



# Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024 - 2025

# **Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024 - 2025**

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# Introduction

As part of the Spending Review 2021, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Local Government Association (LGA) agreed that between 2022/23-2024/25, fire and rescue services in England would increase wholetime firefighter productivity by 3% and create 2% of non-pay efficiency savings.

The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire has requested that all Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) produce plans for 2024/25 that cover how they intend to both make efficiencies and increase productivity. This plan outlines some of the steps we've already taken to deliver an effective and productive service and how we will deliver more during 2024/25.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is part of Surrey County Council (SCC) whose Community Vision for Surrey in 2030 places emphasis on prevention, services for vulnerable people and the need for greater collaboration with partners. We play a vital role in delivering this vision, and prevention and protection activities form a core part of what we do.

Over the last 10 years the number of emergency incidents has, thankfully, reduced. We have reshaped our operational workforce to reflect this change and now have 450 firefighters compared with 594 at 31 March 2013. In that same 10-year period, the population profile has changed and there are more residents who are vulnerable to fire by virtue of age and level of fitness.

Our aim is to visit more of those residents to give advice and equipment to keep them safe from fire. We are achieving this by giving our firefighters more skills to visit those with complex needs and have increased our work with other agencies to find those who are most vulnerable. We have increased capacity to carry out these visits by reducing time spent on unproductive activities such as responding to automatic fire alarms that are false, and by finding ways to cut time spent on administration.

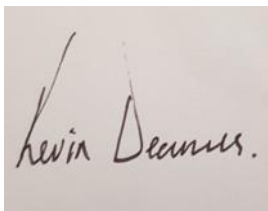
We have also invested in training more Protection team staff to carry out inspections of higher-risk buildings, increasing the number of qualified inspectors from 15 in 2020/21 to 24 in 2022/23. In 2023/24 we trained our firefighters so that they can provide risk reduction activity in lower-risk commercial premises through Business Safe and Well Visits (BSAWVs).

We know how important it is to get value for money for every pound we spend and hold regular reviews to consider all our expenditure, including our non-pay costs. Regular monitoring meetings are held between budget managers and the county council finance team and capital expenditure is monitored by the Resources Working Group and Infrastructure Board. We collaborate with other services on procurement wherever possible so that we can purchase at lower costs than would

We continue to focus on how we can use firefighter time most productively and how we can exploit opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness presented by changes in technology. This includes by ensuring we have the right digital systems in place to measure and enhance workforce productivity.

We are committed to delivering an effective, efficient and productive service that delivers against our vision of working with others to make Surrey a safer place to live, work, travel and do business.

This Plan has been approved by the Section 151 Officer for Surrey County Council.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Kevin Deanus." with a period at the end.

Kevin Deanus

Cabinet member for Fire and Rescue  
and Resilience

A photograph of a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is stylized and appears to read "Dan Quin".

Dan Quin

Chief Fire Officer

# Efficiency

The table below sets the efficiencies we achieved in 2022/23, the efficiencies we expect to have achieved in the year 23/24 and those we intend to make in the year 24/25.

	<b>Actual 2022-23</b>	<b>Forecast 2023 – 24</b>	<b>Forecast 20224 - 25</b>
Opening Revenue Expenditure Budget (Net)	£43,569,700	£44,533,393	£47,934,772
Less Total Direct Employee Costs	£37,135,331	£38,578,043	£43,014,940
Non Pay Budget	£6,434,369	£5,955,350	£4,919,832
Efficiency Target (2% of non-pay budget)	<b>£128,687</b>	<b>£119,107</b>	<b>£98,397</b>

## Efficiency Savings

<b>Direct employee</b>	<b>Actual 2022-23</b>	<b>Forecast 2023 – 24</b>	<b>Forecast 20224 - 25</b>
Reduction in Prevention/Protection/Response Staff	-£90,000		-£172,000
Reduction in Support Staff			-£298,000
<u>Indirect Employee (e.g. training, travel etc.)</u>			
All indirect employee costs		-£50,000	-£50,000

<b>Premises</b>	<b>Actual 2022-23</b>	<b>Forecast 2023 – 24</b>	<b>Forecast 20224 - 25</b>
Utilities			

<b>Premises</b>	<b>Actual 2022-23</b>	<b>Forecast 2023 – 24</b>	<b>Forecast 20224 - 25</b>
Rent/Rates			
Other Premises Costs			
Shared Premises			-£5,000

<b>Transport</b>	<b>Actual 2022-23</b>	<b>Forecast 2023 – 24</b>	<b>Forecast 20224 - 25</b>
Fleet			
Fuel			
Other Transport Costs	-£14,000	-£15,000	

