for areas covering all or part of a local Government area in Wales, the strategy must be published in both English and Welsh and submitted to Welsh Ministers within 7 days of publication, by sending the strategy to CrimeandJustice@gov.wales.
121. This should either be as a weblink to where the strategy is published or as an attachment (PDF or Word version).
122. For more detailed information about the publication of the strategies please see paragraph 324 onwards of this guidance.

Chapter Two: Planning and Collaboration

Collaboration

123. Every local area will have a range of existing multi-agency arrangements in place. These existing partnerships may include Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), Health and Wellbeing Boards, Serious Organised Crime Partnerships as well as Supporting Families Programme Structures, Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Boards, VAWDASV Boards, Criminal Justice Boards, Violence Reduction Units (non-statutory), Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
124. As previously set out, the PCSC Act does not specify the partnership model through which specified authorities must fulfil their obligations to collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence. Representatives from the specified authorities should collectively decide on the appropriate partnership in which they will work together to undertake the requirements of the Duty. An example of a multi-agency partnership model is included as a case study below.
125. This flexibility is designed to allow specified authorities to build on existing infrastructure, strengths and capabilities as they consider most appropriate. In order to comply with the Duty, it may not be necessary to create a new partnership, and the specified authorities should use existing partnerships where possible and with appropriate modifications. CSPs will still need to be satisfied that this approach complies with their requirements under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 amendments (made by the PCSC Act 2022) to prepare and implement a serious violence strategy. Where partnership arrangements span more than one local government area, thought should be given to how variations in need and provision will be reviewed at a more local level – for example, through individual local authority scrutiny committees.

126. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities have also produced a useful resource for local system leaders on multi-agency partnership working for the purposes of serious violence prevention.⁴⁵
127. The specified authorities within the partnership area should come together, provide information and data, and collaborate in the formulation and agreement of the strategic needs assessment. It will be for the local partnership, on behalf of the specified authorities, to decide how best to work together to deliver the actions identified in the strategy as a result of the initial assessment.
128. There is no “one size fits all” approach, as some specified authorities will need to collaborate with other authorities across a wider geographical area on some issues (for example, knife crime across London or county lines drug dealing), whereas other bodies may be able to collaborate in smaller areas on other issues (for example, a rise in school exclusions in part of a local authority area leading to an increased risk of serious violence). Similarly, some identified actions may require all specified authorities to work together, whereas other actions may only require the specific attention of one or two of the authorities.

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences

129. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 created a statutory definition of domestic abuse which includes not just physical abuse, but also emotional abuse, economic abuse, controlling or coercive behaviour, sexual abuse and psychological or other abuse⁴⁶. In addition, there are growing links between domestic abuse and victims who died by suicide.
130. For the purposes of the Duty, sexual offences are defined as offences under the law of England and Wales specified in Schedule 3 to the Sexual Offences Act 2003⁴⁷.

⁴⁵https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/838930/multi-agency_approach_to_serious_violence_prevention.pdf

⁴⁶ This is a non-exhaustive list of offences which could constitute domestic abuse. The [Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance](#) provides full information on what domestic abuse is and how to identify it.

⁴⁷ Aside from paragraph 14 in that schedule which does not apply to this duty

Sexual offences can often occur in the context of domestic abuse but in many instances they do not.

131. Around one-third of violence against the person offences and one fifth of all homicides are domestic abuse related. Where domestic abuse or sexual offences are determined to be serious violence in a local area, in accordance with section 13(6) of the PCSC Act, specified authorities should take action to prevent and reduce such offending. Local areas' strategy should include how they will exercise their functions to tackle domestic abuse and sexual offences.
132. Action on domestic abuse and sexual offences is particularly encouraged where preventative activity is directed at risk factors which are shared between these crimes and public space youth violence. Such risk factors might include, but are not limited to, growing up in a violent home, substance abuse, social isolation and adverse childhood experiences. The latter can have a significant impact on health and the associated risks of perpetrating broader forms of violence in later life⁴⁸.
133. Action to address these shared risk factors is encouraged even when domestic abuse and sexual offences are not determined to be serious violence in a local area.
134. The Serious Violence Strategy identifies 22 risk factors from a series of reviews for youth and gang violence. Of these, many also appear in systematic reviews of risk factors associated with intimate partner violence including child abuse (physical, sexual and neglect), low IQ/learning difficulties, poor parental supervision, poor quality/delinquent peer relationships, and substance abuse. Early intervention and preventative strategies aimed at these risk factors are known to be effective in reducing both types of offending.
135. Evidence similarly points to the impact of experiencing domestic and sexual abuse in childhood having adverse impacts on children in later life⁴⁹. Some domestic abuse perpetrator interventions recognise the overlapping risk factors by identifying the

⁴⁸ [Violence-prevention.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/violence-prevention.pdf)

⁴⁹ <https://victimscommissioner.org.uk/document/sowing-the-seeds-childrens-experience-of-domestic-abuse-and-criminality/>

impact abusers have on children, and the adverse childhood experiences they will consequently have. This is an integral part of their design.

136. The Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy⁵⁰ and the complementary Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan⁵¹ focus on improving collaboration and multi-agency working between organisations, including at a local level. Specialist domestic abuse organisations offer a range of training for professionals working in multi-agency safeguarding contexts.
137. Given such complexity, the most effective multi-agency responses to all forms of domestic abuse and sexual offences will be those in which pre-existing mechanisms are joined into any structures that discharge the Duty.
138. The appropriate partnership model for authorities to work together to undertake the requirements of the Duty is not prescriptive. Organisations with responsibilities under the Duty may consider how they can address those responsibilities alongside those under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, as well as relevant legislation relating to domestic abuse and sexual offences, without setting up parallel or duplicative arrangements unless they wish to do so. Specified authorities may wish to consider adapting and revising their current multi-agency arrangements aimed at preventing domestic abuse and sexual offences in order to deliver the Duty.
139. Listed below are some examples of these existing arrangements, most of which focus on preventing reoffending. And those able to assist children who experience domestic abuse, which the Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance acknowledges is as an adverse childhood experience, can help tackle the links between these experiences and future offending:
- **Operation Encompass** – This scheme involves information sharing between police and schools in cases where a school-aged child has experienced a domestic abuse incident, so the school is in a better position to support the affected child.

⁵⁰ [Tackling violence against women and girls strategy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672222/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy.pdf)

⁵¹ [Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672222/tackling-domestic-abuse-plan.pdf)

- **Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Boards** – these assess the need for and commission support services for all domestic abuse victims and survivors, including their children, within safe accommodation. Their make up may vary across areas, but as a minimum, they will include those representing local authorities, victims and survivors and their children, domestic abuse charities or voluntary organisations, health care providers, and the police or other criminal justice agencies.
- **Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)** – These are a framework of statutory arrangements, under which the police and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, with the cooperation of other agencies with responsibility for health, housing, and social care, are required jointly to assess and manage the risk presented by known sexual and violent offenders. This includes those convicted of offences related to sexual abuse and domestic abuse. These arrangements are designed to prevent future reoffending.
- **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)** – This is a non-statutory process that brings together statutory and voluntary agencies to jointly support adult and child victims and survivors of domestic abuse who are at a high risk of serious harm or homicide, and to disrupt and divert the behaviour of the perpetrator. The core MARAC agencies are the police, Independent Domestic Violence Advisor services, housing, children's services, the Probation Service, primary health, mental health, substance misuse service and adult social care.

140. There are also examples of Home Office-funded Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) delivering activity that tackles domestic abuse and sexual offences, notably where the end goal of that activity is to drive reductions in public space violence. It should be noted that VRUs spend comparatively small amounts of funding on these activities.

141. The primary aim of Home Office VRU funding is to prevent and reduce public space violence amongst under 25s. Accordingly, the vast majority of Home Office funded VRU activity is focused on those crime types directly related to this primary aim. However, VRUs are also able to use Home Office funding to deliver activity that covers broader crime types, should their Strategic Needs Assessments identify that doing so will positively impact reductions in their primary aim. This includes domestic abuse and sexual offences, for which some VRUs have identified that they can reduce public space violence by commissioning targeted preventative work on domestic abuse. An example of this is included in the Northumbria case study below.

142. Outside of Home Office funding, VRUs are able to utilise match resources without restrictions as to whether this must be focused on reducing public space violence. Whilst they will continually be measured against their ability to make progress against their primary aim, there are examples of VRUs using outside resources to both co-ordinate partnership responses to domestic abuse and sexual offences or commission activity themselves.

Case Study: Northumbria VRU

The majority of Northumbria VRU's work and interventions focus on street level violence, particularly in relation to young people. The VRU has drawn from both existing research and local data which identifies a relationship between young people who witness or become victims of domestic abuse having a higher risk of being involved in future public space violence both as victims and perpetrators.

Accordingly, the VRU spends approximately £150,000 of its budget to complement the current provisions in place across Northumbria. This includes the VRU appointing a dedicated Domestic Abuse Specialist who works with all six local authorities, commissioned domestic abuse providers and the six Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards to progress the key priorities identified in its Strategic Needs Assessment. Its approach largely takes the form of education and engagement at the earliest opportunity as well as progressing dedicated training and awareness around bystander approaches for men and boys. A strategic review of perpetrator interventions, carried out by a commissioners forum, made a number of recommendations that are being explored via the six Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards. One of the key recommendations was to take a strategic approach to all perpetrator commissioning activity across the region and more targeted work with high harm perpetrators. The VRU is currently working with Domestic Abuse commissioned service to develop a 'hub and spoke' model that will provide additional resource to work with a cohort of high harm perpetrators within the MARAC process on behaviour change. This is a joint initiative with the VRU and local authorities. It is envisaged that as the VRU develops there will be more opportunities for joint approaches to tackle Domestic Abuse as part of our wider public health approach to reducing serious violence.

Case Study: Nottinghamshire VRU

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Nottinghamshire has included domestic abuse and sexual violence within the scope of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Violence Reduction Unit (NNVRU) since its inception in June 2019. The VRU recognises that children living in households where domestic abuse occurs have an increased risk of developing acute and long-term physical, emotional health problems and trauma, which may, without the right support, perpetuate the cycle of violence. As a result, the NNVRU seek to build the local and national evidence base through the commissioning and evaluation of interventions, as well as the commissioning of research, to better understand the ‘causes of the causes’ of public space violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence and the preventative factors which link these crimes and could be tackled to mitigate their impacts.

One such project is the Choices Project, delivered by Equation, which addressed abusive behaviours in all forms as part of a participant-led project over ten weeks, aimed at young men in year 10. Participants were predominantly excluded from mainstream school, had experienced, or been exposed to domestic abuse, had demonstrated aggressive or violent behaviour, as well as negative attitudes toward women and girls. The project had clear learning aims but was largely participant led, it enabled young men to explore their feelings in a safe environment whilst providing them with the tools to problem solve and manage feelings of anger, building their self-esteem and aspirations. Topics included exploitation by criminal gangs such as county lines, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation alongside a strong focus on healthy relationships, personal space, toxic behaviours and consent. Through empowerment, education and giving participants a voice, the project was able to influence young people’s lives in a positive way.

Safeguarding children

143. It is essential that frontline professionals recognise the specific needs and vulnerability of children and young people, regardless of the circumstances around any interaction children and young people may be involved in such as gang or drug related violence. There needs to be a proportionate response in the strategy so that those

children and young people impacted by criminal exploitation and engaging in serious violence are seen as victims and are safeguarded and supported as opposed to criminalised.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 places a duty on three of the specified authorities (police, health and local authority) as statutory 'safeguarding partners' for local areas in England. This duty means that they (and other relevant agencies they consider appropriate) must work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area, including identifying and responding to their needs. Chapter 3 of the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children⁵² makes clear the duty on safeguarding partners to make arrangements to work together, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is shared and equal.

144. The Serious Violence Duty does not detract from these responsibilities. In collaborating to prevent and reduce serious violence, safeguarding partners have an opportunity to demonstrate and strengthen the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in a local area. There is extensive existing statutory guidance found in "Working together to safeguard children"⁵³ to support local partners to develop their serious violence strategy and consider the importance of safeguarding children.

145. Whole-family working is also integral to delivering effective preventative support. The needs and goals of all the family should be considered, rather than just responding to the needs of the lead individual. This ensures that the resilience of the entire family unit is strengthened and improves outcomes in the long-term. Whole-family working requires understanding needs of both adults and children, understanding where needs are overlapping and interconnected. Families should recognise who their lead practitioner is, and be able to share their story once. The lead practitioner will coordinate other services around the family, providing 'wrap around' support, ensuring each family has a bespoke plan in place to address their needs and improve their outcomes.

⁵² [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672212/Working-Together-to-Safeguard-Children-2018.pdf)

⁵³ [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672212/Working-Together-to-Safeguard-Children-2018.pdf)

Case Study: Multi-agency Partnership Model

In Swansea, the Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) and partners are delivering a range of interventions and multi-agency arrangements to reduce and prevent violence, and to take a holistic child-centred approach to children and young people involved/at-risk of involvement in violence. The VPU has funded a host of interventions at a primary, secondary and tertiary level, which includes interventions that target the root causes of violence and offer support at what is considered a ‘teachable moment’. These interventions sit within a system that has established a range of approaches to target violence.

The Swansea CMET Panel (Missing, Exploitation and Trafficking) is a multi -agency meeting established and led by Swansea Council, meeting on a fortnightly basis, working within a Contextual Safeguarding framework, recognising and responding to the individual needs of young people that have been identified by partners (including South Wales Police, Community Safety, Youth Offending and third sector organisations) providing, or facilitating access to, specialist support services in relation to vulnerabilities such as substance misuse, mental health, homelessness and violence. It also focuses on identified hotspot locations across Swansea and peer groups, providing targeted outreach activity.

The CMET Panel enables young people to be diverted from the risk of exploitation, youth violence and serious organised crime and is critical to ensuring that there is no duplication and a clear referral pathway to specialist interventions.

Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) has been commissioned by the VPU to assess the delivery of these approaches in Swansea collectively, to capture how they operate to identify individuals at risk of/ involved in violence, and the measures implemented to mitigate risk, and prevent further involvement in violence and crime. The evaluation will incorporate the wider approaches of key agencies (e.g. police and community safety partnerships), but with a specific focus on the CMET panel, a multi-agency arrangement to target hotspot areas, while also providing wrap-around support for children and young people at risk.

Strategic Needs Assessments

146. A strategic needs assessment will enable a local partnership to identify the kinds of serious violence that occur in their area and, so far as is possible to do so, the causes of that serious violence as required by the PCSC Act, providing information on current and long-term issues relating to serious violence and the cohorts most vulnerable to involvement in their partnership area. The SNA prepared for the Duty [may also / is likely to/is expected to] meet the requirements for an SNA relating to serious violence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998; in this case, individual CSPs do not need to carry out separate SNA unless they choose to, or if this is the partnership arrangement chosen to deliver the Duty requirements. The SNA will provide a greater understanding of established and emerging serious violence trends, priority locations or other high-risk issues. An example outlining the overall aims and framework of an existing SNA is included as a case study below. A single SNA may cover more than one local government area, where all of the specified authorities from each local government area it covers choose to collaborate together to fulfil their duties under the PCSC Act 2022.

147. The SNA should be formulated following an evidence-based analysis of information relating to the violent crime types, the drivers of crime within the partnership area and the cohorts most vulnerable. This will require the gathering and analysis of data from all partners, so far as is possible, including (but not restricted to):

- Local and national crime data, (including Crime Survey of England and Wales (eg, police recorded crime by crime type, crime outcomes and profiles of victims and offenders),
- Anonymised hospital and primary care data on serious violence injuries,
- Education data (e.g. attendance, suspension and exclusion),
- Anonymised prison data (e.g. types of offences),
- Local data (e.g. census information),
- Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme data,
- MARAC data,

- Children's social care data,
- Outcomes of homicide reviews including in areas such as domestic homicide, child and adult safeguarding, mental health and offensive weapons homicide reviews,
- Input of organisational information and experience and where appropriate knowledge and useful information from specialist voluntary sector organisations and young people (e.g. data on violence against women and girls). The National Statement of Expectations and VAWG Commissioning Toolkit⁵⁴ set out data sources which could be considered when assessing the specific needs of victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence,
- NPCC VAWG Performance Framework⁵⁵ will also outline data Police should collate,

148. Local areas may wish to seek additional analytical support and expertise in formulating their SNA. Office for Health Improvement and Disparities have also published a useful resource for local areas on the development of local SNA.⁵⁶

149. The SNA may also identify data or intelligence gaps, where the partnership is lacking information or knowledge and requires further information. Involving a range of staff and partners in the development of the SNA will improve the analysis and lead to a clearer picture of the local areas' problems. For example, incidents of domestic abuse and sexual violence are underreported to the police and other statutory agencies so other data sets will augment understanding of the local picture for these crime types. Partnerships may also find it useful to gather qualitative data as part of this process.

⁵⁴ [Commissioning services to tackle violence against women and girls - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/commissioning-services-to-tackle-violence-against-women-and-girls) The National Statement of Expectations provides guidance for local areas on how to commission effective support services for victims of VAWG. The NSE is underpinned by a separate Commissioning Toolkit, which compiles information in a practical way to demonstrate how commissioning VAWG services can be done to meet needs effectively.

