

# Productivity and Efficiency Plan

2026-2027



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## About the Plan

This Productivity and Efficiency Plan sets out the ongoing financial position for the Authority and illustrates the recent transformation savings that have been delivered by the Service and presents future work that will contribute positively to improving efficiency and drive productivity.

The Fire and Rescue [National Framework](#) sets a requirement that Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) produce and publish annual efficiency plans. There is a specific requirement from the Minister for Building Safety, Fire and Democracy that in 2026/27, FRAs produce plans that cover their efficiencies and productivity initiatives in 2025/26, and their intentions for continuing efficiencies and productivity into 2026/27 and onwards.

Productivity and Efficiency Plans help the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Local Government Association (LGA) and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) to collate evidence for future Spending Reviews, assess progress, and champion national improvement by identifying and sharing best practice. This year, the information requests have been refreshed to reduce burdens on services and improve consistency and quality of returns. In addition, MHCLG are asking services to provide three-year financial forecasts and information relating to on-call staff.

This document has been produced as a requirement of the funding settlement from the MHCLG and is published on the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service website so that it can be scrutinised by members of the public and the council tax payers within Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent.

This document contains links to other relevant documents and websites and should be read in conjunction with other publications.

## Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Authority's strategy for the provision of services is driven by the approved Community Risk Management Plan. The Plan has been developed using integrated risk management planning methods and is designed to conform to the Government's guidance in relation to the preparation of integrated risk management plans. A new Community Risk Management Plan has been released for the period 2025 to 2028. The financial year 2026/27 is the second year of the updated plan.

The Community Risk Management Plan can be found as per the link below:

[Community Risk Management Plan \(CRMP\) 2025-2028](#)

The Community Risk Management Plan and this Productivity and Efficiency Plan is supported by the approved Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which sets out how the Authority will fund the plan. The MTFS is based on a number of assumptions, which are detailed within this document.

## Funding and Budget Assumptions

The following table sets out the assumptions the Authority is making about funding up to 2028/29 and includes the assumptions including the year 2025/26. The budget year 2026/27 is the first year of a three-year settlement issued following the Government's Fair Fund Review. The financial year 2025/26 has been rebased to fall in line with the funding assumption included for 2026/27 where certain grant funding streams have been included with the revised Revenue Support Grant (RSG).

Settlement Funding Assessment (All figures are £000 unless stated)	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Budget	2027/28 Plan	2028/29 Plan
Baseline Funding - Business Rates / Top Up	10,547	8,777	9,047	9,229
Revenue Support Funding	10,935	12,918	11,446	10,120
<b>Fair Funding Assessment</b>	<b>21,482</b>	<b>21,695</b>	<b>20,493</b>	<b>19,349</b>
<b>Council Tax Forecast</b>				
Band D Council Tax (£)	92	97	100	103
Actual / Assumed Council Tax base increase on previous year	320	269	360	375
Yearly Council Tax Precept Increase	1,848	1,862	1,089	1,132
Collection Fund (council tax & business rates)	(488)	305	(68)	0
<b>Total Council Tax Income</b>	<b>33,828</b>	<b>36,264</b>	<b>37,645</b>	<b>39,152</b>
Council Tax Band D Precept Increase (%)	0	0	0	0
Growth in Council Tax Base Yield to Previous Year (%)	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL REVENUE BUDGET £000s</b>	<b>55,310</b>	<b>57,959</b>	<b>58,138</b>	<b>58,501</b>

## Revenue Budget 2026/27

The following table sets out the budget for 2026/27 and breaks down sources of income and planned spend. The budget for 2026/27 and level of council tax increase was approved by the Staffordshire Commissioner on 9 February 2026 following a presentation to the Police Fire and Crime Panel.

The budget for 2026/27 included a decision to raise the Precept by £5 (5.45%).