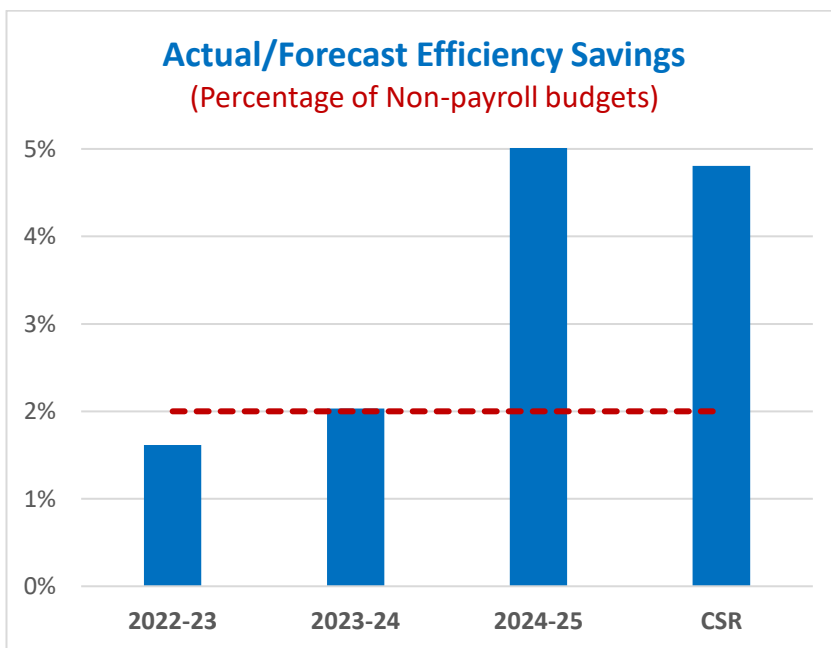
<b>Supplies and services</b>	<b>Actual 2022-23</b>	<b>Forecast 2023 – 24</b>	<b>Forecast 20224 - 25</b>
National Procurement Savings			
Local Procurement Savings		-£56,000	
Other Technology Improvements			
Decreased Usage			-£2,000

<b>Capital financing</b>	<b>Actual 2022-23</b>	<b>Forecast 2023 – 24</b>	<b>Forecast 20224 - 25</b>
Revenue Expenditure Charged to Capital			
Net Borrowing Costs			
Revenue Expenditure Charged to Capital			
Net Borrowing Costs			

<b>Other</b>	<b>Actual 2022-23</b>	<b>Forecast 2023 – 24</b>	<b>Forecast 20224 - 25</b>
Collaboration			-£3,000

Other	Actual 2022-23	Forecast 2023 – 24	Forecast 20224 - 25
Other Savings 2 (Please Specify)			
Other Savings 3 (Please Specify)			

<b>Total efficiency savings</b>	<b>-£104,000</b>	<b>-£121,000</b>	<b>-£530,000</b>
Efficiency Savings as a Percentage of Non-Payroll Budgets	1.62%	2.03%	10.77%
Efficiency Savings Target	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
Over/(Under)	<b>-0.38%</b>	0.03%	8.77%



We evaluated our response model when we developed our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2020-2024. Following an analysis of risk and demand, we removed night-time cover where this wasn't required and added weekend cover at other fire stations. These changes resulted in a saving of £3.3m over the period 2020/21 to 2021/22.

In 2023/24 the service made changes which created total savings of approximately £121,000. These savings were achieved by stopping operational staff rotations which brought down associated staff training costs, and cancelling a corporate subscription.

In addition, during 2023/24 we have implemented a call challenge policy for Automatic Fire Alarms in accordance with our CRMP. We have also reduced the overall number of incidents attended by signposting callers to more appropriate agencies for some animal rescue incidents. Although these measures have created a minimal financial saving, they have released staff capacity for prevention and protection work, allowing us to deliver more Safe and Well Visits (SAWVs) to residents and to introduce Business SAWVs.



The table which follows shows planned efficiencies of £530,000 for 2024/25. Planned efficiencies for the two following financial years are also shown.

