



Staffordshire Fire
and Rescue Service

Statement of Assurance 2021/22



www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk



Staffordshire
Fire and Rescue Service
preventing • protecting • responding

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Contents

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać ten dokument w innym języku lub w innym formacie albo jeżeli potrzebna jest pomoc tłumacza, to prosimy o kontakt z nami.

French

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Urdu

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

Bengali

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান অথবা যদি আপনার একজন ইন্টারপ্রেটারের প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੀਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸੱਸੋ।

Arabic

إذا أردت هذه الوثيقة بلغة أخرى أو بطريقة أخرى، أو إذا كنت بحاجة إلى خدمات مترجم، فنرجو أن تقوم بالاتصال بنا.

Chinese

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Farsi

اگر این مدرک را به زبانی دیگر یا در فرمتی دیگر میخواستید و یا اگر احتیاج به سرویس مترجم دارید، لطفاً با ما تماس بگیرید

Welcome	4
Introduction	6
Our Priorities	7
Your Service	8
Governance and assurance	10
Priority 1: Prevention and early intervention Safety Campaigns	16
Priority 2: Protecting Staffordshire and its people Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic	20
Priority 3: Public confidence His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection	26
Priority 4: Service reform	30
Financial overview	36
Our Year 2021-22	38
What do you think of our Statement of Assurance?	40



0300 330 1000



Welcome

We hope you can find some time to read through our annual **Statement of Assurance for 2021/22**. When our **Safety Plan 2020-2024** was first published in 2020, we promised you that we would be open about our intentions, make our plans clear and easy to understand and provide regular updates about our performance. In this report, we would like to tell you about the progress we have made against the priorities set out in our **Safety Plan** and explain the financial, governance and operational arrangements that were in place for the period of 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

In 2021, we said good-bye to Chief Fire Officer, Becci Bryant on her retirement from the Service. I was honoured to be appointed as Chief Fire Officer in October 2021 and following my appointment I recruited to the vacant Deputy Chief Fire Officer position. Glynn Luznyj was successful in gaining that position following a rigorous process. Both Glynn and I have spent all of our careers within Staffordshire and we are fully committed to providing

the best Service to both the City and the County. We also welcomed our new Assistant Chief Fire Officer Michelle Hickmott who joined us from London Fire Brigade. Our new leadership team is supported by a wealth of experience and skills from our staff across the organisation. Our ambition is always to improve the services we provide to the public, and we will continue to do so through our Service Transformation programme.

Work streams aligned to Service reform are all developed through our Transformation Board, which will ensure a Service Fit for Tomorrow in line with the Staffordshire Commissioner's priorities. The Service Transformation programme will be focusing upon reform in the following key areas:

- Corporate restructure
- Response and Crewing
- Prevention and Protection
- Estates and Shared Services

During the last year, the Service has been working closely with the new Staffordshire Commissioner, Ben Adams, and has presented a number of options for Service transformation that will see a more efficient and effective Fire and Rescue Service and one that can achieve improved productivity as part of the next stages of its transformation work. The Commissioner quite rightly expects every pound of taxpayer's money invested in Fire and Rescue to be spent wisely and for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service to continue to seek efficiencies. It has to be recognised that balancing the Medium-Term Financial Strategy is becoming increasingly difficult as budgets are reduced, a further £2m of additional savings will be required by 2026 and as such a focus upon efficiency remains a key priority.

As Chief Fire Officer, I recognise and understand the financial challenges ahead. However, I remain committed to investing in the Service and its people to ensure that we have the best equipment, skills and structures from which to deliver the highest level of service to our communities. Our focus upon effectiveness and efficiency needs to continue, but we also need to invest now to provide the platform from which we can improve. The future will continue to be challenging. Given our good record of making savings, smarter use of technology, more efficient crewing models and sharing more buildings and back-office costs with Staffordshire Police, the Commissioner and the Service believe this to be achievable.

We have also taken the opportunity in this report to tell you about our latest His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

***Her Majesty's Inspectorate is now referred to as His Majesty's Inspectorate throughout this document following the passing of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September 2022.**

and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report following the inspection that took place during 2021. The inspection focused on our effectiveness, efficiency and how well we look after our people. We have been rated as 'Good' at being effective in understanding and preventing fires and other risks and responding to major and multi-agency incidents. We were also rated as 'Good' in how we make the service affordable now and in the future.

However, there were a number of areas in which we were rated as 'Requires Improvement' and HMICFRS has identified a number of areas for improvement. I would like to reassure you that I take these areas very seriously and I am confident that we can address them, many of these have already moved forward significantly since the inspection last autumn.

One particular area where I would welcome support from our local communities is in relation to on-call firefighters. Our recruitment campaign has been running for over a year now, but we are still struggling to recruit people, despite it being a paid role. Our on-call firefighters come from a range of backgrounds, most have the role as secondary employment although for some it is their main job. We would encourage people who may never have thought about it before to consider joining us, as on-call firefighters really are vital to our local communities.



Rob Barber
Chief Fire Officer

Introduction

The **Fire and Rescue National Framework** for England requires us to provide an Annual Statement of Assurance on financial, governance and operational matters so that our communities, partners, local authorities and Government can readily assess our governance arrangements and performance.

This Statement of Assurance sets out the financial, governance and response arrangements that the Staffordshire Commissioner had in place for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. It reflects on the progress made by the Service over the past 12 months in taking our priorities forward and is designed to provide our people, partners and our local communities with the reassurance that we will not compromise on our commitment to protecting our local communities from fire and other emergencies, reducing risk and improving firefighter safety.

We would also like to reflect upon the impact the COVID pandemic has had on our activities and resources and use this as an opportunity to tell you about our plans.

*We have written this statement with the aim of providing our communities with information that is clear and easy to understand. This Statement includes extracts or links to key documents, or other sources of information, where relevant in accordance with the guidance published by the Department for Communities and Local Government on **Statements of Assurance for fire and rescue authorities in England**.*



Our Priorities

This report highlights the progress Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service has made against each of the four priorities set out in our community risk management plan, which we call our **Safety Plan 2020-2024** and meets the requirements of an Annual Statement of Assurance, confirming the adequacy of arrangements for effective management of financial, governance and operational matters for the period. The priorities set out in our **Safety Plan 2020-2024** compliment and support those of the **Staffordshire Commissioner's Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-2024**.

We have set out our priorities for you below alongside those of the Staffordshire Commissioner to show how our priorities support and complement each other:

- 1 Prevention and early intervention**

We aim to develop a detailed community risk profile of Staffordshire, so that we can use our resources in the most efficient and effective way

Help people most at risk stay safe (Staffordshire Commissioner)

Deliver effective and targeted prevention work that provides early help to individuals, families and communities so that we keep people safe from fires and other incidents, they feel safer and there is less pressure on fire response services.
- 2 Protecting Staffordshire and its people**

We aim to reduce and remove risks in our communities using a combination of prevention, protection and response activities and help make Staffordshire a safer place to live, work and visit

Protect people and places (Staffordshire Commissioner)

Protect people, premises and the environment through the right balance of education, advice and support and the use of regulatory and enforcement powers to keep people safe.
- 3 Public confidence**

We aim to report regularly on our progress and communicate openly about our plans so that, they are clearly understood, meet our legal duties and provide assurance to the public in a way which is transparent and easy to scrutinise

A flexible and responsive service (Staffordshire Commissioner)

