

# THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE JOINT COMMITTEE



## Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee Annual Meeting

**Monday 11 July 2022 at 2.00 pm**

**Meeting Room 1 BMKFA Headquarters,  
Stocklake, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire,  
HP20 1BD**

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### AGENDA

	Item	Page No.
1.	Appointment of Chairman for 2022/23 To appoint a member from Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority as Chairman for 2022/23	
2.	Appointment of Vice-Chairman for 2022/23 To appoint a member from Oxfordshire County Council as Vice-Chairman for 2022/23	
3.	Apologies	
4.	Introductions (including changes of membership, if any) To note appointments onto the joint committee and any	

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
	notified appointed substitutes for 2022/23	
5.	Declarations of Interest	
6.	Minutes of the last meeting held on 16 December 2021	Pages 5-12
7.	Questions from Members (written questions)	
8.	Matters Arising	
9.	Questions submitted under Standing Order 9.5 (questions from members of the public)	
10.	Chairman's Annual Report 2021/22 - to note	Pages 13-16
11.	TVFCS Members Workshop Summary - 21 March 2022 – to note	Pages 17-20
12.	TVFCS Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 2021/22 Performance Reports – to note	Pages 21-70
13.	TVFCS System Contracts and Hardware Refresh – to agree	Pages 71-76
14.	NFCC MAIT Connect Project Expression of Interest – to note	Pages 77-86
15.	TVFCS Joint Committee September 2022 Workshop - to note A Members and Officers Workshop will be held on Thursday 15 September 2022, 2.00pm at Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) Headquarters. (This meeting is not open to the public).	
16.	Forward Plan - to note	Pages 87
17.	Date of Next Meeting Thursday 15 December 2022, 2pm at BMKFA Headquarters, Stocklake, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP20 1BD	

## **Joint Committee Terms of Reference**

### **1. REMIT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE**

- 1.1. The Joint Committee is constituted to provide overall strategic direction and oversight for the TVFCS.
- 1.2. The Joint Committee shall have the following functions:
  - 1.2.1. champion the TVFCS;
  - 1.2.2. act as the link between the TVFCS and the Fire Authorities;
  - 1.2.3. guide recommendations from the TVFCS, that may affect the operational functions of the Fire Authorities, through the governance processes of the Fire Authorities;
  - 1.2.4. assist with the management of the relationships between the Fire Authorities;
  - 1.2.5. monitor the steady state operational benefits and performance of the TVFCS, against the agreed measures and targets;
  - 1.2.6. monitor steady state risks relevant to the TVFCS;
  - 1.2.7. monitor the financial performance of the TVFCS against required and available budget, benefits and efficiencies, and to contribute to the financial processes of the Fire Authorities;
  - 1.2.8. discuss, and contribute to, proposals on future developments for the TVFCS;
  - 1.2.9. provide strategic direction on the future of the TVFCS;
  - 1.2.10. consider and recommend to the Fire Authorities proposals in relation to Fire Authority Decisions including but not limited to:
    - (b) discuss and recommend proposals for additional full partners into the TVFCS;
    - (c) discuss and recommend proposals for the supply of TVFCS services to other fire and rescue services or other clients;
  - 1.2.11. decide upon and determine all matters which are Joint Committee Decisions, any matters referred to the Joint Committee for decision pursuant to the TVFCS decision making process in clause 11 (Decision Making by TVFCS) and any matters reserved by law or otherwise to the Joint Committee.

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## Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee Meeting

Thursday, 16th December, 2021, 2.00 pm

### Minutes

**Present:** Councillor David Cannon, Royal Borough Windsor and Maidenhead  
Councillor Lesley Clarke, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service  
Councillor Neil Fawcett, Oxfordshire County Council  
Councillor Steven Lambert, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority  
Councillor Angus Ross, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

**In Attendance:** Mike Adcock, Area Manager - Senior Responsible Officer (OFRS)  
Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer (RBFRS)  
Graham Britten, Monitoring Officer (BFRS)  
Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (RBFRS)  
Simon Harris, Group Manager (TVFCS)  
Asif Hussain, Deputy Director of Finance and Assets (BFRS)  
Rob MacDougall, Chief Fire Officer (OFRS)  
Fayth Rowe, Democratic Support Lead (RBFRS)  
Jason Thelwell, Chief Fire Officer (BFRS)  
Steve Wells, Area Manager – Senior Responsible Officer (BFRS)

#### Action

#### 18. APOLOGIES

Apologies of absence were received from Jim Powell, Senior Responsible Officer, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS).

## 19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

## 20. MINUTES AND RECORDED ACTIONS OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 12 JULY 2021

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes and actions of the meeting held on 12 July 2021, be approved as a true record to be signed by the Chairman.

## 21. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman made the following announcements:

### Rowe Court incident, Reading

The Chairman explained Jim Powell Senior Responsible Officer's absence was due to him being the Level Four Gold Commander for the major incident at Rowe Court, Reading, an incident which occurred in the early hours of Wednesday 15 December 2021. The incident had made national news, involving a number of blue light services.

### Thames Valley Collaboration Steering Group

Joint Committee Members are invited to join the Thames Valley Collaboration Steering Group which follows this meeting, for an update on Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP).

## 22. CONTROL NATIONAL OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE PRESENTATION

Simon Harris, Group Manager, TVFCS delivered a presentation on Control Room National Operational Guidance (N.O.G), which was introduced to replace previous manuals and guidance.

The requirement for Operational Guidance for Control Rooms was identified by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Home Office. The process to develop Control National Operational Guidance began in 2020.

A team of Control sector staff was established to research and develop guidance. Best practice was identified from a number of organisations nationally and internationally, as well as a Peer Review which was carried by selected Control Rooms (including TVFCS).

Simon Harris reported professional scrutiny and approval was provided by the NFCC Mobilising Officers Group and the guidance was signed off by the NFCC Operations Committee.

In adopting the National Operational Guidance in TVFCS the following had been implemented or was due to be implemented:

- Change to policies
- Change to procedures
- Development and delivery of updated training
- Updated Control guidance notes
- Change to TVFCS systems
- Risk Information due to be updated

Simon Harris stated all three Thames Valley Fire Services were committed to the adoption of N.O.G and a risk based approach had been determined in the planning and implementation of the guidance.

He further stated the benefits of N.O.G were the following:

- TVFCS working to agreed national standards, using industry 'Best Practice'
- More consistent advice to callers, leading to safer communities.
- Shared understanding of risk and guidance being given between Control and Operational crews, leading to improved firefighter safety

In answer to a question from the Chairman, Simon Harris reported that some elements of the guidance were planned within a three – four year roll out and that the guidance in some areas were suggestions.

For copies of the presentation please contact [committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk)

### **23. TVFCS BUDGET 2022/23 - TO AGREE**

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HF&P) provided a comprehensive outline of the proposed budget for Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) for the 2022/23 financial year.

In referring to Appendix A of the report, he stated the proposed TVFCS Revenue Budget for 2022/23 showed a total budget of £2,512,725 which was an increase of £102,278. He stated there were a number of contributing factors in the increase in the 2022/23 Revenue Budget.

He reported staff costs amounted to over 80% of the increase in the 2022/23 Budget. No pay award had been built into the 2021/22 Revenue Budget in response to the Government's announcement last autumn of a public sector pay freeze. The 2022/23 budget, therefore, reflect the impact of the pay award made in 2021/22 and the estimated pay award of 2% effective from 1 July 2022.

In addition to the above, Conor Byrne reported Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) faced an increase in Local Government Pension Scheme lump sum deficit payments. There will also be an increase in national insurance contributions from 1 April 2022, although this will be offset through Government funding.

The Facilities recharge will increase by £13,180. Excluding the lighting cost, the base recharge will increase by 3.21% which reflects the impact of the current economic climate.

The Human Resources and Learning and Development recharge will increase by 10.91%. There were 19 staff on Development and Assessment Pathway (DAP) which involved more content and resource than previous NVQs.

Technology costs have increased due to contractual price raises. In referring to the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), Conor Byrne reported that it detailed the budget pressures or cost reductions in the medium term and future salary awards.

In addition, he outlined the capital expenditure programme for 2022/23 (Appendix C) and that the 2022/23 Capex programme [Vision] of £676,000 would be funded from the Renewal account (Appendix D).

In referring to the recommendations of the report, Conor Byrne reported that 2.8 was in reference to a clause in section 25 of the Inter Authority Agreement which require each Authority to state whether they wish to withdraw from the Agreement after five years.

In answer to a question from the Chairman, Conor Byrne reported that it was a requirement for the budget provision to be agreed by each Authority.

The Chairman requested a minor amendment to be made to 2.3 of the recommendation, which was to insert the word 'revenue'. The amendment to 2.3 of the recommendation was seconded by the Vice-Chairman.