	Budget 2025/26	Budget 2026/27	Year on Year Change
	£000s	£000s	£000s
<b>Pay</b>			
Pay Costs	33,820	35,137	1,317
Other Employee Costs	2,666	2,548	(118)
Pay Efficiency	(300)	(100)	200
<b>Total Pay</b>	<b>36,185</b>	<b>37,585</b>	<b>1,400</b>
<b>Non Pay</b>			
Premises Costs	4,687	4,347	(340)
Transport Costs	1,139	1,156	17
Supplies & Services Costs	9,965	9,792	(173)
CFS Costs and Initiatives	320	249	(71)
Non Pay Efficiency	(100)	(100)	
<b>Total Non Pay</b>	<b>16,012</b>	<b>15,444</b>	<b>(567)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Income - General	(2,109)	(1,934)	175
Interest Receivable	(608)	(410)	199
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(2,717)</b>	<b>(2,344)</b>	<b>373</b>
Capital charges	2,217	2,060	(157)
Interest Payable	723	674	(50)
PFI Unitary Charge	4,220	4,255	35
<b>Total Capital Charges</b>	<b>7,160</b>	<b>6,988</b>	<b>(172)</b>
<b>Total Revenue before Reserves</b>	<b>56,640</b>	<b>57,673</b>	<b>1,033</b>
Transfer to/(from) Reserves	(1,330)	286	1,616
Budget Gap in Year			
<b>Total Revenue Budget</b>	<b>55,310</b>	<b>57,959</b>	<b>2,649</b>

## Revenue Budget and MTFS Narrative

Following the Police, Fire and Crime Panel meeting on 9 February 2026, the Revenue Budget for 2026/27 was approved by the Staffordshire Commissioner at £58 million. This budget included a £5 increase in Council Tax, raising the Band D rate to £96.77, which is approximately £1.86 per week. This increase was in line with the Council Tax referendum limit set at £5. The Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27 has unfortunately introduced several new challenges, leading to a significantly worse financial outlook for 2026/27 and into the medium term than anticipated. The Fair Funding settlement allocations for 2026/27 is £0.4m lower than the rebased Settlement Funding. Fair Funding allocations across the three-year period result in a net reduction of £2.1m. The Fire and Rescue sector will overall see a reported increase in core spending power of 4.5% for 2026/27, 4% for 2027/28 and 3.8% for 2028/29, however government funding is actually reducing by 1% in cash terms across the three years of the settlement and all of the increase in core spending power is as a result of the assumed £5 council tax increase in each year. It should be noted that although the Fair Funding Review did produce a multi-year settlement, the service is having to operate and plan on a single year budget due to the level of income from Council Tax being unknown for years two and three.

In addition to the above the Council Tax base increase within Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent, which includes the growth through new domestic properties only grew by 0.79% compared to the expected 1% growth. This being said, the Council Tax Collection Fund does show a small surplus of £218k.

In order to deal with this medium-term financial position, the Commissioner has tasked the Service with achieving an additional £1 million in recurring savings by 2028/29. This will ensure a balanced revenue position into the medium term. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer has led the transformation programme and the work completed in this programme will result in the savings being achieved during the year 2026/27, two years ahead of schedule. The Government's Fair Funding Review represents a reduction in grant funding over the next three years partially mitigated by an expectation that Commissioner's increase council tax by the maximum allowed £5. This assumption ignores that the Staffordshire Commissioner is required to consult the public on the council tax precept increases each year. Subject to future consultations informing the Commissioner's precept decision there is a funding gap of between £500k and £2.1m which is in addition to the £1m savings already identified. In order to address this gap, Phase 3 of the Transformation Programme is already underway, with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer continuing to lead this next phase of work, building on the transformation efforts of the past two years.

The Authority needs to access its Earmarked Reserve during the next three years in order to balance this challenging financial position. The Reserve Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) assume the use of £1m of reserves will be required during the next five-year period in addition to delivering the £1m saving target.

The Chief Fire Officer fully understands and acknowledges the challenges that lie ahead. He is confident in the ability of the Service to build upon the successful initiatives already delivered by the Transformation Board. It is crucial for the Service to continue to scenario plan for the future, therefore a range of scenarios have been worked through and will be reviewed to meet the funding gap. These scenarios may impact on service delivery, however public safety and firefighter safety will be prioritised and protected as much as possible. This proactive approach will ensure that a range of options are available for consideration by the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority.

The Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27 was received on 17 December 2025 and incorporated the three-year settlement for the first time in a decade. The Fair Funding Review refreshed the methodology for distributing a fixed pot of funding between local authorities covered by the local government finance settlement using a Relative Needs Formula (RNF). Whilst many RNFs have been fully reviewed the data underpinning the Fire and Rescue RNF has simply been updated to reflect the latest information.