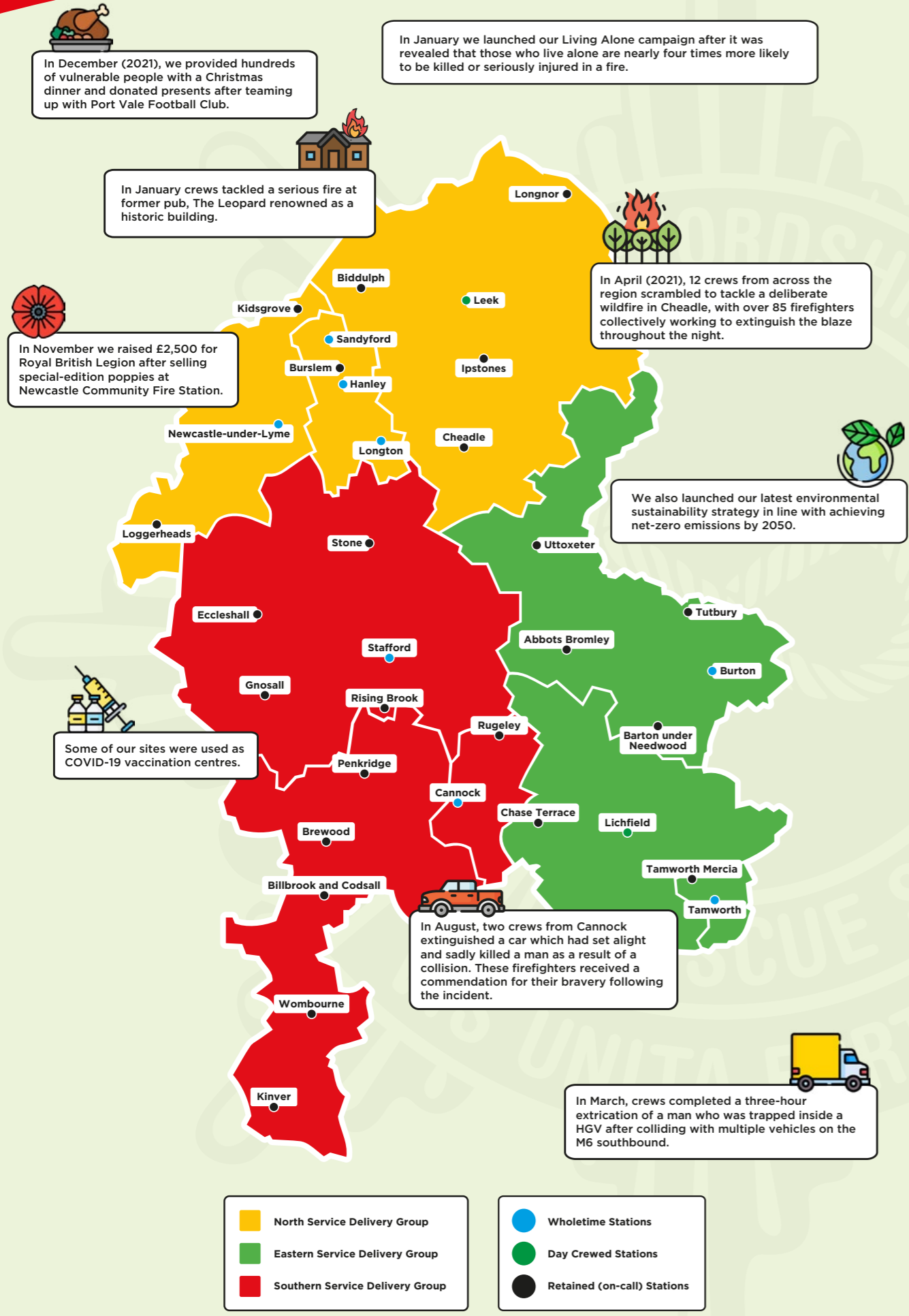
Ensure your local fire and rescue service continues to be accessible and responsive so that risk is appropriately and proportionally managed, community and firefighter safety remains paramount and high levels of public confidence and trust in the service are maintained.
- 4 Service reform**

We aim to develop and support a diverse, healthy and highly professional workforce who are motivated and empowered to improve our service

A fire and rescue service for tomorrow (Staffordshire Commissioner)

Ensure that Staffordshire Fire and Rescue is fit for a changing future and is a leading example for other services to follow so that the people of Staffordshire can be reassured that their money is being used efficiently and effectively and the workforce better reflects the communities it serves.

Your Service



Scope of Responsibility

Since 1 August 2018, the Staffordshire Commissioner (the Commissioner) has been responsible for the governance of the Service, in addition to overseeing Staffordshire Police. The Commissioner is elected by public vote to hold the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Constable to account and ensure local fire and rescue and police services are effective and efficient. Complaints and conduct matters in relation to the Chief Fire Officer are also handled by the Commissioner.

Corporate governance is about how the Commissioner ensures the right things are being done in the right way, for the right people, in an inclusive, open, honest, timely way. The Commissioner is responsible for making sure that:

- the Service is accountable and conducts its business in accordance with the law and relevant standards
- we have effective arrangements in place to identify and manage risk
- we continually look to improve the way we operate and deliver our services
- that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of our communities across Staffordshire.

The Commissioner is responsible for approving the Service's community risk management plan, which we call our Safety Plan. In the summer of 2020, the Commissioner approved our current **Safety Plan 2020-2024** which set out the Service's strategic vision, priorities and objectives and considers how we will best respond to and improve the services we deliver to our communities across Staffordshire.

The Commissioner has also fully satisfied the duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which the functions of the Service are delivered, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. In discharging these overall responsibilities, the Staffordshire Commissioner maintained responsibility for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.



Ben Adams
Staffordshire
Commissioner

Scrutiny and Performance Management

A governance framework is in place which enables the Commissioner to monitor, scrutinise, support and challenge the Service's performance against the priorities set out in our Safety Plan and consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

A well-established and robust performance management system is in place internally throughout the Service with senior management carrying out regular performance monitoring. Performance against delivery of our strategic objectives is measured by using key performance indicators (both quantitative and qualitative). Achievements against these key performance indicators are reported regularly to the Service Delivery Board and monitoring reports are scrutinised by the Commissioner's office

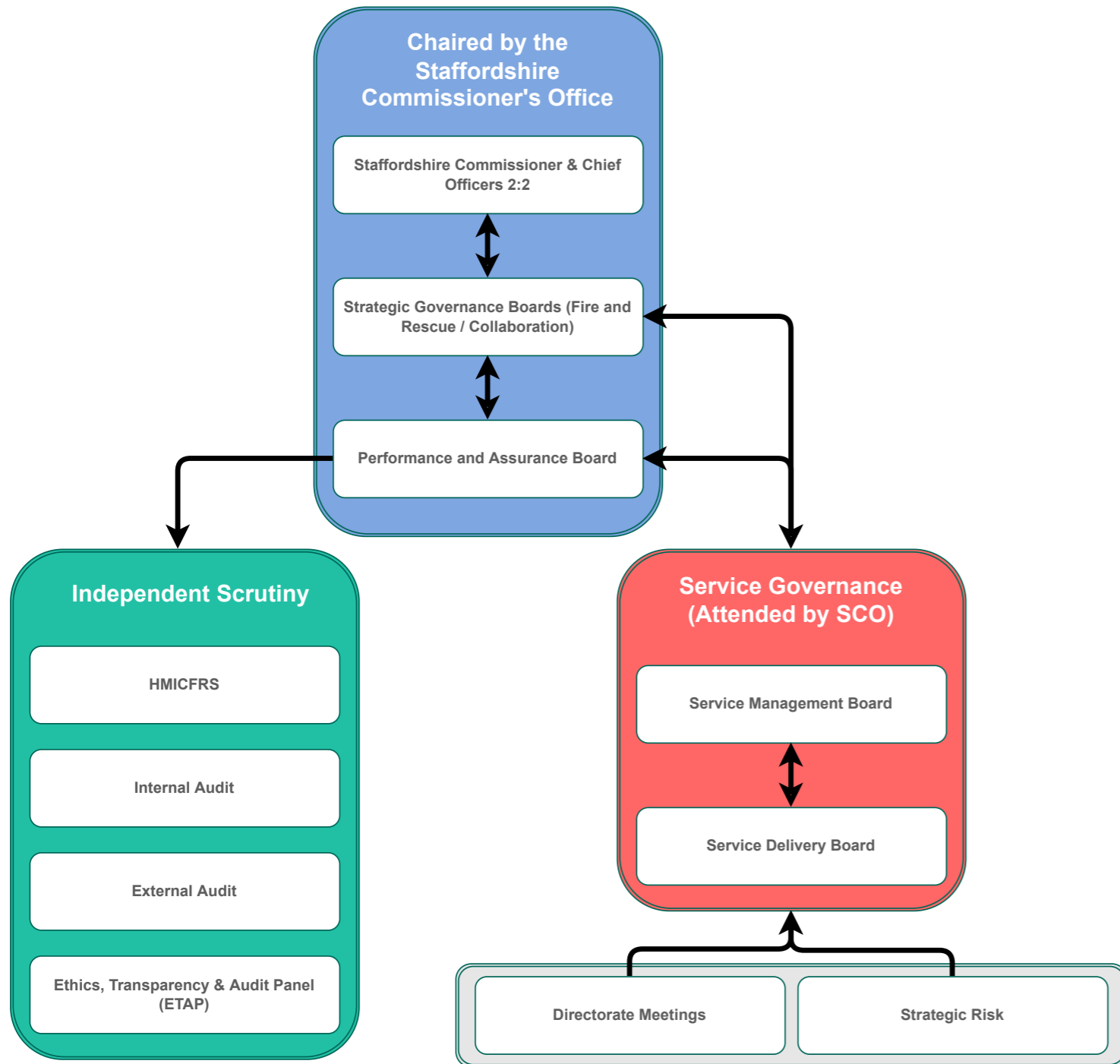
at Strategic Governance Board (SGB). SGB also scrutinise detailed financial reports on a quarterly basis. The reports include full details of performance against budget for the key reporting areas namely, revenue, capital, cash and delivery of efficiencies and savings.