The Chairman moved the amended recommendation of the report from 2.1 – 2.8, which was seconded by the Vice-Chairman.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that:

- The proposed TVFCS revenue budget for 2022/23 as amended and detailed in **Appendix A** be agreed.
- A contingency budget allocation of £150,000 which would provide an upper limit of expenditure without further Authority approval be agreed.
- To delegate authority to the three CFOs (unanimous decision)



required) for any unplanned revenue expenditure between £10,000 and £150,000 be agreed.

- To set aside £150,000 (£50,000 from each partner) in 2022/23 towards capital replacement costs be agreed.
- The Capital Expenditure Programme for 2022/23 (**Appendix C**) be agreed.
- The Medium Term Financial Plan (**Appendix B**) and Renewals Long Term Forecast (**Appendix D**) be noted.
- It be recommend to their respective Authorities the TVFCS budget for the financial year 2022/23 and the individual Authority contributions to this budget.
- It be recommend that no Fire Authority withdraws from the TVFCS Inter Authority Agreement for the reasons outlined in this paper.

#### **24. TVFCS MEMBERS WORKSHOP SUMMARY 16 SEPTEMBER 2021 - TO AGREE**

Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer presented the report and stated paragraphs 3.10 – 3.14 which outlined future expansion would feed into the theme of the next Joint Committee Workshop in March 2022.

The recommendation was moved by the Chairman and seconded by Councillor Cannon.

#### **RESOLVED** that:

The contents of the report as an accurate record of the business conducted at the workshop be agreed.

#### **25. CAPITA CONTRACT NOVATION - TO NOTE**

Wayne Bowcock, CFO reported Capita's intent to sell this arm of their business and explained the legal process that had taken place. He stated the report was seeking Members to note the deed and novation.

In relation to paragraph 2.3 of the recommendation, he apologised for the delay in informing the Joint Committee of the extension (until April 2022) of ICCS maintenance and support contract. He suggested the Joint Committee may wish to look at the governance and Inter Authority agreements due to the above contract extension which could have been a delegated decision.

Rob McDougall, CFO, reported that a number of Fire and Rescue Services and

SROs  
(BFRS,  
OFRS and  
RBFRS)

Police Services were affected by the sale, however risks had been mitigated which was set out in 3.5 – 3.8 of the report.

The Vice-Chairman queried whether a timetable had been put in place for the ICCS contract outlined in 3.12 would meet the approval process required by the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) by February 2022.

Both Wayne Bowcock, CFO, and Mike Adcock reassured the Committee that timelines had been devised and would be maintained.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- That completion of the Deed or Novation between Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, Capita Secure Information Solutions Limited (“CSIS”) and Capita (SSS) Limited (in relation to the ‘Mobilising System Contract’) has been approved by two of the Authorities, and is pending approval from OCC, as set out in the TVFCS Inter Authority Agreement, be noted.
- That completion of the Deed of Novation between Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Capita Secure Information Solutions Limited (“CSIS”), and Capita (SSS) Limited, in relation to the contract for the provision, maintenance and support of the DS3000 Integrated Communication Control System (ICCS) has been approved by two of the Authorities, and is pending approval by OCC, as set out in the TVFCS Inter Authority Agreement, be noted.
- That the ICCS maintenance and support contract in place with Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, which will be novated to Capita (SSS) Limited, was extended by a contract dated 27 April 2021 to allow for it to continue until April 2022, be noted.

#### **26. TVFCS PERFORMANCE REPORTS QUARTER 1 AND QUARTER 2 2021/22 - TO NOTE**

Simon Harris, Group Manager reported there was a continuation of the impact of covid in Quarter One. Two members of staff were on long term sick leave. He reported that the majority of staff had been fully vaccinated.

In answer to a question from the Chairman, Mike Adcock, SRO, reported on the increase in the number of staff required to isolate as a result of being identified as a close contact of a covid case, and the impact it had had in staff availability. He stated this pressure was reduced when the duration for those required to isolate was lifted on 16 August 2021.

The Vice-Chairman queried the lack of equality and diversity figures in the report. Mike Adcock, SRO, advised that this would be reviewed and would be reported in Quarter Three. In referring to page 89 of the report, Mike Adcock

commended the prevention activity by TVFCS staff and stated referrals of smoke alarms had been made to 42 residents and 32 safeguarding notifications.

Councillor Lambert queried whether call challenge was delaying the mobilisation of appliances. Councillor Fawcett queried the effectiveness of targets and stated there was a need to look into whether the targets set were right.

The Chairman stated that Automatic Fire Alarm (AFAs) did distort figures. Wayne Bowcock stated there were complexities and reported each Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) had its own response standard. He explained that it would be difficult to introduce a response standard which support all three FRSs. He added that he supported call challenge and as an example, referred to the 45 second call challenge prior to the mobilisation of appliances to the Rowe Court incident, Reading.

A discussion was held on the targets that had been set. The Chairman requested for targets to be discussed at the Joint Committee Workshop, and requested the Senior Responsible Officers and Simon Harris to review by the next Workshop in March 2022.

In discussing resilience, both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman thanked all Control staff for their commitment during a challenging period.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

## 27. FORWARD PLAN - TO NOTE

**RESOLVED** that the Forward Plan be noted.

## 28. DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2022/23 - TO AGREE

Joint Committee Workshop moved to be held on Monday 21 March 2022 via Microsoft Teams.

The dates below were provisionally agreed, subject to published Local Authority 2022/23 meeting dates. They will be reviewed at Joint Committee Workshop on 21 March 2022. From July 2022, meetings will be arranged by Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and will commence at 2pm.

- Monday 11 July 2022 (Annual Joint Committee Meeting)
- Thursday 15 September 2022 (Workshop)
- Thursday 15 December 2022 (Joint Committee Meeting)
- Monday 20 March 2023 (Workshop)

*(The meeting closed at 3pm)*

SROs  
(BFRS,  
OFRS and  
RBFRS)

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# THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE



<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22</b>
<b>PRESENTED TO:</b>	<b>TVFCS JOINT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>11 JULY 2022</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>AREA MANAGER MIKE ADCOCK</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NOT APPLICABLE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TO NOTE</b>

## 1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To provide a high level summary of Thames Valley Fire Control (TVFCS) activity during the year 2021/22.

## 2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Joint Committee **NOTE** the annual report

## 3. **REPORT**

- 3.1 An annual report is produced each year by the outgoing Chairman of the TVFCS Joint Committee. In 2021/22, this was Councillor Angus Ross (RBFA).
- 3.2 This report will provide a high-level overview of control room activity and any progress made in relation to service plans and performance, including a look at staffing and a summary of the financial position at year end. Finally, it will provide a look forward to 2022/23 and the key areas of work required to continue making improvements to TVFCS on behalf of the three Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services (FRS).
- 3.3 TVFCS continues to be the flagship of collaboration in the region since going live in April 2015. The control centre handles calls and mobilises resources for the three Thames Valley FRS.

- 3.4 Governance of TVFCS is undertaken by elected members, two from each contributing authority, who form the TVFCS Joint Committee. Senior Responsible Officers (SRO) from each TV FRS form the Joint Coordinating Group (JCG) and support the control manager to monitor and manage performance, reporting into the Joint Committee.
- 3.5 The service utilises a single employer model with a single mobilising system, which has delivered significant cost efficiencies to all three authorities. Increased resilience, efficiency and improved performance will result in collective savings of over £1 million a year over a 15 year period up to 2030.

#### **4. PERFORMANCE**

- 4.1 TVFCS is measured against a set of targets agreed by the Joint Committee and these are reviewed as part of the scrutiny of performance reporting. The report provides information on key mobilising performance metrics but also provides members with information relating to other activities undertaken by TVFCS which provide added value to the three FRS and their communities.
- 4.2 TVFCS has performed well against the existing measure for how quickly calls are answered during the year, with the target exceeded on the majority of occasions.
- 4.3 Levels of performance against the time taken to mobilise resources have been challenging to achieve, as has been the case over a period of several years. Work has taken place to quantify the impact that other important processes such as the application of call challenging have on the ability to meet the current target. The outcomes of this work will be reported to the Joint Committee through existing performance reporting.

#### **5. STAFFING**

- 5.1 Since Autumn 2021, TVFCS has experienced staff turnover at a higher rate than anticipated, with staff choosing to move to other employment for a variety of reasons such as becoming Wholetime Firefighters. This impact on Fire Controls is being experienced nationally across the sector. An NFCC working group has been established to look at Fire Control recruitment and retention nationally, at which TVFCS will be represented. The TVFCS SROs and management team are working together to identify local solutions.
- 5.2 It has continued to be possible to fill all internal vacancies for Supervisory and Middle Management roles with internal candidates, demonstrating the progress that has been made in terms of staff development and succession planning.
- 5.3 High levels of staff absence due to sickness absence, including COVID19 infections, have been experienced over the last 9 months. This has presented some challenge in terms of maintaining crewing levels, with the TVFCS management team and SROs having to coordinate resources to ensure that a robust and resilient service was maintained.

#### **6. YEAR END FINANCIAL POSITION**

- 6.1 The budget for TVFCS is set at the December meeting of the Joint Committee each year. The budget for TVFCS for 2021/22 was £2,410,447. At year end, the actual expenditure was £2,446,891 creating a variance of £36,444 (1.51%) The principal cause being a higher than anticipated pay award in July 2021.