## Income Narrative

The Authority has a budgeted total income for 2026/27 of £2.3m, which includes recurring and non-recurring activities, as shown below:

<b>INCOME</b>										
<b>£000</b>										
	Actual 2024-25		Actual 2025-26		Forecast 2026-27		Forecast 2027-28		Forecast 2028-29	
	Recurrent	Non-recurrent	Recurrent	Non-recurrent	Recurrent	Non-recurrent	Recurrent	Non-recurrent	Recurrent	Non-recurrent
Income generated from charging policies	(275)	0	(266)	0	(43)		(44)		(44)	
Income generated from trading operations	0	0	0	0					0	
Income generated from shared premises	(720)	0	(837)	0	(984)		(1,054)		(1,074)	
Income generated from interest on investments	(1,001)	0	(608)	0	(410)		(230)		(150)	
Income generated from other sources		(1,033)	(108)	(898)	(158)	(750)	(161)	(824)	(164)	(841)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(1,996)</b>	<b>(1,033)</b>	<b>(1,819)</b>	<b>(898)</b>	<b>(1,594)</b>	<b>(750)</b>	<b>(1,488)</b>	<b>(824)</b>	<b>(1,432)</b>	<b>(841)</b>

### Income from Charging Policies

This includes charges for the Primary Authority Scheme, fire reports completed, partnership income, collaboration recharges, the sale of fuel and equipment.

### Income from Shared Premises

The Authority shares a number of sites with Staffordshire Police as part of the collaboration initiative drive by the Staffordshire Commissioner supported by the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Constable. Shared sites exist across the Fire estate including Hanley, Tamworth, Chase Terrance, Stone, Kinver, Barton under Needwood and from April 2025 Uttoxeter with further shared sites under development.

## **Income from Investments**

This is the income received from Investments made by the Authority based upon the cash held during the year. Interest return has increased significantly during the last two year in line with the Bank of England base rates.

## **Income from other Sources**

Income includes the S31 grants receivable as part of the Business Rates system, the apprenticeship levy and government grants.

## **Transformation Savings and Plans**

Ongoing Service Transformation has been necessary to ensure that Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service can continue to deliver ‘a modern, efficient, and sustainable level of service to the public’ that prioritises the safety of both our staff and our communities. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer oversees the Service’s Transformation Programme that will consider how transformation can best support our priorities of **our communities, our people** and **our environment**.

The Transformation Board was formed in February 2022, with representatives from various areas of the Service. Its purpose is to explore and implement ways to transform the Service and ensure its financial sustainability. The Board meets regularly to monitor and evaluate progress through an action plan, while also providing recommendations through to the relevant governance channels.

A multi-phase transformation programme has been undertaken in order to meet financial sustainability targets as detailed in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Following the successful completion of Phase 1, which delivered £1.3m recurring savings, the focus has shifted to the implementation of Phase 2 initiatives in order to save an additional £1m recurring savings. At the same time, attention has now been focused upon the identification and delivery of additional financial savings required to secure the required savings from 2026 onwards as a result of the Fair Funding Formula review under the three-year comprehensive spending review.

The delivery of this transformation programme has achieved savings of £2.3m, including areas such as administrative reviews, estate sharing and workforce efficiencies.

Service Transformation has also taken into account additional work streams. For instance, working on a ‘Clean Concept’ initiative to minimise operational staff’s exposure to contaminants from fires. Additionally, a project to review the standards and accreditation for fire investigation officers has also been implemented.

The Transformation Board has now moved into the next phase and will be reviewing options to further transform the Service in order to increase productivity and drive efficiency. A review by an external company has now been completed utilising up to date and historic risk and demand data in order to objectively review existing station locations and current shift patterns. This has formed a range of scenarios that could be utilised if necessary to make additional savings from the operational response element of the service but all scenarios would have an impact on response times and levels of fire cover for the County.

In order to balance the updated MTFS and meet the additional financial challenges the Commissioner has tasked the Service to deliver a further £2.1m of new recurring savings over this next three-year period as part of the next phase of transformation. A saving target of £0.4m has been incorporated into the 2026/27 budget and has already been surpassed.