Under the governance arrangements the Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel (ETAP), which also has a separate Finance Panel that receives bi-monthly finance reports, performs the function of the Audit Committee. The Finance Panel includes a number of qualified accountants who are able to provide detailed scrutiny to the monthly Resource Control Report, Internal and External Audit Reports, also the **Annual Statement of Accounts** and provide professional advice to the members of ETAP.





The Governance Structure in place under the Staffordshire Commissioner during 2021/2022 is detailed below:



Public Performance meetings

Public Performance meetings are the forum in which the Commissioner holds the Chief Fire Officer to account for the service to the public. The Service is required to demonstrate the quality of its service in different areas and is assessed against the vision of the Commissioner's Fire and Rescue Plan. This year's topics included the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our performance, prevention activity during the pandemic, police/fire collaboration, funding and precept. The meetings also consider fire and rescue performance data, allowing the Commissioner to assess performance against the priorities set out in our **Safety Plan 2020-2024**.

Operational assurance

Staffordshire (Fire and Rescue) Authority (the Authority) has carried out its functions in accordance with the defined statutory and policy framework in which it is required to operate:

- **Safety Plan 2020-2024**
- **Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004**
- **Civil Contingencies Act 2004**
- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**
- **Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007**
- **Localism Act 2011**
- **Fire and Rescue National Framework for England**
- **Health and Safety Act at Work etc. Act 1974**

Mutual aid arrangements are in place with neighbouring fire and rescue services to provide resilience for cross-border, large scale or complex incidents where additional resources are needed. We support the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit, which co-ordinates multi-agency training, planning for and response to complex incidents that would have a large impact on our county, e.g. pandemic illnesses, wide-scale flooding or terror-related incidents. The Service contributes to the national resilience programme and we can make a number of our assets and resources available to support across the country to support major incidents that would otherwise overwhelm local resources.

We have robust business continuity plans in place which are integral to managing corporate risk and to ensure we can continue to provide a fire and rescue service to our communities in the event of a major disruption.

Annual Governance Statement

The Commissioner will receive all funding, including the government grant, and other sources of income related to fire and rescue services. But it is important to note both Staffordshire Police Fire and Rescue Service and Staffordshire Police remain separate organisations with separate budgets, staff and governance processes.

The Annual Governance Statement is published as part of the Service's **Annual Statement of Accounts**. The statement publicly explains how the Service manages its governance and internal control measures. In addition, the Narrative Statement contained within the **Annual Statement of Accounts** also provides the reader with a broad understanding of the Service's financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2022, by clearly explaining the funding position, and how this funding is spent in order to deliver the priorities as set out within the **Safety Plan 2020-2024**. It is an open and honest account of how we ensure financial management systems are adequate and effective and demonstrate a sound system of internal control, assuring utmost integrity in all dealings. The Annual Governance Statement for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 is published on our website within the **Annual Statement of Accounts**.

We are satisfied that during 2021/22, the Authority's financial, governance and operational assurance arrangements were adequate and operating effectively overall and that our business has been conducted in accordance with proper standards and law and that public money was properly accounted for and used efficiently and effectively. In addition, we are satisfied that the Authority has done everything within its power to comply with the requirements of the **Fire and Rescue National Framework for England**.



Our Progress

1 Priority 1: Prevention and early intervention

To prevent fires and respond promptly and effectively to fires and other emergencies we said we would:

“Help people most at risk stay safe”
(Staffordshire Commissioner)



Work together with our partners across the county to share information and create a more detailed understanding of the risks to our communities and identify the people and properties most at risk



Prioritise these risks to ensure our activities have the most positive impact on community safety



Develop targeted activities to make the most efficient use of our resources and minimise our impact on the environment



Work with partners to educate our communities and share goals to reduce duplication and inefficiencies in the public sector

What we have done and what we plan to do

Safe and Well visits

With the relaxing of Government COVID restrictions during in the summer of 2021, we saw a substantial increase in the number of Safe and Well visits we completed. In 2021/22, we completed 3,583 face to face Safe and Well visits. Whilst social-distancing was in place we put a process in place to conduct ‘non-contact’ assessments via telephone to ensure we continued to give advice and guidance and provide equipment where needed to those most vulnerable members of our communities. The Safe and Well figure provided does not fully capture or reflect this method of contact.

During 2022, we will see the introduction of the new Home Fire Safety Visit and we are currently working on integrating a new online Home Fire Safety Check tool, called ‘Safelincs’, as part of our revised Safe and Well offer. ‘Safelincs’ will be for use by members of the public and our partner agencies. Following

completion of an on-line questionnaire, they will be able to access tailored safety information and guidance, based on their vulnerability and risk score. ‘Safelincs’ is already being utilised by a number of other Fire and Rescue Services and is linked with the work of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

New Contact Centre

In 2021, we took the opportunity to combine our Community Advice and Reception teams and create our new Contact Centre providing one main point of contact for all enquiries. The team manage the process for Safe and Well referrals and bookings, and is the first port of call for other non-emergency enquiries, such as the booking of headquarters facilities and managing the front of house communications. Recently, they have also been liaising with our NHS partners, booking deliveries, by our Safe and Well technicians of blood pressure monitors and equipment to GP surgeries, as well as ensuring anti-viral medication is delivered to COVID-19 patients across the county.

Mental wellbeing

One-in-four adults experience a mental health problem such as anxiety or depression. Older adults may delay seeking help for their mental health for many reasons such as embarrassment, fear they may lose their independence or lack of awareness of or the ability to access appropriate healthcare services. Mental health problems can affect a person’s physical health, wellbeing, and their relationships with others if left untreated and potentially contribute to them experiencing a fire or other emergency.

Colleagues from across the Service have participated in the **FIRESIDE Study** a partnership research project with Keele University, University of Chester and Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. The aim of this research is to explore whether fire and rescues service teams carrying our home fire safety visits could play an important role in supporting older adults to access help and advice about mental health. The research team will analyse information provided via focus groups and help us understand whether we could expand these visits to include mental health support and advice.

Prince’s Trust

The Service has worked in partnership with The Prince’s Trust since 2014 delivering a range of programmes for 16-25-year-olds who are unemployed or work for a maximum of 16 hours per week that help get them into volunteering, further training, education and work.

During 2021/22 we supported 105 Young people on our Princes’ Trust programmes, ‘Get Started’, ‘Explore’ and ‘Team’. This figure is lower than our projected numbers due to the impact of COVID restrictions and the Government’s Kickstart Scheme, which offered funding to employers to create new jobs for 16 to 24 year olds on Universal Credit who

are at risk of long-term unemployment. We anticipate that the numbers of young people engaging with the schemes will continue to increase to pre-pandemic levels over the next few months.

We have recently recruited a new Team Programme Leader for Stone, with the intention that Stone Community Fire Station can operate once again as an independent site as it was pre-pandemic. We have also secured further funding to run an additional Explore Programme from Newcastle-under-Lyme Community Fire Station. This will allow us to form new working relationships and partnerships and pave the way towards supporting more regular Prince’s Trust programmes in the in the north of the county.

Education

The Service is committed to supporting schools and communities to help them make informed and positive lifestyle choices, improving health, safety and wellbeing through direct engagement via ‘Safe+Sound’ workshops and partnership working. During COVID-19 restrictions the delivery of the ‘Safe+Sound’ programme from fire stations was not possible, so we developed an on-line workshop to support families and children educated at home. These weekly online broadcasts, at 10am Wednesday (term-time only), will continue to run through to the end of the 21/22 academic year (also available on demand www.learnliveuk.com/safesound) and start again in the 22/23 academic year.

Device numbers peaked on 30 March 2022 with 5,107 devices tuning in nationally (3,134 of those were Staffordshire based). Between October 2021 and March 2022 the average number of devices, tuning in each week was 2,826.

Our Progress

There are on average five different subjects covered per programme, all produced and delivered by the Service and our partners. Work has started with the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education leads for both Stoke-On-Trent and Staffordshire to link our programmes into the PSHE curriculum to enable teachers to see where our content supports their curriculum requirements.

A total of 130 devices tuned into the Winter Driving Special programme aimed at adults, which included advice on winter safety checks, approaching level crossings, eyesight and driving and driving in challenging weather conditions.

We have produced a Home Safety Special programme that is available on the **LearnLive channel** to view on demand. This programme is for older members of our community to provide advice, information and education on topics such as fire safety in the home, road safety and staying safe online. We are also planning to develop a mechanism for our Safe and Well technicians to be able promote the Home Safety Special during a Home Fire Safety visit as it will reinforce and add value to topics they cover on their visit.

Targeted education

We are planning to introduce a targeted education offer for Key Stage 3 and 4 children who attend alternative provision. This offer will link to the Key Stage 3 and 4 PSHE curriculum and to the science, technology, engineering and math education (STEM) curriculums where possible. We envisage that these sessions will take place on our fire stations and will use the Safe+Sound brand and style of delivery. It is likely that a pilot will take place in two locations between September and December 2022, which will help us to understand the best way to deliver the programme in the future.