## **7. NOTABLE ACTIVITY**

- 7.1 Throughout the year, activity in TVFCS has largely been driven by the need to adapt to the changing pressures caused by the COVID19 pandemic, ensuring that the service was resilient and able to continue to operate to a high standard throughout whilst placing a focus on the health and wellbeing of our staff.
- 7.2 Control room National Operational Guidance (N.O.G.) began to be published by the Home Office in early summer 2021. TVFCS has put arrangements in place to review N.O.G. and adapt our processes and training to fully align with this industry best practice.
- 7.3 The TVFCS SROs and members of the Joint Committee have focused on the need to ensure that TVFCS systems and the contracts to support those systems are suitable for the ongoing needs of the Service in the medium to long term.
- 7.4 As the restrictions required to mitigate the impacts of COVID19 began to lift in early 2022, it was possible to resume a number of pieces of work that had been paused during the pandemic, most notably a Control room refurbishment involving the redecoration of the control room and replacement of the legacy lighting solution in the main Control room. This is part of a wider package of improvements that focus on staff wellbeing and creating a safe, positive work environment.
- 7.5 New national arrangements have been introduced to assist Fire Controls across the UK to manage peaks in demand which put pressure on capacity. These measures include a national radio channel that enables control rooms to communicate more effectively without having to use telephone systems which can quickly become overwhelmed at peak times. It also includes the introduction of a BT system that 'moves' 999 calls to partner FRS control rooms at pre-determined levels to manage high demand. TVFCS have adopted all new arrangements and have been involved in the exercising and evaluation of those arrangements.
- 7.6 TVFCS has continued to evidence its operational effectiveness during the year, managing a number of challenging situations. In December 2021, a serious fire affected a block of flats at Rowe Court in Reading. TVFCS were required to give lifesaving 'fire survival guidance' to one occupant and liaised closely with responding crews to coordinate their rescue. In February 2022, the Thames Valley experienced severe impacts from Storm Eunice, which caused emergency calls to be routed into TVFCS in exceptionally high numbers. TVFCS worked closely with officers and support staff from all three FRS and called on national assistance to manage this unprecedented demand.

## **8. LOOKING FORWARD**

- 8.1 The Joint Committee will be asked to make decisions in July 2022 on the future of the 'Vision 4' command and control system. This is a key decision for the next 5-7 years, ensuring the service has the support it needs and continues to utilise the most up to date technology.

- 8.2 A programme of targeted activities to assist staff to improve their overall health and wellbeing is planned for the year, this includes a health and wellbeing survey that will inform a program of improvement and staff being given the opportunity to access 1-2-1 support in making positive lifestyle changes.
- 8.3 TVFCS will continue to adopt National Operational Guidance as it published by the NFCC Central Programme Office, ensuring control staff are able to work to 'industry best practice'.
- 8.4 Technical work required to implement the new Emergency Services Network is scheduled to start during 22/23 and will continue over the coming years. This work is coordinated through a regional project structure and the impact on Control room operations will need to be carefully managed by TVFCS managers and will be supported by all three TVFRS.

**9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 None

**10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 None

**11. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 None

**12. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 Risks relating to future activity are captured in the TVFCS risk register and reviewed regularly by the SROs.

**13. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

- 13.1 Chief Fire Officer
- 13.2 Chief Finance Officer

**14. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 14.1 None

**15. APPENDICES**

- 15.1 None

**16. CONTACT DETAILS**

- 16.1 Group Manager Simon Harris [harriss@tvfcs.org.uk](mailto:harriss@tvfcs.org.uk)



# THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE



<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>TVFCS MEMBERS WORKSHOP SUMMARY – 21 MARCH 2022</b>
<b>PRESENTED TO:</b>	<b>JOINT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>11 JULY 2022</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>AREA MANAGER JIM POWELL</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TO NOTE</b>

## 1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Following agreement by members in September 2020 –that the Joint Committee meet formally in July and December and that workshops are held in March and September each year- an online members workshop was held on 21 March 2022.
- 1.2 This report presents a summary of that workshop and the associated output.

## 2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That Joint Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the contents of the report.

## 3. **REPORT**

- 3.1 On 21 March 2022, an on-line members workshop was held to consider a range of items regarding the future direction and development of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS).
- 3.2 The workshop was attended by: Cllr Angus Ross, Cllr David Cannon, Cllr Lesley Clarke OBE, Cllr Steven Lambert, Cllr Neil Fawcett, Cllr Glynis Phillips, CFO Jason Thelwell, CFO Rob MacDougall, CFO Wayne Bowcock,

AM Jim Powell, AM Mike Adcock, AM Steve Wells, Graham Britten, Asif Hussain, Tony Vincent, Ryan Maslen, GM Simon Harris

3.3 **Future expansion**

3.4 Building on previous discussion at the September workshop and the undertaking by the Senior Responsible Officers to work with blue light partners to explore strategic intent in relation to shared control functions, a paper was presented to the Thames Valley Collaboration Interoperability Board on 25 April 2022 as previously agreed.

3.5 The board noted and agreed the position that at this time, and into the medium term future, partners would be unable to commit to undertaking a control room collaboration. There were a number of factors that influenced this including; capacity required to implement the Emergency Services Network (ESN – the replacement for Airwave), the impact of other collaboration activity (e.g. Thames Valley Police and Hampshire Constabulary) and ongoing implementation and upgrades to control systems.

3.6 All services were in agreement that this option should be explored in the future and work would be initiated as individual services commence replacement of control rooms, where scoping of collaboration opportunities could be meaningfully undertaken at an early stage in the project lifecycle.

3.7 In relation to income generation, SROs also undertook to review schedule 12 of the TVFCS Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) which lists a number of third party income arrangements (primarily focused on agreements with Alarm Monitoring Organisations). This work has been re-prioritised to take place later in 22/23 and any significant outcomes will be reported to the Joint Committee at a future meeting.

3.8 **TVFCS targets**

3.9 Following on from members observations that TVFCS has consistently not met the target for the performance measure - “% occasions where time to alert station is within 90 seconds of the emergency call being answered”, the workshop explored a number of key questions around this measure, principally; is this the right measure and is it adding value.

3.10 Members noted that this measure plays a key part in delivering services response to incidents as part of their ‘Response standards’. The TVFCS management team actively use this data to interpret and manage performance in the control room. However, the discussion explored how the data could be presented differently in future to support a deeper understanding across a range of different incident types and operating contexts that would enable the service to use this information more effectively.

3.11 Changes have been introduced into quarter four 21/22 report and this will be presented and explained at the July Joint Committee meeting.

3.12 **Mobilising system review**

3.13 Members received a presentation, which built on previous papers and workshops, with regards to informing future decision making in relation to the extension of the Vision mobilising system contract.

3.14 Members noted the sale of SSS public Safety, supplier of the Vision product, to NEC Software Solutions UK Ltd. SROs highlighted that despite some complicating factors in relation to the sale, extending the current contract with SSS public Safety was the preferred option to ensure continued system stability through a period of change e.g. implementation of ESN.

3.15 A decision would be provided to the Joint Committee in July.

4. **COMPLIANCE WITH THE TVFCS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

4.1 This report complies with clause 4 of the IAA – ‘Principles of Collaboration’.

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None identified at this time.

6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 None identified at this time.

7. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None identified at this time .

8. **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 None identified at this time.

9. **CONTRIBUTION TO SERVICE AIMS**

9.1 As stated in the TVFCS IAA schedule 2: ‘Primary objectives’:

9.2 To satisfy the core functions of the Fire Authorities as defined in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

9.2 To satisfy the statutory duty of all the Fire Authorities as category one responders as defined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004

9.3 To improve the resilience of the control room function

9.4 To provide the capability for future expansion of TVFCS with other agencies or clients.

10. **PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

10.1 Joint Coordinating Group.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 None

**12. APPENDICES**

12.1 None

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 AM Jim Powell [powellj@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:powellj@rbfrs.co.uk) 07774215664

# THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE



<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>TVFCS QUARTER 3 AND QUARTER 4 2021/22 PERFORMANCE REPORTS</b>
<b>PRESENTED TO:</b>	<b>TVFCS JOINT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>11 JULY 2022</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>AM MIKE ADCOCK</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>FOR NOTE</b>

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To provide the Joint Committee with an update report on the performance of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS)
- 1.2 The Control Manager's performance reports for 2021/22 Quarter 3 (Appendix A) and 2021/22 Quarter 4 (Appendix B) provide a detailed narrative on TVFCS' performance together with the agreed set of performance information to enable comparisons.
- 1.3 Due to the change in the frequency of TVFCS Joint Committee Meetings previously agreed, a separate performance report for each of the two preceding quarters will be provided at each meeting of the TVFCS Joint Committee.