## **Efficiency and Productivity Update**

This Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2026/27 will help the NFCC, LGA and Home Office to collate evidence and to assess likely progress at national level against the agreed Spending Review goals. The Authority have extracted the data from the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, with the savings target for all three years 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29, as shown below:

## EFFICIENCY DATA (£000)

	Actual 2024-25		Actual 2025-26		Budget 2026-27		Forecast 2027-28		Forecast 2028-29	
Opening Revenue Expenditure Budget (Net)	50,065		55,310		57,959		58,138		58,501	
Less Total Direct Employee Costs	(34,253)		(36,185)		(37,585)		(37,376)		(37,166)	
Non Pay Budget	15,811		19,125		20,374		20,762		21,335	
<b>Efficiency Savings</b>	<b>Recurrent</b>	<b>Non-recurrent</b>	<b>Recurrent</b>	<b>Non-recurrent</b>	<b>Recurrent</b>	<b>Non-recurrent</b>	<b>Recurrent</b>	<b>Non-recurrent</b>	<b>Recurrent</b>	<b>Non-recurrent</b>
<b>Direct Employee</b>										
Reduction in Prevention/Protection/Response Staff	(172)		72		406		800		1,600	
Reduction in Support Staff	392		110		67					
<b>Indirect Employee (e.g. training, travel etc.)</b>										
All Indirect Employee Costs										
<b>Premises</b>										
Utilities			28							
Rent/Rates										
Other Premises Costs										
Shared Premises	50		50							
<b>Transport</b>										
Fleet										
Fuel										
Other Transport Costs										
<b>Supplies and Services</b>										
National Procurement Savings										
Local Procurement Savings	30		27							
Other Technology Improvements										
Decreased Usage			71							
<b>Capital Financing</b>										
Revenue Expenditure Charged to Capital										
Net Borrowing Costs	168		443							
<b>Other</b>										
Other Savings 1 (saving target non pay TBD)			0		100		300		500	
Other Savings 2 (Please Specify)										
Other Savings 3 (Please Specify)										
<b>Total Efficiency Savings Non Pay</b>	<b>248</b>		<b>619</b>		<b>100</b>		<b>300</b>		<b>500</b>	
Efficiency Savings as a Percentage of Non-Payroll Budgets	1.57%		3.23%		0.49%		1.44%		2.34%	

The Commercial Service Team provide a shared service across Police, Fire and the Office of the Staffordshire Commissioner and is focussed upon making a valued and measurable contribution towards the overall commercial performance of each organisation, therefore contributing to the achievement of its strategic direction and business imperatives and where possible deliver procurement savings and efficiencies.

The Service has also moved to the Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC) from April 2024 delivering savings and efficiencies for the provision of insurance services. HMICFRS have recognised FRIC as providing value for money and a cost-effective solution to Fire related insurance risks.

The Service has also continued to build on existing partnerships such as our Fire and Health Partnership activities where we work with the Integrate Care Board (ICB) and Midland Partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT) in providing a Falls Response Service and in December 2023 a new Home from Hospital service was launched. These two initiatives are providing improved outcomes to some of the most vulnerable people within our communities.

Through collaborative working with the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board (SSOTICB) a Falls Response Team was established on 14 November 2022, and the service went live on 7 December 2022 initially for a 6-month pilot period. The initiative involves SFRS personnel attending and resolving falls calls across Staffordshire. The team are dispatched by the NHS-led Unscheduled Care Coordination Centre (UCCC), who draw calls from the West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS). The patients being attended generally have vulnerabilities associated with being at increased risk of fire such as elderly, mobility issues etc, therefore Safe and Well checks, including falls prevention advice are carried out.

The team consists of 6 staff (5 of which are also on-call personnel), based at Lichfield, working in shifts of 3 to cover 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week. When the team are not assigned to falls calls, they are carrying out prevention activity. As at the end of February 2025 over 2200 mobilisations have been made with these important interventions supporting the NHS and ensuring that members of the public are seen quickly following a fall, with an average arrival time of under 40 minutes, much quicker than waiting for an ambulance to arrive, allowing the ambulance teams to focus on more urgent calls. Funding has now been agreed that will extend this important work well into 2025.

