



Suffolk Fire & Rescue Service

Productivity and Efficiency Plan

2025-2026

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Message from Chief Fire Officer



Jon Lacey
Chief Fire Officer
Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service

This Efficiency and Productivity plan details how Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) aim to deliver efficiencies and increase productivity in 2025/26.

As part of the 2021/22 Spending Review the National Fire Chiefs Councils (NFCC) and the Local Government Association (LGA) proposed that across fire and rescue services the sector could by

2024 – 25 create:

- 2% of non-pay efficiencies per annum
- Increase productivity by 3%

In 2024 Fire Services that fall under the governance of County Councils were asked to produce a Productivity and Efficiency Plan.

This Productivity and Efficiency Plan will help the NFCC, LGA and Home Office collate evidence and to assess the progress at national level against spending review goals. It will also assist us to be more efficient and productive in our service.

As part of Suffolk County Council (SCC), Suffolk Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS) key priority is being "Swift to Serve," ensuring Suffolk is a place where people can lead safe and fulfilling lives. We collectively maximise our resources to deliver an effective and value-for-money service.

Our commitment extends to the financial and environmental sustainability of the service. We're delivering a plan of savings and initiating invest-to-save projects to alleviate budget pressure in the short, medium, and long term, all while supporting the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan (SCEP).

The investment SCC has made in our service has ensured that SFRS is one of the top performing Council-led Fire and Rescue Services in the country. We remain an ambitious service that delivers incredible services to our community, and we will continue to adapt and transform the way we work so we can deliver value, improve productivity, and drive innovation whilst delivering our CRMP (Community Risk Management Plan) priorities.

Section 1: Primary Information

Making sure the right resources are in the right place is vital. This includes securing the finance needed to allocate the necessary resources to meet the risks identified in our CRMP.

Our financial planning goes much further than the delivery of Prevention, Protection and Response activity. It enhances our people, the systems we use, our infrastructure and allows a positive culture to flourish.

Astute financial management provides adequate resources to ensure the service can develop, innovate, and meet emerging risks.

Annual financial and performance data for all fire and rescue services are published centrally, enabling services and their communities to measure themselves against regional family groups. Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service is consistently shown to deliver value for money for its county's residents.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service 2025-26 Revenue Budget

BUDGET (£000)			
Revenue Expenditure	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026
Direct Employee	21,907	23,607	25,345
Indirect Employee			
Premises	1,487	1,467	1,467
Transport	576	576	576
Supplies & Services	6,697	8,355	7,704
Capital Financing			
Other	5	5	5
Total	30,672	34,010	35,098
Income	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026
Actual received from precept			
Local Government finance settlement			
Other grants	3,902	3,416	3,416
Income raised locally	363	373	373
Total	4,265	3,789	3,789

Reserves (£000)					
	2023 - 24	2024 - 25	2025 - 26	2026 - 27	2027 - 28
General reserves					
Earmarked revenue reserves	569	697	436		
Of which MRP reserve					
Other reserves					
Of which revenue					
Of which capital					
Total	569	697	436		
	25,838	29,524	30,873		

Efficiency Data (£000)						
	Actual 23-24		Actual 24-25		Forecast 25-26	
Opening revenue expenditure budget (Net)	26,383		29,576		30,873	
Less total direct employee costs	22,052		25,061		25,345	
Non pay budget	4,331		4,515		5,528	
Efficiency target (2% of non-pay budget)	87		90		111	
	Recurrent	Non-Recurrent	Recurrent	Non-Recurrent	Recurrent	Non-Recurrent
<u>Direct Employee</u>						
Reduction in		-0.027		-0.05		
Prevention/Protection/Response staff		-0.095		-0.082		-0.211
Reduction in support staff						
<u>Indirect Employee (training / travel/ etc)</u>						
All indirect employee costs						
<u>Premises</u>				-0.011		
Utilities				-0.009		
Rent/Rates						
Other premises costs						
Shared premises						
<u>Transport</u>						
Fleet						
Local procurement savings						
Other technology improvements						
Decreased usage						
<u>Capital Financing</u>						
Revenue expenditure charged to capital						
Net borrowing costs						
<u>Other</u>						
Other savings (please specify)						
Total Efficiency Savings	-0.122		-0.152		-0.211	
Efficiency savings as a percentage of non-payroll budgets	-0.14%		-0.17%		-0.19%	
Efficiency savings target	2.00%		2.00%		2.00%	
Over/Under	-2.14%		-2.17%		-2.19%	