## 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That the Joint Committee note the report**

## 3. REPORT

- 3.1 The Quarter 3 2021/22 Performance Report is attached as **Appendix A**

- 3.2 The Quarter 4 2021/22 Performance Report is attached as **Appendix B**.
- 3.3 The reports reflect the revised performance measures previously agreed by the TVFCS Joint Committee.

**4. COMPLIANCE WITH THE TVFCS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

- 4.1 This report complies with the Steady State Legal Agreement which defines the responsibilities for measuring and reporting on performance.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no implications within this report.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no implications within this report.

**7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no implications within this report.

**8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no implications within this report

**10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 None for this report.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 Programme Sponsoring Group Benefits Paper – 11 April 2013.

**12. APPENDICES**

- 12.1 Appendix A – TVFCS Control Manager's performance report for 2021/22 Quarter 3.
- 12.2 Appendix B – TVFCS Control Manager's performance report for 2021/22 Quarter 4.

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 Simon Harris GM Thames Valley Fire Control Service

0118 938 4522 | 0774 863 1527

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Appendix A

# Thames Valley Fire Control Service



## Joint Committee Performance Report (Quarter 3 2021/22)



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## Introduction

The Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) performance report presents information on the performance of the joint control room.

This is to provide structure and governance that enables TVFCS to measure, monitor and manage outputs and outcomes in a timely manner, allowing us to respond and make informed decisions to ensure that our statutory and partnership obligations are successfully delivered.

The aim of this report is to share how TVFCS has performed over the previous three months, offer explanation, analysis and mitigation for target outcomes, and to suggest positive means of carrying effective performance into the future.

### Key to Icons and Colours

	Target exceeded by more than 10%
	Target met or exceeded by up to 10%
	Target missed by up to 10%
	Target missed by more than 10%
	NA or data accuracy issues affect confidence in reporting

## Operational Context

During quarter 3 2021/22, TVFCS has continued to focus on maintaining our core service, ensuring the health and wellbeing of our staff whilst adapting to the changing demands of the COVID19 pandemic, along with progressing other key areas of work.

Levels of staff absence remained high through the quarter, with a number of staff suffering from COVID in addition to the seasonal sicknesses that are anticipated during the autumn and winter months. This created challenges in maintaining crewing levels and has created significant difficulties in relation to the ability to progress other work.

The TVFCS Senior Responsible Owners have commissioned the TVFCS management team to investigate a number of options to treat the risks posed by high absence levels and to improve the overall resilience of TVFCS staffing arrangements. Recommendations which result from this work will be presented to the Joint Committee at a future meeting.

TVFCS continues to engage in initiatives to improve national resilience in terms of the ability to handle high call volumes and manage significant and major events. Members of both the Joint Coordination Group and management team have taken on roles within NFCC and Home Office project teams to assist with the development of solutions to ensure that TVFCS is fully sighted on developments in these areas

## Resourcing

During Q3, TVFCS experienced some staff turnover for the first time since 2019. Two members of TVFCS left during the quarter, both moving on to other roles within the Fire & Rescue Service in Buckinghamshire and London respectively. A notice of maternity was also received during the quarter, with maternity leave due to start in February 2022. Recruitment activity has taken place to fill these vacancies, resulting in three new starters joining TVFCS in January 2022. Further leavers are now anticipated during Q4 and recruitment activity to fill any resulting vacancies is taking place.

Sickness levels remained high through the quarter, with TVFCS suffering from a variety of seasonal illnesses resulting in absence from work. Through November and December an increased number of TVFCS staff contracted COVID, particularly as the Omicron variant became dominant in the UK. Whilst the majority of affected staff experienced mild illness, the extended period of absence

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

required following a positive test had a notable impact on the number of working days lost. Sickness absence is reviewed regularly and managed in line with agreed policy and procedure. Where applicable, staff are signposted to support arrangements to assist with particular issues and maximise availability for work.

We continue to support a small number of TVFCS staff who are currently experiencing complex medical issues. Due to the pressures placed on the NHS, diagnosis and treatment are taking longer to access than would have been expected before the pandemic. The majority of these staff members have returned to the workplace, but are not yet able to resume shift work on a full time basis. The revised working arrangements for these members of staff are monitored, reviewed and supported by the TVFCS management team with assistance from the RBFRS HR team and Occupational Health function.

Measure	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021
Short-term Sickness Episodes	9	12	12
Long-term Sickness Episodes*	1	2	1
Total Days lost to Sickness	32	59	54
Average days lost per FTE	0.80	1.48	1.35

\*A sickness episode is considered to be 'long-term' once the individual has been absent for more than 28 days. Maternity leave is not recorded as sickness and is not included in these figures.

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

Ethnicity	Percentage of workforce
Black or Black British African	2.5%
Other Mixed	2.5%
Unknown	2.5%
White British	92.5%

Gender	Percentage of workforce
Female	70%
Male	30%

TVFCS recruitment activity aligns to the EDI objectives set out within the RBFPS People Strategy. A consultation on the EDI objectives within the strategy is due to conclude in early April 2022. TVFCS will review and refresh our recruitment activity once the outcomes of this consultation are known.

### Staff Development

Staff have continued to undertake development activity during the quarter, but progress through development programmes has been hindered by the staffing issues experienced. A review of the Control Development and Assessment pathways introduced in 2020 is taking place during Q4. A number of potential changes to the programme have been identified which will allow candidates to make more timely progress and reduce the impact that assessment has on overall capacity.

## Development status

Role	Current staff	Number who have completed role Development pathway	Number in Development	% of Current Staff in Development
Group Manager	1	1	0	0%
Control Manager	1	1	0	0%
Control Training Manager	1	0	1	100%
Watch Manager	4	4	0	0%
Crew Manager	12	4	8	67%
Fire Fighter	23	16	7	30%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>32%</b>

The information provided in the table shown above relates to those who have successfully completed the development pathway associated with their substantive role, which qualifies the individual to receive the 'competent' rate of pay for that role. All TVFCS staff are assessed for their ability to perform competently and safely in a role before being considered for promotion to that role.



## Prevention and Protection

TVFCS staff have contributed to prevention activity during the quarter through the identification and referral of 21 residents of the Thames Valley with defective smoke alarms in their homes and through the handling of 32 safeguarding notifications. Most issues with defective domestic smoke alarms are as a result of the device's battery becoming flat, causing it to sound. This is often a cause of real concern for our most vulnerable residents, unable to access the device, or unsure what the noise they are hearing is indicating. In these cases, TVFCS will pass the information onto the relevant Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) to facilitate an urgent 'safe and well' visit for the occupant to replace the faulty alarm and provide other safety advice. Safeguarding issues can either be identified by TVFCS when dealing with callers or following attendance at an address where crews will notify TVFCS that a safeguarding issue has been identified. All TVFCS staff receive regular mandatory training relating to the safeguarding of both adults and children to assist them with this aspect of their work.

TVFCS also deal with notifications from partner agencies, primarily Thames Valley Police, when a credible threat of arson has been received against a person or premises and action needs to be urgently taken. The notifications are then passed to the relevant FRS to be dealt with in line with their respective procedures. TVFCS did not receive any urgent notifications during the quarter, but were notified of threats against 42 addresses during the period which were passed via other routes. Once suitable inspections have been carried out at a premises where an arson threat has been received and appropriate measures applied to the premises, TVFCS will normally be asked to take additional actions should a call to the address be received. This may involve increasing the number of fire resources sent to the address or making urgent contact with the Police and other agencies.

## Response

Measure		October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	Reporting period average	Q3 2020/21 average	Rolling 12 month average
1	Total Emergency calls answered	3361	3055	2616	3011	2691	2895
2	Number of Mobilisations	2037	1911	1687	1878	1628	1603

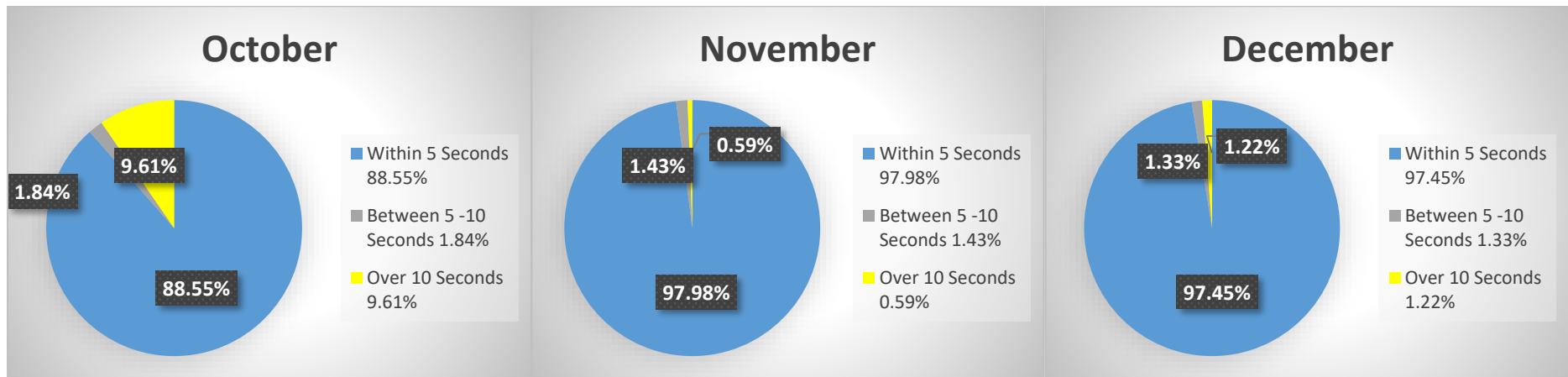
# TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

\*Definitions are available in appendix A

Demand on the Service has now returned to levels comparable to those seen before the pandemic. Overall demand generally reduces during winter months, although periods of severe weather can cause spikes in the volume of calls received.