Business education

We continued to support businesses suffering a fire throughout the pandemic, with post-fire recovery advice. Our Business Support Lead also supports the police and our own Learning and Development Team with staff training, fire, evacuation chair and general fire safety as well as providing accredited fire safety courses for businesses.

Safety campaigns

The National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) 'Be Water Aware' campaign ran from 26 April and 2 May 2021. The aim being to encourage people to be safe in or around water by being aware of the risks. With the easing of COVID restrictions, it was anticipated many people would head to coastal locations and inland water beauty spots. The Service supported the campaign by actively encouraging people not to be complacent when spending time in and around water.

In good weather, people enjoy the outdoors and will take the opportunity to cool off in the sea, lakes or rivers. In recognition of this, we adopted a different approach to our prevention campaign during the summer. Instead of telling of people to stay out of the water we focussed our messages on improving understanding of the risks and what to do if you get into difficulty. To improve awareness amongst young people we messaged parents and teenagers, through Safe and Sound, our own social channels and through paid social media using the hashtag #Floattolive.

Using resources from the NFCC, the Service took to social media in support of Home Safety Week, which ran from 14 - 21 June 2021. We encouraged people to use and regularly test their smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to reduce the risk of incidents in the home.

During October, we issued a warning to drivers about the dangers of storing fuel at home, as motorists responded to the 'fuel crisis' by flocking to forecourts to fill up their vehicles. We reminded motorists to take extra care when filling up and, in an effort to deter stockpiling, be aware of the risks of inappropriate handling or storage of such highly flammable materials.

In November, we reminded residents to celebrate Bonfire Night safely and to be mindful of the dangers of fireworks and of the spread of coronavirus. With fewer people choosing to attend professionally organised public displays for fear of catching COVID, we reminded our communities of the firework code and warned against garden bonfire parties due to the risk of fires getting out of control.

In January 2022, we launched our new **Living Alone** fire safety campaign, aimed at people aged 45+ who live alone as they are nearly four times more likely to die or be seriously injured in a house fire. The campaign will continue to run throughout 2022, focusing on different areas. The first part of the campaign focussed on cooking safety as statistics show that 72 per cent of accidental house fires involving people who lived alone started in the kitchen.

Fire safety in the home booklets are now available on our **website** in different languages for those members of our communities who do not have English as a first language and prefer to read in their native language. We are also looking to make some hard copies of the booklets available for those who do not have web access.



Our Progress

2 Priority 2: Protecting Staffordshire and its people

To protect our people, buildings, the environment and reduce local risk we said we would:



Continue to modify and develop our activities to embrace the changing needs of the county and use advances in technology and techniques to ensure our response to emergencies is efficient and effective



Contribute to building communities which are fit for the future – resilient, healthy and sustainable



Contribute to ensuring that buildings in Staffordshire are safe for residents and visitors for generations to come



Ensure that we have the capability to meet new and emerging risks from incidents that may involve flooding, wildfire, terrorism or supporting other emergency services

What we have done and what we plan to do

Fire Safety Audits and Building Regulation activity

The Service regularly inspects business premises to make sure that they comply with fire safety legislation. We aim to help and support to businesses to operate safely, but we will consider, and where necessary, take legal action where lives are at risk. We hope that by taking such action we will deter other business owners from failing to take their responsibilities seriously and encourage them to take necessary fire precautions to keep their premises safe from fire.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we introduced telephone audits as an alternative method of engagement in order to ensure we continued to protect members of the public and fulfil our regulatory responsibilities to the communities of Staffordshire. The proportion of face-to-face fire safety audits increased steadily between October 2021 and March 2022 in line with the relaxing of COVID-19 restrictions. The upward trajectory is likely to continue into 2022/23 as activity returns to pre-pandemic levels with a

focus upon ensuring increased risk properties such as care homes receive regular audits to ensure the safety of residents.

We are reviewing our Risk Based Inspection Programme following the publication of preliminary guidance on higher risk occupancies and relative priorities for Risk Based Inspection Programmes in October 2021. The factors to be considered when identifying high-risk premises are:

- Likelihood of a fire occurring
- Likelihood of non-compliance with fire safety regulations and standards
- Societal life risk

In October 2021, at Stoke-on-Trent Crown Court, the owner of premises in Penkull pleaded guilty to a single offence of breaching the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and was sentenced to 12-months' community service and ordered to pay full costs within 28 days.

We learned of the breach following a serious fire at the premises in May 2020. We had to rescue several occupants from the burning building, which the owner had converted from

“Protect people and places”
(Staffordshire Commissioner)

commercial use into mixed commercial and residential usage without the appropriate planning approval. The owner failed to take general fire precautions, placing people at serious risk as the fire occurred in the building where people were sleeping.

High Rise Buildings Inspection Programme activity

As part of the High-Rise Inspection Programme (also known as the Building Risk Review Programme), the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) identified 50 premises for inspection across Staffordshire. Following the fire at Ridware House in Lichfield in November 2020, we prioritised this piece of work and audits of all 50 premises were completed well ahead of MHCLG's deadline of December 2021.

Community sprinkler project

In 2017, we identified 42 blocks of flats over five storeys in Staffordshire, which required sprinkler systems fitting. It was our aim to get these systems in place within a ten-year period. By the end of 2022 with work on 16 of those buildings set to be completed, we are well on track to meet that objective working with our partners in social housing.

We are working in collaboration with Midland Heart to provide sprinklers in a number of their properties. What started as an idea to retrofit sprinklers in a single block of flats in Staffordshire has now turned in a much bigger project to provide sprinklers in eight buildings across the wider West Midlands area.

School Court in Hednesford and Camoys Court in Hanley are two retirement villages where the residents will now benefit from the added protection that sprinklers provide. However, it is the completion of the sprinkler system at Charnwood House in Lichfield, which marks the most recent success of our Community

Sprinkler Project. This 5-storey block of flats formed one of the original 42 premises we identified back in 2017.

Following the fire that occurred on the 11th floor at Northwood Court in Hanley in March 2022, we will be taking the opportunity to engage with local social housing providers about the benefits of sprinklers. At the same time, Stoke-on-Trent City Council have continued their own programme of retrofitting sprinklers in all their high-rise blocks of flats with four systems installed over the past year and a further two installations already underway.

Fire hydrants

Working fire hydrants are essential for firefighters to be able to access water sources for fighting fires and protecting the public. We have a new detailed Hydrant Policy and ensure that our new technicians receive all the necessary training to perform statutory testing of the very high rated adopted fire hydrants around the county. There are currently 39,000 fire hydrants within Staffordshire and since the start of 21/22:

- 2,096 - Statutory testing completed in accordance with the requirements the Fire Services Act 2004.
- 401 Adopted fire hydrants - inspected on new housing developments. We tend to see around 200 new schemes per year.
- 109 Adopted fire hydrants - checked after the water undertaker carried out repairs.
- 720 Location Plates - installed to make sure fire crews can locate the hydrant when they need to.
- 143 Inspections - completed for adopted fire hydrants, reported as defective.

Our Progress

Prevent, protect, and hydrant management system (PPHMS)

We are developing a new system (PPHMS) which will provide one integrated location and database for our fire safety audits, enforcement activity, home fire safety visits and hydrant information. We have also developed risk profile maps in order to help target those who are most vulnerable.

Improving our environmental impact

Protecting our local environment starts at 'home' and in January, we launched our new **Environmental and Sustainability Strategy 2022-2027**. Our previous Environmental Protection Strategy, launched in 2011, led to an increased awareness of environmental issues across the Service, focussed on good practices such as turning off lights, and increased recycling. Our new strategy explores how small changes to the way we work can add up to larger environmental savings through a reduction in our carbon emissions.

To improve the environment and help us reduce our carbon footprint further, we will focus on:

- Reducing waste
- Being more sustainable during

Operational incidents

- Improving air quality
- Reducing energy usage
- Generating more green space across our sites

For example during active firefighting, in the case of wildfires we will now look to understand new tactics to extinguish fires more quickly, consider environmental protection as part of our plans and include this in training, as well as use more innovative equipment. We will look at ways of improving how we power our buildings and equipment, dispose of our waste as well as developing green spaces for our staff to enjoy and help improve their wellbeing.

It is hoped that the new strategy will have a positive impact across three distinct areas:

- Environment - by reducing pollutants
- Social - by improving air quality and work environments
- Economic - by reducing our carbon footprint



Our response to the COVID-19 pandemic

- **Helped to deliver over 3,500 COVID vaccinations to Staffordshire residents**
- **Supported pop-up clinics to slow the number of Delta variant cases**
- **Winners of the Frontline Risk Award and Partnership Award for our work during the pandemic**

We have continued to review our localised measures to help protect our staff and our communities from the risk of catching COVID as we continued to see high levels of infections in Staffordshire. We issued revised people and workplace guidance in relation to COVID 19 throughout the pandemic. There is a legislative obligation on the Service to ensure the safety of our workforce whilst continuing to provide our services safely to our communities and maintain our emergency response availability.