Income (£000)						
	Actual 23 - 24		Actual 24 - 25		Forecast 25 - 26	
	Recurrent	Non-Recurrent	Recurrent	Non-Recurrent	Recurrent	Non-Recurrent
<u>Income generated from</u>						
Charging policies	66		87		52	
Trading operation						
Shared premises	335		437		189	
Interest on investments						
Other sources	442		327		132	
Total	843		850		373	

Efficiency Narrative

Direct Employee

Our service achieved significant savings in direct employee costs totalling over £524,000 for the 2024/25 fiscal year. These savings were primarily realised through proactive vacancy management and strategic workforce planning.

A substantial portion of the savings, £400,000, came from Control. This was due to a combination of factors: new staff not starting on their originally scheduled dates, and a deliberate decision to delay recruitment for some officer roles. Instead, our existing control operators effectively managed the resulting vacancies, ensuring continued service delivery without immediate backfilling.

Further direct employee savings were achieved across other areas by diligently managing vacancies. This strategic approach was a direct response to the "SCC Fit for the Future" initiative and the need to achieve budget neutrality, driven by local government funding pressures.

Specific contributions to these savings also came from:

- P&I: A £92,000 saving, representing a 20% reduction in budget.
- FSTATs: A £32,000 saving, accounting for an 8% reduction.
- Risk and Resilience: This department also contributed to the overall savings by managing open vacancies.

These combined efforts demonstrate our commitment to fiscal responsibility and efficient resource allocation, allowing us to deliver essential services within budgetary constraints

Indirect Employee

Significant savings in indirect employee costs were achieved for the 2024/25 financial year, primarily through a strategic shift in our recruitment approach for firefighters.

A key initiative was the internal recruitment drive that allowed existing on-call firefighters to apply for wholetime firefighter vacancies. This service-wide decision to alternate between internal and external recruitment each year directly addressed feedback received regarding firefighter recruitment processes.

By prioritising internal candidates, we realised a substantial 83% saving on our external recruitment costs. This internal pathway reduced the need for extensive advertising, screening, and administrative processes typically associated with external campaigns, leading to significant efficiencies and cost reductions in this category.

Premises

Our service achieved notable savings in premises costs for the 2024/25 financial year, primarily through a combination of decarbonisation efforts and strategic utilisation of shared resources.

A significant portion of the savings was realised through an ongoing decarbonisation programme initiated by SCC (Suffolk County Council). This proactive programme, focused on SCC corporate buildings (excluding PFI properties), involved investments in energy-efficient boilers, solar panels, and improved windows. These measures were specifically implemented to mitigate the impact of rising energy costs, leading to reduced utility consumption and associated expenditure.

Furthermore, a key efficiency was gained by relocating the new Fire Control space to a shared SCC building. This strategic move allowed us to capitalise on already available SCC building space, leading to a direct reduction in running costs that would have otherwise been incurred with a standalone or externally leased facility. By using existing council infrastructure, we avoided additional overheads and optimised our operational footprint.

Transport

Significant savings in the transport category for the 2024/25 financial year were achieved through a dual strategy: the continued transition to electric vehicles and the strategic disposal of end-of-life assets.