⁵⁵ [Violence against women and girls: Outcomes and performance framework \(prgloo.com\)](https://prgloo.com/vawg-outcomes-performance-framework)

⁵⁶ [Serious Violence Duty: strategic needs assessment guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-duty-strategic-needs-assessment-guidance)

150. The results of the SNA should be used by the partnership to define their serious violence issues and formulate and prioritise bespoke actions to prevent and reduce serious violence that the partnership will take forward (the strategy).

151. A local area may consider that an existing multi-agency strategic needs assessment (produced by a VRU for example) already fulfils the criteria set out in this section, meeting the relevant duty obligations as required by the PCSC Act. They should only do so if said SNA matches the definition of serious violence that is agreed by partners in the consideration of implementation of the Duty in their area.

Case Study: Violence Prevention and Reduction Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership, September 2019

The West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership was set up using funding from the PCC and with the support of the police and health.

A joint police and health team work with organisations such as councils, hospitals and charities to help them to provide services that will prevent violence, using best practice and evidence of where violence takes place.

Needs Assessment Aims:

To identify, collate and assimilate existing data across partner agencies and associated systems with regards to violence prevention need:

- Epidemiological approach - time, person, place
- Comparative approach - regional and national comparators
- Corporate approach - compilation of any stakeholder consultation already undertaken at local authority level or qualitative research where it exists

To determine and understand current violence prevention provision across partner agencies in relation to need and to identify gaps in provision:

- Focus on violence with injury (except for domestic abuse and knife crimes)
- To enable triangulation with hospital data
- To consider the crimes associated with evidenced harm
- To complement other analysis underway that considered “all crimes”

Needs Assessment Framework:

1. Primary prevention - Preventing involvement in violence
2. Secondary prevention - Preventing recurrence following early involvement in violence
3. Tertiary prevention - Reducing harm and preventing further violence where violence is established
4. Enforcement and criminal justice
5. Attitudinal change

Data sources: West Midlands Police data, Community Rehabilitation Company data, Youth Justice Board data, Public Health England Fingertips, Department for Education, Local surveys, Local authority-led consultation, Health and justice deep dive

The Strategy

152. The strategy should be prepared by the specified authorities following the identification of the kinds of serious violence that occur in the partnership area and, so far as is possible to do so, identification of the causes of serious violence in that area through a comprehensive SNA. It should comprise a range of new and existing actions that the partnership will take forward to prevent and reduce the serious violence issues and drivers that have been identified.
153. The PCSC Act requires that the strategy is published, kept under review and revised from time to time. The strategy should be reviewed at a minimum on an annual basis and specified authorities should collectively decide if any new action is required or if a revised strategy is needed. There is nothing to prevent specified authorities from reviewing and revising their SNA and strategy (or part thereof) on a more frequent basis if required.
154. The strategy could usefully include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Arrangements being using to deliver the Duty and whether there is a named co-ordinator,

- b. Governance, including how the partnership will fulfil the requirements of the legislation (including those under the Crime and Disorder Act)⁵⁷, regular meetings, monitoring arrangements and process and dates for review,
- c. Framework, for gathering and analysing data,
- d. Who (such as the voluntary and community sector, young people and communities) the partnership will work with; why they have been chosen; and how they will collaborate,
- e. Consultation arrangements with young people and communities,
- f. Geographical boundaries (especially if the arrangements operate across more than one local authority area) and how this links to Crime and Disorder Act requirements⁵⁸,
- g. How engagement with education and prisons will be managed effectively to ensure their involvement,
- h. How appropriate links will be made with safeguarding arrangements,
- i. Roles and responsibilities of the local policing body (primarily the PCCs) , including arrangements for allocating funding to authorities
- j. Set out what the arrangements are for commissioning additional services under the strategy and how links are made to existing funding partnership for prevention and reduction activities,
- k. What the arrangements are for independent scrutiny of the strategy, including those under the crime and disorder committee,

⁵⁷ Where the CSP decides to fulfil its CDA requirements through the Serious Violence Duty SNA and strategy

⁵⁸ Where the CSP decides to fulfil its CDA requirements through the Serious Violence Duty SNA and strategy”

- l. A high level (non-sensitive) summary of the SNA,
- m. Actions (including early intervention preventative action) to be undertaken by the whole partnership area, by sector/partners and wider actions (where appropriate – cross boundaries or nationally), how the identified actions enhance or complement existing actions/or arrangements within the local area,
- n. An executive summary of the serious violence strategy,
- o. Where applicable the annual assessment of the partnership's performance against the previous years' strategy.

155. Specified authorities may also want to be mindful of timing the development of their strategies and actions to coincide with budgetary or spending decisions within their local area – this will enable an evidence-based assessment of where funds are best diverted to. Any actions falling on educational authorities, prisons or youth custody authorities should be subject to an agreed cost assessment to ensure affordability alongside current spending obligations. Where funding is not available through local budgets, partnerships may want to consider pooling and/or directing resources to where they are needed most.

156. Prior to finalising the strategy, gathering the views and ideas of the voluntary and community sector, children and young people, adult victims service users and businesses operating in the area is strongly encouraged. Further advice and guidance on this process is outlined in Chapter 3 of this guidance. Specified authorities may also wish to refer to strategies published by neighbouring areas to check for consistency of approach if there is a need to work across local authority boundaries on common issues.

157. The Equality Act 2010 places a legal obligation on public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity; and to foster good relations, between persons with different protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. When developing their local strategies, which will include actions and

interventions for their local areas, specified authorities must comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

158. Specified authorities should also monitor the impact of their local strategies on those with protected characteristics on an ongoing basis.

Arrangements for publication and dissemination of the strategy

159. The Secretary of State has made regulations in connection with the publication and dissemination of the strategy⁵⁹.

160. Each strategy must be published as soon as reasonably practicable after it has been prepared, with the first strategy for each local government area being published by the 31 January 2024.

161. Each strategy must be placed on the website of a specified authority or a local policing body for the local government area to which it relates and published in such other form as the specified authorities consider appropriate (which may include hard copies). Where specified authorities collaborate across local government areas, the shared strategy must be published on the website of a specified authority or local policing body for each local government area which forms part of the relevant area. This ensures that all strategies relating to a local government area are available in that area.

162. The serious violence strategies must be submitted to the Secretary of State for the Home Department within 7 days of publication. It should be sent to: Seriousviolenceduty@homeoffice.gov.uk. In addition, for areas covering all or part of a local Government areas in Wales, the strategy must be submitted to Welsh Ministers within 7 days of publication, by sending the strategy to CrimeandJustice@gov.wales. This should either be as a weblink to where the strategy is published or as an attachment (PDF or Word version).

⁵⁹ These regulations The Prevention and Reduction of Serious Violence (Strategies etc.) Regulations 2022, were laid in Parliament on 12 December. [The Prevention and Reduction of Serious Violence \(Strategies etc.\) Regulations 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2022/12/12/ukdsi202200011/1)

163. When publishing and disseminating their strategies specified authorities must comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Specified authorities covering all or part of a local government area in Wales will also be required to publish a Welsh language version of their strategy.
164. Areas where work is already underway on preventing or reducing serious violence may wish to publish an interim strategy earlier but there is no obligation to do this.
165. Specified authorities may also wish to disseminate their strategy through their individual agency and partnership annual reporting processes, including their serious violence strategy, progress on actions and the outcome of subsequent reviews of their strategy.
166. Specified authorities may develop a bespoke individual strategy in response to the Duty or assessment can be incorporated into existing products if it is clearly identified. For example, specified authorities which form part of CSPs can comply with their new functions under the Crime and Disorder Act (in relation to preventing and reducing serious violence) by producing a stand-alone strategy covering prevention and reduction of serious violence, or by preparing one over-arching strategy covering this issue as well as the other issues which CSPs are required to formulate and implement strategies in relation to, identified in section 6(1)(a) to (c) of the 1998 Act. Specified authorities may also decide to use the CSP as the appropriate partnership to fulfil the Duty (under the PCSC Act), and so prepare one strategy fulfilling both the Duty and Crime and Disorder Act requirements. Where specified authorities prepare one strategy to fulfil both of these requirements, they strategy will need to clearly indicate that. It will also need to comply with the publication and dissemination requirements for the strategy under both the PCSC Act Regulations and the Crime and Disorder Act Regulations⁶⁰. The requirements are closely aligned.
167. An example of a strategy and associated actions is included as a case study below. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities have also produced a useful

⁽⁶⁰⁾ The requirements for the formulation and implementation of strategies under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 are set out in *The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007* (as amended) for England, and *The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) (Wales) Regulations 2007* (as amended) for Wales.

resource for local system leaders on partnership working for the purposes of serious violence prevention.⁶¹

Case Study: Hertfordshire County Community Safety Unit – Serious Violence Strategy

Hertfordshire undertook a Serious Violence Needs assessment in 2018 in response to an increase in knife crime and county lines activity. This assessment formed the background for the first Serious Violence Strategy which was launched in 2018 and took a whole system approach addressing prevention, early intervention and enforcement.

The strategy was refreshed in 2021 following professional and public survey and an update of the Serious Violence needs assessment. The strategy was also informed by intelligence products such as Drugs Market Profile, Cuckooing and Drugs Supply Exploitation Briefing.

The strategy has four priorities:

1. Criminal Exploitation of Young People

Prevent children and young people from being involved in criminal exploitation and serious violence

2. County Lines and organised drug supply

Intervene as quickly as possible to reduce the opportunities for children, young people and adults' further involvement in County Lines and illegal drugs supply

3. Criminal exploitation of adults including 'cuckooing'

Support vulnerable adults who are at risk of criminal exploitation and having their properties used for criminal activity and illegal drug supply

4. Availability of knives and other weapons

Reduce the opportunities to obtain knives and other weapons involved in serious violence.

⁶¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/838930/multi-agency_approach_to_serious_violence_prevention.pdf

The governance for this strategy lies with the following boards:

- Community Safety Board
- Domestic Abuse Executive Board
- Drugs and Alcohol Strategic Board
- Hertfordshire's Safeguarding Adults Board
- Hertfordshire's Children's Partnership
- Integrated Offender Management Board

A Serious Violence Co-ordinating group was formed, with representatives of each of these boards, to ensure delivery of actions in line with the objectives of the strategy.

Information Sharing

Background

168. To recognise the importance of effective multi-agency information sharing, the Serious Violence Duty legislation includes specific provisions to support partners to share information, intelligence and knowledge to prevent and reduce serious violence (see sections 16 and 17 of Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the PCSC Act). These provisions create information sharing gateways to permit disclosure to a specified authority of information held by specified authorities, local policing bodies and educational, prison or youth custody authorities and to enable local policing bodies to request information from specified authorities, educational authorities, prison or youth custody authorities within its police force area, or any other local policing body for the purposes of the duty.

169. The provisions will not replace existing data sharing agreements or protocols that are already established, including those under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The new information sharing gateways for the purposes of the Duty are intended to enable the sharing of relevant data where existing powers alone would not be sufficient.

170. Health and social care authorities should be aware that there are restrictions under the powers in sections 16 and 17 on the disclosure of patient information and/or

disclosure of personal information by a specified health or social care authority. These restrictions mean that generally they cannot be required to disclose confidential patient information.

171. In practice, local authorities already collate large amounts of pupil level and educational data so any additional education data required from education authorities for the purposes of the strategic need assessment would therefore be most practicably best collected through the local authority.

172. Each authority will already routinely collect information on a particular aspect of a local area's strategic needs assessment. The legislation enables such information to be appropriately shared with the partnership in order for all aspects of serious violence to be adequately considered. Information sharing can also help to support a partnership's aims by:

- a. Providing a shared understanding of the problem – information brought together from a range of organisations/agencies can be used to identify patterns and trends, geographical hotspots and vulnerable cohorts. Such information can also be reverted to for evaluation purposes;
- b. Fostering a multi-agency response – including a range of information sources in the initial strategic needs assessment will help to engender a natural multi-agency response as each organisation/agency will have a clear role to play in addressing local issues;
- c. Supporting partnership working – regular sharing of information may help to build and/or improve inter-agency relationships as partners will be working together on shared issues with a common goal.

173. Effective data sharing is also a key focus of the current Violence Reduction Units (VRUs), supported by funding from the Home Office. VRUs provide a dedicated resource, a clear place to coordinate information as well as strategic leadership to respond to the findings of any analysis. As set out in interim guidance⁶² to VRUs, information and intelligence sharing should primarily consist of sharing anonymised

⁶²Violence Reduction Unit Interim Guidance. March 2020.

aggregated data to inform the strategic, tactical and operational response to serious violence.

174. It is acknowledged that the 'Information Sharing to tackle Violence (ISTV)' approach to information sharing should be adopted as a baseline and continually improved upon where possible. VRUs are currently working to achieve the following three levels of information usage in order to support their work to prevent and reduce serious violence:

- a. Level 1 – Information used to inform the strategic needs assessment in order to understand local issues;
- b. Level 2 – Information used to better identify hotspot locations and support a targeted approach;
- c. Level 3 – Information used to better identify individuals at risk for high-intensity support programmes. Level 3 data would not apply for healthcare data under the Duty.

The legislation – Disclosure of Information (Section 16)

175. Section 16 of the PCSC Act provides a permissive information sharing gateway that enables specified authorities⁶³, local policing bodies (PCCs or equivalents), educational, prison and youth custody authorities to disclose information to each other for the purposes of their functions under the Duty. Information sharing to support effective collaboration with partnerships should be considered carefully and in line with data protection requirements ensuring that any disclosure is necessary and proportionate for the proposed purpose. See paragraphs 152 onwards for further information.

176. The powers permit requests to be made for sharing information, or for information to be shared pro-actively, but do not oblige any specified authority to share information (either pro-actively or following a request). For example, an Integrated Care Board may choose to respond to a request under section 16 to disclose aggregated management

⁶³ As defined by section 11 and Schedule 1 of the PCSC Act.

information about hospital attendances where serious violence was suspected, which could support the development of a local problem profile / strategic needs assessment.

177. Personal information⁶⁴ may be disclosed under section 16 by specified authorities (with the exception of health or social care authorities), local policing bodies (PCCs or equivalents), educational, prison and youth custody authorities. Any sharing of personal information must comply with data protection legislation (most importantly, the Data Protection Act 2018).
178. Disclosure of patient information by specified authorities, local policing bodies (PCCs or equivalents), educational, prison and youth custody authorities is not authorised under these powers (section 16(4)(a)), nor is disclosure of personal information by specified health or social care authorities (section 16(4)(b)).
179. Anonymous information may be disclosed under section 16 by all specified authorities, including health or social care authorities, and local policing bodies (PCCs or equivalents), educational, prison and youth custody authorities.
180. Section 16(3) provides that disclosures under section 16 do not breach any obligation of confidence owed by the person making the disclosure, or any other restriction on the disclosure of information (however, imposed). The disclosure must also be:
 - a. in accordance with the data protection legislation⁶⁵ (section 16(4)(c), and
 - b. not prohibited by any of Parts 1 to 7 or Chapter 1 of Part 9 of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (section 16(4)(d)).

⁶⁴ Personal information or ‘personal data’ means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (‘data subject’); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person”. UK GDPR.

⁶⁵ Primarily the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and regulations made under the Data Protection Act 2018

181. Section 16(7) provides that this information sharing gateway does not otherwise affect existing powers to disclose information. Personal data may still be shared where appropriate and consistent with the existing legal frameworks and mechanisms that are already established between local partners (e.g. MARAC and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) arrangements).
182. Health and care practitioners must follow the information sharing guidance of their professional regulator when deciding whether they may disclose confidential patient information to local policing bodies (PCCs or equivalents) or other authorities in reliance on alternative information sharing powers. Further information on disclosures for the protection of patients and others under these existing mechanisms can be found in the GMC guidance on Confidentiality: good practice in handling patient information⁶⁶

Supply of information to local policing bodies etc (Section 17)

183. The PCSC Act also creates a power under section 17 for local policing bodies (PCCs and equivalents) to request any specified authority and any educational, prison or youth justice authority within its police force area to supply it with such information as it may specify for the purpose of its functions relating to the Duty.
184. The purpose of this power is to enable or assist local policing bodies (PCCs or equivalents) to assist a specified authority in the exercise of its function to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence and monitor the local strategy and its effectiveness.
185. Where a request is made under section 17(1), the person or body to whom it relates must comply and supply the requested information, subject to the limitations in subsection (6). The information requested must be held by the person to whom the request is made and must relate to that person, a function of that person, or a person in respect of whom a function is exercisable by the person requested to supply the information.

⁶⁶ General Medical Council. Confidentiality: good practice in handling patient information, paragraphs 50 - 76.