Whilst we continued to maintain a COVID-secure environment, we encouraged our staff who were able to work from home to do so around the festive period to help keep infection rates low with the emergence of the new more virulent Omicron variant.

Improving the equity of access

With coronavirus cases above the England and West Midlands average, the Service volunteered the use of several of our fire stations as sites for local walk-in COVID vaccination centres to our NHS partners. We wanted to help make it possible for everyone

eligible for the vaccine to have easy access to a vaccination site, both for their own health and the safety of the wider community.

It is clear that, particularly in rural locations, some community members were experiencing difficulties accessing designated COVID vaccination centres. Volunteers from across the Service stepped up to support the Staffordshire Local Resilience Forum in delivering COVID vaccination programmes within hard to reach areas. Our teams worked alongside health colleagues within targeted locations throughout the county on an outreach basis, providing support with planning, logistics and transport.

This approach helped improve the equity of access to vaccines for all and ensure that any barriers to access are removed. In particular a number of seasonal fruit farms with significant numbers of migrant workers were targeted, and for many people this was the first time they had ever had a vaccination. The number of workers on these farms, which are located all around the county, increased as we moved towards the summer months.

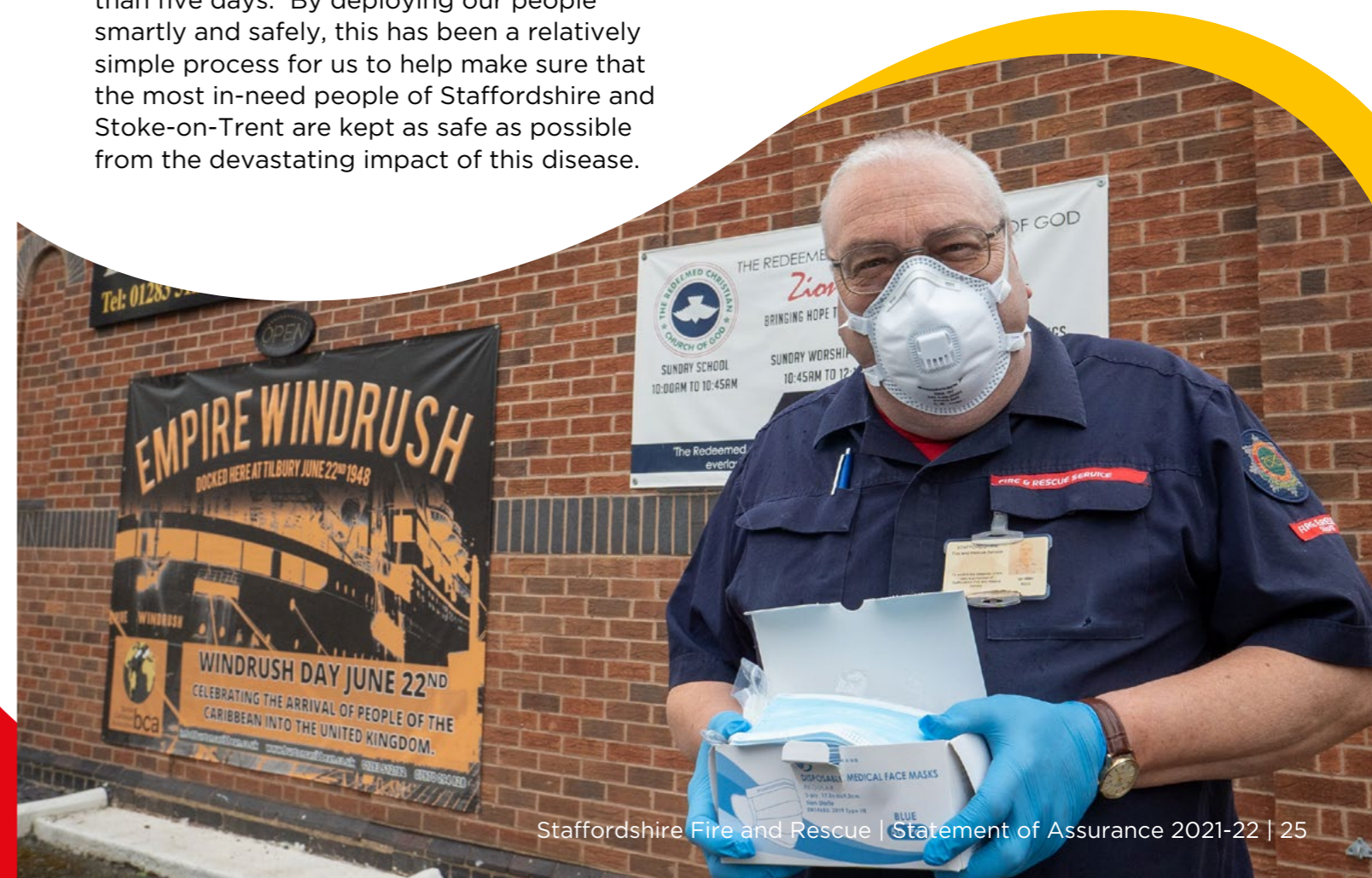
Partnership working

We also provided volunteers, logistical and planning support to the Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust for pop-up mass vaccination clinics set up in response to the increased numbers of the Delta variant being identified in areas such as Leek. We also supported surge testing in these areas

by dropping off and collecting home test kits as a further way of identifying any positive cases that had not been picked up. Our continued support to these activities was crucial in ensuring a continuation of the effective and efficient response to the pandemic in order to save lives and keep people safe.

Our firefighters joined with partners in the NHS to deliver vital anti-viral medication to the most vulnerable people in our communities with COVID-19. People with conditions such as cancer and other serious illnesses that affect the immune system, are assessed by an NHS medical professional and then our firefighters pick up the drugs from local hospitals and pharmacies and deliver them to the patient the same day. The whole process, from assessment to delivery of the drug, usually takes no more than five days. By deploying our people smartly and safely, this has been a relatively simple process for us to help make sure that the most in-need people of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent are kept as safe as possible from the devastating impact of this disease.

In January 2021 HMICFRS published its report, which explores how fire and rescue services supported their communities during the COVID 19 pandemic. The report highlighted our involvement in improving the take up of COVID vaccinations supporting the Staffordshire Vaccination Equality Group, by helping with the pop-up vaccination clinics. To read the report in full [click here](#).



Our Progress

3 Priority 3: Public confidence

To maintain public confidence and trust in the service we said we would:

“A flexible and responsive service”
(Staffordshire Commissioner)



Ensure plans and resources are in place to provide a flexible efficient and resilient response to emergency incidents



Consult with our communities and listen to our people when developing our plans and services



Provide evidence that our activities are based on a recognised need and are targeted where they are needed most



Adopt a transparent and easily understood approach to planning and reporting throughout the Service

What we have done and what we plan to do

New Commissioner

In May 2021, Ben Adams was signed in as the new Staffordshire Police Fire and Crime Commissioner, with Helen Fisher as his deputy. During the year they have been visiting crews and teams across the Service to deepen their knowledge about the work we do and the challenges we face. The Statement of Assurance for 2020/21 was prepared for presentation to and sign-off by the new Staffordshire Commissioner. It was then published on our website in accordance with our publication scheme. As a public authority, we are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and are required to maintain a **publication scheme** which describes the information available and where it can be found.

Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU)

The CCU moved from Stafford Fire Station site to its new permanent base at our fire headquarters in July 2021. The new accommodation provides an improved training, exercise and response capability. CCU will be working on enhancing video-conferencing and tactical response facilities in the new location.

New Service Management Team

In October 2021, Becci Bryant retired as Chief Fire Officer after 29 years with the fire and rescue service. Former Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Rob Barber was confirmed as our new Chief Fire Officer at a special meeting of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on 12 October 2021. Glynn Luznyj (previously our Director of Response) took up his new role as our Deputy Chief Fire Officer on 6 December 2021. These new appointments gave us an opportunity to reflect and look at how best to lead the Service into our next phase.