The Home from Hospital work (HfH) has been very successful with just under 2300 patients, as at February 2025, being transported from Hospital and taken home since 4 December 2023. This service provides a discharge and settle-in service for patients identified by the Integrated Discharge Hub (IDH) and is currently operating from various wards of the Royal Stoke Hospital. The team will attend the hospital on request and take a patient home and settle them in, ensuring they have access to all requirements to keep them safe, e.g. electricity, heat, food etc and will carry out safety checks including a Safe and Well check. The team also have the capability to transport patients in wheelchairs.

The Falls Response and HfH are both excellent examples of how the Service can add real value and support the communities we serve, but in different ways helping the local health economy to manage the increasing demands being placed upon the NHS.

## **Wholetime Firefighter Productivity Update**

### **Measurement of Productivity**

The Service has a process in place to record the amount of time that operational staff are contributing towards the Operational, Enabling, and Non-Framework activities. Data is captured from operational staff directly, who are recording the type of daily activity and the time required to complete each activity manually within Service data management systems.

Guidance has been issued to operational crews through the 'Station Daily Work Routine' document, which also details the blocks of time within each shift (outside of meal breaks, standard routines and scheduled briefings) where activity recording is to take place.

Recording categories have been defined internally and are divided into the following areas for operational staff:

- **Operational Activities**
- **Training Activities**
- **Additional Routine Activities**
- **Prevent Activities**
- **Protect Activities**
- **Administrative Activities**

These categories are broadly similar to the guidance methodology detailed, however areas referred to as 'non-framework' activities such as; standard routines, meal and rest breaks are not included as these areas are already accounted for in Station daily work routines and do not form a part of reporting currently as crews are not required to record these types of activity.

### **Productivity Reporting**

Operational productivity for Wholetime (WT) firefighters is captured through the Service's FireCal system, developed using a Power App. The platform provides a consistent method for recording daily WT activity and aligns directly with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) productivity categories. All watches input their routine work into FireCal, including activities such as parade, briefing, routines, training, and community engagement. Incident information is automatically populated.

FireCal measures activity across the four NFCC categories: Core, Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary. In addition to this, specific training activity is recorded for both WT and On-Call staff. This includes the planning and delivery of training sessions and exercises, with sub-categories covering areas such as Breathing

Apparatus, Road Traffic Collisions (RTC), core operational skills, multi-appliance exercises, and national resilience assets such as the High-Volume Pump (HVP). All statutory, mandatory, and expected elements of operational training are included.

A minimum monthly performance standard is set for each WT watch. This includes:

- 24 hours of training (with an emphasis on 2 hours per day of practical activity)
- 13 hydrant inspections
- 1 Fire Safety Compliance Check
- 4 PORIS fire safety visits
- 15 Home Fire Safety Visits
- 9 school/education visits per academic year
- Community engagement aligned to local risk and need

These standards form the baseline expectation and are reviewed annually as part of the Service's planning and performance cycle, ensuring alignment with organisational priorities and any new workstreams that emerge.

FireCal generates a range of performance reports that are reviewed across several governance layers. Detailed scrutiny takes place at Senior Leaders' meetings (quarterly), Group Manager performance meetings (monthly), and Delivery Group performance meetings (monthly). An overview of performance is presented to the Strategic Governance Board (SGB), Service Delivery Board (SDB), and relevant thematic boards covering response, prevention, and protection.