<b>Efficiency &amp; Savings</b>	<b>2024/25 £m</b>	<b>2025/26 £m</b>	<b>2026/27 £m</b>	<b>Total £m</b>
Stop operational staff rotations	(0.050)			(0.050)
Logistics - review of Staff, Property and Non- Capital Assets	(0.192)	(0.014)		(0.206)
Fire investigation	(0.115)			(0.115)
Operations Management Centre /Staff office review	(0.106)			(0.106)
Staffing vacancy	(0.057)			(0.057)
Recharge for use of Fire facilities	(0.005)			(0.005)
Charging Police Partners for support at certain incidents	(0.003)			(0.003)
Fire Cadets	(0.002)			(0.002)
Replacement of airwave radio system		(0.085)	(0.086)	(0.171)
Utilise new training facilities. Expand Learning and Development to external partners			(0.250)	(0.250)
Expand the use of new Logistics (Engineering) facilities to other users			(0.100)	(0.100)
<b>Total Efficiencies &amp; savings</b>	<b>(0.530)</b>	<b>(0.099)</b>	<b>(0.436)</b>	<b>(1.290)</b>

# Risks and barriers to delivery of efficiencies

Realising these efficiencies will depend on development of the training and workshop facilities at our Wray Park site. Cabinet approved the investment for the training facilities refurbishment in February 2024.

## Collaboration

SFRS has collaborated with East and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) to create one joint control room for all three services. West Sussex FRS came on board in January 2020 and East Sussex FRS in November 2021. This Joint Fire Control increases resilience and staffing numbers. The new Joint Fire Control created £0.6m efficiency for Surrey Fire and Rescue Service in 2020/21 and has avoided costs, eg in relation to systems upgrade and maintenance and additional staff to support the Fire Survival Guidance (FSG), as pressures and investment are shared between all three services. To respond to FSG requirements the tri-service workforce was increased to provide resilience but achieved a more cost-effective model.

Other successful collaborations include a joint Occupational Health and Wellbeing service being delivered across Surrey/Sussex Police forces and East Sussex FRS. This collaboration has not reduced our expenditure on occupational health, but has given us access to improved occupational health services which we would not be able to afford on our own. Better access to occupational health services has contributed to reducing the length of sickness absence, which has reduced our expenditure on overtime.

## Asset management and investment in technology

We are working to reduce administrative time at stations by introducing technology that is quicker to use and eliminates paper-based processes. In 2023 we supplied each fire station with laptops, which, together with the introduction of an electronic form, enable crews to complete SAWV administration at residents' homes where the resident agrees. The electronic form takes less time to complete than the paper one did and reduces time at station spent on inputting data from paper forms to the digital database.

Another time saving is that relevant data such as the location of a bedbound resident within a property, is automatically fed through to premises information on the mobile data terminals without an additional process having to be carried out.

In 2024/25 we will be introducing electronic forms for our Business SAWVs and will migrate to Prevent + Protect, a replacement for our current community safety Community Risk Management database. Prevent + Protect will give us an up-to-date system with accurate and reliable data that can be shared across the service quickly and efficiently for multiple purposes. It will allow us to automate a whole host of processes that are currently manual to create more capacity for community safety work.

By 1 April 2024 each station will have a touchscreen installed. The touchscreens will display the Dynamic Cover Tool, a live feed that shows the location of appliances and crews across the county. The touchscreens will enable crews to update the appliance status without having to go to the appliance cab to use its mobile data terminal. This will save some time, but the main benefit is likely to be more accurate reporting of appliance statuses, increasing our understanding of productivity.

The service is in the process of migrating stations' broadband to a different provider which will increase bandwidth and therefore speed up the use of different applications, further reducing administrative time at stations and creating more capacity for community safety work.

Other developments planned for 2024/25 include extracting and using data from the telematics systems installed in our vehicle fleet, which we anticipate will help us use them more efficiently.

## Charging policies

We are a trusted partner that can, and does, support regional and national partners during emergency incidents. We have arrangements in place with our neighbouring FRSs to deliver the quickest and most suitable response to an incident. This means we can arrange for a response from a neighbouring FRS to an incident in Surrey when they can get there more quickly than we can. Likewise, we will attend incidents over the border in neighbouring counties when we can reach them more quickly than our neighbouring FRS can. Each FRS sets its own rates per incident each financial year, and these are incorporated into the memoranda of understanding with our neighbouring FRSs. The three FRSs that collaborate to have one Joint Fire Control do not charge each other for 'over the border' incident attendances.

We have a memorandum of understanding in place with Surrey police allowing us to charge them for our support at specific planned non-time critical incidents such as those involving water, confined space and working at height, or requiring technical search capabilities. In 2024/25 we expect to generate a small amount of income from charging third parties for use of our facilities. In future years we anticipate increasing the shared use of our Training and Engineering facilities following the planned investment in them.