Home Office fire statistics

Our Performance and Assurance Team collate data and submit an annual response for data to the Home Office. The Home Office has responsibility for fire services in England and collects detailed information on incidents attended by fire and rescue services which it publishes on a dedicated webpage - **Fire statistics**. The source of the data used for Home Office statistical publications involving incidents attended by fire and rescue services is the online Incident Recording System (IRS). Home Office Fire Statistics include:

- Fire and rescue incident statistics, quarterly; presents trends in fires, fire-related fatalities and fire casualties, false alarms and non-fire incidents attended by

fire and rescue services

- Detailed analysis of fires, annual; presents detailed statistics on fires attended by fire and rescue services, and fire-related fatalities and non-fatal casualties in those fires; including analyses of the causes of fires and smoke alarms operation
- Detailed analysis of non-fire incidents, annual; presents detailed statistics on non-fire incidents attended for example emergency medical responding, flooding, road traffic collisions, fatalities and casualties
- Fire and rescue response times, annual; focuses on trends in average response times to different types of fires.

New website

The new Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service website went live in September 2021. The new version allows for an improved user experience and enhanced accessibility features to make sure we are reaching all our communities within Staffordshire. With over 60 per cent of visitors to the site using a mobile device, the user interface has been designed to be mobile first, to improve user experience, enhance engagement and make the journey through the website much more streamlined. It is also visual instead of text heavy and uses new branding throughout to reflect the modern service, providing a channel, which allows us to be open and transparent with our communities.

Our plans for 2022/23

In January 2022 our Principal Officers Chief met with all heads of department and asked them to provide an update on their plans for 2022. This approach is part of a renewed Service wide focus upon performance management. Heads of department will be held to account for delivery against their plans as will all managers within the Service.

We have now published our Annual Plan 2022 that sets out our strategic priorities for the coming year. The drivers for planning have been our **Safety Plan**, the **Staffordshire Commissioner's Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-2024**, **His Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)** and the **Fit for the Future initiative**.*

Departments and service delivery groups have in turn set our departmental objectives in their delivery plans, which support the strategic priorities.

All our plans are readily available on a dedicated section of our intranet 'Staffnet' for ease of reference. Staff are encouraged to view those annual plans that are relevant to their area of business and consider how they and their teams can contribute to achieving those objectives.

Annual Plan 2022

The main drivers for planning

- 1. Safety Plan Priorities 2020-2024:**
 - Prevention and early intervention
 - Protecting Staffordshire and its people
 - Public confidence
 - Service reform
- 2. Staffordshire Commissioner's Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-2024:**
 - A flexible and responsive service
 - Protecting people and places
 - Helping people most at risk stay safe
 - A fire service for tomorrow
- 3. HMICFRS – State of Fire Report 2021 and Service Inspection 2021**
- 4. Fit for the Future - How fire and rescue services can improve to meet the challenges of the 21st century (Fire and Rescue Service Employers, NFCC and LGA) October 2020**

Strategic Priorities for 2022

- 1. People Priorities**
 - Cultural reform
 - Increase the diversity within the workforce
 - Improve the training of our workforce through development on leadership, management and all people matters
- 2. Service Transformation**
 - Ensure that we are "able to provide a modern, efficient and sustainable level of service to the public which does not compromise the safety of our staff or our communities."
 - Continue to collaborate effectively with Staffordshire Police and other partner organisations
 - Ensure that public value is prioritised within our transformation
- 3. Prevention and Protection**
 - Deliver on the expected outcomes from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2
 - Continue to invest in protection teams training and capabilities
 - Introduce operational staff protection training and accreditation
 - Improve the understanding of risks, planning and performance
 - Increase the delivery and range of prevention work
 - Broaden the role of our prevention work and the opportunities closer with health
- 4. Response**
 - Identify better ways of working - embracing technology and harnessing talent
 - Embed response performance measures
 - Utilise fire standards to identify areas of improvement
 - Implement the environmental strategy in relation to vehicles, equipment, property and during incidents
 - Wider collaboration and strengthen local partnerships
 - Improve our training implementation and recording processes.
- 5. Service wide priorities**
 - Ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all of our staff
 - Implement the Environmental Strategy
 - Explore greater flexible working systems for staff
 - Support the introduction of technological advancements in the delivery of all aspects of Service work



**Fit for the Future is an initiative developed in a partnership between the National Employers (England), the Local Government Association (LGA) and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). It looks to provide an evidence-based view of the role of the fire service, so that the role of employees could be properly defined and agreed and clarify the benefits and value that fire and rescue services bring to their communities.*

State of Fire Report 2021

The latest State of Fire and Rescue – The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2021 report [click here](#) demonstrates the enormous contribution that the fire sector has made during the global pandemic. The flexibility of all of our staff has been evident throughout demonstrating that our staff can support partners in responding to a variety of tasks.

Locally we have been working hard to ensure that our fire safety or protection teams have

been strengthened and this will mean that our buildings are as safe as possible for both residents and fire fighters alike, this is something that has also been reflected within the national report. The need to accelerate the diversity within the sector is acknowledged and this is something that the Service is focussing upon locally in order to improve. This linked with our continued drive to further develop the culture within the organisation is a priority for the Service, as is the wellbeing of our people.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection

Since 2017, HMICFRS has been responsible for the independent inspection of England's 45 fire and rescue services in addition to national police forces. These inspection reports provide an assessment of a fire and rescue service's effectiveness and efficiency and how well they look after their people. HMICFRS use a system of graded judgments to assess these criteria; 'Outstanding', 'Good', 'Requires Improvement' and 'Inadequate'.

The Service has worked hard to develop a positive and inclusive working environment, values and culture and we remain focused on developing this to underpin the way we serve our communities, carry out our role and work together. These inspections help us to identify best practice and provide further opportunities for learning and improvement, which will ensure that our culture and working practices are as inclusive and supportive as possible and enable people to perform at their best.

HMICFRS had to carry out much of its inspection activity remotely due to the COVID pandemic to help reduce the risk to the sector, staff and public. The inspection was carried out using a blend of virtual and on-site interviews, desktop exercises, focus groups and on-station reality testing.

Although we were inspected over a number of weeks during September and October 2021, the final report was not published until July 2022; in line with HMICFRS's approach of publishing reports in batches and not immediately after each service's inspection is complete. Although the publication date falls outside the period of this Statement of Assurance, we thought it important to share the outcomes with you as part of this report.

Its findings were in many ways positive, although it highlighted issues that we are continuing to invest time and effort in to improve. We are pleased that HMICFRS still recognise us as 'Good' at providing an effective service to the people of Staffordshire and we are well prepared for major incidents. Inspectors also said we are 'Good' at identifying people in our communities who are most at risk from fire and we work well with our partners to reduce this risk. The inspection noted how we have responded positively and proactively to learning from the Grenfell Tower tragedy and have improved the safety

of residents in Staffordshire who live in high-rise buildings through our sprinkler scheme.

HMICFRS found us to have good financial management arrangements in place so we can understand how money is spent and that we collaborate well with the police which means we can make more efficient use of our fleet and buildings. We do, however, need to explore new ways of working and invest in new technologies to help ensure we are using our workforce in the most productive way.

There were however, a number of areas in which we were rated as 'Requires Improvement' and HMICFRS has identified a number of areas for improvement. These included: protecting the public through fire regulation, responding to fire and other emergencies, making the best use of resources, promoting the right values and culture, and ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.

Naturally, we are disappointed in some of the ratings we have received in these areas, but only by going through this inspection process can we identify and make improvements, in order to make things better for our staff and our communities.

HMICFRS consider the Service 'Requires Improvement' in the way we look after our people. Our staff are at the heart of our organisation and although we need to do more to address some issues related to our people, the report highlights the good wellbeing arrangements we have in place to support our staff. Some of the considerations have already been highlighted through our own Culture Report and we are working towards addressing these.

We have identified that the difficulties we have faced in recruiting on-call firefighters has resulted in our availability not being as high as we would want it to be. We are focussing on promoting our recruitment campaign in our communities as a priority.

We are committed to improving diversity within our workforce and have recently appointed a dedicated Positive Action Co-ordinator to support us in this area, something that we are also focussing on in our recruitment campaign






You can read the latest HMICFRS Inspection report in full [here](#).

Our Progress

4 Priority 4: Service reform

To ensure we are effective, efficient and able to transform the Service to meet the challenges we face we said we would:

“A fire and rescue service for tomorrow”
(Staffordshire Commissioner)

-  Invest in our people by providing them with the right equipment, training and skills to keep them safe, encourage innovation and inspire our future leaders
-  Continue to strive to improve the services we provide
-  Be honest and open, encouraging people to be themselves and treat each other with kindness and respect
-  Promote a positive and supportive culture committed to improving the health, fitness and wellbeing of our people
-  Work with our communities and partners to improve the diversity of our workforce

What we have done and what we plan to do

New management structure
The formal notice of retirement of one of the Service’s Directors presented an opportunity for the Service to redefine the roles and structure within the senior leadership team to create a more efficient and effective management structure and more flexible pathway for the development of staff into senior roles.

The Service has operated with one of leanest Senior Leadership Team structures in the UK Fire and Rescue Services since 2011 and it has been reviewed on four occasions between 2011 and 2019. The number of senior posts and roles has reduced on each occasion. It is important to note that the Service chose not to introduce the role of Area Managers into the Service when the sector engaged in a national transition from rank to role structures in 2004 instead opting to employ a board of Directors.