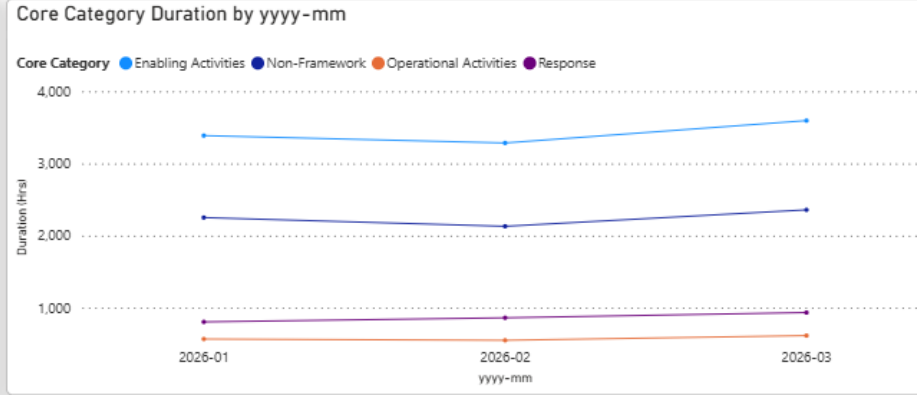
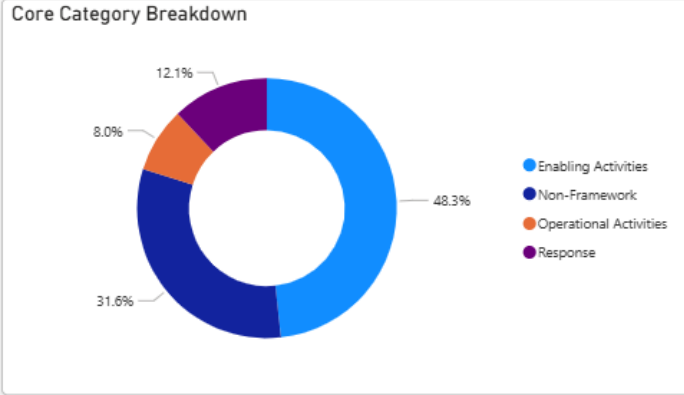
Operational assurance activities provide quality checks on performance and include exercises, incident debriefs (undertaken in line with the Service's debrief policy), and planned station assurance visits. Findings are collated and reported monthly to the Response Board, ensuring learning and continuous improvement remain central to operational delivery.

Below is an extract from the Services new FireCal system which is used to review performance data and productivity covering the following core categories; Enabling Activities, Non-Framework, Operational Activities and Response.

The information provided below is for the fourth quarter of 2025-26 only. This is due to the new FireCal System being installed part way through the year. The Service will be able to provide a full year's worth of data in the 2027-28 Productivity and Efficiency Plan.

Date: 01/01/2026 to 31/03/2026  
 SDG: All  
 Station: All  
 Watch: All  
 Day or Night: All

Unrecorded Hours / Over Planned Hours (Decimal): -336.5



Delivery Group	Enabling Activities (hrs)	Enabling Activities % of shift	Non-Framework (hrs)	Non-Framework % of shift	Operational Activities (hrs)	Operational Activities % of shift	Response (hrs)	Response % of shift	Total Duration (hrs)	Planned Hours	% Productivity
<b>WSDG</b>	<b>1,291.2</b>	<b>45.4%</b>	<b>1,016.5</b>	<b>35.7%</b>	<b>188.7</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>346.9</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>2,843.32</b>	<b>2,830.03</b>	<b>100.47%</b>
Stafford	656.1	46.3%	508.7	35.9%	93.4	6.6%	158.2	11.2%	1,416.42	1,415.02	100.10%
Cannock	635.1	44.5%	507.8	35.6%	95.3	6.7%	188.7	13.2%	1,426.90	1,415.02	100.84%
<b>NSDG</b>	<b>3,563.4</b>	<b>48.1%</b>	<b>2,311.6</b>	<b>31.2%</b>	<b>584.7</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>944.0</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>7,403.69</b>	<b>7,783.08</b>	<b>95.13%</b>
Sandyford	669.3	47.1%	452.5	31.8%	111.0	7.8%	188.6	13.3%	1,421.39	1,415.02	100.45%
Newcastle	671.6	46.6%	473.6	32.9%	108.6	7.5%	186.6	13.0%	1,440.38	1,415.02	101.79%
Longton	1,176.6	49.0%	811.3	33.8%	166.0	6.9%	247.4	10.3%	2,401.33	2,830.03	84.85%
Leek	464.0	65.0%	98.0	13.7%	95.9	13.4%	55.5	7.8%	713.37	708.00	100.76%
Hanley	581.9	40.8%	476.2	33.4%	103.2	7.2%	265.9	18.6%	1,427.22	1,415.02	100.86%
<b>ESDG</b>	<b>1,815.7</b>	<b>50.9%</b>	<b>1,039.0</b>	<b>29.1%</b>	<b>338.1</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>374.8</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>3,567.68</b>	<b>3,538.03</b>	<b>100.84%</b>
Tamworth Belgrave	675.9	47.3%	482.6	33.7%	140.2	9.8%	131.7	9.2%	1,430.43	1,415.02	101.09%
Lichfield	452.3	63.6%	76.0	10.7%	89.3	12.5%	93.9	13.2%	711.48	708.00	100.49%
Burton-on-Trent	687.5	48.2%	480.4	33.7%	108.6	7.6%	149.2	10.5%	1,425.76	1,415.02	100.76%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,670.3</b>	<b>48.3%</b>	<b>4,367.1</b>	<b>31.6%</b>	<b>1,111.5</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>1,665.7</b>	<b>12.1%</b>	<b>13,814.68</b>	<b>14,151.14</b>	<b>97.62%</b>