Measure*		2021/22 Target	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	Reporting period average	Q3 2020/21 Average	Rolling 12 month average
3	Emergency calls answered within 5 seconds	92%	88.55	97.98	97.45	94.66	96.85	95.86
4	Emergency calls answered within 10 seconds	97%	90.39	99.41	98.78	96.19	98.70	97.59

\*Definitions are available in appendix A



## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

This measure examines call waiting times by looking at the performance of TVFCS staff when answering emergency calls. It sets two targets for how quickly control operators should pick up an emergency call when it comes into the control room. We measure whether a call is picked up within 5 or 10 seconds and the expected performance is that this will be done on 92% or 97% of occasions respectively. Performance against these targets is very good and the targets are routinely exceeded. In reality this means that the majority (**97% or more**) of all emergency calls that come into TVFCS will be picked in 10 seconds or less. The actual figures for Q3 show that, on average, control operators picked up 94.66% of all emergency call within 5 seconds and 96.19% of all emergency calls within 10 seconds.

The small number of occasions where these times are exceeded are usually associated with periods of higher demand where a number of calls are received simultaneously, this can be as a result of a large number of calls being received in a relatively short period of time, either as a result of single incident which is visible to a large number of people (for example, a fire involving grass on the side of a major road) or as a result of environmental conditions affecting large numbers of people simultaneously, such as exceptionally heavy rainfall causing flooding.

The variance in performance seen in October 2021 was the result of a fault affecting a single line used by TVFCS. The fault caused a call to be presented to Control staff but did not allow them to answer it, causing the call to ring for a prolonged period before disconnecting and then reconnecting with the same result. The line affected was one used solely to monitor automatic fire detection equipment at fire stations and there was no negative impact on the service provided to other emergency callers.

Measure		2021/22 Target	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	Reporting period average	Q3 2020/21	Rolling 12 month average
6	Average time to alert station in seconds – Primary Fires	N/A	66	59	74	66	69	66

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

7	Average Time to alert station in seconds – Secondary Fires	N/A	79	82	101	87	88	84
9	Average time to alert station in seconds – Road Traffic Collisions	N/A	81	95	95	90	88	93

\*Definitions are available in appendix A

The average time taken to alert a station following a call being answered, where a mobilisation is required, remains a useful measure to determine how effectively Control staff are able to handle calls. The incident types included in this reporting measure are those which are most often dealt with by the Control room with the potential to involve a threat to life and/or damage to property. On average, TVFCS staff take 90 seconds or less to handle these types of calls, further evidencing their role in supporting the performance of the three FRS' against their Integrated/Community Risk Management or Public Safety Plans and in protecting communities across the Thames Valley.

Future reports will present the data relating to these incident types as percentage compliance with the 90 second overall target. New statistical reports are required to show this breakdown, which it is anticipated will be available for the Q4 2021/22 performance report.

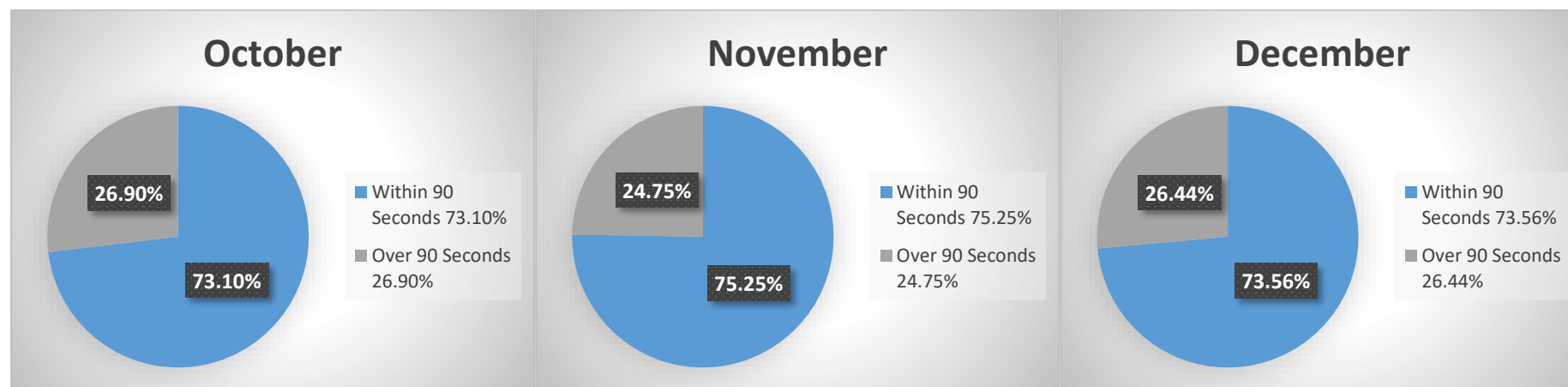
Primary fires are typically incidents which pose a higher risk to life and property, as they generally relate to fires occurring within buildings. Throughout the period, TVFCS have consistently mobilised to these incidents within 90 seconds. TVFCS continue to achieve strong results when handling calls to these incidents, with the average time taken during the quarter being well within the 90 second target.

Secondary fires tend to be smaller, predominantly outdoor fires, which can often be more difficult to locate than fires involving buildings. It is therefore expected that TVFCS staff will take slightly longer to handle these calls and this is reflected in the statistics for the period.

Road traffic collisions (RTCs) typically take longer to locate than many other incident types, as callers are often not familiar with the area they are travelling in and are often only able to pinpoint their location as being between two notable points, for example roundabouts or other landmarks, which can make identifying a precise location challenging. A large number of calls to road traffic collisions are passed to TVFCS by the Police or Ambulance Service, which means that assistive technology for location identification such as BT Advanced Mobile Location cannot be used, leading to slightly longer call handling times.

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

Measure*		2021/22 Target	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	Reporting Period Average	Q3 2020/21 Average	Rolling 12 Month Average
5	% occasions where time to alert station is within 90 seconds of the emergency call being answered.	80%	73.10	75.25	73.56	73.97	69.54	72.32



We have seen small variations in performance against this measure which are consistent with normal seasonal variations. Although performance against this measure remains below target, the data shows an improvement against the rolling 12 month figure and the equivalent quarter in 2020/21.

During the quarter, TVFCS successfully challenged 1309 emergency calls. In addition to calls to alarms where FRS attendance is not required in Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire, which accounted for 637 incidents, this figure also includes a large number of calls to other incident types where, through extended questioning of the caller, it is identified that an agency other than the Fire & Rescue Service is more appropriate to provide the assistance that the caller requires. Whilst this call challenge process can lead to extended call handling times, it is a vital aspect of

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report



the overall response strategy of the FRS as it preserves the availability of resources to attend incidents where life and property are threatened and simultaneously reduces the risk posed to the public and firefighters when responding to incidents under emergency conditions.

### Resilience

As a result of the crewing pressures caused by the high level of staff absence experienced during the quarter, there were a number of occasions where it was not possible to achieve the desired crewing levels within TVFCS. In total, TVFCS was staffed below normal crewing levels for 6.1% of the available hours during the quarter. On these occasions, TVFCS staff were supported by the three FRS working to agreed degradation plans, which prioritise risk critical operational activity whilst ensuring the health and wellbeing of control staff performing their duties. Although this created additional pressure for Control room staff, all emergency calls placed to TVFCS were responded to without needing to utilise our buddy arrangements.

TVFCS plans include a quarterly full evacuation exercise, with staff relocating to the secondary control room facility at Kidlington. Due to the restrictions associated with COVID19, the physical evacuation exercises have been suspended and replaced with simulated evacuation exercises. A simulated evacuation exercise took place on December 2nd 2021, demonstrating Staffordshire & West Midlands Fire Control's ability to receive calls and alert resources within the Thames Valley. Following the relaxation in COVID restrictions, a full evacuation exercise has been scheduled for 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

### Data and Intelligence

During Quarter 3 2021/22, all requests for change submitted by the FRS to TVFCS were processed within 5 working days of the request being received. These included requests to amend the Pre-determined attendance of fire and rescue assets for specific locations, add or amend details of newly promoted FRS officers, changes to details relating to fire assets appliances and changes to FRS procedures carried out by TVFCS staff when dealing with particular types of events.