186. Personal information may be disclosed under section 17 by specified authorities (with the exception of health or social care authorities), local policing bodies (PCCs and equivalents), educational, prison and youth custody authorities.
187. Disclosure of patient information by specified authorities, local policing bodies (PCCs and equivalents), educational, prison and youth custody authorities is not authorised under these powers (section 17(6)(a)), nor is disclosure of personal information by specified health or social care authorities (section 17(6)(b)).
188. Anonymous information may be disclosed under section 17 by all specified authorities, including health or social care authorities, and local policing bodies (PCCs and equivalents), educational, prison and youth custody authorities.
189. Section 17(5) provides that disclosures required by section 17 do not breach any obligation of confidence owed by the person making the disclosure, or any other restriction on the disclosure of information (however imposed). Disclosure must be:
- a. in accordance with the data protection legislation⁶⁷ (section 17(6)(c)), and
 - b. not prohibited by any of Parts 1 to 7 or Chapter 1 of Part 9 of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (section 17(6)(d)).
190. Section 17(7) provides that any information supplied to a local policing body under this section must be used only by that body for the purpose of enabling or assisting it to perform its functions under section 14 and for purposes of preventing and reducing serious violence in relation to the Duty. Nor can information be further disseminated outside of that local policing body. This means it can only be used for purposes connected with assisting and monitoring specified authorities in the exercise of their functions under the Serious Violence Duty. For example, it could not be used, or shared with the police or other law enforcement agencies, for other purposes.

Regulation making powers (section 10)

⁶⁷Primarily the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and regulations made under the Data Protection Act 2018.

191. Section 10 of the PCSC Act provides a power for the Secretary of State to make regulations conferring powers on specified authorities to collaborate with prescribed persons (and vice versa). Prescribed persons could be in the public, voluntary or private sectors. These will be put in place when local areas experience legal challenges working together. Section 10 also provides a power for the Secretary of State to make regulations authorising the disclosure of information between a prescribed person and specified authorities, local policing bodies (PCCs and equivalents), educational, prison and youth custody authorities. Any such information sharing gateway would be subject to similar limitations on what can be disclosed to those found in sections 16 and 17.

Data protection

192. All responsible authorities should already have arrangements in place that clearly set out the processes and principles for sharing information internally. In addition, these arrangements may cover sharing information within the local partnership and with external bodies, including processing personal data in order that it can be anonymised for sharing purposes. Where relevant, such arrangements should include the purpose for sharing the data, what is to happen to the data at relevant points and clarity on respective roles. Data sharing agreements may need to be established where they are not already in place. These should include effective safeguarding measures to make it clear that the purpose of the data is to ensure the appropriate support and interventions for individuals can be put in place. Guidance on data sharing arrangement sharing for people who provide safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers can be accessed here [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-sharing-advice-for-safeguarding-practitioners).

193. Disclosures of personal information (excluding patient information and/or personal information for health and care authorities) under sections 16 and 17, and under any regulations made under section 10, will only be permitted if they do not contravene data protection legislation as defined in section 3 of the Data Protection Act 2018⁶⁸ This includes Part 3 of the Data Protection Act 2018, for law enforcement processing, and the UK-GDPR, for general processing.

⁶⁸ Primarily the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and regulations made under the Data Protection Act 2018

194. In circumstances where health and care authorities consider that disclosures of personal data not authorised by this legislation are required to support the prevention and reduction of serious violence, this should be done in accordance with existing guidance⁶⁹ and data sharing gateways and the relevant data protection frameworks.
195. Specified authorities should design privacy into their partnerships from the beginning of the process and before exercising the relevant functions under the PCSC Act, including for example, having all appropriate data protection or sharing agreements and notices in place and being able to exhibit good evidence of compliance with the data protection legislation.
196. When disclosing personal data or otherwise processing personal data in order that effectively anonymised data might be shared, all responsible authorities:
- a. Must comply with the processing conditions under data protection legislation - including being transparent about the purposes for which your organisation processes personal data and the circumstances in which you might do so when complying with the Serious Violence Duty.
 - b. Should be aware of the exemptions from certain UK GDPR provisions contained in Schedule 2 to the Data Protection Act 2018, to the extent that the application of those UK GDPR provisions would be likely to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime. Where those purposes would not be likely to be prejudiced, any processing must comply with the UK GDPR as normal.

⁶⁹ General Medical Council. Confidentiality: good practice in handling patient information

Case study: Example of effective data-sharing model (influencing and impacting mainstream delivery)

The Essex Violence & Vulnerability (V&V) Partnership is a forum which successfully brings together agencies and organisations across Southend, Essex and Thurrock to develop joint strategies and direction for tackling serious violence across Essex. This includes the effective sharing of data to ensure approaches are delivered in response to identified needs. The Partnership enables organisations to identify issues so that a joint approach can be taken to solving them. As part of the Partnership's work on data-sharing, one of the issues identified across the partnership has been the timely sharing of information across the criminal justice (CJ) agencies, compounded by Covid. The Partnership has considered how this issue has impacted on how young people enter the criminal justice system, who are involved in serious violence and gangs and at risk of exploitation in the pre-court period (and recognising that this period can be over many months). The Partnership engaged with relevant teams from Essex Police, Probation, and Youth Offending Services to understand the issues being faced by the individuals and the agencies involved. The Partnership developed a plan which met the needs of all services by ensuring:

- Prompt and secure dissemination of bail / 'released under investigation' (RUI) data
- Appropriate training and guidance in information sharing to teams across the agencies
- Review of information sharing processes between the agencies

This led to the identification of aspects of the system which were causing blockers between agencies, and measures were put in place to improve information sharing between the teams. Following on from this, tailored approaches in Southend, Essex and Thurrock, have been developed, designed to build on the increased intelligence and information sharing between Essex Police and other multi agency partners from this work. An example of this in Essex, is a pilot "Reroute" which aims to work across Essex Police and Essex Youth Offending Service, to support, protect and enforce against those young people who are either released under investigation or are on police bail.

Chapter Three: Engagement

Police and Crime Commissioners, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the Common Council of the City of London

197. Local policing bodies, being Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the Common Council of the City of London, have an important part to play as a lead convener for local partner agencies as they are responsible for the totality of policing in their area, as well as services for victims of crime.
198. Whilst not subject to the Duty themselves, local policing bodies will have a key role in supporting delivery. As with PCCs and the MOPAC's existing functions in relation to Community Safety Partnerships, they may choose to assist specified authorities in the exercise of their functions. This may include collaborating with local partnerships and taking a lead convening role to support the development and implementation of the local strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence.
199. They may also monitor specified authorities' exercise of their functions under the Duty.
200. This also applies to Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners in their capacity as local policing bodies and in the exercise of those functions.
201. Regulations conferring functions on local policing bodies have been made under section 14 of the PCSC Act⁷⁰, to enable them to assist a specified authority in relation to the Duty. This includes making grants to specified authorities, convening and chairing meetings, requiring representatives of the specified authorities, relevant authorities (educational, prison or youth custody authorities) or such other persons as

⁷⁰ These regulations The Prevention and Reduction of Serious Violence (Strategies etc.) Regulations 2022 were laid in Parliament on 12 December 2022. [The Prevention and Reduction of Serious Violence \(Strategies etc.\) Regulations 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2022/1220/contents/make)

they consider appropriate to attend such meetings, and providing administrative and management support to the specified authority.

202. Grant funding for specified authorities will be administered, on behalf of the Home Office, by local policing bodies. Specified authorities may approach their local policing body for relevant guidance.

203. Local policing bodies (PCCs and equivalents) may also monitor specified authorities exercise of their Serious Violence Duty functions. Specified authorities must co-operate with a local policing body in relation to the Duty when a local policing body requests it to do so, however the local policing body should consider the proportionality of additional requests and anticipated costs to specified authorities before making any such requests. This includes requests for information made under section 17 of the PCSC Act in order to fulfil their role of enabling and monitoring the effectiveness of local strategies.⁷¹ Such requests must only be for information held by the authority to whom the request was made, and the information must only relate to that authority, a function of that authority except where functions are contracted out. There must also be sufficient safeguards in place to ensure that information is disclosed in line with relevant data protection legislation.

Serious Violence Prevention in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

In February 2020 the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable jointly established a Serious Violence Prevention Programme (with £1M per annum funded by local taxpayers through the council tax precept) to tackle serious violence using a public health approach. A programme director was appointed to lead the portfolio across both organisations and the wider partnership, hosted by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).

Developing the Evidence Base

During the programme's initiation, the OPCC and Police worked with Crest Advisory, alongside the Social Care Institute for Excellence, to build an evidence base for tackling serious violence through a multi-agency joint strategic needs assessment. Research looked at violence across four thematic areas: (1) violence in public spaces, (2) violence in

⁷¹ As set out in section 14 of the PCSC Act.

the home, (3) violence associated with other criminality (including organised crime and gang culture/ criminal exploitation) and (4) violence against emergency workers.

Publicly available data and local datasets from partners were analysed across the force area, plus extensive stakeholder engagement via interviews, focus groups, workshops, events and Board meetings. This resulted in the strategic needs assessment, homicide and serious case reviews, best practice guide and a series of stakeholder events.

Refining the Strategy

An evidence based strategy was produced with an aim to take a preventative, partnership approach to victims, offenders, and locations to reduce the risk of involvement in violence thereby making the area safer and more resilient.

Three core priorities make up the programme's strategy:

PEOPLE: Ensure quality support is available for young people under 25 on the edge of violence.

PARTNERSHIPS: An ambitious partnership that works together to prevent serious violence by holding each other to world-class standards.

PLACES: Home is a safe place to be and public spaces where there is more likelihood of violence will be prioritised.

Implementing targeted interventions

The partnership delivers through policing and externally commissions a range of services aimed at supporting vulnerable young people under 25.

Interventions focus on preventing violence in young people, their family and intergenerational networks. Parents, guardians, and wider family members are also able to access support for themselves.

The programme has demonstrated considerable success since its launch. It has supported just under 1,400 young people, with almost 140 wider family interventions delivered across over 30 projects, including 6 community projects, 8 police led projects and 19 partnership projects driven by 9 Community Safety Partnership's (CSPs).

Community Safety Partnerships and their respective Local Authorities have already received an investment of £800k from the programme over the last two years to help them prepare for implementation of the Duty in their local areas and to co-design projects to meet the strategy.

A 'Theory of Change' was built with Crest Advisory to connect each project back to the overarching strategy and to lay the groundwork for evaluation and data collection.

Clear accountability

The programme has both internal and external governance boards to oversee the work and the delivery of the Serious Violence Duty.

PCCs are uniquely placed to bring agencies and organisations together to oversee the totality of work taking place towards the prevention and reduction of violence particularly in complex geographical areas with multiple partners who are not coterminous. The PCC, together with the Chief Constable, led two senior leader events to brief, enthuse and galvanise strategic leaders from across the peninsula to ensure that key specified authorities can connect and progress key ambitions relating to not only the programme but the Duty. During these sessions, it was agreed:

- Partners from across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly will adopt the programme's shared approach to guide their own organisational responsibilities to the Serious Violence Duty and to sign up to a partnership concordat.
- The programme will lead a Task and Finish Group to coordinate and steer peninsula wide priorities and workstreams with each participating organisation nominating a primary point of contact.
- Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) would act as the lead local delivery mechanism for the new Duty with many CSPs choosing to set up a specific serious violence delivery group to steer activities and the Duty's implementation locally. These groups connect at the force level via the Task and Finish Group.

For further information on the approach, please see this blog post co-written by Crest Advisory and the Devon and Cornwall OPCC team following a national showcase event.

Violence Reduction Units

204. Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) are non-statutory, collaborative partnerships. Currently there are 20 VRUs⁷² that have been established with the help of Home Office funding in areas of England and Wales that experience highest volumes of serious violence, though other areas may also independently choose to set up similar partnerships.
205. VRUs implement a ‘public health’ approach to tackling serious violence, which follows the 5Cs; Collaboration, Co-production, Co-operation in data and intelligence sharing, Counter-narrative, and Community Consensus.⁷³ This approach aims to support long-term reductions in serious violence by understanding the root causes and intervening with both short and long term solutions to prevent those most at risk from becoming involved in serious violence in the first place.
206. A VRU’s core function is to lead and co-ordinate the local response to serious violence in their areas. As systems leaders, VRUs bring together insights and expertise from key local partners to identify the drivers of violent crime, defining the populations and areas most at risk, and work in collaboration with them, using the current evidence-base, to determine, agree and deliver the targeted activity that can best prevent and impact on serious violence.
207. VRUs bring together mandatory membership from, the Chief Constable for the area, the Police and Crime Commissioner, local authorities with responsibility for the geographical areas principally targeted by the activities of the VRU, the Integrated Care Boards, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities/Wales and the Youth Offending Team. Representatives of local education institutions, community groups including young people and the voluntary sector are also key partners in many VRUs.

⁷² The 20 areas in receipt of a VRU funding allocation from the Home Office are as follows: Metropolitan Police, West Midlands, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Northumbria, Thames Valley, Lancashire, Essex, Avon and Somerset, Kent, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Bedfordshire, Sussex, Hampshire, South Wales, Cleveland (since 22/23 and Humberside (since 22/23).

⁷³ As set out in ‘A whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention’ by Public Health England (now OHID):
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/838930/multi-agency_approach_to_serious_violence_prevention.pdf

208. Specified authorities through local partnerships and/or CSPs will wish to work closely with VRUs (if there is one present in their area) in the development of the Strategic Needs Assessment and Strategy. Specified authorities may wish to incorporate, align or refer to these products in the development of their strategy. However the geographical areas covered by VRUs are at police force or regional level and as such may be too broad to act in place of a local needs assessment on behalf of the specified authorities for the local area (which may be carried out by CSPs/local partnerships).
209. As VRUs also commission local services to deliver interventions and, in fulfilling their core function, are expected to hold significant information about the current provision in the region. Through their co-produced Strategic Needs Assessments, VRUs will also hold information about the impact of violence on local communities including the impact of health inequalities.

Voluntary and Community Sector

210. Throughout England and Wales, there are many voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations working to tackle serious violence or serious violence related issues and ultimately improve outcomes for young people.
211. These organisations are often highly skilled and knowledgeable on specific local issues and communities. The voluntary sector can provide essential expertise, often from people with lived experiences of violence. Locally based organisations are often very trusted in communities, and as such can engage with people within the community, in a way that public bodies may not be able to. This may also be further enhanced through the recruitment of individuals with lived experience. By engaging with the voluntary and community sector, specified authorities may therefore gain a richer understanding of the serious violence issues within their local areas.
212. The VCS comprises a range of organisations, including but not limited to; community groups, voluntary organisations, faith and equalities groups, charities, social enterprises, housing associations and the specialist violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence sector. All of which may be relevant to engage with as part of the initial identification of the local strategic needs assessment, the development of the response strategy, its subsequent implementation and review.

What to consider when engaging with the VCS

213. Collaborative working with the VCS is key to delivering policies that tackle the issues that matter to communities and to strengthen the resilience of this sector in addressing these issues. In order to achieve better outcomes, statutory partnerships and VCS organisations should work together to build effective working relationships. However, it is important that VCS organisations maintain their independence in order to uphold their role as advocates for their beneficiaries and the community and preserve the trust of their service users.
214. Early engagement ensures that the key stages of policy development can reflect the expertise of this sector and can provide valuable insight into how policies are likely to impact communities. Expectations should also be set in line with the capacity of the organisation in question.
215. It is also important to give proper notice of funding opportunities or decisions and ensure that funding terms are fair and enable local organisations to participate.
216. The Compact is a voluntary agreement⁷⁴ which may be used as a vehicle to foster strong, effective partnerships between statutory partnerships and VCS organisations. Its principles apply to all relationships between VCS organisations, local authorities and public bodies that are distributing funds on behalf of the government. Many local areas in England also have a local Compact or other arrangement to promote effective partnership working.

Case study: Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector - Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland Violence Reduction Network (VRN)

⁷⁴ The agreement which governs relations between the government and civil society organisations in England. [Government, voluntary and community sector agree new Compact for working in partnership - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-voluntary-and-community-sector-agree-new-compact-for-working-in-partnership)

When the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland VRN was established in September 2019, the principle of ‘with and for communities’ was embedded within their core approach. The term Network, rather than Unit, was used to reflect the need for all groups, organisations and communities to work collaboratively to tackle the complex causes of violence. This inclusive approach means that communities were considered as partners from the outset.

Through the allocation of resource, in terms of time and money, and an unwavering commitment to continuously advocate for the involvement of communities in the work of the VRN, the following activity has been achieved:

- A dedicated role within the VRN central team to engage, support and involve communities and provide additional capacity to pursue initiatives and projects.
- Universal and targeted insights work – including surveys, focus groups and Network Events for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) –to ensure that the Strategic Needs Assessment and Response Strategy is co-produced with communities and young people.
- Learning and development opportunities for grassroots community groups to increase capacity including the design and delivery of a Community Leadership Programme.
- Board membership extended to include representation from charities and grassroots community groups to enable joint decision-making and resource allocation.
- Co-designing VRN interventions with young people and communities, and building experiential feedback into evaluation for continuous improvement.
- Partnering with and funding grassroots community groups to increase youth involvement and to deliver services with and for young people.

This broad and inclusive partnership has enabled the VRN to continuously extend its reach and increase its relevance and impact in relation to reducing violence affecting young people. However, it is recognised that further progress is required to secure the cultural change necessary for the VRN to be a fully community-focused and community-driven partnership and this work is continuing in preparation for the new Duty.