It is acknowledged that this structure meant a significant gap in responsibilities, terms and conditions from a Group Manager up to a Director (which is an Assistant Chief Fire Officer - ACFO).

Many similar services operate with a structure of a single ACFO role combined with a number of Area Managers beneath (at least one Area Manager in those structures has the additional responsibility of Strategic Command to support the Gold (XP) rota). This has proven to be effective and offers a route of succession from Group Manager, to Area Manager, to Principal Officer Level with Strategic Command responsibilities. It also means that other Area Manager roles within the organisation do not have to have an operational responsibility. The benefit of this is that it opens the positions to a broader talent pool for recruitment and selection purposes and brings new skills into the Service.

Therefore, one of the ACFO posts has been

removed from the organisation. Moving from seven Group Managers to five and developing three Area Manager Positions (only one of which is required to have operational competence). This fulfils the needs of the strategic operational rota, whilst providing opportunities for non-operational colleagues to operate at the senior leadership level, which is again something that has been raised through our cultural survey.

This new structure is less costly than the current structure, but importantly provides additional capacity and supports service delivery. These changes are intended to ensure that the Service has a robust structural framework to deliver the **Safety Plan** and all of our statutory duties. At the same time, the changes are intended to support all of our people in the Service, to ensure that they can flourish within each of their teams and their individual roles.

Service Transformation Programme
The Service’s Transformation Programme is managed by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and is aligned to the **Safety Plan** (Service Reform) and the Commissioner’s Fire Plan 2021-2024 under the two priorities of having a flexible and responsive service as well as a fire service for tomorrow. The focus of the Transformation Board’s work will be on response, crewing reform and prevention and protection reform with work streams developing a number of options to make the service financially sustainable for future years.

Code of Ethics
In May 2021 the **Fire Standards Board** published the **Code of Ethics** which is to be

adopted by every fire and rescue service in England. The code, reflects best practice principles and has been designed to underpin the way we serve our communities, carry out our role and work together.

The Code of Ethics is easy to understand and is broken down into five ethical principles which are designed to help us improve our culture and workforce diversity:

- Putting our communities first
- Integrity
- Dignity and respect
- Leadership
- Equality, diversity and inclusion

The Core Code is closely aligned to our existing Cultural Framework and values which already focus on valuing our people, diversity and improvement and putting service to our communities at the heart of everything we do.

One of the key priorities in our Safety Plan is to **maintain public confidence and trust in the Service**. This relies on each and every one of us demonstrating sound ethical behaviours. We will continue to explore how we can enhance and incorporate the Core Code of Ethics into our values, behaviours and policies across the Service. A review of policies is being undertaken and a gap analysis is being developed so we can determine where we need to amend, change or introduce new guidance on the core code. A new LearnPro module was developed to support everyone’s understanding of the Core Code of Ethics and set out the Service’s expectations.

Our Progress

Culture sessions and report

By the end of the summer everyone had the opportunity to take part in one of our Cultural Sessions. The intention of these workshops was to have a conversation about a number of key issues and to gain an insight into how people were feeling and being treated within the workplace on a daily basis so we could fully understand how we can improve as an organisation.

In October 2021 we published the Culture Report, which is an in-depth review of the feedback provided by staff during the Culture Sessions. Following publication of the report the Service has embarked on a series of activities to look at how the culture can be improved further. Senior leaders have come together to analyse the report and look at how we can approach things differently and staff are encouraged to work within their teams and share ideas on how the culture in the Service can improve further or what they see as the opportunities to resolve the issues raised.

Statement of Intent

The Service's Statement of Intent was published as an acknowledgement that the Service, like all organisations, has its issues, but that we welcome people with both visible and invisible differences and hold all our staff to the highest standards in terms of supporting equality, diversity and inclusion. It sets out the Service position regarding inappropriate behaviours and is not intended to stifle, but to encourage constructive conversations around equality, diversity and inclusion within teams. It is designed to support our staff in terms of being able to raise issues and concerns regarding inappropriate behaviours. This statement linked with the Core Code of Ethics are key aspects of the Service's approach to cultural change.

A diverse, healthy, and highly professional workforce

Concerns were raised through the cultural survey as well as through a number of other

channels to suggest that capacity within the shared Human Resources (HR) department has been an issue. As a result a Head of HR (for Fire only) has been recruited, providing additional capacity and dedicated focus on the people planning aspect of HR that is required within fire.

The shared HR function is developing a new Workforce Strategy which will set out how we will continue to work towards our Safety Plan priority of 'Developing a diverse, healthy, and highly professional workforce who are motivated and empowered to improve our Service.' We will be making sure that we are working with police colleagues in this area to ensure that we are engaging with all of our communities and creating the understanding that the fire and rescue service is a career choice for all.

The Service has become a corporate member of **Women in the Fire Service**. Since its formation, the membership has sought to influence the equality agenda, engaging with the major fire and rescue service players in order to have the voice of all women working in the fire and rescue service heard.

The Insights and Engagement Team will be working with their police counterparts in order to focus upon improving the equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the Service. HMICFRS has recognised that the sector needs to improve significantly in this area and we want to be a forward-thinking organisation with regard to this area of work. In addition, there were many comments made via the culture review regarding EDI and as such, we will be investing time and effort to improve our collective understanding.

Looking after our own mental health and wellbeing

We are currently exploring ways of improving the wellbeing of our staff. These include but are not limited to:

- Mental health support and advice – to

- improve our understanding of mental health issues in the workplace and how to support colleagues who may be struggling
- Health and fitness – having a single point of contact on each watch or in each team to support colleagues
- Developing outside areas at each location for people to relax in or have outdoor meetings which will also support our new Environmental Strategy at the same time
- Staff networks to provide safe spaces and support for a wide variety of groups.

Mind, The Royal Foundation, The Ambulance Staff Charity, The Fire Fighters Charity, and Police Care UK have launched **Blue Light Together** – a brand new website designed to support emergency responders. We told our staff about the new hub via our internal iNews publication. The independent site offers specialised information and resources around looking after your mental health and wellbeing.

To support the wellbeing of our staff flu vaccination clinics were held at fire HQ, Burslem, Cannock, Lichfield fire stations and police headquarters. These were open to both fire and police colleagues, offering free flu vaccinations, in a bid to protect the health of our people during the flu season.

Firefighter recruitment

In April 2021 we hosted the passing out parade for our whole-time firefighter apprentice course 2020/21. With the COVID restrictions the event needed to use a very different approach to ensure the safety of everyone involved. The event consisted of an inspection, followed by the presentation of certificates and the awards for breathing apparatus, rescue and the silver axe. It is important to recognise the efforts, commitments and hard work of all the instructors and the team at Learning and Development who delivered the course for 18 new firefighters at a time when the pandemic meant we had to rethink the way in which the entire course was delivered. Running two separate syndicates in different locations with all the logistics that took was an incredible achievement.

The next phase of our whole-time/competent on-call transfer process started towards the

end of August 2021. The whole-time course started in September, with a number of competent on-call firefighters being placed straight out on stations.

Role of a firefighter

In November, we encouraged our staff to take part in the NFCC's consultation on the Job Description and Person Specification for the role of a firefighter. This consultation included a Job Description and Person Specification for the core role of a firefighter, as well as information regarding service-specific duties and guidance on how these might be dealt with where appropriate. We recognise the importance of participating as our responses will help to shape the document and enable the NFCC to deliver a quality product endorsed and supported by the wider fire and rescue service sector.

Collaborative shared services and estates

Since the change to single governance, collaboration between Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Staffordshire Police and the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office has realised significant savings, totalling over £1m per annum through initiatives such as:

- combining shared enabling services (core HR, Finance, Estates, Communications and Procurement) (Shared Services)
- shared use of estate buildings and stations
- single procurement processes to leverage economies of scale in purchasing.

The COVID pandemic had a significant impact on shared services due to the need to maintain organisational business as usual to all customers and organisational effort being concentrated on the pandemic response. As we emerge from COVID all parties have a renewed commitment to drive continual reform, improvement and efficiency from the current shared services arrangements. This work started in 2021 with a review of occupational health and will be extended to all shared services in the 2022/23 financial year. These reviews will differ in intensity based on the relative changes since inception of each service, any concerns around value for money or performance as well as known changes in organisational landscape but will be evidence based.