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

A number of requests for information to assist with investigations have been received from Thames Valley Police during the quarter. These requests are referred to the relevant FRS for approval before being released to ensure all relevant data protection legislation is complied with.

### Financial Position

	<b>Total Annual Budget</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure To 31st December 2021</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn at Year End</b>	<b>Variance = Forecast - Annual Budget</b>	<b>Variance %</b>
Staff	1,798,104	1,388,640	1,852,972	56,912	3.18%
Corporate	324,343	243,257	324,343	0	0
Other	37,995	-7,133	39,118	1,123	2.96%
Technology	250,005	178,718	245,417	1,123	-1.84%
<b>Total Budgeted Expenditure</b>	<b>2,410,447</b>	<b>1,803,482</b>	<b>2,461,850</b>	<b>51,430</b>	<b>2.13%</b>

## Appendix A

### Performance Measure Definitions

Measure	Description
<b>% of occasions where the time to answer emergency calls is within 5 seconds</b>	This measure uses the time taken from when the Fire Control Room system receives an emergency incoming call alert to the moment they are answered by a TVFCS Operator.
<b>% of occasions where the time to answer emergency calls is within 10 seconds</b>	This measure uses the time taken from when the Fire Control Room system receives an emergency incoming call alert to the moment they are answered by a TVFCS Operator.
<b>% of occasions where time to mobilise is within 90 seconds</b>	This measure is calculated from when emergency calls are answered to when control room staff operate equipment at a station notifying crews that they are required to respond.
<b>Average time to alert station in seconds – Primary Fires</b>	The average number of seconds elapsed between an emergency call being answered and control staff operating equipment at a station notifying crews that they are required to mobilise when responding to primary fires. Primary fires are defined as 'more serious fires that harm people or cause damage to property'
<b>Average time to alert station in seconds – Secondary Fires</b>	The average number of seconds elapsed between an emergency call being answered and control staff operating equipment at a station notifying crews that they are required to mobilise when responding to secondary fires. Secondary fires are defined as 'generally small outdoor fires, not involving people of property'.
<b>Average time to alert station in seconds – Road Traffic Collisions</b>	The average number of seconds elapsed between an emergency call being answered and control staff operating equipment at a station notifying crews that they are required to mobilise when responding to road traffic collisions.





Appendix B  
Budget Summary

TVFCS Budget Monitoring 3 Months to 31st December 2021						
	<i>Total Annual Budget</i>	<i>Actual Expenditure To 31st December 2021</i>	<i>Forecast Outturn at Year End</i>	<i>Variance = Forecast - Annual Budget</i>	<i>Variance %</i>	<i>Commentary</i>
<b>Staff</b>						
Employment Costs	1,789,804	1,385,286	1,846,716	56,912	3.18%	The unexpected pay award for staff conditioned to the Grey book announced in July, and higher than anticipated costs in covering staff absence have caused an overspend in this area.

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

Mileage and Subsistence	7,000	2,967	4,256	-2,744	-39.20%	We expect to realise some in year savings against this budget line, as restrictions to travel and the use of virtual meetings have reduced costs in this area.
Training	1,000	387	1,000	0	0%	
Recruitment	300	0	1000	700	233%	A higher number of leavers than predicted, has led to an increase in the costs of identifying and employing new starters.
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>1,798,104</b>	<b>1,388,640</b>	<b>1,852,972</b>	<b>54,868</b>	<b>3.05%</b>	
<b>Corporate</b>						
Facilities	99,184	74,388	99,184		0%	
Finance	23,289	17,467	23,289		0%	
HR	81,076	60,807	81,076		0%	

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

ICT	93,818	70,364	93,818		0%	
Liability and Equipment Insurance	10,924	8,193	10,924		0%	
Management	16,052	12,039	16,052		0%	
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>324,343</b>	<b>243,257</b>	<b>324,343</b>		<b>0%</b>	
<b>Other</b>						
Professional Services and General Equipment Purchase	5,500	1,772	5,823	323	5.87%	Unexpected price increases for some items has led to a small anticipated overspend against this line.
OFRS Costs (secondary control facility)	44,395	0	44,395	0	0%	
TVFCS Alarm Receiving Centre income	-11,900	-8,905	-11,100	800	-6.72%	A reduction in the number of ARCs covering premises in the TVFCS area of operations has slightly reduced forecast received income.
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>37,995</b>	<b>-7,133</b>	<b>39,118</b>	<b>1,123</b>	<b>2.96%</b>	

# TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

Technology						
Capita Mobs System (maint)	70,276	53,173	70,897	621	0%	A small difference in the rate of RPI used when the budget was set and the prevailing rate when the year's costs were calculated by Capita has led to this variance.
DS3000 (for primary and secondary) ICCS	85,356	88,031	88,031	2,674	3.13%	A small difference in the rate of RPI used when the budget was set and the prevailing rate when the year's costs were calculated by Capita, as well as an unforeseen framework fee for contract extension has led to this variance.
Telephony and Network costs.	53,343	30,564	45,460	-7,883	-14.78%	Lower than anticipated network costs will result in an in year saving against this budget line.

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

Software Maintenance	715	0	715	0	0%	
EISEC Services (Primary and Secondary Control)	9,000	6,750	9,000	0	0%	
Smart services to switch 999 lines to secondary control or elsewhere	17,000	0	17,000	0	0%	
Airwave rental ( SAN I ,B ) ( Primary,secondary ) (7+8)	14,315	0	14,315	0	0%	
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>250,005</b>	<b>178,718</b>	<b>245,417</b>	<b>-4,588</b>	<b>-1.84%</b>	
<b>Total Budgeted Expenditure</b>	<b>2,410,447</b>	<b>1,803,482</b>	<b>2,461,850</b>	<b>51,403</b>	<b>2.13%</b>	

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Appendix B

# Thames Valley Fire Control Service



## Joint Committee Performance Report (Quarter 4 2021/22)



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## Introduction

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The aim of this report is to share how TVFCS has performed over the previous three months, offer explanation, analysis and mitigation for target outcomes, and to suggest positive means of carrying effective performance into the future.

### Key to Icons and Colours

	Target exceeded by more than 10%
	Target met or exceeded by up to 10%
	Target missed by up to 10%
	Target missed by more than 10%
	NA or data accuracy issues affect confidence in reporting

## Operational Context

During quarter 4 2021/22, as the restrictions associated with the national response to COVID19 have lifted, TVFCS has continued to support staff in making the adjustments required to 'live' with COVID, but has also begun to focus on a number of areas of work which have been delayed by the pandemic. Quarter 4 saw some challenges in maintaining crewing numbers, as, in addition to the absences that are anticipated during the winter months, a number of TVFCS staff also contracted COVID19 during the period.

The Senior Responsible Owners and TVFCS Management team have begun to work towards identifying options for improving staffing resilience within TVFCS. A report will be presented to the Joint Committee at an appropriate future meeting.

On February 18<sup>th</sup> 2022, the Thames Valley was impacted by Storm Eunice. The high winds associated with the storm caused significant disruption across Central and Southern England and resulted in calls for assistance being routed into TVFCS in numbers not seen for many years, putting extreme pressure on TVFCS call handling capacity. TVFCS worked with all three FRS and other control rooms across the UK to manage this level of demand and to ensure that an appropriate response was made to all calls for help.

## Resourcing

During Q4, TVFCS experienced further staff turnover, with staff leaving to become Whole time operational firefighters and to take up other careers outside the Fire and Rescue Service. Recruitment activity took place to fill the resulting vacancies and a number of new staff have joined the TVFCS team during the quarter. Higher than usual levels of staff turnover have been experienced across the Fire Control sector nationally, and TVFCS will be working as part of an NFCC sponsored group to look at methods for improving both recruitment and staff retention.

We continue to support a small number of TVFCS staff who are currently experiencing complex medical issues. Due to the pressures placed on the NHS, diagnosis and treatment are taking longer to access than would have been expected before the pandemic. The majority of these staff members have returned to the workplace, but are not yet able to resume shift work on a full

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

time basis. The revised working arrangements for these members of staff are monitored, reviewed and supported by the TVFCS management team with assistance from the RBFCS HR team and Occupational Health function.

Measure	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022
Short-term Sickness Episodes	13	5	9
Long-term Sickness Episodes*	1	1	2
Total Days lost to Sickness	67	42	77
Average days lost per FTE	1.67	1.05	1.92

\*A sickness episode is considered to be 'long-term' once the individual has been absent for more than 28 days. Maternity leave is not recorded as sickness and is not included in these figures.

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Ethnicity	Percentage of workforce
Black or Black British African	4.76%
Other Mixed	0%

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

Unknown	2.38%
White British	92.86%

Gender	Percentage of workforce
Female	73.81%
Male	26.19%

TVFCS recruitment activity aligns to the EDI objectives set out within the RBFRS People Strategy. A consultation on the EDI objectives within the strategy concluded in April 2022, TVFCS will now be carrying out work with RBFRS to align recruitment activity with the revised strategic objectives.

## Staff Development

Staff have continued to undertake development activity during the quarter, with a number of staff completing their development programmes during the period, however the number of new starters during the period means that the percentage of staff in development in the Firefighter role has increased.