# Resourcing

We use five response models:

- Wholetime daytime only 0700-1900
- Wholetime 24/7 0900-1800 and 1800-0900
- Wholetime hybrid shift system with two appliances crewed 0700-1900 and one appliance crewed 1900-0700
- On call 24/7 (3 stations)
- On call evenings and weekends only.

We are exploring alternative response models to include in the Community Risk Management Plan in development for consultation in 2024-25. Our aim is to ensure we have appropriate staffing levels at the times of day where incidents are most likely to occur, to minimise disruption by shift changeover and to create maximum opportunity for community safety work.

We have introduced new, more flexible contracts for on-call firefighters, which means they can commit to fewer hours during a week.

We have introduced a new 'County Crewing' project which allows on-call staff from across SFRS to provide positive working hours, and improves fire engine availability, specifically at our three 24/7 on-call stations. These are staff members that are not required to be contractually on call, but that voluntarily provide additional 'flat rate' cover to improve service-wide resilience.

We have also changed how we resource on-call fire stations, which are now resourced one week in advance. Minimum numbers of staff are made available to respond to incidents. This reduces costs and helps us manage resources more effectively.

Reviews of our Logistics, Staff Office and Fire Investigation teams are expected to yield savings of £0.413m in 2024/25.

# Procurement

We always seek to achieve best value for money and our policy on procurement is to identify and use any relevant frameworks first. We used the framework hosted by the NFCC to procure Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and the Blue Light Commercial framework for some vehicle purchases. In the past we have collaborated with Surrey and Sussex police and South East Coast Ambulance Service to procure telematics software for our appliances and special vehicles. We also collaborated with the police to use the Crown Commercial Services framework for bulk fuel and fuel cards.

We have also been able to use SCC contracts relating to waste, health and wellbeing, pensions and HR. If there are no frameworks available, we look for a collaboration opportunity.

We have formed the 4F partnership with East and West Sussex FRSs and Kent FRS, for procuring replacement breathing apparatus and an incident command unit. Retendering for the breathing apparatus is expected to take place in Quarter 3 of 2024/25. The incident command unit will be going out to tender in Quarter 2 of 2024/25. Cashable savings will be identified following the tender process.

Contracts within SFRS are managed in accordance with SCC's contract management strategy. Contracts are classified from level 1-5 according to risk, value, opportunity and complexity and managed in accordance with that classification. SFRS staff who manage contracts are supported by the SCC Contract Management and Advisory Service.

## Budget for 2024 -25

The table below shows how our budget for 2024/25 has been allocated and what income we expect to receive.

<b>2024/25 Revenue Budget Summary by expenditure type</b>	<b>Full Year Budget £</b>
Employee Related	43,014,940
Premises Costs	48,406
Supplies & Services	3,226,489
Transport Costs	1,027,806
Direct Service Provision	617,131
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>47,934,772</b>
Government Grants	-4,690,559
Fees & Charges	-33,538
OLA Income	-2,464,352
Other Income	-329,325
Property Income	-24,480
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>-7,542,254</b>
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>40,392,518</b>

# Productivity

## Wholetime firefighter productivity

We measure firefighter productivity by looking at how many domestic and business SAWVs, how many Operational Planning Surveys/Tactical Consideration Record (OPS/TCR) visits are carried out and how many training exercises are completed.

We are committed to meeting the national Spending Review target of improving the productivity of wholetime firefighters by 3%. Our target for domestic SAWVs for 2024/25 is an increase of 18% on the 2023/24 target, which was itself an increase of 50% on the previous year's target. An additional target relating to domestic SAWVs is that 70% of them should be to our most vulnerable residents. More vulnerable residents often have complex needs and visits and administration therefore take longer. This impacts on the number of visits that are achievable. Our SAWV targets flow from our CRMP 2020-2024 commitment to do even more SAWVs for vulnerable people and expand the content to make every contact count and keep people as safe as possible in their homes.

In 2023/24 crews began to deliver Business SAWVs (BSAWVs) to provide risk reduction activity in premises with differing risk profiles from those included in the Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP). Additional benefits of BSAWVs are that they increase firefighters' knowledge of the built environment and improve operational preparedness/site specific risk information collation. Electronic forms for BSAWVs will be introduced during 2024/25, which should reduce administrative time and create capacity for more visits.

OPS/TCR visits are made annually to higher risk properties and every three years to medium risk properties. The target is to visit 100% of higher and medium risk properties within the appropriate timeframe.

The service targets are broken down into Borough and Station targets which are included in Borough and Station plans. Station commanders have access to dashboards which show the stations' performance week by week. Station and Group Commanders meet every quarter to share success stories and to identify and resolve any causes of under-performance.