A key contributor to savings was our ongoing commitment to fleet decarbonisation. We continued to transition smaller vehicles, such as those used for prevention activities and officer cars, to electric models. As of the end of FY 24/25, approximately 16% of our total fleet is electric, and specifically, 27% of our small vehicle fleet now operates on electric power. During FY 24/25, approximately 3% of our total fleet, equating to about 4 vans, transitioned to electric, directly contributing to reduced fuel and maintenance costs. Our plan for 25/26 includes replacing 16 FDS cars, with further details pending project authorisation.

Furthermore, substantial savings and a healthy return were generated through the strategic sale of end-of-life assets, with the proceeds directly reinvested into the fleet maintenance budget. This not only offset future maintenance costs but also provided a valuable income stream. The total net amount received from these sales was £109,522.31.

These sales were categorised as follows:

- Vehicle - Appliances: £80,583.33 generated from the sale of various fire appliances.
- Vehicles - Cars & Vans: £28,939.00 generated from the sale of cars and vans.

These combined efforts in fleet electrification and efficient asset disposal demonstrate our commitment to reducing operational expenditure within the transport category.

Supplies and services

Our service achieved significant savings in the Supplies and Services category for the 2024/25 financial year through a multifaceted approach encompassing contract management, efficient resource deployment, and a commitment to reuse and repair.

While there were no changes to our current PPE and Workwear contracts, we observed a reduction in Workwear spend, primarily due to upfront purchases made in 2022/23 to ensure supply continuity. These initial investments are now yielding lower ongoing costs, a trend expected to continue as the contract approaches its end in 2026. Looking ahead, a new, more flexible PPE framework is anticipated, potentially allowing for more tailored and cost-effective purchasing, such as issuing a single set of PPE for specific roles, which could further reduce operating costs. Despite this, it's worth noting that PPE lease costs have risen by 17% over the past 24 months, with our 2024/25 operating costs for structural firefighting PPE standing at £400,000.

Beyond contract specifics, proactive management contributed to savings. Increased scrutiny of the managed service provided by Bristol Uniforms for structural PPE in 2024/25 led to £30,000 in KPI charges being levied and reclaimed by Suffolk Fire and Rescue, contributing directly to a departmental underspend.

Further savings were realised through

- More efficient use of frontline staff and a reduction of overtime across response. This indicates better resource allocation and scheduling, minimising the need for additional paid hours.
- Resource management initiatives also resulted in significant savings in overtime. This included effective vacancy management, which also contributed to a 20% saving across operational on-call vacancies.
- A 9% saving on external training costs was achieved. This was driven by a more strategic approach involving the recruitment team and the decision to bring certain driver training elements back in-house, reducing reliance on external providers. Notably, our Driver Training team has significantly re-engineered its approach to procuring LGV (Large Goods Vehicle) training, now delivering it in-house. This internal provision of LGV training has saved the service approximately £21,000 per year, with 22 individuals

trained last year. This not only generates substantial cost savings but also provides a direct benefit to the students, as they gain a full week of practical experience driving a fire appliance, which is highly beneficial for their subsequent ERDT course.

- The FSTATs department also saw savings from its budget, through the implementation of a reuse and recycle methodology. While no equipment was sold for revenue, we actively recycle, reuse, and repurpose items where possible, such as sending decommissioned equipment to Ukraine and donating safety equipment to Suffolk Lowland Rescue (SULSAR).
- Our teams are continuously seeking ways to extend the life of equipment without compromising firefighter safety, for instance, extending the service life of high-quality dry suits. Prioritising repairs over outright replacement also contributes to cost reduction.
- The team also actively monitors different suppliers to ensure best value for money, considering economic, environmental, and sustainable factors.
- Through a dedicated effort in in-house repairs, the team recorded savings of approximately £13,000 in the last six months of 2024.

These combined efforts demonstrate a commitment to careful financial management, maximising resource effectiveness, and implementing sustainable practices to achieve significant savings in supplies and services.