### Development status

Role	Current staff	Number who have completed role Development pathway	Number in Development	% of Current Staff in Development
Group Manager	1	1	0	0%
Control Manager	1	1	0	0%
Control Training Manager	1	0	1	100%
Watch Manager	4	3	1	25%
Crew Manager	12	2	10	83%
Fire Fighter	21	8	13	62%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>63%</b>

The information provided in the table shown above relates to those who have successfully completed the development pathway associated with their substantive role, which qualifies the individual to receive the 'competent' rate of pay for that role. All TVFCS staff are assessed for their ability to perform competently and safely in a role before being considered for promotion to that role.



### Prevention and Protection

TVFCS staff have contributed to prevention activity during the quarter through the identification and referral of 25 residents of the Thames Valley with defective smoke alarms in their homes and through the handling of 48 safeguarding notifications. Most issues with defective domestic smoke alarms are as a result of the device's battery becoming flat, causing it to sound. This is often a cause of real concern for our most vulnerable residents, unable to access the device, or unsure what the noise they are hearing is indicating. In these cases, TVFCS will pass the information onto the relevant Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) to facilitate an urgent 'safe and well' visit for the occupant to replace the faulty alarm and provide other safety advice. Safeguarding issues can either be identified by TVFCS when dealing with callers or following attendance at an address where crews will notify TVFCS that a safeguarding issue has been identified. All TVFCS staff receive regular mandatory training relating to the safeguarding of both adults and children to assist them with this aspect of their work.

TVFCS also deal with notifications from partner agencies, primarily Thames Valley Police, when a credible threat of arson has been received against a person or premises and action needs to be urgently taken. The notifications are then passed to the relevant FRS to be dealt with in line with their respective procedures. TVFCS did not receive any urgent notifications during the quarter, but were notified of threats against 31 addresses during the period which were passed via other routes. Once suitable inspections have been carried out at a premises where an arson threat has been received and appropriate measures applied to the premises, TVFCS will normally be asked to take additional actions should a call to the address be received. This may involve increasing the number of fire resources sent to the address or making urgent contact with the Police and other agencies.

# TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

## Response

Measure		January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	Reporting period average	Q4 2020/21 average	Rolling 12 month average
1	Total Emergency calls answered	2559	3019	2882	2820	2560	2971
2	Number of Mobilisations	1596	1708	1719	1674	1550	1770

\*Definitions are available in appendix A

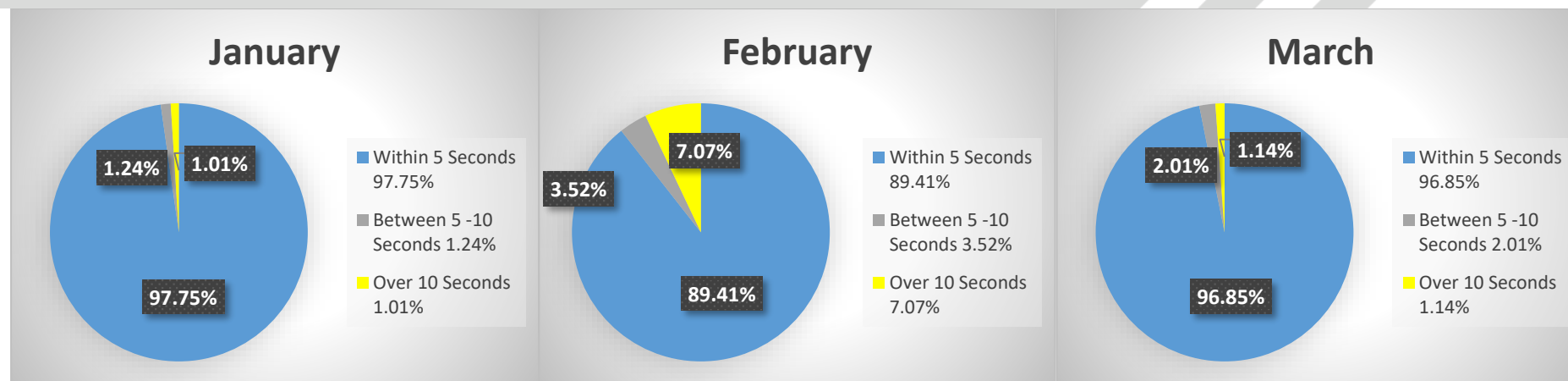
Demand on the Service has now returned to levels comparable to those seen before the pandemic. Overall demand generally reduces during winter months, although periods of severe weather can cause spikes in the volume of calls received.

Measure*		2021/22 Target	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	Reporting period average	Q4 2020/21 Average	Rolling 12 month average
3	Emergency calls answered within 5 seconds	92%	97.75	89.41	96.85	94.67	96.70	95.86
4	Emergency calls answered within 10 seconds	97%	98.99	92.93	98.86	96.93	98.51	97.59

\*Definitions are available in appendix A



# TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report



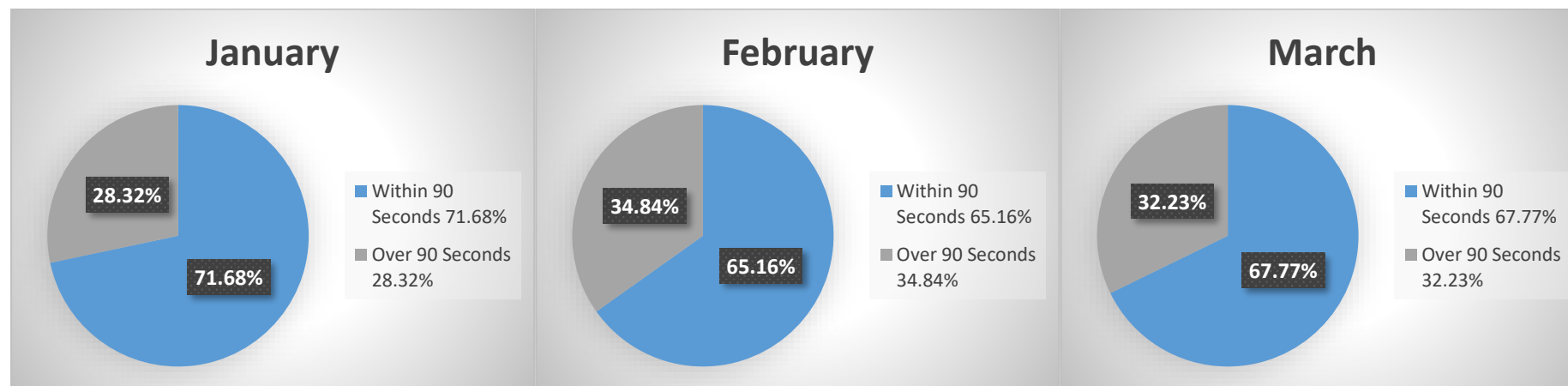
This measure examines call waiting times by looking at the performance of TVFCS staff when answering emergency calls. It sets two targets for how quickly control operators should pick up an emergency call when it comes into the control room. We measure whether a call is picked up within 5 or 10 seconds and the expected performance is that this will be done on 92% or 97% of occasions respectively. Performance against these targets is very good and the targets are routinely exceeded. In reality this means that the majority (**97% or more**) of all emergency calls that come into TVFCS will be picked in 10 seconds or less. The actual figures for Q4 show that, on average, control operators picked up 94.67% of all emergency call within 5 seconds and 96.93% of all emergency calls within 10 seconds.

The small number of occasions where these times are exceeded are usually associated with periods of higher demand where a number of calls are received simultaneously, this can be as a result of a large number of calls being received in a relatively short period of time, either as a result of single incident which is visible to a large number of people (for example, a fire involving grass on the side of a major road) or as a result of environmental conditions affecting large numbers of people simultaneously, such as exceptionally heavy rainfall causing flooding.

The impact of the exceptionally high call volumes experienced during Storm Eunice can be seen in the February data. The number of calls received concurrently throughout the storm exceeded TVFCS call handling capacity for an extended period, causing calls to ring for longer than would normally be the case. In April 2022, a new national arrangement for call redistribution during exceptional periods of demand went live across the UK, which will reduce the impact of similar events in the future.

# TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

Measure*		2021/22 Target	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	Reporting Period Average	Q4 2020/21 Average	Rolling 12 Month Average
5	% occasions where time to alert station is within 90 seconds of the emergency call being answered.	80%	71.68	65.16	67.77	68.20	72.74	71.96



TVFCS has consistently struggled to achieve this target since 'go live' in 2015, although improvements had been made over preceding quarters, performance against the measure fell during Q4 2021/22. There are a number of factors which influence how quickly TVFCS staff are able to mobilise resources once an emergency call has been answered and a combination of these factors affected TVFCS during the quarter. New starters in TVFCS often take longer to handle calls than their more experienced colleagues, as they develop their skills and confidence after completing their initial training. As mentioned earlier in the report, staff turnover in both Q3 and Q4 required the recruitment of a number of new staff to fill establishment vacancies, with all of these staff beginning to take live '999' calls during February and March. We would expect this impact to gradually reduce as those members of staff gain confidence and experience.