In 2023/24 we implemented a new way of recording of station exercises and have more accurate baseline data now to measure productivity against in 2024/25.

## Wholetime Firefighter Capacity

Firefighters carry out a range of activities in addition to attending incidents.

- SAWVs – visiting people in their homes to provide safety advice, fit safety devices and make referrals to further support. This activity is targeted at the most vulnerable people in our communities, which may include the elderly or those with mental or physical illnesses.
- Business SAWVs – visiting businesses to support them in protecting against fire and other risks.

- Site Visits – visiting high risk premises and locations within the local area to ensure crews are familiar with risks and procedures. This includes visits to high-rise buildings which may present specific risks in the event of a fire.
- Community Engagement events and visits – station open days, school visits and community events present opportunities to share prevention advice and encourage people to consider firefighting as a career.
- Training – firefighters must maintain a wide range of skills and competencies which require comprehensive training both on station and elsewhere, from online e-academy courses, physical fitness to live fire training.
- Exercises – these are larger-scale training events undertaken both internally and with partners from other FRSs, police, ambulance and others.
- Maintenance and checks – cleaning and maintaining equipment and vehicles to ensure readiness for operational response.
- Administration – completing incident reports and workbooks, management activities, and providing important information that supports our service delivery and allows us to measure efficiency and productivity.

Our Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on station routines sets out how much time we expect to be spent each shift on mealtimes, fitness training and vehicle and equipment checks. The SOP allows for at least 90 minutes every day on making equipment and appliance checks at stations. The actual time spent will vary depending on the appliances kept at that station, and whether checks require more than one firefighter to complete them. Checks on breathing apparatus are carried out in each shift. Other equipment and appliance checks are normally carried out in the day shift only.

In 2023/24 the service introduced software on the mobile data terminals on appliances for recording of appliance status codes to gain information about how long different types of activities away from station are taking. In 2024/25 we will introduce appliance status codes for activity on station. Touchscreens at stations will enable crews at stations to update the appliance status codes easily. The data we receive will help build a more accurate picture of time spent on different activities at station and inform a review of the SOP on station routines.

## Improving Productivity

We have seen productivity improve as a result of measures we have taken to increase capacity for community safety work. For domestic SAWVs, productivity up to December 2023 increased by 51% when compared with the previous year. The proportion of SAWVs to vulnerable adults was consistently 83% or above.

In October 2022 we introduced a change in response to Automatic Fire Alarms in business premises. Our Joint Fire Control operators began to ask questions designed to determine the nature of the call and mobilising resources where a fire or signs of a fire were confirmed. Since making this change, we have seen a 95% drop in false alarm attendances over 12 months, saving approximately 522 crew hours and ensuring our resources are available for genuine emergencies. From 4 March 2024 we have extended this policy to residential properties including hospitals, hotels and care homes, and we expect to see attendances fall further and release approximately 210 crew hours.

We have also reduced the number of standbys that stations are involved with by 25%, which is less disruptive and gives crews more capacity for other activity.

A new form for recording data gathered on domestic SAWVs has reduced firefighter administration time. The form takes crews less time to complete and only a few paper versions now need to be input at station. The data captured on the new form and the associated process has contributed to approximately 2000 referrals to other agencies over 2023/24, an increase on previous years.

We have reduced the number of revisits to refit smoke detectors which have fallen off ceilings by changing the process for the installation of smoke alarms and upskilling the crews. We have also given crews additional training so that they can give advice that previously only a specialist Partnership team could supply. This has increased the number of single visits only and freed the Partnership team to identify additional opportunities for collaboration with other agencies to reach our most vulnerable residents.

A review of fire fatalities highlighted that regular care providers could provide a vital role in reinforcing our advice to residents about fire-safe behaviours or suggesting that we should visit. We have developed and distributed training materials to approximately 200 local authority care providers and seen an increase in the number of referrals from them. The next step is to work with private care providers.

Data collated by Cleveland FRS for the three months ending 30 September 2023 showed that our support (Green Book) staff lost only 0.43% of working days to sickness, the lowest percentage of the 36 FRSs who reported data. We have been able to reduce the average firefighter absence from 8.2 days per year to 7 in 2023/24, which equates to approximately 160 days saved across the workforce over a year. We have given managers more training on how to manage absence. Senior managers have access to an absence monitoring tool which is updated daily. This tool enables managers to identify any trends that suggest there's an underlying issue that might need addressing. Our use of the occupational health system has enabled scans and other treatments to be accessed more quickly.