Children and Young People

217. Children and young people under 18 have a different legal status and a range of different vulnerabilities to adults in the context of youth violence⁷⁵. A child is up to the age of 18 and a young person is between the ages of 18 – 25.
218. Engaging children and young people is important to make sure they have a say on the issues which affect them and that they care about. This is especially important for those who are in receipt of services and support that the agencies and bodies involved in the partnership provide and who also may be particularly vulnerable, for example, children or young people and those involved in the criminal justice system, out of mainstream schooling, and children in care and/or victims of crime. Those causing serious violence may be victims themselves which may impact on their criminality and offending. In addition, it should be recognised that young people from Minority Ethnic backgrounds are disproportionately disadvantaged in many areas including education, housing, health, and poverty so are over-represented at most stages of the youth justice system.
219. Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right and places a duty on tier 1 local authorities to provide support services for them, as well as their parents, in safe accommodation and to consider the full range of existing legislation and safeguards to protect children.
220. The Government has carried out comprehensive research into the drivers of violent crime and the characteristics of perpetrators and victims.⁷⁶ We know that there are overlapping risk factors of becoming a victim and/or perpetrator of serious violence and these risk factors apply at an individual, family and community level. Partnerships should be mindful of this overlap when engaging with children and young people and developing interventions which are targeted at or may affect them.
221. It is also important to consider how safe children and young people feel when going about their daytime and evening activities, to address their concerns and ensure that they are aware of the work being undertaken in their local area to prevent and reduce serious violence and improve their safety in the community. Most local authorities or

⁷⁵ [Youth violence \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/youth-violence)

⁷⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy>

areas have a local youth council or other youth engagement forums which provides opportunities for children and young people to work with decision-makers on a range of issues, such as the prevention of knife crime. Some areas also have young mayors, youth police and crime commissioners and youth forums within VCS youth organisations which could all be engaged. Schools, colleges and where appropriate, universities, often have relevant consultation and engagement forums and groups as well.

222. The quality of engagement is extremely important to support young people when they are volunteering their time to improve their communities. Young people are diverse, and this should be reflected in efforts to seek views on evidence and issues for the partnership. Some young people may need their support workers (youth workers, mental health worker, personal advisor etc.) to be involved alongside them in order to effectively engage in consultations and community planning. Specified authorities may also want to consider allocating an appropriate budget for out of pocket expenses prior to engagement.

223. The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) was established in 2019 following a £200m endowment from the Home Office. The 10-year programme aims to support this Government's response to serious violence by developing the evidence base on what works to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in violence and making this accessible to front-line policy-makers and practitioners. The YEF have developed a Toolkit which summarises the best available research evidence about different approaches to preventing serious youth violence. It is based on real life data about what has happened when these approaches have been used before. It provides an insight on a growing number of different approaches, with more to be added in the future. For each approach it explains what it is, how effective it's likely to be, how confident you can be in the evidence of its impact, as well as indicative costs and links to related resources and programmes.

Case study: Example of effective engagement and collaboration with communities

The Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit provides leadership and the strategic coordination of the local response to serious violence, bringing together various partners to achieve this outcome. In addition to significant co-working with a variety of partners, the VRU places great importance in community engagement and ensuring the needs of local young people shape both strategy and delivery. Community voices are therefore incorporated within the VRU structure, with representatives joining the Oversight Board in 2021.

In 2020, the VRU worked with the Police Gangs Superintendent to establish a County Lines Reference Group, where representatives from community organisations meet with the Gangs Team leadership and the VRU Directors. Community representatives have the chance to hear about and comment on the work being carried out to tackle County Lines and the associated exploitation, and the forum is where they can hold decision makers to account.

As well as community organisations, the group has representatives from education and faith groups who are able to contribute to the discussion and ensure that their views are heard. In 2021, the work of the group led to the VRU providing additional funding to parent support groups for those parents whose children have been exploited by county lines. Parents now attend the Reference Group, and their experience helps shape the planning for future work, and the VRU meet with the parents outside of the group to follow up on discussions.

The community representatives of the Reference Group have two seats on the VRU Oversight Board, which ensures that the discussions within the Board and the planning of the work of the VRU reflect the needs of local communities. The community representatives are often the most active and vocal of the Board members and ensure that decisions are informed by the needs of the communities that they reflect.

Chapter Four: Sector Specific Guidance

Police

224. The police have a critical role to play in enforcing the law to protect the public.

However, the requirements relating to the Duty make clear that a partnership response to serious violence, involving a range of lead agencies, is required. Collaboration with partners can aid early identification and diversion from involvement in serious violence which are crucial in reversing the increase in harm largely caused by and against young people. Existing work to investigate, disrupt, deter and enforce using the full range of policing powers and tools available (for example, stop and search) should still continue as well as work undertaken within statutory safeguarding arrangements to support vulnerable children and young people, referring to support and healthcare services where appropriate.

225. The Duty applies to the Chief Officer of police for all police force areas in England and Wales. Chief Officers of police are specified authorities under the PCSC Act. The Chief Officer should ensure that there is appropriate representation to all partnerships operating within their force area. This representative should be able to:

- Engage fully with local partnerships, including by establishing and maintaining the use of anonymised information from NHS emergency departments regarding the locations in which people are injured in violence and weapons used
- Share relevant police data and information to inform the strategic needs assessment for the local area (for example; data on numbers and trends in violence against the person including knife crime, gun crime⁷⁷, homicides and drugs as well as domestic abuse or sexual violence related incidents, , information on local serious violence hotspots including people and places, information on county lines drug dealing etc.)

⁷⁷ General Medical Council provide data sharing guidance on reporting gun shots and knife wounds.
[Reporting gunshot and knife wounds - ethical guidance - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\)](https://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical/guidance/Reporting-gunshot-and-knife-wounds-ethical-guidance-GMC-gmc-uk.org)

- Support the development and implementation of a strategy to address the risks identified
- Facilitate the use of a relevant risk assessment tool
- Support work to deliver prevention and early intervention activities and explain to partners how their data can help inform this work

226. The Duty does not apply to ports policing, nuclear policing, the Ministry of Defence Police or British Transport Police, however where such forces operate within a local area, the Chief Officer could usefully consider how to engage such forces where necessary.

Justice

Prisons

227. Prisons help to protect the public and play an important role in the rehabilitation of people who have committed violent offences. People in prison and people on probation include those that can contribute to violence both in the prison, and in the wider community, through demand for drugs and contraband and participation in organised crime. The prison population also includes people who are at risk of being a victim of violence, particularly domestic abuse in the case of females.

228. There are a number of different categories and types of prison, containing different cohorts of individuals and therefore not all will have relevance for the local partnerships. Many may also house a population that has very little connection with the local authority area in which they are located. Whilst prison authorities are not core duty holders, specified authorities must consult them in the preparation of the local strategy, but prison authorities may also choose to collaborate with a specified authority or another prison authority, a youth custody authority or an educational authority in that area of their own volition, or any of those other bodies may require them to collaborate. Where prisons choose, or are requested, to actively collaborate with the partnership, they should be asked to input into the development of the strategic needs assessment and consent to any actions in the strategy which may apply to them.

229. Where and when requested, a prison must comply with actions in a local strategy, so long as they:

- are compatible with any other statutory duties;
- would not have an adverse effect on the exercise of the authority's functions;
- are not disproportionate to the need to prevent and reduce serious violence locally; and
- would not mean that the prison authority incurred unreasonable costs.

230. Local partnerships should engage prisons in their area early and regularly throughout the development of the strategy, to ensure that:

- There is a shared understanding about the relationship between the prison and serious violence in the local area.
- There is an informed view about how partners can support in-prison efforts to reduce violence and rehabilitate people in prison.

231. When considering the evidence that a prison can contribute, local partnerships should try to look beyond the headline violence data. This may be supported by involving prison staffing groups, Prison Group Safety leads in the consultation process.

232. Prisons co-operate closely with wider law enforcement in investigating criminality, pursuing suspects, and ensuring the security of prisons and the protection of the public. Insight from these institutions can inform the work of the local partnership, although the ongoing co-operation through existing structures should continue in any case.

233. The governor or director of the prison is responsible for complying with the Duty⁷⁸. They may wish to identify a suitable representative, who should be able to:

- Engage with the relevant partnership to prevent and reduce serious violence.
- Share and contextualise anonymised aggregate prison data that is published or collated for business as usual purposes by the prison or HMPPS nationally.

⁷⁸ As set out above, their duties under the PCSC Act include collaborating with specified authorities or other relevant authorities in the area (where requested to), carrying out any actions specified in the strategy and responding to requests for information.

- Support the development and implementation of a strategy to address the risks identified.
- Communicate the role of prisons in cutting crime and the rehabilitation of people in prison, and work with community partners to develop work in this area.
- Identify impacts of serious violence within the local community e.g. violence against staffing groups and people within establishments.

234. Prisons already work alongside police and probation through existing multi-agency partnerships, such as the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), and Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Schemes, to assess and manage eligible violent offenders at a strategic level. Prisons also have a responsibility to work with police and other law enforcement agencies to share information on criminal activity such as serious violence impacting communities from inside custody establishments. Some prisons also participate in local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and Violence Reduction Units (VRUs). However, many prisons are not routinely involved in the partnerships that may be chosen to deliver this Duty. Partnerships should consider this in how they support prisons' involvement and take a pragmatic approach to how prisons are involved in partnership arrangements.

Children and Young People Secure Estate

235. The Children and Young People Secure Estate (CYPSE) settings protect the public and have a critical role to play in the care and rehabilitation of children who have committed or may be at risk of becoming involved in serious violence. Working with other agencies and organisations they can plan and deliver evidence-led child centred approaches which can help to prevent and reduce serious violence. This includes violence reduction within secure establishments themselves, and in the wider community.

236. The Duty will apply to youth custody authorities in the same manner as prisons (detailed above).

237. Governors of Young Offender Institutions, Governors or Directors of Secure Training Centres, Registered Managers of Secure Children's Homes and Heads of

Secure Schools are responsible for complying with the Duty. Governors of Young Offender Institutions and Governors of Secure Training Centres may wish to identify a representative. The representative should be able to:

- Engage fully with the local partnership to prevent and reduce serious violence both in the community and within secure establishments
- Support the development of the evidence-based strategic needs assessment and publication and implementation of the strategy to address the drivers of serious violence within establishments and within the local partnership area
- Identify opportunities for agencies to work across local authority boundaries to tackle specific serious violence issues
- Share relevant aggregated and anonymised data, operational knowledge and experience transparently (for example; data and trends in drug dealing, resettlement needs, security issues, violence against staff and contraband, insight and experience relating to children and young people who have offended, useful information which may support crime prevention, and, where appropriate, insight and information from resident children and young people themselves)
- Review and build upon existing partnerships wherever possible (e.g. Youth Offending Teams, Children's Social Care, Secure Children's Homes⁷⁹, NHS and Education providers)
- Identify impacts of serious violence within the local community e.g. violence against staff and children within establishments

238. Local Partnerships need to support the work of secure establishments and recognise the needs of children in custody and resettling them back to the community, within the context of their life experiences. To jointly recognise that the vulnerability and complexity of needs amongst the cohort of children and young people is not mutually exclusive from the risk they may pose to others and that addressing the former is key to mitigating the latter. It is important that Local Partnerships help every child and young person involved in offending behaviours to feel safe, to support them in healing

⁷⁹ For the purposes of the duty, all types of residential care for looked-after children, including secure children's homes, will be the responsibility of the local authority in which they are located. The onus will therefore be on the local authority to ensure engagement between the partnership and such institutions where necessary.

from trauma and to develop more positive identities, where they can be celebrated for the positive contributions they can bring to local communities.

Youth Offending Teams

239. Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are multi-agency teams responsible for helping to cut crime and for the supervision of children subject to pre-court interventions and statutory court disposals.

240. Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, YOTs have a duty to co-operate as a multi-agency entity to secure youth justice services appropriate to their area and drive a strategic effort to prevent offending by children and young people. They play a critical role as they are well placed to identify children and young people known to relevant organisations and agencies who are likely to be involved in perpetrating serious violence. Through existing partnerships, they collaborate with partners to aid early identification and diversion from involvement in serious violence.

241. The YOT must comply with the Duty, as specified authorities under the PCSC Act, and should nominate a representative from the team who should be able to:

- Engage fully with the relevant local partnership to prevent and tackle serious violence, and where applicable, as a core member of the local Violence Reduction Unit
- Share relevant aggregated and anonymised data, where practicable, to support the development of the evidence-based problem profile/strategic assessment (for example; information on local serious violence hotspots, information on county lines drug dealing networks and wider child criminal exploitation etc.)
- Support publication and implementation of the strategy to address the risks identified, ensuring that children and their interests are fairly represented in such discussions
- Identify and act to ensure children's best interests, including safeguarding requirements and reducing vulnerability to criminal exploitation, are kept at the forefront of any strategic planning

- Advise on appropriate responses to increase levels of safety within the local partnership area and enable children to be able to move beyond their offending behaviour and status.
- Assist in the delivery of prevention and early intervention initiatives where possible, and explain to partners how their input can help enhance this work
- Work across local authority areas and organisational boundaries where children are not located in the partnership area (for example, when leaving custody, transitioning from youth to adult custody or in county lines drug dealing cases where children may be far from their home area)

Probation

242. Probation helps to protect the public and reduce reoffending, with a focus on overseeing the rehabilitation activities for those on licence or serving community sentences. For those sentenced to prison, the aim is to address the factors linked to their offending behaviour whilst in custody and prepare them for release on licence to the community. Once released the Probation Service is responsible for supervising the individual and initiating recall where necessary for public protection, as well as managing risks, continuing the rehabilitative process and helping the individual to reintegrate successfully. For those serving community sentences, the Probation Service is responsible for ensuring the individual meets the requirements ordered by the courts.

243. Alongside the distinct role the Probation Service has in reducing and preventing re-offending through the delivery of rehabilitative activities and interventions amongst those convicted of violent offences, they are responsible for communicating with and prioritising the wellbeing of victims of violent offences, when an individual has received a prison sentence of 12 months or more, or is detained as a mental health patient.

244. The Probation Service also work alongside police and prisons through existing multi-agency partnerships, such as the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Schemes, to assess and manage eligible violent individuals at a strategic level.

245. The Duty applies to a provider of probation services under section 3(6) of the Offender Management Act 2007, who are specified authorities under the PCSC Act. Local Delivery Unit (LDU) heads who represent the Probation Service at Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) should be responsible for ensuring that there is appropriate representation to the partnership. The representative should be able to:

- Engage fully with the local partnership to prevent and reduce serious violence
- Share currently collated and/or published data and information to inform the strategic assessment for the local area (for example; Offender management quarterly statistics – key statistics relating to offenders who are in prison or under Probation Service supervision and/or Criminal court statistics – National Statistics on cases in the magistrates' courts and Crown Court)
- Use relevant aggregated Risk-Need-Responsivity Data to inform the design and commissioning of interventions aimed at reducing reoffending (The Risk-Need-Responsivity Model⁸⁰)
- Support the development and implementation of the local strategy to address the risks identified
- Collaborate with local partners to help reduce instances of re-offending amongst violent offenders and protect vulnerable groups (for example, victims of domestic abuse)

Health

246. Violence is a major cause of ill health and poor wellbeing, and is related to the difference in health status, social determinants of healthcare and health related behaviours between areas and communities; it is strongly related to inequalities. Data has shown that the poorest fifth of people in England have hospital admission rates for violence five times higher than those of the most affluent fifth.⁸¹ It affects individuals

⁸⁰ [The Risk-Need-Responsivity Model \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

⁸¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216977/Violence-prevention.pdf

and communities and is a drain on health services, the criminal justice system and the wider economy.

247. One of the key ambitions of the NHS's Long-Term Plan is to prevent illness and tackle health inequalities. Core20PLUS5 is a national NHS England approach to support the reduction of health inequalities at both national and system level. The approach defines a target population cohort and identifies '5' focus clinical areas requiring accelerated improvement. The approach, which initially focused on healthcare inequalities experienced by adults, has now been adapted to apply to children and young people.
248. Preventative interventions aimed specifically at reducing inequalities to prevent violence and address its root causes, especially those in early childhood, improve multiple long-term outcomes including the prosperity for violence, education, employability and health.
249. Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) are partnerships of health and care organisations that come together to plan and deliver joined up services and to improve the health of people who live and work in their area.
250. They exist to achieve four aims:
- **tackle inequalities** in outcomes, experience and access
 - enhance **productivity and value for money**
 - help the NHS support broader **social and economic development**
 - **improve outcomes** in population health and healthcare
251. Each ICS comprises of an:
- Integrated care partnership (ICP): the broad alliance of organisations and representatives concerned with improving the care, health and wellbeing of the population, jointly convened by local authorities and the NHS.
 - Integrated care board (ICB): bringing the NHS together locally to improve population health and care and establish shared strategic priorities within the NHS, connecting to partnership arrangements at system and place.
252. The Health and Care Act 2022 put ICBs on a statutory footing. ICBs have a key role

to play in joining up services within the NHS and across public health, social care and education.