Capital Financing

While this financial year's capital financing was re-profiled for the next four-year period, no direct savings were realised from that re-profiling in 24/25. However, significant cost efficiencies in the capital financing category were achieved through collaborative procurement and strategic hub solutions.

A key area of savings came from joint procurement initiatives with Essex, resulting in more favourable pricing and reduced individual expenditure for shared assets or services.

The implementation of a joint Control Hub with Norfolk and Hertfordshire generated substantial reductions in initial forecast costs. By establishing a shared hub solution, we avoided the higher expenses associated with individual, standalone control facilities. This collaborative approach allowed for shared infrastructure, technology, and operational costs, leading to a more cost-effective capital investment for all participating services.

Other

Savings are primarily achieved through our strategic engagement with and utilisation of shared services provided within Suffolk County Council (SCC).

By integrating with SCC's centralised functions, we realised significant cost efficiencies across various critical areas. These included Legal, Insurance, Human Resources (HR), and Procurement. As these services are shared across multiple departments and organisations within SCC, we benefit from economies of scale, reduced administrative overheads, and streamlined processes. This collaborative approach eliminates the need for our service to maintain dedicated, independent units for these functions, thereby directly contributing to demonstrable savings in this category.

Future efficiencies

The service anticipates achieving significant future efficiencies through a combination of strategic invest-to-save initiatives and efficiency gains, focusing on collaboration, improved resource management, and technological advancements.

A key invest-to-save initiative in its scoping phase is the development of a community hub in West Suffolk. This project envisions co-locating various blue light services, which is expected to generate efficiencies through shared premises, reduced overheads, and enhanced inter-agency collaboration.

Anticipated Devolution plans, while details are still emerging, are expected to lead to increased shared services. This will likely mirror the benefits already seen with existing shared services within SCC, further optimising costs and resource allocation by leveraging collective purchasing power and consolidated administrative functions.

Regarding recruitment, the continuation of our successful strategy to conduct internal recruitment every other year for firefighter vacancies will ensure sustained savings on external recruitment costs and foster career progression for existing on-call firefighters.

Improved resource management is a core focus for future efficiencies. The control function is being developed to enable more effective deployment of both operational staff and equipment. This will ensure resources are utilised efficiently and strategically across the service, reducing wasted time and improving incident response. . A critical development within this is the Control Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT). This tool will enable real-time visibility and strategic movement of resources across the county as required, saving time, enhancing responsiveness, and ensuring more efficient deployment of personnel and equipment during incidents.

The impending implementation of a new Asset Management System will provide better oversight of all assets, tracking their lifespans, and managing instances of loss or damage, thereby enabling more proactive and cost-effective maintenance and replacement strategies.

Collaboration at the county level is also set to drive efficiencies. SCC is establishing a Strategic Procurement and Commissioning Board specifically to identify and facilitate joint procurement opportunities across all directorates. This initiative will allow the fire service to collaborate on similar procurements with other SCC departments, leading to greater economies of scale and better value for money.

Finally, the Fire IT roadmap is set to deliver substantial efficiencies. Enhancements to systems such as Gartner/Expert/Pay and improvements to SharePoint are aimed at enabling better joined up working across the service. These technological advancements will maximise staff time, reduce manual processes, and improve data accessibility, leading to more streamlined and efficient operations.

Collaboration

Our service anticipates ongoing financial and operational benefits through continued and evolving collaborative efforts with regional partners and national bodies.

Financially, we expect to sustain and enhance cost efficiencies through existing and future regional collaborations. The continued engagement in large contracts for PPE and workwear will allow us to use sustained purchasing power, securing favourable terms and pricing.

The established joint Control Hub with Hertfordshire and Norfolk will continue to deliver long-term capital financing savings by optimising shared infrastructure and operational costs.

Ongoing joint training initiatives with regional partners across areas such as Women in Leadership, driver training, HMICFRS SLO, and Protection will ensure a consistently skilled and adaptable workforce. These shared forums facilitate knowledge exchange, ensure consistent standards, and ultimately enhance operational effectiveness across the region.