## Capacity recording

A new Capacity and Activity Calculator has been created by the Home Office. Since this time the Service has moved to a new recording system (FireCal) on 1 December 2025. This has also meant that as a Service we have adopted the joint Home Office/ NFCC framework for Productivity reporting for Primary categories; and have determined Secondary and Tertiary categories for productivity recording within the overall context of the Home Office Productivity Plan.

The capacity of Wholetime Fire Fighter watches is currently determined from the daily shift pattern hours of each watch and the number of operational hours contained. This is also split into Day/Night shifts. The productivity of Wholetime watches is currently reported against this capacity from the activity recording completed by crews in FireCal, which also includes internal targets that have been set by the organisation for specific activity types.

Since developing FireCal and moving the Service over to this as the single recording method for productivity, there have been great improvements in the quality of the data recorded due to basing the new reporting model on that of the activities of the watch and not each individual Fire Fighter. Further to this a data assurance and checking process is being completed by Business Support Staff on a monthly basis between 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of each month to ensure that all time within the Wholetime shift pattern calendar is accounted for.

Capacity is a set time based quantity within the Service that is used for the current productivity recording model on the basis of the number of operational hours available for the watch, which is set by the general shift pattern, although there are noted changes to this for Day crewed stations.

The mechanisms by which the Service records productivity have improved from 1 December 2025, with the introduction of the FireCal product across the Service for Wholetime staff.

Moving from recording productivity on an individual level towards recording activities on a watch level has greatly decreased the individual administrative burden of recording this activity, and the app itself has focused upon an improved user interface to streamline this process and deliver increased efficiencies through the combination of links to MS forms and the inclusion of targets and priorities to focus crews on specific activities within the framework. In addition, the introduction of FireCal has likely reduced the number of hours spent in completing 'non framework' and administrative activity although this is difficult to measure fully due to the change in national framework and primary activity groups between recording in FireWatch and recording in FireCal. There is anecdotal evidence provided from the workforce generally that this is the case.

An increase in capacity could be assumed by the reduction in administrative activities required to provide productivity data that allows further time in the shift to complete activities under other areas of the framework. The introduction of targets for areas of activity also provides focus to crews on the priority areas that have been determined by the service. Finally, a greater overview of what activities Wholetime crews are completing is now available at a strategic and tactical level through the use of PowerBI dashboard and integrated reporting tools within FireCal.

## **Asset Management and IT Investment**

To allow staff to work anywhere and still have full access to IT, the Service have provided all staff with access to the full set of Microsoft applications with appropriate security controls and also are in the process of delivering state of the art audio visual equipment to each Fire Stations.

The access to applications, means that staff do not need to be tied to headquarters or stations to complete the majority of their work. They are able to work from home, the fireground or anywhere in between. The audio-visual equipment means that they can have immersive training or be active members of meetings from their own station. This is particularly effective for on-call staff in managing their availability more flexibly and effectively.

The initiatives mean that training can take place remotely, reducing travel times. Staff can be more part of the decision-making process rather than feeling that decisions are made in isolation of the workforce. It is simpler and easier to record staff hours and their productivity accurately as it can be done in real time. This project commenced in 2023 and will conclude in March 2026.

## **Digitisation of processes**

The use of Microsoft PowerApps, PowerBI and Microsoft forms has been used to digitise numerous processes within the service. A new intranet has also meant that staff now know the correct location and application to use when completing work.

Staff now have the ability to complete forms or provide data in a single place, and then the processes are fully digitised, with streamlined workflows, potentially automated reducing manual tasks, and speeding up operations, leading to increased productivity.

Digital data can be accessed from anywhere at any time, making it easier for remote teams to collaborate and for individuals to access information. Digitised data can be easily analysed to gain insights, track trends, and make informed decisions.

The digitisation of processes has improved data quality, with the addition of validation at source, allowing more accurate reporting and actionable insight.