253. The ICB is specifically subject to the Serious Violence Duty and must collaborate with other duty holders to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area.
254. The ICB is required to produce an integrated care strategy which should describe how the assessed needs of the local population are to be met through the exercise of functions by the ICB, local authorities and NHS England. It must address integration of health and social care and should address integration with health-related services.
255. The ICB is also required to produce a 5-year joint forward plan (JFP) in conjunction with their partner trusts and foundation trusts. The JFP should reflect the collective ambitions of the ICB, local NHS partners, local authorities and wider system partners to meet the health needs of the ICB's population, as well as describing the delivery of ambitions articulated in the integrated care strategy.
256. Under the Health and Care Act 2022, the ICB has a particular duty to ensure that the needs of victims of abuse and of children and young people are specifically addressed in their JFPs.
257. In meeting the Duty, the ICB should consider these existing plans and strategies when developing strategies to reduce serious violence. They should also consider how existing structures and partnerships within the ICS could facilitate implementation of the strategy.
258. To meet the legislative requirements of the Duty, the accountable officer of an ICB should ensure that there is appropriate representation to the partnership of specified authorities. As part of the partnership, this representative will be expected to:
- Facilitate the sharing of relevant anonymous health data and information to inform the problem profile/strategic needs assessment for the area (for example, number of violent injuries treated within NHS urgent care settings),
 - Support the development and implementation of a strategy to identify and mitigate the risks identified and agree an approach to preventing serious

violence, managing related health problems, and improving wellbeing/resilience of the community.

259. The implementation of the strategy may include facilitating appropriate commissioning within the local health system to prevent, treat and manage serious violence as set out in the strategy. Where possible, an ICB should (co-)commission support services for those at risk of or involved in serious violence (including from the voluntary and community sector).
260. Depending on the geographic boundaries of the partnership(s) in their commissioning area, ICBs may need to engage directly with all serious violence partnerships in their area. In some areas, there will be more than one ICB per partnership area. Although each ICB must comply with the Duty, they may consider it appropriate to nominate a 'lead' or consider a 'hosting' arrangement for input and active engagement into the serious violence partnership on behalf of other ICBs. In this case, the serious violence lead should ensure the input of all ICBs in the geographical footprint.
261. Health is devolved to Wales and the relevant guidance is contained in Chapter 1 'Delivery in Wales'. The Duty applies to Local Health Boards as specified authorities in Wales.

Sharing of patient and personal information

262. Under the Duty there are specific limitations under section 16 and 17 of the PCSC Act on the disclosure of information by health and social care authorities. Patient information and personal information (i.e. information that can be used to identify a person either directly or indirectly) is not permitted to be disclosed and health and social authorities can only share anonymous data. Further details can be found in the Information Sharing chapter of this guidance.
263. If patient or personal information that can be used to identify an individual is shared by a health or social care authority in reliance on alternative legal powers, such disclosures must be consistent with the existing legal framework, which includes both

the common law duty of confidence, as well as the Data Protection Act 2018. The General Medical Council (GMC) have produced guidance on this⁸².

Local Authority

264. Local authorities are responsible for the delivery of a range of vital services for people and businesses in a local area, including but not limited to, children's and adult's social care, children and adult safeguarding, schools, housing⁸³ and planning, youth services, business support, alcohol licensing, leisure, substance misuse, community safety as well as public health commissioning and commissioning of support services for victims and survivors of violence against women and girls crimes⁸⁴, so will have an essential role to play in partnership arrangements.

265. Local authority Chief Executives should ensure that there is appropriate representation to the partnership to fulfil the local authority's duties. This representation may be delegated to an appropriate senior officer.

266. Within the Local Government landscape, specified authorities subject to the Duty are:

- A district council
- A county council in England
- A London borough council
- The Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a local authority
- The Council of the Isles of Scilly
- A county council in Wales
- A county borough council in Wales

267. Local authorities are well placed to complement the work of other agencies and contribute to the prevention and reduction of serious violence by:

⁸² <https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/confidentiality>

⁸³ Registered providers of social housing are not included within the Serious Violence Duty

⁸⁴ The [National Statement of Expectations](#) and commissioning toolkit provide guidance on how to commission effective services to tackle violence against women and girls

- Sharing a range of relevant aggregated data sets for the development of the strategic needs assessment (for example data already collected from local schools and social care services),
- Conducting wider preventative work addressing general factors that contribute to risk and vulnerability (e.g. poverty, housing⁸⁵, family challenges, environment),
- Leading on wider public health commissioning to support prevention and address risk factors or impacts of trauma (e.g. substance misuse services including alcohol treatment services),
- Providing information on availability/pressures on local resources including housing, community support, children's social care, etc., and
- Effectively commissioning and supporting early intervention initiatives such as Keeping Children Safe In Education⁸⁶ which could be required in response to issues concerning child criminal exploitation, gang activity, sexual violence, domestic abuse.

268. Local authorities should also be mindful of settings or locations falling within their jurisdiction which may have a specific risk or issue relating to serious violence, particularly when carrying out the initial local strategic needs assessment. This may include residential care facilities for children in care, including secure children's homes, supported accommodation and domestic abuse accommodation- based services. Other public spaces such as parks, for which local authorities are responsible or Anti-Social Behaviour areas as locations of vulnerability, should also be considered as these may be areas where specific forms of serious violence are prevalent.

269. Mayoral Combined Authorities are able to participate in partnership arrangements to support the prevention and reduction of serious violence, however there is no legal obligation for them to do so.⁸⁷ This is due to the different functions a combined

⁸⁵ Existing local authorities duties under the Housing Act 1996 are relevant here and should be considered as part of the work to meet the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty.

⁸⁶ [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education)

⁸⁷ An exception to this is the Greater Manchester Combined Authority which is subject to the duty, but only in respect of its role as a fire and rescue authority and only in the exercise of those functions. This applies to any future Mayoral combined authorities formed which perform fire and rescue authority functions.

authority might perform, not all of which are likely to be relevant to tackling serious violence. Constituent authorities may choose to collaborate through the overarching structure of a combined authority however they remain individually accountable for their participation.

270. For the purposes of the Duty, local authority Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are a separate specified authority, and so are treated as independent to the local authority. YOTs will therefore be responsible for engaging with the partnership in their own right.

271. Local Government is devolved to Wales and the relevant guidance is contained in chapter one, Delivery in Wales.

Housing and homelessness

272. Local authorities will be best placed to provide a strategic overview of and information about housing and associated issues in the local area. Existing requirements under housing legislation should be considered as part of the work to meet the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty. It is essential that this includes recognising and protecting the cohorts most at risk of involvement in serious violence.

273. Section 195 of the Housing Act 1996⁸⁸ places a duty on housing authorities to work with people who are threatened with homelessness within 56 days to help prevent them from becoming homeless – ‘the ‘prevention duty’. Section 189B of the 1996 Act⁸⁹ requires housing authorities to help people who are homeless to secure accommodation – the ‘relief duty’. Under these duties, the housing authority is obliged to take reasonable steps to help the applicant either remain in their existing accommodation (where applicable) or secure alternative accommodation. These duties apply when the housing authority is satisfied that the applicant is both homeless (or at risk within 56 days) and eligible for assistance.

⁸⁸ [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/68/section/195)

⁸⁹ [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/68/section/189B)

274. Section 177(1) of the Housing Act 1996⁹⁰ defines violence as violence from another person or threats of violence from another person which are likely to be carried out. This is in relation to whether it is reasonable to continue to occupy accommodation and the circumstances to be considered as to whether a person runs a risk of violence are the same.

275. Section 177(1) of the 1996 Act⁹¹ provides that it is not reasonable for a person to continue to occupy accommodation if it is probable that this will lead to violence against:

- a. the applicant;
- b. a person who normally resides as a member of the applicant's family; or,
- c. any other person who might reasonably be expected to reside with the applicant.

276. It will usually be apparent from the homelessness assessment whether the applicant has had to leave accommodation because of violence or threats of violence, which can include non-contact forms of abuse. An assessment of the likelihood of a threat of violence being carried out should not be based on whether there has been actual violence in the past. Assessments must be based on the facts of the case and should be devoid of any value judgements about what an applicant should or should not do, or should or should not have done, to mitigate the risk of any further violence.

277. Certain categories of household have a priority need for homelessness assistance. A person who is vulnerable as a result of ceasing to occupy accommodation because of violence from another person or threats of violence from another person which are likely to be carried out, or who is homeless as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse, has a priority need as set out in section 189 of the 1996 Act⁹².

278. The prevention and relief duties are owed to all eligible applicants who are homeless irrespective of 'priority need'. However, if homelessness is not successfully prevented or relieved, a housing authority will owe the main housing duty to applicants

⁹⁰ [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/42/section/177)

⁹¹ [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/42/section/177)

⁹² [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/42/section/189)

who are eligible, have a priority need for accommodation and are not homeless intentionally. If the local authority has reason to believe the applicant has priority need, they also have a duty to provide interim accommodation during the relief duty.

279. Section 193(2) of the 1996 Act⁹³ requires housing authorities to secure that accommodation is available for occupation for applicants who have a priority need for accommodation and, as set out in section 176 of the 1996 Act⁹⁴, the accommodation must be available for occupation by the applicant together with any other person who normally resides with them as a member of the family, or might reasonably be expected to reside with them. Further information on priority need can be found at Chapter 8 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance⁹⁵.
280. There are a number of potential accommodation options for victims of serious violence, and housing authorities will need to consider which are most appropriate for each person on a case by case basis taking into account their circumstances and needs. This may include safe temporary accommodation and/or a managed transfer. Housing authorities may, for example, provide temporary accommodation whilst action is taken to exclude or to arrest and detain a perpetrator.
281. Account will need to be taken of any social considerations relating to the applicant and their household that might affect the suitability of accommodation offered to them to prevent or relieve homelessness, or under the main housing duty.
282. Section 208(1) of the 1996 Act⁹⁶ requires housing authorities to secure accommodation within their district, in so far as is reasonably practicable. However, in circumstances where there has been serious violence or threats of serious violence in a particular locality, there may be clear benefits for the applicant of being accommodated outside of the district to ensure their safety.
283. In some circumstances, housing authorities may need to consider the need for accommodation that would not be found by a perpetrator (which may involve an out of

⁹³ [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

⁹⁴ [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

⁹⁵ [Chapter 8: Priority need - Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

⁹⁶ [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

district placement) and which has security measures and appropriately trained staff to protect the occupants. Housing authorities may consider implementing a reciprocal agreement with other housing authorities and providers to facilitate out of area moves for applicants at risk of violence.

284. In terms of determining the appropriate authority to take a homelessness application (local connection referrals), a housing authority cannot refer an applicant to another housing authority where they have a local connection if that person or any person who might reasonably be expected to reside with them would be at risk of violence in that other district. The housing authority is under a positive duty to enquire whether the applicant would be at such a risk and, if they would, it should not be assumed that the applicant will take steps to deal with the threat of violence. For further guidance on local connection see Chapter 10 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance⁹⁷.

285. It is vitally important that housing authorities work together with other services including youth offending teams, educational authorities and national probation services to provide support for victims of serious violence and their household. To ensure applicants who have experienced actual or threatened violence get the support they need, housing authorities should also inform them of appropriate specialist organisations in the area as well as agencies offering counselling and support.

286. While not subject to the Serious Violence Duty, Private Registered Providers of social housing (PRPs) have a duty under s.170 of the Housing Act 1996⁹⁸ to cooperate with housing authorities – where the authority requests it - to such extent as is reasonable in the circumstances in offering accommodation to people with priority under the authority's allocation scheme. This includes lettings allocated to those requiring urgent re-housing as a result of violence or threats of violence.

287. Similarly, s.213 of the 1996 Act⁹⁹ provides that, where a PRP has been requested by a housing authority to assist them in the discharge of their homelessness functions

⁹⁷ [Chapter 10: Local connection and referrals to another housing authority - Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁹⁸ [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

⁹⁹ [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

under Part 7, it must cooperate to the same extent. Statutory guidance¹⁰⁰ on allocations issued in 2012, to which local authorities must pay due regard, reaffirms this.

288. Housing is devolved to Wales and the relevant guidance is contained in chapter one, Delivery in Wales.

Family support or early help

289. ‘Family support, or ‘early help’, aims to identify vulnerable families and help build their resilience to divert them from crisis and improve their outcomes in the long-term. This approach works to tackle the root causes of a range of problems, including serious violence and offending. An effective family support system looks to identify the needs of all the family, taking into account both the needs of parents, children and carers. It provides a range of interventions to reduce the risk of families’ needs escalating towards acute services, such as children’s social care, A&E, the police or justice system.
290. Family support is best delivered in a multi-agency way, ensuring that all relevant partners (education, health, police, justice, voluntary and community sector, and others) are jointly working together, sharing information and best practice to help support families. This coordinated style of working means that many local areas will have existing arrangements and partnerships between family support services, Violence Reduction Units and Youth Offending Teams, among others. Areas should look to utilise these existing partnerships and consider the role of family support services when delivering towards the Duty.

Education

291. Engagement in education is a strong protective factor against children and young people’s risk of involvement in serious violence. Through engaging in good quality education, children and young people feel a sense of belonging, achievement

¹⁰⁰https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60df2d0de90e0771784b991f/Current_allocation_of_accommodation_guidance.pdf

and are equipped with skills and resilience they need to be safe and to succeed in life. Education providers have a vital role in preventing and reducing serious violence by facilitating early intervention, prevention and safeguarding children and young people in their care as a relevant agency within the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. In England, the Department for Education provides the key guidance for schools and college¹⁰¹ setting out the legal duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in schools and colleges.

292. Effective collaboration between the local partnership and educational authorities in the local area has the potential to improve police, school and college partnerships and provide support for any existing or planned institution-level interventions involving wider services for children and young people e.g. youth work or social care. This close collaboration may also add to children and young people's sense of safety in school, college and their local community as they will be more alert to the work taking place in their local area to prevent, reduce and safeguard children and young people against serious violence.
293. In recognition of the vital role schools and colleges play in safeguarding children and young people, specified authorities must consult educational authorities¹⁰² including; local authority maintained schools, academies, independent schools, free schools; including primary schools, alternative provision education and further education providers located within the partnership area in the preparation of the local strategy.
294. Educational authorities may also choose to collaborate with a specified authority, a prison or youth custody authority or another educational authority in that area of their own volition. Or, if requested by the specified authorities or another prison, youth custody or educational authority, educational authorities must collaborate with other partners in the preventing and reducing serious violence in the area (the preparation and delivery of the strategy).
295. Educational authorities, defined in section 12 of and Schedule 2 to the PCSC Act, are:

¹⁰¹ [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/keeping-children-safe-in-education)

¹⁰² As defined in section 12 of and Schedule 2 to the PCSC Act.

- Governing bodies of maintained schools, further education colleges and sixth-form colleges in England and further education institutions in Wales
- Proprietors of academy schools, free schools, alternative provision academies and non-maintained special schools¹⁰³
- Proprietors of independent schools
- Management committees of pupil referral units

296. A strategic education representative(s) or representative group for the local area should be chosen by the partnership to provide a link between the responsible authorities and individual education institutions. If a representative group is chosen, this can be made up of educational authorities across all age ranges and school or college types.

297. The role of the strategic education representative(s) or representative group may include:

- Representing the voice of education providers in discussions on serious violence locally
- Assisting the partnership to better understand the education risk factors and vulnerabilities experienced by children and young people

298. The partnership and the strategic education representative(s) or representative group should:

- Use existing safeguarding structures or other approaches, to consult with the wider group of schools and education providers to gain qualitative insight into the impact of serious violence on the education sector more broadly.
- Collectively agree the ways in which the education sector can support the implementation of the strategy to address the local factors that put a child or

¹⁰³ In the case of academies and free school trusts, the proprietor will be the trust itself. Multi-academy trusts spanning more than one local area will need to consider whether it is necessary to engage with one or multiple local partnerships.

young person at risk of being either a victim or perpetrator of serious violence or both.

299. Individual education providers must be consulted by the specified authorities and the strategic education representative(s) or representative group in the preparation of the local strategy, and as responsible authorities, they should:

- Provide data, as required by existing statutory duties, to Local Authorities. This data will feed into the evidence-based analysis of the risk profile of young people and the causes of serious youth violence for the local serious violence strategy. Examples of this data include data on school provision, exclusions and persistent absence. Personal (non-anonymised) data about a specific child held by schools should only be shared for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. More detail on data sharing in the context of safeguarding can be found in the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance and corresponding Information sharing: advice for practitioners
- Engage with the partnership via the strategic education representative(s) or representative group to provide qualitative insight into the impact of serious violence on the education sector
Engage with the partnership via the strategic education representative to provide insight into the risk factors and vulnerabilities experienced by children and young people in the local area
- Support the development and implementation of the strategy to address the local factors that put a child at risk of being a victim or perpetrator of serious violence
- Where required deliver at an individual institution level actions that are specified in the strategy which have been agreed by the partnership in collaboration with the strategic education representative(s) and wider consultation.

300. Educational authorities may be required under the Duty to carry out actions specified in a strategy which have been agreed by the partnership in collaboration with the strategic education representative(s) and wider consultation. Where and when

requested, educational authorities must comply with actions in a local strategy, so long as they:

- are compatible with any other statutory duties;
- would not have an adverse effect on the exercise of the education authority's functions;
- are not disproportionate to the need to prevent and reduce serious violence locally; and
- would not mean that the education authority incurred unreasonable costs.

301. Serious violence may also occur in higher education residential accommodation or licensed premises, such as student union facilities. If a local higher education institution considers serious violence to be an issue that is pertinent to them then they are encouraged to feed into the partnership where appropriate.

302. Education is devolved to Wales and the relevant guidance is contained in chapter one, Delivery in Wales.

Fire and Rescue

303. Fire and Rescue Authorities are responsible for the oversight and delivery of Fire and Rescue Services in their area. As of January 2022, there are currently 44 Fire and Rescue Authorities in England, and three in Wales (where Fire and Rescue Services are a devolved responsibility).