Furthermore, strategic secondments to national bodies will continue to bring invaluable benefits. Maintaining a presence with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) and continued involvement in National Operational Guidance (NOG) projects through the Eastern Region Programme Group ensures our service remains at the forefront of best practices. These ongoing collaborations provide opportunities to influence national standards, gain critical insights into evolving regulations, and bring back expertise that directly enhances our local operational effectiveness.

These sustained and evolving collaborative efforts underscore our commitment to making the most of shared resources, strengthening regional capabilities, and making best use of national expertise for the benefit of our service and the communities we protect.

Assessment of Efficiencies

The service demonstrated effective financial management and achieved significant efficiencies throughout the 2024/25 fiscal year, successfully mitigating a projected substantial overspend. Through proactive measures, the service transformed a £600,000 overspend in Q2 into a £50,000 overspend by the end of the financial year. This reduction was predominantly driven by robust resource management and strategic cost-saving initiatives across various categories.

Mitigating Factors

The achievement of these efficiencies is commendable given the challenging financial landscape. Several mitigating factors underscored the necessity and impact of these proactive measures:

- **SCC Local Government Budget Pressure:** The overarching financial constraints faced by Suffolk County Council due to local government funding pressures created a stringent environment, necessitating rigorous budgetary control across all services.
- **"Fit for the Future" Initiative:** This SCC-wide initiative mandated departments to operate more leanly and efficiently, providing a strategic imperative for the service to identify and implement cost-saving measures.
- **Tighter Controls Over Recruitment with Scrutiny by Cabinet Members:** Increased oversight and stricter controls on recruitment processes from cabinet members meant that every new vacancy was subjected to intense scrutiny. This directly influenced the robust vacancy management strategies that yielded substantial direct employee savings.

In conclusion, the service's ability to turn a significant projected overspend into a minimal one highlights strong prudent financial management and maximised resource effectiveness.

Section 2 - Productivity

Collaboration

Initiatives involving secondments play a crucial role in enhancing our service's productivity, although the benefits may not always be immediately quantifiable in financial terms. These secondments directly contribute to improved capabilities and foster closer working relationships with key national bodies.

Specifically, the ongoing secondment of personnel to the Building Safety Regulator (BSR), including both a BSR Manager and a BSR Planning Officer, yields significant productivity improvements. While difficult to quantify directly in monetary savings, these secondments achieve several critical objectives:

- **Direct Link to BSR Activity for the Protection Department:** Our seconded officers are embedded within the BSR, gaining first-hand insight into the development and implementation of new building safety legislation, standards, and regulatory practices. This direct link allows our Protection Department to proactively adapt its strategies, understand emerging risks, and ensure compliance with the latest requirements. This foresight reduces reactive work, improves efficiency in regulatory enforcement, and ensures our staff are highly proficient in this complex and evolving area.
- **Enhanced Ability to Protect the Community within the Built Environment:** The expertise gained through these secondments directly translates into a better ability to protect our community within the built environment. Our officers bring back invaluable knowledge regarding fire safety in complex buildings, new construction methods, and the identification of potential hazards. This enhanced understanding

improves the effectiveness of our prevention, protection, and response activities, ultimately leading to a safer community and a more productive use of our resources in managing risks associated with the built environment.

- **Knowledge Transfer and Best Practice Integration:** Beyond direct involvement, the seconded personnel act as conduits for knowledge transfer, disseminating best practices, new methodologies, and regulatory insights throughout our service. This internal upskilling reduces the need for external training in highly specialised areas and ensures our operational and support functions are aligned with national strategic objectives for building safety.

Asset Management and IT investment

Our service is strategically investing in asset management systems and leveraging IT advancements to significantly improve productivity, streamline operations, and empower informed decision-making. These initiatives are designed to improve efficiencies and enhance overall service delivery.