At the centre of the Government's Fire Reform White Paper presented in May 2022 are plans to improve accountability by transferring fire governance to a single elected individual, overseeing delivery by operationally independent Chief Fire Officers in the same way as Staffordshire Police Force is a distinct legal entity from the Commissioner's Office. This may impact on the reviews being undertaken and as such will influence the order in which these reviews are undertaken, dependent upon the legislative outcome and direction of travel.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service has a building portfolio consisting of 35 premises (21 of these being Private Financed Initiative (PFI) buildings). The PFI buildings are managed by the Shared Services Estates Team and building maintenance is outsourced to two contractors across the estate; Equans Facilities Management and Kier Facilities Management. The remaining 14 buildings are maintained by an in-house facilities management function within the Estates Team. The Estates Team have planned a major refurbishment programme for the residual buildings, which initially will see works carried out at Stafford and Abbots Bromley fire stations, then shortly after Brewood and Tutbury, with the intention of completing the entire programme by 2024. There is a continued programme of investment to make sure all our buildings are maintained to a standard and facilities are fit for purpose.

The Estates Team are working closely with the Staffordshire Commissioners Office to build upon the current successful collaborative building projects recently undertaken at Hanley and Tamworth which now sees the Service and Staffordshire Police working together and co-locating within the same buildings. The Estates Team are committed to utilising the building portfolio to explore

further collaborative opportunities between both fire and police as well as other public organisations. Shared services is more than just the local relationship between policing and fire. There remains an intent to provide the services where best suited based on organisational need as opposed to always seeking police and fire collaboration. We already share a control room with West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service, as well as having multi-service arrangements in place for items such as pension administration.

With Staffordshire Police changing its operating model to focus on local policing, moving policing closer to the communities they serve, it has been agreed to explore the feasibility of three further combined locations between police and fire at Uttoxeter, Kidsgrove and Stone. As this remains at the feasibility stage no firm commitment has yet been made. The benefits to the public purse of the shared locations at both Tamworth and Hanley (within Stoke on Trent) have provided both modern, fit for purpose accommodation to policing as well as generating capital receipts of circa. £2m and ongoing revenue savings in excess of £300k per annum across Police and Fire. Whilst the aforementioned site will not generate the same level of savings due to their relative size they will provide modern, fit for purpose policing facilities within those locations for future generations.

Enhanced Rescue Pumps

We took the decision to buy two new Enhanced Rescue Pumps (ERPs) as part of the replacement program for existing ageing vehicles and, from a decision made originating from our transformation programme, the removal from service of the current Rescue Tender from Longton. In essence, the new concept was combining a pump rescue ladder with a rescue tender, to form an enhanced rescue pump. The new ERPs will be located

at Stafford and Longton. The requirement for ERPs has been based on current and foreseeable risk within Staffordshire and the analysis of previous incidents attended to make sure that we can continue to provide a resilient operational response for incidents requiring technical rescue capabilities.

Following an extensive consultation and procurement process, and taking into account vehicle commissioning timescales, it is estimated that the ERPs chassis will arrive in Service mid-2023 and the appliance build will be complete by end 2023. The appliance will then be subject to a snagging and training period before being made operationally available.

The ERP's will be capable of attending all types of technical rescue incidents, but in addition to the current capability, crews will have specialist training and will be better equipped to carry out rescues from heavy goods vehicles and train carriages. Following discussions with our Learning and Development department, operational crews, other fire and rescue services and industry experts, our Emergency Response Team have been arranging station trials of equipment to assist in deciding on types of equipment best suited to dealing with technical rescue type incidents. New hydraulic rescue tools have been trialled along with an extensive list of new equipment.



The Staffordshire Commissioner is responsible for the finances of the Service with a net revenue budget of £41.977 million approved for 2021/22 on 15th February 2021. Revenue expenditure consists of the day-to-day running costs, such as employee costs, pension costs, premises, transport, ICT, income and financing costs.

The Staffordshire Commissioner manages the affairs of the Authority to ensure that proper arrangements are in place for delivering value for money through securing financial resilience and challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Overall the financial performance of the Authority has been positive in year by delivering savings which has importantly supported the direct financing of capital expenditure and contributes to the increase in reserves.

During 2021/22, £0.4m was invested in capital projects, which is considerably less than the original budget approved for the year as the continued impact of the pandemic during the year has had some impact upon spend and the ability to deliver against the original programme, in addition to product availability in a challenging market place.

It is imperative that the Service continues to play a leading role in the communities we serve to ensure that Staffordshire remains one of the safest places to be. The Service is responsible for providing its services to a population of just over 1.14 million people in our communities across the county of Staffordshire and the City of Stoke-on-Trent. During the year ending 31 March 2022 we responded to 8,404 emergency incidents.

Accounting Statements

The **Annual Statement of Accounts** is published to present fairly the financial position and transactions of the Staffordshire

Commissioner (Fire and Rescue) Authority (the Authority) in a fair and transparent manner. Its format is prescribed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

The main statements consist of:

- Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts which sets out the responsibilities of the Authority and the Treasurer for the accounts;
- Annual Governance Statement which assesses the adequacy of the Authority's governance arrangements and identifies where improvements can be made;
- Statement of Accounting Policies which sets out the basis for recognising, measuring and disclosing transactions in the accounts;
- Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement which summarises income and expenditure on the Authority's services during 2021/22; and presents all the recognised gains and losses of the Authority during 2021/22;
- Movement in Reserves Statement which reconciles the Income and Expenditure Account with General Fund Balances taking into account contributions to reserves committed for future expenditure;
- Balance Sheet which sets out the Authority's financial position as at 31 March 2022; and
- Cash Flow Statement that summarises the inflows and outflows of cash in the year.

The Statement of Accounts is available on our website at: www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk

Printed copies can be obtained by contacting our Finance team on **0300 330 1000**.





Response



- 8404** total incidents ↑ **UP 4%** from last year
- 726** road traffic collisions ↑ **UP 33%** from last year
- 440** accidental house fires ↓ **DOWN 15%** from last year
- 1635** small outdoor fires ↓ **DOWN 9%** from last year
- 3** accidental house fire deaths **NO CHANGE** from last year
- 25** accidental house fire injuries ↑ **UP 25%** from last year
- 155** accidental business fires ↑ **UP 27%** from last year
- 48** deliberate business fires ↑ **UP 37%** from last year



Protection

6 Enforcement Notices and **7** Prohibition Notices issued

400 telephone fire safety audits

730 full fire safety audits were carried out on those premises deemed most at risk

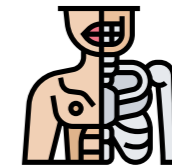


Health and Safety

Injuries up to **37**, in comparison to **26** the previous year.

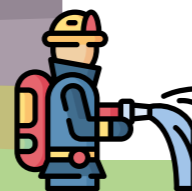
Breakdown:

- 7** struck against object
- 4** manual handling
- 4** slip, trip or fall
- 13** struck by object
- 2** fall from height
- 4** musculoskeletal
- 2** entrapment
- 2** other



Prevention

3,583 Safe and Well visits * ▼ **DOWN 13.6%** from last year



Human Resources

Recruited:

- 23** on-call firefighters
- 18** wholtime firefighters
- 20** support staff



Finance

Budget set at **£42m**,
Capital spend **£0.4m**.



*Due to Covid-19 restrictions only high priority Safe and Well visits were carried out.

What do you think of our Statement of Assurance?

We welcome any views you may have on the content of this Statement of Assurance. If you have any feedback, thoughts or suggestions, or if you would like to take part in future consultations please let us know.

Planning for the future

Our current Safety Plan covers the period 2020-24. We will soon be starting work on developing our next Safety Plan and it is important that we seek the views of our communities when doing so. We would love to hear from individuals, partners and local community groups who would be interested in helping us to shape the future of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service by taking part in consultation about our future plans.

If you would like to share your views with us about our Statement of Assurance, or if you would like to take part in future consultation please email us at consultation@staffordshirefire.gov.uk, or visit our website at www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk where you will find links to further information about our services and activities.

Interested in helping us by becoming an on-call firefighter?

On-call firefighters are part-time, paid firefighters who provide emergency response to the same emergencies as our whole-time firefighters. They often have a primary job and fit in their role as an on-call firefighter around their main employment. They can respond to an emergency from either their home or work.



Alerter goes off

If an emergency is called in during their on-call period, they will be notified by their alerter.



Go to fire station

They will then make their way to their local fire station, whether this is from their home or work.



Respond to emergency

When at the station, they will then kit up, get in the fire engine and respond to the emergency.

As well as responding to emergencies, on-call firefighters can also get involved in community fire safety initiatives in their local area, including carrying out Safe and Well visits and school visits.

On-call firefighters are a crucial part of our fire service as they provide an efficient and effective emergency service to the communities of Staffordshire. We are recruiting on-call firefighters, so if you are interested in becoming an on-call firefighter in your local area, you can find more details and apply online via the careers section of our website staffordshirefire.gov.uk/careers

Contact

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
Pirehill
Stone
Staffordshire
ST15 0BS



www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk



Staffordshire
Fire and Rescue Service
preventing • protecting • responding