304. Fire and Rescue services have a tradition of engaging with local communities to promote fire safety as well as wider models of community and individual engagement to support citizenship, community cohesion and direct support to vulnerable individuals and communities. Work with children and young people, safeguarding as well as fire reduction strategies, such as the sectors work to reduce deliberate fires, should be recognised as part of the Duty.

305. The Duty applies to the Fire and Rescue Authority for all Authority areas, including Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners¹⁰⁴, metropolitan Mayors and the London Fire Commissioner solely in their capacity as fire and rescue authorities and in the exercise of those functions. Fire and Rescue Authorities are specified authorities under the Duty. The Fire and Rescue Authority may wish to identify a representative, which may be the operational Fire and Rescue Service for the area, as this may be the body that will have the greatest local knowledge, however the Authority as the duty holder will remain responsible for compliance with the requirements of the Duty. The Authority should, therefore, ensure that any suitable representative has responsibility and authority for ensuring full participation with the partnership arrangements.
306. Emergency Services are already subject to a statutory duty in England to collaborate with one another and Fire and Rescue Services have a key role in these partnerships, often occupying a very trusted position by some community groups.
307. Fire and Rescue Services should be supported to deliver trauma informed interventions, engagement activities and safety education to targeted children and young people which supports the personal development and social and emotional learning of the child to reduce their vulnerability and increase their resilience in line with current practice and evidence of what works to reduce serious violence.
308. Collaboration with partners can aid early identification and diversion from involvement in serious violence which are both crucial in reversing the increase in harm which may be caused by and against children and young people in the local community. Fire and Rescue Services should continue to develop partnerships to support risk reduction services to those identified as vulnerable and at risk from exploitation or abuse. Safeguarding within the fire sector is immersed in collaborative approaches with the majority of fire and rescue services represented at Local Authority Safeguarding Children and Local Authority Safeguarding Adult Boards and this should be developed as a core function of all Fire and Rescue Services.

Fire and Rescue Service involvement in the Princes Trust Teams programme

¹⁰⁴ PFCCs role as Fire and Rescue Authorities is set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, as amended.

The Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) are part of the Princes Trust (PT) Teams programme which is aimed at between 16-25 years old and is an opportunity to gain new skills, take a qualification and meet new people. The FRS has worked in partnership with The PT for over 45 years working with some of the UK most disadvantaged young people.

Through a range of PT programmes, the FRS works with young people aged between 11-30 from the following target groups: The unemployed – particularly the long term unemployed and NEET young people, educational underachievers – typically those young people who struggle with numeracy and literacy, offenders and ex-offenders including serving prisoners, young people in and leaving care, asylum seekers and refugees, young people from ethnic diverse communities, lone parents and young people with a disability. 47% of young people who attend Trust programmes delivered by the FRS have an offending background, 57% report a mental health need.

Kyle, 17, one of the participants, was referred to the programme by police after he started associating himself with people thought to have a negative influence on his behaviour and getting into trouble for anti-social behaviour. He wanted to gain some work experience to help get a job or into a course by the end of the programme. Kyle spent some time at his local fire station where he learnt about road traffic collisions and one of the team was picked to be cut out of a car, whilst the firefighters explained all their procedures. The experience has made Kyle think more seriously about the consequences of fast driving. Since leaving the programme, Kyle has secured a full-time job and has aspirations in the future to be a property developer.

The aim of all PT programmes is to deliver young people into a positive outcome of further education, training, employment and to continue to volunteer in the community. Recruitment and referrals typically come from pathway partners connected to the target groups and include Job Centre Plus, Young People's Services, homeless hostels, the Probation Service, Youth Offending Teams, police officers and many others.

Chapter Five: Monitoring and Compliance

Successful partnerships

309. Three key success measures for the prevention and reduction of serious violence are: a reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object; a reduction in knife and sharp object enabled serious violence recorded by the police; and homicides recorded by the police. In establishing success measures for local serious violence strategies, we expect specified authorities to include a focus on serious youth violence in public spaces and they may wish to include a focus on domestic abuse and sexual offences. Outcomes may also be based on: data on police recorded violent offences included in the local areas' strategic needs assessment, this could include (but is not limited to) offences involving firearms, robbery and possession of weapons offences, and may also include data on violent crimes such as sexual offences and domestic abuse where those offences were incorporated in that area's strategic needs assessment. Data on causal factors of violence may also be of interest.

310. Police data on charge rates for serious violence offences, like robbery, and Ministry of Justice statistics for offenders cautioned/convicted for knife and weapons related offences are also useful sources of information for measuring the success of a partnership.

311. The success measures specified above do not prevent local areas from adopting additional success measures to help track progress in dealing with local serious violence issues. In any event, partnerships will want to tailor the success measures to suit the local strategic needs assessment.

How will partnerships be monitored?

312. Partners are required to work together to establish the strategic needs assessment and prepare and implement a strategy, which should be reviewed on an annual

basis.¹⁰⁵ In doing so, partnerships are expected to be able to self-monitor and collectively evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the local strategy. Partnerships may wish to seek additional support from an external evaluator, such as a university research group, to support them with this process. Police and Crime Commissioners, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the Common Council of the City of London, will also have a discretionary power to monitor the performance of the local partnership against its shared objectives. Government departments may also monitor progress in relation to the Duty requirements and provide advice/support to local areas where required. A cross-Whitehall board will deliver national oversight, act as a central point for resolving strategic delivery challenges and consider published strategies and the impact of the Duty.

313. CSPs have a statutory requirement under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to keep the implementation of their strategies under review for the purposes of monitoring effectiveness and make any changes to such strategies where necessary or expedient and to publish the outcomes of each review. This includes their strategies for preventing people becoming involved in, and reducing instances of, serious violence in their area (following the amendments made to the Crime and Disorder Act by the PCSC Act 2022).

314. Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 also requires every local authority to have a crime and disorder committee in order to oversee the work of the members of the CSP. In particular, crime and disorder committees have powers in connection with the work of the local CSP to address local crime and disorder matters under section 19. The amendments made by the PCSC Act (section 21) to section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 adds a third statutory local crime and disorder matter, namely serious violence.

315. Routine inspection programmes undertaken by individual inspectorates may also consider the organisational response to local serious violence issues.

¹⁰⁵ By the provisions in Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the PCSC Act.

Secretary of State powers

316. Where the Secretary of State considers that a specified authority, educational, prison or youth custody authority has failed to discharge certain duties imposed under the PCSC Act¹⁰⁶, for example following an inspection as set out above, the Secretary of State may issue directions to the responsible authorities for the purpose of securing compliance with the duty (section 18 of the PCSC Act). This power does not apply to probation services provided by the Secretary of State or to governors of prisons, young offender institutions, secure training centres or the principal of a directly managed secure school. For such institutions, the Secretary of State for Justice may use existing mechanisms to secure compliance with statutory duties, if required.
317. Directions given under section 18 of the PCSC Act may require the relevant specified authority to take such steps as in the opinion of the Secretary of State are necessary for the purpose of securing compliance with the Duty. This direction can be enforced by a mandatory order, that is an order granted on application to the Administrative Court in England and Wales, to compel a public body to comply with a legal duty. The Secretary of State must obtain consent of the Welsh Ministers before giving a direction to a devolved Welsh authority.
318. We believe that where a direction is required local policing bodies (PCCs and equivalents) have a key role in instigating this process. We expect these powers to be seldom used and will only be utilised where all other means of securing compliance have been exhausted.
319. Where local policing bodies (PCCs and equivalents) exercise their powers under section 14(2) of the PCSC Act to monitor the exercise by specified authorities of their serious violence duty functions, section 14(3) provides local policing bodies with the power to report their findings to the Secretary of State. In exercising this power local policing bodies should initially contact the Secretary of State for the Home Department in writing to SeriousViolenceDuty@homeoffice.gov.uk. Depending on the specified authority in question, the Secretary of State would either consider the report or would

¹⁰⁶ In relation to a specified authority a duty imposed by section 8, 14(6), 15(3) or 17(4) of the PCSC Act, and in relation to an educational, prison or youth custody authority a duty imposed by section 15(3), (4) or (5)(b) or 17(4) of that Act.

liaise with her counterpart in the relevant Government Department.

Chapter Six: Community Safety Partnerships – Serious Violence Strategies

Introduction

320. Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), formerly known as Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, were established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to help tackle crime and reduce reoffending. There are around 300 CSPs in England and 22 in Wales.¹⁰⁷
321. CSPs are made up of ‘responsible authorities’ which are: Chief Officers of police, probation services, local authorities, health (Integrated Care Boards in England, and Local Care Boards in Wales) and fire and rescue authorities. These responsible authorities are responsible for developing strategies for reducing crime and disorder, combatting the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances, and reducing re-offending in their areas.¹⁰⁸ Following the amendments made by the PCSC Act, strategies for preventing people from becoming involved in serious violence, and reducing instances of serious violence in their areas, must also be prepared. There has also been a mutual duty on PCCs and CSPs to cooperate on reducing crime and offending since the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.¹⁰⁹
322. The responsible authorities have a statutory duty to work together to: reduce re-offending; tackle crime and disorder; tackle anti-social behaviour; tackle alcohol and substance misuse; tackle any other behaviour which has a negative effect on the local environment; and, now, to prevent people from becoming involved in, and to reduce instances of, serious violence.¹¹⁰ CSPs may also work with any other local partners

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-crime-prevention/2010-to2015-government-policy-crime-prevention>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/37/part/I/chapter/I/crossheading/crime-and-disorder-strategies>

¹⁰⁹ As set out in section 10 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

¹¹⁰ As set out in section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

they wish to, including business representatives and the voluntary and community sector.

323. In carrying out their statutory duties, CSPs also have further obligations including: setting up a strategic group to direct the work of the partnership; to regularly engage and consult with the community about their priorities and progress achieving them; to set up protocols and arrangements for sharing information; analyse a wide range of data, including recorded crime levels and patterns, in order to identify priorities in an annual strategic assessment to set out a partnership plan and monitor progress; produce a strategy to reduce reoffending; and commission domestic homicide reviews.

Preventing and Reducing Serious Violence

324. Alongside the Serious Violence Duty, the PCSC Act also amends the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to include a requirement for CSPs to formulate and implement a strategy to prevent people from becoming involved in serious violence, both as victims and perpetrators, and to reduce instances of serious violence in the area. This will ensure CSPs have an explicit role in escalating issues to a strategic level where necessary.¹¹¹

325. Should specified authorities consider the CSP to be the most appropriate local multi-agency structure through which they intend to fulfil the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty, then the strategic needs assessment and strategy produced by the CSP may account for both the Serious Violence Duty and Crime and Disorder Act requirements. If this is not the proposed partnership model for delivery of the Duty requirements, the CSP will need to ensure that the serious violence strategy required by the Duty is delivered elsewhere. The PCSC Act allows for wider co-operation between CSP members and specified authorities subject to the Serious Violence Duty, including the sharing of data and information, for that purpose. It may be that the delivery of the Duty strategy elsewhere also meets the obligations of the CSP under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (to prepare and implement a strategy to prevent

¹¹¹ These regulations The Prevention and Reduction of Serious Violence (Strategies etc.) Regulations 2022 were laid in Parliament on 12 December 2022. The Prevention and Reduction of Serious Violence (Strategies etc.) Regulations 2022 (legislation.gov.uk)

people from becoming involved in, or reducing instances of serious violence), but this will need to be determined by responsible authorities on a case by case basis.

326. In recognition of a CSPs wider remit in relation to community safety, and that many issues concerning violent crime can be interrelated, a CSP may choose to incorporate their strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence [under the Crime and Disorder Act and/or, potentially also under the Serious Violence Duty], into a wider plan which also encompasses their other priorities. This will also help to ensure that individual strategies are aligned without being duplicative.

327. There are also amendments to section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006. Section 19 requires every local authority to have a crime and disorder committee in order for the work of the membership of the CSPs is fully scrutinised. In particular, crime and disorder committees have powers in connection with the work of the local CSP to address local crime and disorder matters under section 19. The amendments made by the PCSC Act will add a serious violence as a third statutory local crime and disorder matter. CSPs will need to incorporate this requirement into their existing crime and disorder committee arrangements.

Case study: London Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)¹¹²

Putting community and young people at the heart of our work to have a sustainable long-term approach towards reducing violence is one of 3 strategic aims of London's VRU.

The VRU Partnership Reference Group has been set up to provide strategic direction, support and challenge the work of the Unit. The group is chaired by the Mayor is made up of representatives from community groups and specialists in health, education, police, probation and local government.

One of the first actions of the London VRU is establishing a young people's action group which will be resourced and empowered to lead on parts of the VRU's work programme. Young people will have a stake in all of the Unit's work but particularly on changing the message around violence, ensuring the youth voice is properly representative and by supporting peer-to-peer engagement.

¹¹²https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/838930/multi-agency_approach_to_serious_violence_prevention.pdf

The Unit has also brought together a group of 30 community stakeholders to form a Community Involvement Planning group which has supported the Unit in planning engagement and shaping priorities. In January 2019 approximately 150 community organisations came together to discuss the establishment of the VRU and were able to input ideas.

Through a series of formal and informal meetings, workshops and discussions with various community partners the Community Involvement Planning Group has worked with the VRU to develop a set of commitments for the VRU in its operations across London, with Londoners:

- Work with a wide range of community voices
- Be as accessible as possible and create meaningful opportunities for involvement
- Recognise where communities are coming from
- Amplify community voice
- Ensure community involvement is sustained over the long term
- Involve young people
- Tackle stereotypes

Interaction with existing duties

Statutory duties

328. Relevant duties in Wales are covered in the Delivery in Wales chapter of this guidance.

329. Responsible authorities will want to be aware of the following statutory duties in exercising their functions under this duty:

- The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, The Police Act 1996, the Police Reform Act 2002 and the Policing and Crime Act 2017 underpin the core operational duties of police officers which include; maintaining law and order, protecting the public, prevention and detection of crime, protection of property and the maintenance of civil order. Each police force is overseen by the Secretary of State, and the Chief Police Officer (Chief Constables, Commissioner of the City of London Police and Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police) is held to account by the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, in relation to the Metropolitan Police and the Common Council of the City of London as police authority in relation to the City of London.
- Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) were established by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act') to be directly accountable for a police force for their area. Their constitution, powers and duties are set out in Part 1 of the 2011 Act.
- Integrated Care Boards¹¹³ are clinically-led statutory NHS bodies in England, responsible for the planning and commissioning of health care services for their local area, including mental health services, urgent and

¹¹³ Clinical Commissioning Groups were replaced with Integrated Care Boards from 1 July 2022 as part of the Health and Care Act 2022.

emergency care, elective hospital services, and community care. Their statutory functions are set out in the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

330. The duties and functions of local authorities are set out in numerous Acts of Parliament. Particularly relevant functions include:

- The Local Government Act 1972 ('the 1972 Act'), Part IX which prescribes the functions of local authorities, including public health functions and social services functions. The 1972 Act also provides the framework for Local Government in Wales (as amended, including by the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994)
- Functions and duties are further prescribed in section 12 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the NHS Act 2006 and the NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- Core social services, duties and functions are set out in the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970. Additional duties and functions are set out in the Children Act 1989 (in respect of children) (safeguarding duties at sections 27 and 47), Children Act 2004 (safeguarding duty at section 11), the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Care Standards Act 2000, the Childcare Act 2006 and the Mental Health Act 1983.¹¹⁴
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017 (section 16) includes the duty placed on safeguarding partners and relevant agencies to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the local area. The local authority is named as a safeguarding partner, alongside the chief police officer for a force operating within the local area and the Integrated Care Board operating within the local area.

¹¹⁴ [Safeguarding guidance | GOV.WALES](#)

- Community safety duties and functions are set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 ('the 1998 Act') and Police and Justice Act 2006. Under section 17 of the 1998 Act, local authorities are under a duty to consider the crime and disorder implications of all their day-to-day activities. Youth Justice Offending service duties are also set out in the 1998 Act. Criminal Justice duties are set out in the Criminal Justice Act 2003.
- Education duties and functions are set out in the Education Reform Act 1988, the Education Act 1996, the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, the Children Act 1989, Education Act 2002 and Education and Skills Act 2008 and the Child Poverty Act 2010. The proprietors of schools have various duties in relation to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children, including co-operation with other schools and with other relevant bodies. Guidance on these various functions is set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance 2018 and Keeping Children Safe In Education Guidance 2022.
- Core housing duties are set out under the Housing Act 1996.
- Fire duties and functions, predominantly relating to fire safety, are set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Local Authority duties, relating to provision of support for all victims of domestic abuse within 'relevant' accommodation, as set out in Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- The core functions and legal duties for adult prisons are set out in the Prison Act 1952 and the Prison Rules 1999.
- The core functions and legal duties for under 18 Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) and Secure Training Centres (STCs) are set out in the Prison Act 1952 and in the Young Offender Institution Rules 2000 and the Secure Training Centre Rules 1998.