Our ongoing IT roadmap is a key element in boosting productivity. By prioritising off-the-shelf software development, we are reducing the demand on internal IT capacity, which has directly contributed to a reduction in direct employee costs within the IT function. This approach will allow us to use proven solutions rather than expending resources on bespoke development.

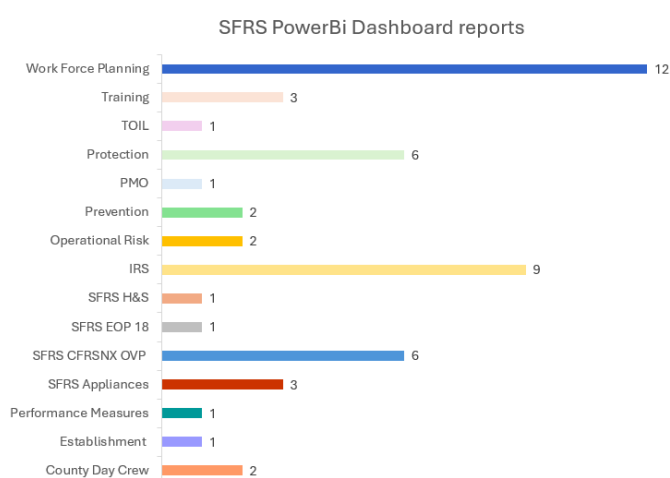
Further use of technology, our participation in the Co-pilot trial within SCC is exploring how AI-powered tools can augment staff capabilities, automate routine tasks, and enhance efficiency in various administrative and operational functions. The widespread use of Microsoft 365 products across the service is already enabling seamless, real-time joint working on documents, eliminating version control issues and significantly improving collaborative productivity among teams.

The transition to mobile phone-based officer mobilising as a replacement for pagers represents an improvement in operational productivity. This shift provides officers with richer, real-time information, improving response times and situational awareness, ultimately leading to more effective incident management.

Hybrid working across the service, coupled with the strategic use of local fire stations as collaborative hubs, enhances employee flexibility and productivity. This approach reduces commuting time and costs for staff, while maintaining opportunities for face-to-face interaction and team cohesion. The extensive use of Microsoft Teams for meetings has also dramatically reduced time spent on travel, lowered carbon emissions, and increased overall meeting productivity by enabling quicker, more frequent, and efficient virtual interactions.

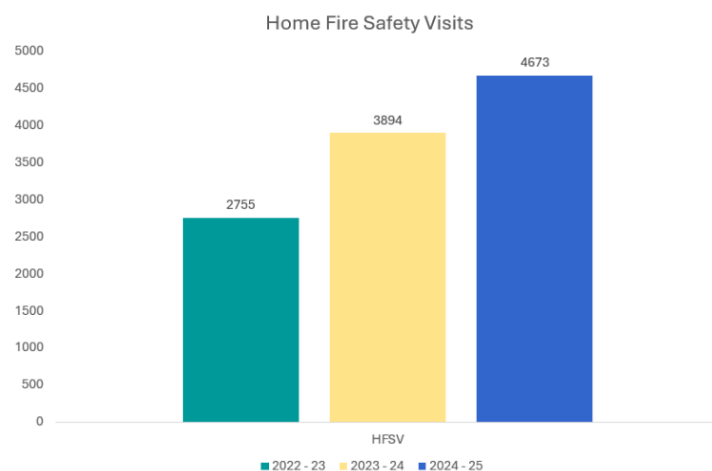
A key focus for future productivity gains is the enhanced use of data. We are increasingly using PowerBi across all areas including workforce planning, which provides dynamic insights into our staffing needs, competencies, and development requirements.

This data-driven approach enables highly informed decision-making for succession planning, targeted training programmes, and competency development. By ensuring we have the right people with the right skills in the right places, we maximise the effectiveness of our human resources and reduce potential gaps in service delivery.