## **Access to timely data and reports**

The project has utilised PowerBI to enhance the ability to provide data sets and reports. Managers have the ability to build reports based on the datasets that are provided.

The project commenced in 2023 and will continue for the foreseeable future as there are numerous sources of data that can provide actionable insight.

Managers are now able to use the data sets to measure and monitor performance and compare and contrast between shifts, stations and divisions. This allows them to build actionable insights and review the success or otherwise of initiatives to improve productivity.

Managers can now see which areas need to be targeted for improvements.

### **Application rationalisation**

Application rationalisation has involved evaluating and streamlining the number of software applications within our service to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and eliminate redundancy.

The Service over the years had purchased a number of spot solutions that provided a capability, but were not integrated with other applications, making data sharing difficult and having multiple sources of truth. By analysing the applications that we use and by replacing them with solutions that cover multiple areas, we have been able to reduce license costs, have clear demarcations of the master source of data, and allow simple integrations between fewer applications.

A simple example of an improvement is that the core operational water management solution, has a simple integration within the MDT solution, so that the state of hydrants is near real time and all users have an accurate up to date picture.

This project commenced in 2024 and will complete in 2026.

### **Capital Expenditure and Performance Information**

As well as ensuring that the revenue budget is affordable over the medium term, the Authority also needs to ensure money is available to purchase new assets (e.g. Premises, vehicles, equipment, ICT infrastructure). The planned capital programme is shown in the table below.

<b>Estimated Capital Expenditure (All figures are £m unless stated)</b>	<b>2026-27 Budget £m</b>	<b>2027-28 Plan £m</b>	<b>2028-29 Plan £m</b>
Capital Expenditure	5.3	4.1	5.1
<b>Capital Expenditure Financing</b>			
Direct revenue Funding	0.4	0.5	0.5
Use of earmarked Reserves	0.4	0	0.5
Unsupported / Prudential Borrowing	4.5	3.6	4.1

A three-year Capital Programme and Capital Strategy has been approved for 2026/27 to 2028/29. The total programme of £5.3m for 2026/27 includes an element of carry-over from the current year. Whilst this delay has not impacted upon service delivery to date, it has culminated in a challenging but deliverable programme.

The Capital programme is supported in 2026-27 by the use of £0.4m of reserves, and £0.4m of direct revenue funding.

### **Performance Information**

The Authority commits to the publication of transparent performance information. This includes but is not limited to:

- Annual Statement of Accounts, which incorporates the
- Annual Governance Statement
- A Statement of Assurance
- Information required by the prevailing Local Government Transparency Code
- The latest HMICFRS inspection report

### **Use of Reserves**

Reserves are an essential part of good financial management. They allow authorities to manage unpredictable financial pressures and plan for their future spending. The level, purpose and planned use of reserves are important factors when developing medium-term financial strategies and setting annual budgets. Reserves are held for three main purposes:

- a working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing – this forms part of general reserves
- a contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies – this also forms part of general reserves
- a means of building up funds (often referred to as earmarked reserves) to meet known or specific requirements

Within the existing statutory and regulatory framework, it is the responsibility of the Chief Finance Officer to advise the Staffordshire Commissioner about the level of reserves that it should hold and to ensure that there are clear protocols for their establishment and use. The projected balance of reserves for the period is shown in the following table, as per the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy:

<b>RESERVES (£000)</b>					
	<b>2024-2025 £000</b>	<b>2025-2026 £000</b>	<b>2026-2027 £000</b>	<b>2027-2028 £000</b>	<b>2028-2029 £000</b>
General Reserves	1,906	1,906	1,906	1,906	1,906
Earmarked Revenue Reserves of which MRP reserve	6,800	6,385	6,236	5,925	4,853
Earmarked Capital Reserves Other Reserves of which revenue of which capital	8,583	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,289</b>	<b>16,791</b>	<b>16,642</b>	<b>16,331</b>	<b>15,259</b>

### **Progress of the Efficiency Plan**

The Authority commits to publishing an annual Productivity and Efficiency Plan as required by the MHCLG. This will be published following the annual budget setting process, and before the start of any new financial year. An update is provided to the Police Fire and Crime Panel as part of the MTFS refresh which is reviewed and scrutinised by the Panel usually in October / November annually.