- The National Probation Service supervises high-risk offenders released into the community. Its functions, on behalf of the Secretary of State, are to ensure sufficient probation provision is provided including the supervision and rehabilitation of persons remanded to bail, given conditional cautions or charged with or convicted of an offence and giving assistance to courts in determining the appropriate sentences to pass. This is set out in sections 1 and 2 of the Offender Management Act 2007.
- Youth Offending Teams are established by local authorities under section 39(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Their statutory duty is to co-ordinate the delivery of youth justice services in the authority's area, and to carry out functions assigned in the youth justice plan formulated by the local authority.
- Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) core functions are set out in The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 ('FRSA 2004') and include extinguishing fires in their area, protecting life and property in the event of fires in their area, rescuing and protecting people in the event of a road traffic collision and rescuing and protecting people in the event of other emergencies. FRAs must also comply with the Fire and Rescue Services National Framework.
- Local Authorities in Wales are required to operate in the unique legislative and policy framework in Wales. As such the following apply: In Wales the duties and functions of local authority social services and of regional Safeguarding Boards are set out in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and aligned statutory guidance.¹²¹
- Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 made the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child part of the domestic law in Wales. This ensures that children's rights are included in all policy making in Wales.

Non-statutory duties

- [From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

A 10-year drug strategy which set out a whole-system response to tackling drug misuse. It is underpinned by a record investment of nearly £900 million of additional funding, taking the total investment on combatting drugs over the next three years to £3 billion. Commitments are made across government to break drug supply chains at every phase while simultaneously delivering a world-class drug treatment and recovery service to support those suffering from addiction, and achieving a generational shift in demand for drugs.

- [Drugs strategy guidance for local delivery partners - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

This guidance sits alongside the drugs strategy to outline the structures and processes through which local partners in England should work together to reduce drug-related harm.

It sets out the National Combating Drugs Outcomes Framework, which will provide a single mechanism for monitoring progress across central government and in local areas towards delivery of the commitments and ambitions of the 10-year drugs strategy to level up the country. The outcomes and metrics included in the framework aim to provide a link between action and the impact experienced by individuals, families and neighbourhoods across the country and in local areas.

Useful guidance and resources

331. Responsible authorities may also wish to refer to the following links to guidance, documents and resources:

- [Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings: Guidance on interviewing victims and witnesses, and guidance on using special measures 2011, Ministry of Justice](#)
- [Advice to parents and carers on gangs 2014, Home Office](#)
- [Advice to schools and colleges on gangs and youth violence 2013, Home Office](#)
- [Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England](#)
- [About the toolkit - Youth Endowment Fund](#)
- [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales \(the Victims' Code\)](#)
- [Children and Young People strategy 2016 \(npcc.police.uk\)](#)
- [Commissioning services to tackle violence against women and girls - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines 2018, Home Office](#)
- [Caldicott principles as defined in 'The Information Governance Review'](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [DH – Code of practice on protecting the confidentiality of service user information](#)
- [Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act Statutory Guidance: NULL](#)

- [Draft Coercive and Controlling Behaviour Statutory Guidance](#)
- [From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives: a 10-year plan to cut crime and save lives by reducing the supply and demand for drugs and delivering a high-quality treatment and recovery system.](#)
- [General Data Protection Regulations/ Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [GMC 'Confidentiality: good practice in handling patient information guidance' \(May 2018\)](#)
- [Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers 2018, HM Government](#)
- [Information sharing for community safety: Guidance and practice advice 2010, Home Office](#)
- [Keeping Learners Safe, Welsh Government](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education 2020, Department for Education](#)
- [Modern Slavery: Statutory Guidance for England and Wales \(under s49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015\) and Non-Statutory Guidance for Scotland and Northern Ireland](#)
- [Multi-agency public protection arrangements \(MAPPA\) 2012, Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Service, and HM Prison Service](#)
- [NHS England Safeguarding Policy 2019, NHS England and NHS Improvement](#)
- [National protocol on reducing criminalisation of looked-after children 2018, Department for Education](#)
- [Police Race Action Plan: Improving policing for Black people \(college.police.uk\)](#)
- [Preventing serious violence: a multi-agency approach 2019, Public Health England](#)
- [Preventing offending and re-offending by children 2019, Public Health England](#)

- [Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk in the NHS: Safeguarding Accountability and Assurance Framework 2019, NHS England and NHS Improvement](#)
- [Serious and Organised Crime Toolkit: An Interactive Toolkit for practitioners working with young people 2021, Home Office](#)
- [Supporting Families Programme guidance 2022 to 2025](#)
- [Supporting Male Victims: Position Statement on Male Victims of crimes considered in the cross-Government Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan](#)
- [Safeguarding guidance | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Social services codes of practice | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Supporting male victims - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Children and Young People Secure Estate National Partnership Agreement 2018-2021, HM Government and NHS England](#)
- [The Early Intervention Foundation](#)
- [The What Works Centre for Crime Reduction](#)
- [Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy 2021 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence: strategy 2022 to 2026, Welsh Government](#)
- [Violence Reduction Unit interim guidance 2020, Home Office](#)
- [VAWG commissioning toolkit \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, HM Government](#)
- [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015: guidance | GOV.WALES](#)

- [Youth Endowment Fund Evidence and Reports, Impetus and Home Office](#)

Glossary

Term	Definition
Local Area	The primary area within which specified authorities will collaborate in discharging the duty. This may be, as a minimum, a local authority area and, at a maximum, a police force area.
Local Policing Bodies	Police and Crime Commissioners, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), the Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a police authority and Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners in their capacity as local policing bodies and in the exercise of those functions.
Partnership	An arrangement through which specified authorities will work together to meet the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty.
Responsible Authorities	All authorities to whom the Serious Violence Duty applies and/or organisations and institutions with a duty to co-operate with specified authorities when requested to do so. As defined in sections 11 and 12 of, and Schedule 1 and 2 to the PCSC Act.
Serious Violence	Serious Violence in the local area is violence that is serious in that area, taking account of: the maximum penalty which could be imposed for the offence (if any) involved in the violence, the impact of the violence on any victim, the prevalence of the violence in the area and the impact of the violence on the community in the area. Serious Violence should include such violence as

defined in the Serious Violence Strategy¹¹⁵ 2018, HM Government. The scope of the strategy is concerned with specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, and gun crime and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in gangs and county lines drug dealing. It also includes emerging crime threats faced in some areas of the country which amount to serious violence, such as the use of corrosive substances as a weapon. For the purposes of the Duty, violence includes domestic abuse, sexual offences, violence against property and threats of violence but does not include terrorism.

Serious Violence Duty

A Duty placed on local organisations to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence. As set out in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022.

Strategic Needs Assessment

An analysis of current and long-term issues relating to serious violence and the cohorts most vulnerable to involvement in a local area undertaken to provide a greater understanding of established and emerging serious violence trends, priority locations or other high-risk issues.

Strategy

A high-level plan outlining the multi-agency response that the partnership will take to prevent and reduce serious violence in the specified local area.

Specified Authorities

All authorities to whom the Serious Violence Duty applies, as defined in section 11 of and Schedule 1 to the PCSC Act.

¹¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy>

Violence Reduction Unit

Non-statutory partnerships which offer leadership and strategic coordination of the local response to serious violence by bringing together police, local government, health and education professionals, community leaders and other key partners to identify the drivers of serious violence and agree a multi-agency response to them.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

9 JANUARY 2023

PRESENT: Councillor S Sansome (Chair)

Councillors: S Alston, S Ayris, T Smith, P Turpin, A Dyson and C Pilkington

A Dyson and C Pilkington
(Independent Members of the Audit & Governance Committee)

J Field, H Impey and S Loach, D Nuttall and D Thorpe (Barnsley MBC)

DCFO T Carlin and S Slater
(South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue)

A MacDonald and A Mullen (Internal Audit – RSM)

P Hewitson (External Audit - Deloitte)

IN ATTENDANCE J Taylor

REMOTELY: (Independent Members of the Audit & Governance Committee)

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillor B Johnson, Dr A Billings, N Copley and E Eruero

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

3 URGENT ITEMS

None.

4 ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That agenda item 19 entitled ‘Member only session with External / Internal Audit’ be considered in the absence of the public and press.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS IN RELATION TO ANY ITEM OF BUSINESS ON THE AGENDA

None.

6 REPORTS BY MEMBERS

None.

7 TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC, OR COMMUNICATIONS SUBMITTED BY THE CHAIR OR THE CLERK AND TO PASS SUCH RESOLUTIONS THEREON AS THE STANDING ORDERS PERMIT AND AS MAY BE DEEMED EXPEDIENT

None.

8 MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 NOVEMBER 2022

C Pilkington queried the outstanding action regarding the criteria used for the valuation of fire stations.

S Loach informed Members that finance colleague had been focused on completing the 2020/2021 audit work, Members would be provided with the information in due course.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 21 November 2022 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.
- (ii) Noted that S Loach had agreed to obtain a response in relation to the outstanding action regarding the criteria used for the valuations of fire stations.

9 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the 2022/23 Audit and Governance Committee Work Programme and were reminded that they could nominate topics for consideration at future meetings which fall within the Committee's main areas of business i.e., overseeing internal and external audit activity; the Authority's regulatory framework for internal control; and the Authority's accounts.

Members were informed that one additional item, the Audit & Governance Self-Assessment Exercise, had been added for the March meeting.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Considered the agreed Work Programme.
- ii) Noted that the Self-Assessment Exercise had been scheduled for the March meeting.

10 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

A report was presented to provide the Committee with an update on progress against the Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23, approved by the Committee on 14 March 2022. The report also summarised the results of Internal Audit's work to date.

Members noted the following key messages:

- For the 2022/23 internal audit plan, fieldwork dates had been agreed with management for all the internal audits scheduled for 2022/23.
- The Contract Management report had been finalised since the Committee last met and was included in the agenda pack.
- The Purchasing and Creditors report had now been finalised and would be presented to the Committee in March.
- The Strategic Partnerships report was awaiting management comment and should be presented at the March meeting.
- There were two audits left to complete for the year and fieldwork dates had been agreed with management.
- There had been no changes to the internal audit plan since the last Audit & Governance Committee meeting.

In regard to the Contract Management report, three medium and three low risks had been identified, with a partial assurance issued. Actions identified included the implementation of contract management training, undertaking contract risk assessments and the formal review of contracts.

DCFO Carlin informed Members that the Service had welcomed the report. Training would be implemented across the Service shortly, there was a need to establish a broader and deeper view of contract management across the organisation but the initial learning from the audit was welcomed.

Councillor Turpin noted that the strategy had been implemented in an ad-hoc manner historically and asked how the Service intended to remedy this.

DCFO Carlin responded that this was part of the review, and the new contract management training should help to implement effective contract management across the Service.

Councillor Turpin asked if there was a new structure in place to implement the audit actions.

DCFO Carlin confirmed that a new procurement manager was in post along with a new property services team. The Service would undertake a deep dive to ensure managers have the right training and support in place.

Councillor Smith queried if Members could see the contents of the contract management training.

DCFO Carlin responded that he would put Councillor Smith in touch with the new procurement manager to share an overview of the contract management training.

DCFO Carlin confirmed that the Service had staff who had particular subject specialism in this area, and that contract management training is dynamic due to the complexities of European and UK procurement legislation.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- (i) Members considered and received the report.
- (ii) Noted that arrangements would be made with the SYFR Procurement Manager to provide Members with an overview of the contract management training.

11 DRAFT INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY 2023/24 - 2025/26 (INCLUDING THE INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023/24)

The report contained a detailed one-year Plan for 2023/24, and a suggested three year rolling Strategy of audit coverage. Members noted that the Strategy would be revisited each year to ensure it remains current and reflects the risk profile of the organisation.

The proposed risk-based and core assurance audits for Internal Audit coverage in 2023/24 were set out within the report for Members' information.

Members were informed that the delivery of the plan will be based around a core team however the team would be complimented with additional specialist skills when required.

For 2023/24, the risk-based audits proposed were:

- The Community Risk Management Plan
- Sustainability/Environmental, Social and Governance
- Commercial Premises Inspections
- Incident Ground Welfare Provision

The proposed core assurance audits for 2023/24 were:

- Stocks and Stores Departmental Review
- Wellbeing, Occupational Health and Absence Managements
- Core Financial Systems
- Internal Service Governance

Member's attention was drawn to Appendix A, which featured the internal audit standards, and Appendix B, which included previous years audits.

All proposed changes to the Plan, or when work would be undertaken would be discussed and agreed with management and reported within Internal Audit progress reports to the Committee. The final Plan would be presented to the Committee at the March meeting.

A Dyson commented that it could be useful for internal audit to look at minor income in terms of fees and charges, and also income from developers (section 106 monies).

A Mullen responded that this had been noted and would be discussed for detailed scope work.

Councillor Sansome queried whether it was easier to ascertain areas of risk by looking back at previous audit plans prepared by RSM.

A Mullen confirmed that historic knowledge had helped to identify areas of risk and provided high levels of assurance in regard to which audit areas should be pursued.

RESOLVED that Members reviewed and challenged the content of the Internal Audit Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26, whilst acknowledging the need to maintain flexibility.

12 REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE (ISA 260) 2020/21

The Committee considered an update report of the External Auditor (Deloitte) which summarised the key issues identified during their audit of the Authority's financial statements for the year ending 31st March 2021.

As reported in updates to the Audit and Governance Committee from September 2021 onwards, the audit completion had been delayed as a result of errors identified in respect of the floor areas used in the Property, Plant and Equipment revaluation exercise, which had required management to remeasure the gross internal areas of their buildings and to also commission a further valuation report to correct the errors in floor areas that have been identified.

Members were informed that a small number of items were outstanding. The receipt of supporting schedules for notes 1 – 3 had recently been completed and the review and receipt of financial statements was currently ongoing.

Members were invited to request management to correct the small number of unidentified errors or state otherwise, as required by the International Standards on Auditing (UK), however were advised to take advice from the finance team on this issue.

Councillor Sansome asked if the finance team had advice for Members on the correction of the small number of unidentified errors.

S Loach responded that the recommendation was not to correct the misstatements identified by the external auditor as they would the misstatements would be remedied in future audit work and correcting them could cause further delays.

Councillor Sansome sought reassurance that the issues identified in the 2020/21 audit would not impact future audits.

S Loach replied that all issues had been identified and plans would be put to in place to alleviate these issues in future audits.

S Slater informed Members that finance colleagues had recently met with external audit regarding the preparation for the 2021/22 audit and previous issues would be picked up in the preparation work.

Councillor Alston queried the timeline for actions being completed and when Members would be informed of any progress again the actions.

S Slater responded that these actions would be picked up in the next audit.

P Hewitson informed Members that none of the actions identified by the external auditor were fundamental and most are process driven and therefore the Service would decide how to implement the actions.

Councillor Turpin asked if the issues identified would also be picked up in the 2021/22 audit report.

P Hewitson responded that if the Service did not have the opportunity to complete the actions before the next audit that this would be made note of in the report.

Councillor Turpin queried if there was a current timeline for the 2021/22 audit report.

P Hewitson informed the Committee that work would be ongoing during the early months of 2023. Property, plant, and equipment work should take place in March to avoid previous errors.

RESOLVED that Members noted the Report to Those Charged With Governance (ISA 260) 2020/21.

13 DRAFT AUDITOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

Members were presented with the Draft Auditor's Annual Report 2020/21. The report set out the key findings arising from the work external audit had undertaken for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Members were informed that the report was in draft from until the statement of accounts 2020/21 were signed.

The report fulfilled the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations for an Annual Audit Letter.

This report was intended to bring together the results of the work over the year at the Authority, including commentary on the Authority's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the use of resources.

P Hewitson commented that external auditors were satisfied that there were no significant weaknesses, and 9 actions had been suggested by external audit.

Councillor Sansome queried when the final report would be presented at the Committee.

P Hewitson responded that the report would be issued as written once a date was agreed, once outstanding audit work was completed.

RESOLVED that Members note the Draft Auditor's Annual Report 2020/21.

14 AUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2020/21

S Loach presented the updated Audited Statement of Accounts 2020/21.

S Loach explained that the Audited Statement of Accounts included in the pack had been updated to reflect the external auditor's findings.

Members were informed that both Councillor Smith and Councillor Sansome would need to sign the updated Statement of Accounts 2020/21 due to Councillor Smith's tenure as Chair of the Audit Committee in 2020/21.

P Hewitson confirmed that external audit was waiting for final quality control clearance. Therefore, both Councillor Sansome and Councillor Smith signed the accounts which would be dated once this had been completed.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- (i) Approved the updated Statement of Accounts 2020/21.
- (ii) Approved both Councillor Sansome and Councillor Smith to sign the Statement of Accounts 2020/21, which would be dated once final quality control clearance was received from external audit.

15 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2023/24

A report of the Treasurer was submitted to outline the Authority's Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for the 2023/24 financial year.

The report provided Members with an overview of:

- The Treasury Management Policy Statement;
- The Borrowing Strategy;
- The Investment Strategy;
- The Prudential and Treasury Indicators demonstrating the affordability of capital investment plans; and
- The Minimum Revenue Provision setting out the proposed prudent method of charging to revenue for the repayment of debt.

Members were asked to note that CIPFA published updated Treasury Management and Prudential Codes in December 2021 and full implementation of the reporting changes is required from 2023/24.

The Committee were informed that a key point to note in the report was the continued uncertainty regarding the economy, particularly rising interest rates.