Resourcing

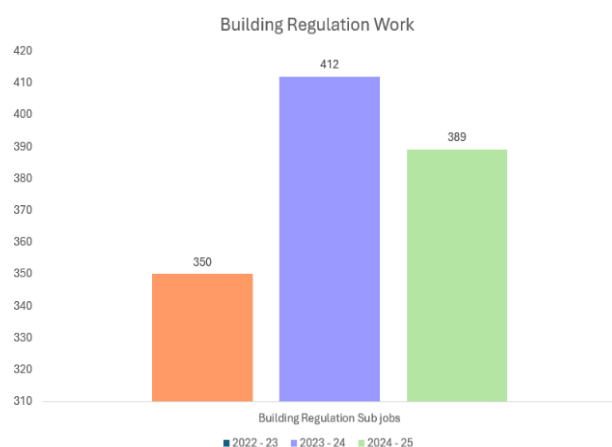
A significant productivity gain has been realised through the strategic appointment of a Group Manager (GM) into Prevention in 2023, with the positive effects becoming fully apparent in 2024/25. This investment in senior leadership has paid clear dividends by providing a comprehensive strategic overview for all prevention activities. The GM's focused management has led to demonstrably improved outputs across all prevention activity, directly translating into increased productivity from both the Prevention team and frontline firefighters. This enhanced productivity and strategic direction were independently validated by a good HMICFRS rating for our prevention efforts, showcasing the tangible benefits of this resourcing decision.



The full utilisation of the Protection Uplift Grant has been instrumental in boosting productivity within our Protection function.

- **Better Quality of Audits:** By providing the necessary resources, the grant has allowed for more thorough and effective audits, leading to higher standards of fire safety compliance across the built environment. This improved quality reduces the likelihood of future incidents and the associated demands on response resources.
- **Better Quality Assurance:** Enhanced quality assurance processes are now in place, ensuring the consistency and effectiveness of our protection activities. This proactive approach identifies and addresses issues early, preventing more significant problems down the line and improving the overall efficiency of our regulatory work.

Our active engagement with BSR (Building Safety Regulator) and NOG (National Operational Guidance) is a forward-looking resourcing initiative that ensures future productivity and effectiveness. While the direct benefits may be difficult to quantify, they are fundamental to our long-term capability:



- **Building Safety Regulator (BSR):** Our involvement ensures that our Protection department is directly informed by and can influence the evolving landscape of building safety regulations. This proactive engagement enhances our capacity to protect the community within the built environment, reduces reactive work, and ensures our staff are equipped with the latest knowledge to manage complex risks, ultimately making our protection work more efficient.
- **National Operational Guidance (NOG):** Participation in NOG projects ensures our operational practices are aligned with national best practice. This facilitates standardisation, improves consistency, and provides clear, evidence-based guidance for our operational staff, leading to more efficient and effective incident response and prevention activities.

Income generation

The strategic sale of assets, particularly end-of-life vehicles and equipment is a proven method of income generation that contributes to overall productivity. By actively disposing of assets that are no longer operational or cost-effective to maintain, we generate revenue that can be reinvested into fleet maintenance or other essential service areas. This process ensures the efficient use of capital and prevents redundant assets from incurring ongoing costs.

We are actively reviewing and adjusting our approach to cost recovery for training provided to local partners. For 2025/26 and beyond, these charges are being updated to reflect current costs more accurately. This initiative ensures that the true expense of delivering high-quality training, such as specialised courses or shared drills, is recouped, thereby reducing the burden on our core budget and allowing us to maintain a high standard of training provision.

The Protection Uplift Grant continues to be a significant source of funding that directly supports enhanced capacity and effectiveness in our Protection Team to improve safety within the built environment.

When taking prosecutions, the service will always try to recover any costs it incurs, to reduce the financial impact on the service of taking action to improve public safety.

Section 106 agreements are legal agreements between a local authority and a developer, used to mitigate the impact of new developments. By securing contributions through these agreements, we ensure that major developments, such as Sizewell C, do not result in additional financial pressures on the service.

Outcome based Activities

The service is committed to driving productivity through a focus on outcome-based activities, setting ambitious targets and continuously evaluating our performance to enhance community safety. These initiatives are having a direct effect from 2024/25 onwards.

We are seeing a significant increase in Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) and a rise in the number of safety audits conducted. These direct engagements with the community and proactive assessments of premises are critical outcome-based activities that directly contribute to reducing fire incidents and improving overall safety.

Our firefighters are increasingly engaged in a broader range of activities that enhance productivity and contribute to key outcomes. This includes dedicated time for training, alongside their vital roles in Prevention and Protection (P&P). By integrating these activities into their core duties, we are ensuring a multi-skilled and productive workforce.

Our targets are not static; they are increased incrementally on an ongoing basis. This ensures continuous improvement and pushes the service to achieve higher levels of productivity. Performance is reviewed at the Performance Assurance Board (PAB), providing a high-level oversight of our progress. Furthermore, our Prevention team actively conducts Quality Assurance (QA) and evaluation of their activities to ensure effectiveness and identify areas for refinement.

A crucial element of our outcome-based approach is the joint prevention and response performance meeting. This regular forum allows for a holistic review of activities, ensuring that both preventative measures and emergency response efforts are aligned and contributing to overarching safety goals.

Annually, we review our targets and overall performance, and these are subsequently increased as required. Our overarching plan is to strategically reach 10% of our most vulnerable community each year, ensuring that our efforts are targeted where they can have the greatest impact on reducing risk and improving safety outcomes.

Workforce capacity

Understanding and optimising our workforce capacity is crucial for enhancing productivity. We are focusing on improving data capture and utilising insights to ensure our personnel are deployed as effectively as possible.

We are actively reviewing whether we are still adequately measuring aspects of the utilisation survey. This ongoing assessment is vital to understand how our workforce's time is being spent and to identify any opportunities for improved efficiency.

A key initiative is to systematically record the time spent on prevention and protection activities, as well as on accident and near-miss investigations. Including granular data from these activities will provide a much clearer picture of how our operational staff's time is allocated beyond emergency response.

The data collected on activities and utilisation directly feeds into our prevention/response performance meeting. This forum serves as a critical platform to review the figures and assess how watches are working across both wholetime and day crew systems. By analysing this data, we can make informed decisions about resourcing, shift patterns, and task allocation, ensuring that our workforce capacity is working to its fullest potential and that our staff are engaged in the most impactful activities for community safety and service delivery. This iterative process of data collection and review enables continuous improvement in how we manage and deploy our most valuable asset: our people.

Meeting the 3% Productivity Target

Our service is committed to meeting the 3% productivity target from 2024/25 onwards through strategic enhancements in efficiency, resource utilisation, and workforce management.

We anticipate demonstrating increases in productivity in 2025-26, driven by a range of initiatives across the service. These increases will be evidenced through enhanced output metrics in our outcome-based activities, such as Home Fire Safety Visits and safety audits, as well as more efficient internal processes.

A key indicator of improved productivity is the reduction in overtime, which directly reflects better utilisation of our wholetime staff. By ensuring that our existing personnel are effectively deployed and that their time is maximised, we reduce reliance on additional paid hours. This demonstrates a more efficient operational model where resources are managed strategically to cover necessary functions without incurring excessive additional costs.

Fundamentally, our approach to meeting the 3% productivity target centres on becoming more efficient with our current resources. This encompasses all aspects of our operations, from the strategic deployment of personnel and equipment through to streamlined administrative processes and the adoption of new technologies. The goal is to extract greater value and output from our existing budget and workforce, ensuring that every resource contributes optimally to the service's overarching objectives and delivers enhanced public safety outcomes.