RESOLVED that Members approved the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy Statements which included the following:

- The Treasury Management Policy Statement;
- The Borrowing Strategy;
- The Investment Strategy;
- The Prudential and Treasury Indicators demonstrating the affordability of capital investment plans; and
- Minimum Revenue Provision Statement setting out the proposed prudent method of charging to revenue for the repayment of debt.

16 QUARTERLY FRA / SYFR CORPORATE RISK REPORT

DCFO Carlin presented the Quarterly FRA / SYFR Corporate Risk Report.

Members were provided with contextual information surrounding the merging of the FRA and SYFR corporate risk registers. The risk register continued to be available to all risk owners, and regular horizon scanning had been implemented to ensure transparency in future risk rating exercises.

The Committee was informed that the Service would commence work on a risk system project to replace the current spreadsheet format.

Risk management training was being delivered throughout 2023 and Members had been invited to attend training sessions.

Members were informed that there were three risks (threat) that are currently rated as red on the Risk Register, which could have a major impact on the Service. These are the Industrial Action (Risk 36), Embedding Sustainability (Risk 37), and Financial Uncertainty for the Service (Risk 38).

In regard to new risks, Embedding Sustainability (Risk 37) and Financial Uncertainty for the Service (Risk 38) had both been added and rated as red.

The Immediate Detriment risk (Risk 24) was proposed to move from a red to an amber risk, and to remain open.

Risks recommended for closure included Reductions in Funding post 2020 (Risk 20), Supply Issues (Risk 35) and Employee Relations (Risk FRA03).

Councillor Sansome noted that the new risk surrounding the LFB culture review was a welcome addition to the risk register due to the topical nature of the review.

RESOLVED - That Members:-

- (i) Noted the current position with respect to the overall risk management approach for corporate risks.

- (ii) Considered and comment on the progress being made with the management and mitigation of corporate risks.
- (iii) Approved the proposed closure of corporate risks.

17 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2021-22 AND GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2022-23

Members were presented with the Annual Governance Statement 2021-22 and Governance Improvement Plan 2022-23 for approval.

No material changes had occurred since the AGS 2021-22 and GIP 2022-23 were presented to the Committee at the 21 November 2022 meeting.

Members were informed that the AGS 2021-22 would be published on the South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority website with the Statement of Accounts 2021-22 when available.

RESOLVED - That Members:-

- (i) Approved the final Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2021-22.
- (ii) Approved the final Governance Improvement Plan (GIP) for 2022-23.

18 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and the public interest not to disclose information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

19 MEMBER ONLY SESSION WITH EXTERNAL / INTERNAL AUDIT

At the conclusion of the meeting a Member only session was held with External and Internal Audit colleagues.

Actions Table

No.	Action	Timescale	Officer(s)	Status / Update
9.	Noted that the Committee's Work Programme would be updated to include a report on the Audit and Governance Committee's Self-Assessment Exercise.		D Thorpe	Update 17.01.23 The report will be submitted to the March meeting. ACTION DISCHARGED
9.	Noted that arrangements		D Thorpe/ K Storer	Update 29.11.22

	would be made for Committee Members to receive a training session on the Annual Governance Statement (AGS).			A training session will be devised and implemented before the production of the AGS for 2022/23.
15.	Noted that S Loach had agreed to obtain an update for Members from the Authority's and Service's valuers in relation to the criteria used for the valuation of fire stations.		S Loach	Update 10.01.23 Response circulated to Members via email on 10.01.23 ACTION DISCHARGED
10.	Noted that arrangements would be made with the SYFR Procurement Manager to provide Members with an overview of the contract management training.		DCFO Carlin	

CHAIR

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 24 JANUARY 2023

PRESENT: Councillor T Damms (Chair)
Councillors: A Cherryholme, C Hogarth, A Khayum and S Sansome

CFO C Kirby
(South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue)

T Bell, D Thorpe, and C Smallman (BMBC)

C Cooper
(Humberside Fire and Rescue)

An apology for absence was received from Councillor B Johnson

1 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was noted above.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

3 URGENT ITEMS

None.

4 ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS IN RELATION TO ANY ITEM OF BUSINESS ON THE AGENDA

None.

6 BRIEFING NOTE - RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Members were provided with a briefing note regarding the recruitment and selection process that had been undertaken for the appointment of the Director of People and Culture.

7 RECRUITMENT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND CULTURE - INTERVIEW

The Appointments Committee interviewed for the post of Director of People and Culture.

RESOLVED – That Sue Kelsey be appointed as Director of People and Culture.

CHAIR

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

MONDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2023

PRESENT: Councillor T Damms (Chair)
Councillors: A Cherryholme, C Hogarth and S Sansome

CFO Kirby and S Kelsey (South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue)

T Bell, D Thorpe and C Smallman (BMBC)

A Wood (West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: B Johnson and
A Khayum

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

3 URGENT ITEMS

None.

4 ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS IN RELATION TO ANY ITEM OF BUSINESS ON THE AGENDA

None.

6 BRIEFING NOTE - RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Members were provided with a briefing note regarding the recruitment and selection process that had been undertaken for the appointment of the Director of Finance and Procurement.

7 RECRUITMENT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT-INTERVIEW

The Appointments Committee interviewed for the post of Director of Finance and Procurement.

RESOLVED – That the candidate was not appointed to the role of Director of Finance and Procurement.

CHAIR

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

LOCAL PENSION BOARD

19 JANUARY 2023

PRESENT: J Weston (Chair)

Members: S Sansome (Rotherham MBC), S Smith (SY Fire Brigades' Union), S Smith (SY Fire Brigades' Union), DCFO T Carlin (South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue),

Advisors: C Davies (South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service), A Kilner (South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service) S Kelsey (South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service) L Stones (South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service)

In Attendance Virtually: M Nicholls (SY Fire Brigades' Union), P Bragger (Fire Officers Association), S Slater (South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service) and H Scargill (West Yorkshire Pension Fund)

Officers: D Thorpe and L Belli (Barnsley MBC)

Guest: J McGinnity (Chair of Northern Ireland Pension Board)

Apologies for absence were received from: A Bosmans, M Mott and S Kaur

20 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

J Weston welcomed everyone to the January 2023 meeting of the Board.

J McGinnity, Chair of the Northern Ireland Pensions Board was welcomed to the meeting who was observing virtually.

21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 OCTOBER 2022

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Local Pension Board held on 6th October 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

a) Matters Arising / Actions

Following the Pensions Conference attended by Councillor Sansome and A Bosmans, concerns were raised as to how pensions meetings were formatted and whether there was anything to take on board with regards to best practice. It was requested that Mark Rowe, FBU National Officer, be invited to a future meeting for education purposes as to whether the Pensions Board were giving the best service possible and dealt with matters in the best way. M Nicholls agreed to contact Mark Rowe and invite him to a future meeting.

In relation to item 006 on the Risk Register 'Communications - Failure to ensure there are timely and accurate communication arrangements in place' M Nicholls queried whether it had been communicated to members who were part of the retained pension scheme that they have the ability to buy back due to a legal ruling. In response C Davies informed the Board that as it was in the early stages, they were working with West Yorkshire and the LGA as to what communication would go out. M Nicholls requested that any communication, even in the early stages, would be a help. C Davies confirmed they would take this away and look for a way forward.

24 THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER'S DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITY FOR DECISIONS

S Kelsey recognised changes in board membership and wanted to ensure that members were aware that the Chief Fire Officer had received delegated responsibility with regards to the Pension Scheme in 2016. S Kelsey addressed concerns surrounding this and informed members that the Chief Fire Officer had passed on his reassurance to the Board that should there be any issues of significance then he would liaise with the Fire Authority and not act in isolation.

Members queried as to whether there was an appeals process for any members or retired members that felt the system had failed in the decision made. In response S Kelsey informed members that most decisions were legislative rather than policy but that there was a discretions policy to be adhered to by the Chief Fire Officer. However there was an IDRP process for appeals and issues raised.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

25 IMMEDIATE DETRIMENT: UPDATE

S Slater updated members on immediate detriment. There was nothing to report on Category 1 claims and Category 2 had around 20 applications. In order to manage expectations a communication was sent out before Christmas explaining the timeframe in MOU of around 90 days, the significant delays were due to the number of applicants.

M Nicholls gave his thanks to S Slater and the Team as they were working under significant pressure.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

26 RISK REGISTER

The Chair raised concerns following a recent survey that reported 61% of active members did not understand the complexity of pension benefits and requested this be reflected in the risk register under communications.

In response S Kelsey reported that a discussion had taken place as to the best way to communicate to the operational workforce and it was felt the best way going forward would be via podcast. A number of people would be invited to take part including representatives from the Brigade Union and, Fire Officers Association. The Podcast would be broadcast on TV screens throughout all buildings. Members were informed that everything was geared up with the communications team to go ahead once slides had been provided from the LGA in order to create a script. This was the recommended approach as it could catch a significant number of employees rather than a face to face approach which would take longer.

Members queried whether there would be an opportunity to ask questions. In response they were informed that as it was a podcast this would not be available, but that a follow up exercise to invite questions direct or through a representative body would be created and the FAQ's and responses would be published.

It was agreed to leave risk 006 'Failure to ensure there are timely and accurate communication arrangements in place' amber with an updated mitigation to include the podcast and for it to turn green when it had been completed and felt a successful exercise.

DCFO Carlin proposed that a follow up survey be sent to staff in 6 months' time to check if people had absorbed the information and whether it had improved knowledge following the podcast.

S Sansome raised concerns around Risk 010 – 'Failure to ensure employers pay the correct contributions to the scheme, and that their employees are contributing appropriately' and whether there were any mitigating circumstances as to why it remained red.

S Slater informed the Board that it had remained red due to a pension legal case that was ongoing and had been for 2 years.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the contents of the Risk Register.

27 UPDATE FROM WEST YORKSHIRE PENSIONS FUND (SEE ISSUES BELOW)

H Scargill provided Members with an update from WYPF, which included the Monthly Client reports for October, November and December 2022, together with the Fire Client Minutes of 19th October, 2022.

Members noted the following key points:

- Point 5 in the October update, included work being done and changes being made to the IT systems. A full disaster recovery test had taken place

on new technology which was successful and would be tested twice more in the next 12 months.

- A Pension Dashboard programme of implementation had been established and regular updates would be provided as things progress, the staging deadline had been updated to 30 September, 2024.
- All West Yorkshire updates were focused on cyber security, the document had previously been circulated to members.
- An update was provided on monthly postings and how there had been delays due to a number of reasons, but they had caught up. A document had been created to provide information for successful completion of the monthly postings spreadsheet from April 2022 onwards.
- Month 12 gave update changes of how to report KPI numbers.

J Weston congratulated WYPF for the comprehensive report on cyber security which had proven reassuring.

J Weston queried the Outstanding Work Graph in the monthly updates and how the majority of reasons were under the 'Miscellaneous' section and what that included.

In response H Scargill informed members that this would include things such as telephone queries waiting call backs and items received in the post awaiting assignment to the correct department for processing or a response.

J McGinnity complimented WYPF on the comprehensive updates and the level of information contained within the reports. He enquired as to how many Fire Authority's they provided this service for and whether that work included common issues which spanned across all of those authorities resulting in inter working between FRA Boards.

In response, H Scargill informed him it was 23 and each Fire Authority received a report specific to them and enabled issues to be raised between boards.

It was reported that the Fire Clients meeting involved Pension Board and salaried staff representatives from all 23 Fire Authorities and was an opportunity to raise issues across the Board.

S Sansome referred to the Fire Client Minutes and the mention of overpayments and how this can happen.

In response members were informed that these instances can occur in the death of a member and also if someone claims benefits from DWP for an injury. Those benefits are then deducted from gross injury pension so the fire pension scheme pays a lower amount. It is the individual's responsibility to notify of changes to benefits but there is a process in place to make checks every 3 years to ensure people are being paid correctly.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

S Kelsey posed a question to the Board as to whether going forward the Pensions Dashboard update remained incorporated within the West Yorkshire Pension Fund update or whether it should be a standing item on the agenda.

The Chair requested that it be a standing item on the agenda.

RESOLVED – That the Pensions Dashboard be a standing item on future agendas.

29 BREACHES/FRAUD - UPDATE

Members noted that no breaches had been received.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

30 INTERNAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE (IDRP) - UPDATE

L Stones confirmed that there had not been any new IDRP's received since the last Board meeting.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

31 PENSIONS ISSUES/WORKLOADS

C Davies informed members that retirement forms continued to be processed and a lead time of 3 months was required. However, they continued to receive a number for forms last minute which had resulted in delays in the process for the lump sum to be paid. M Nicholls agreed to send out a joint statement to reiterate this information to members.

Members were informed that there had been difficulties recruiting to a number of posts in the pensions & payroll team but that there would be potential interviews coming up and hopefully a positive update could be provided at a future meeting.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

32 TPR RETURN SCHEMES

C Davies informed members that T Weaver had completed the Pension Fund Annual Scheme returns and had submitted them well in advance of the 18th November, 2022 deadline.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

33 COMMUNICATIONS - UPDATE

Members noted that no further communications updates had been received.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

34 NATIONAL SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD – UPDATES

Members noted that there were no further updates.

RESOLVED – That Members noted update.

35 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT: UPDATE / EVENTS

Members were encouraged to look at the website and complete their own learning and development but if necessary the Local Pension Board had a budget in order for members to book on courses.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

36 SELF ASSESSMENT UPDATE

J Weston emphasised the importance for new members of the Board to complete some training which they would find beneficial. It was requested that the Training Plan be updated and training be provided by people from South Yorkshire and H Scargill if available.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

37 ACTIONS FROM THE LGA FIREFIGHTERS' PENSIONS BULLETINS

D Thorpe presented the item which captured actions arising from the LGA pension bulletins in October and November 2022. The December update will be included in the next meeting. It was noted that all actions were completed or ongoing.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

38 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

D Thorpe presented the Board's Annual Work Programme, which was reviewed on a quarterly basis.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the Annual Work Programme.

39 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

40 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted the future meeting schedule (all meetings to commence at 1.00pm and to be held at Barnsley Town Hall)

Thursday 13 April 2023 – To be held in a hybrid format.

41 AGREED ACTIONS

	Action	Timescale	Officer(s)	Status/Update
1	<p>Risk Register</p> <p>To weave cyber security into one of the existing risks which related to information and governance.</p> <p>To liaise with S Slater regarding the deep dives into risk numbers 004 and 006.</p> <p>To liaise with S Slater regarding the dashboard, and to seek clarification on some of the issues around the current legislation.</p>	<p>Next Board meeting on 19.01.23</p> <p>Next Board meeting on 19.01.23</p> <p>Next Board meeting on 19.01.23</p>	<p>S Slater</p> <p>D Thorpe/ S Slater</p> <p>D Thorpe/ S Slater</p>	<p><u>Update 06.10.22</u></p> <p>An update would be provided to the next Board meeting.</p> <p>ACTIONS DISCHARGED</p>
1.	<p>Risk Register</p> <p>To update the mitigation in Risk 006 to create a podcast to ensure all members have knowledge around pension benefits.</p> <p>To send out an internal survey to all members following the above mitigation to ensure understanding</p>	<p>Next Board meeting on 13.04.23</p> <p>July 2023</p>	<p>S Kelsey/ S Slater</p> <p>S Kelsey / S Slater</p>	
2	<p>Communications - Update</p> <p>To ensure that there was continuous</p>	<p>Update to the next</p>	<p>S Slater/ C Davies</p>	<p>- -</p>

	adequate communication to the Members regarding the pensions benefit illustrations for the transition Members and the move into the 2015 Scheme.	Board meeting on 13.04.23		- - - - - - -
	A document to be created to contain the actions from the LGA Firefighters' Pensions Bulletins, to ascertain whether the actions were underway or complete.	Next Board meeting on 19.01.23	D Thorpe	<u>Update 06.10.22</u> The document to become a standard agenda item from the next Board meeting. ACTION DISCHARGED <u>Update 19.01.23</u> - Action updated as above.
	To consider holding a communication meeting for members to explain the complexity of the different pensions. Liaison to be made with the FBU to ascertain the level of clarity required by the members.	In due course	S Slater/ C Davies/ S Kelsey/ L Stones	
3	Update from West Yorkshire Pensions Fund To provide the Board with the confidential cyber security document.	ASAP	C Davies/ D Thorpe	ACTION DISCHARGED
4	Administration Strategy For an	April 2023	S Slater/	

	Administration Strategy to be developed in April 2023.		C Davies/ S Kelsey/ L Stones	
5	IDRP To request an update from S Slater on an IDRP. An update to be provided to the next Board meeting.	Next Board meeting on 19.01.23	L Stones/ S Slater	ACTION DISCHARGED
6	Annual Work Programme To update the Annual Work Programme. To be presented to the next Board meeting.	Next Board meeting on 19.01.23	D Thorpe	ACTION DISCHARGED
7	Self-Assessment To revisit the Self-Assessment at the next Board meeting.	Next Board meeting on 19.01.23	D Thorpe	ACTION DISCHARGED
8	Recruitment Process To look into the recruitment process for Independent Members on the Board.	In due course	D Thorpe	
9	Matters Arising To invite Mark Rowe to a future Board Meeting to discuss and review the best practice of the Pensions Board	In due course	M Nicholls	

CHAIR

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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