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

During the quarter, TVFCS successfully challenged 814 emergency calls. In addition to calls to alarms where FRS attendance is not required in Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire, this figure also includes a large number of calls to other incident types where, through extended questioning of the caller, it is identified that an agency other than the Fire & Rescue Service is more appropriate to provide the assistance that the caller requires. Whilst this call challenge process can lead to extended call handling times, it is a vital aspect of the overall response strategy of the FRS as it preserves the availability of resources to attend incidents where life and property are threatened and simultaneously reduces the risk posed to the public and firefighters when responding to incidents under emergency conditions.

We have undertaken some analysis of data to illustrate the impact that call challenge procedure have on this performance measure, which are shown in the tables below.

Measure*	2021/22 Target	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022
% occasions where time to alert station is within 90 seconds of the emergency call being answered where 'Call Challenge' Automatic Fire Alarm Calls are excluded.	80%	74.62	72.07	73.77

Measure*	2021/22 Target	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022
% occasions where time to alert station is within 90 seconds of the emergency call being answered where all 'Call challenge' calls are excluded	80%	76.67	80.24	77.95

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

The agreed performance measure for the time taken to mobilise Fire & Rescue Service resources to incidents is that 80% of mobilisations will take place within 90 seconds of the call being answered by TVFCS. This is applied to all incidents which ultimately require a Fire & Rescue Service emergency response. Calls to different types of incidents require different call handling strategies to be applied by Control room staff. The table below shows how TVFCS perform against key incident types which make up a large proportion of TVFCS workload.

Measure		2021/22 Target	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	Reporting period average	Q4 2020/21
6	Percentage of Primary Fires where time to alert station is 90 seconds or less	N/A	82.71%	89.59%	84.77%	85.69%	82.42%
7	Percentage of Secondary Fires where time to alert station is 90 seconds or less	N/A	78.26%	67.05%	68.00%	71.10%	74.04%
9	Percentage of Road Traffic Collisions where time to alert station is 90 seconds or less	N/A	42.34%	51.57%	52.71%	48.87%	53.75%

\*Definitions are available in appendix A

Primary fires are typically incidents which pose a higher risk to life and property, as they generally relate to fires occurring within buildings and vehicles. TVFCS perform strongly when handling incidents of this type and were able to exceed the standard in every month during the quarter.

Secondary fires tend to be smaller, predominantly outdoor fires, which can often be more difficult to locate than fires involving buildings. It is therefore expected that TVFCS staff will take slightly longer to handle these calls and this is reflected in the statistics for the period.

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report



Road traffic collisions (RTCs) typically take much longer to locate than many other incident types, as callers are often not familiar with the area they are travelling in and are often only able to pinpoint their location as being between two notable points, for example roundabouts or other landmarks, which can make identifying the precise location required for mobilisation challenging. In addition, a large number of calls to road traffic collisions are passed to TVFCS by the Police or Ambulance Service, which means that assistive technology for location identification such as BT Advanced Mobile Location cannot be used by TVFCS. This leads to extended call handling times for these incident types.

### Resilience

As a result of the continued crewing pressures caused by the high level of staff absence experienced during the quarter, there were a number of occasions where it was not possible to achieve the desired crewing levels within TVFCS. In total, TVFCS was staffed below normal crewing levels for 14.5% of the available hours during the quarter. On these occasions, TVFCS staff were supported by the three FRS working to agreed degradation plans, which prioritise risk critical operational activity whilst ensuring the health and wellbeing of control staff performing their duties. Although this created additional pressure for Control room staff, all emergency calls placed to TVFCS during these periods were responded to without needing to utilise our buddy arrangements.

TVFCS plans include a quarterly full evacuation exercise, with staff relocating to the secondary control room facility at Kidlington. Due to the restrictions associated with COVID19, these exercises had been conducted virtually as simulations since March 2020. Following the removal of restrictions, a full evacuation exercise took place on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 with staff travelling to the Secondary Control facility at Kidlington whilst TVFCS calls were handled by Staffordshire and West Midlands Fire Control with support from TVFCS staff. The exercise went well and provided assurance that our existing business continuity arrangements remain robust and effective.

### Data and Intelligence

During Quarter 4 2021/22, all requests for change submitted by the FRS to TVFCS were processed within 5 working days of the request being received. These included requests to amend the Pre-determined attendance of fire and rescue assets for specific locations, add or amend details of newly promoted FRS officers, changes to details relating to fire assets appliances and changes to FRS procedures carried out by TVFCS staff when dealing with particular types of events.

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

A number of requests for information to assist with investigations have been received from Thames Valley Police during the quarter. These requests are referred to the relevant FRS for approval before being released to ensure all relevant data protection legislation is complied with.

### Financial Position

	<b>Total Annual Budget</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure To 31st March 2022</b>	<b>Variance = Forecast - Annual Budget</b>	<b>Variance %</b>
<b>Staff</b>	<b>1,798,104</b>	<b>1,388,640</b>	<b>55,074</b>	<b>3.18%</b>
<b>Corporate</b>	<b>324,343</b>	<b>324,343</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>37,995</b>	<b>36,465</b>	<b>-1,530</b>	<b>- 4.03%</b>
<b>Technology</b>	<b>250,005</b>	<b>235,600</b>	<b>-14,405</b>	<b>- 5.76%</b>
<b>Total Budgeted Expenditure</b>	<b>2,410,447</b>	<b>2,446,891</b>	<b>36,444</b>	<b>1.51%</b>

## Appendix A

### Performance Measure Definitions

Measure	Description
<b>% of occasions where the time to answer emergency calls is within 5 seconds</b>	This measure uses the time taken from when the Fire Control Room system receives an emergency incoming call alert to the moment they are answered by a TVFCS Operator.
<b>% of occasions where the time to answer emergency calls is within 10 seconds</b>	This measure uses the time taken from when the Fire Control Room system receives an emergency incoming call alert to the moment they are answered by a TVFCS Operator.
<b>% of occasions where time to mobilise is within 90 seconds</b>	This measure is calculated from when emergency calls are answered to when control room staff operate equipment at a station notifying crews that they are required to respond.
<b>Average time to alert station in seconds – Primary Fires</b>	The average number of seconds elapsed between an emergency call being answered and control staff operating equipment at a station notifying crews that they are required to mobilise when responding to primary fires. Primary fires are defined as ‘more serious fires that harm people or cause damage to property’
<b>Average time to alert station in seconds – Secondary Fires</b>	The average number of seconds elapsed between an emergency call being answered and control staff operating equipment at a station notifying crews that they are required to mobilise when responding to secondary fires. Secondary fires are defined as ‘generally small outdoor fires, not involving people or property’.
<b>Average time to alert station in seconds – Road Traffic Collisions</b>	The average number of seconds elapsed between an emergency call being answered and control staff operating equipment at a station notifying crews that they are required to mobilise when responding to road traffic collisions.







Appendix B  
Budget Summary

	<b>Total Annual Budget</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure To 31st March 2022</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Variance %</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Staff</b>					
Employment Costs	1,789,804	1,844,878	55,074	3.08%	The unexpected pay award for staff conditioned to the Grey book announced in July 2021, and higher than anticipated costs in covering staff absence have caused an overspend in this area.
Mileage and Subsistence	7,000	3,937	- 3,063	- 43.76%	Ongoing COVID19 restrictions during the year resulted in less travel than anticipated taking place.

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

Training	1,000	457	-543	-54.30%	
Recruitment	300	1,211	911	303.67%	A higher number of leavers than anticipated has led to an increase in the costs of identifying and employing new starters.
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>1,798,104</b>	<b>1,388,640</b>	<b>54,868</b>	<b>3.05%</b>	
<b>Corporate</b>					
Facilities	99,184	99,184	0	0%	
Finance	23,289	23,289	0	0%	
HR	81,076	81,076	0	0%	
ICT	93,818	93,818	0	0%	
Liability and Equipment Insurance	10,924	10,924	0	0%	
Management	16,052	16,052	0	0%	
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>324,343</b>	<b>324,343</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	
<b>Other</b>					

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

Professional Services and General Equipment Purchase	5,500	1,956	- 3,544	- 64.44%	An unexpected change in supply arrangements has meant that some anticipated spending has been deferred until the 2022/23 financial year.
OFRS Costs (secondary control facility)	44,395	44,395	0	0%	
TVFCS Alarm Receiving Centre income	-11,900	-9,886	2,014	-16.92%	Business changes affecting commercial Alarm Receiving Centres have led to a reduction in the number of companies requiring this service and a consequential reduction in income received.
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>37,995</b>	<b>36,465</b>	<b>- 1,530</b>	<b>- 4.30%</b>	
<b>Technology</b>					

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

Capita Mobs System (maint)	70,276	61,519	- 8,757	12.46%	Service credits in relation to failures to meet Service Level Agreements have created an in year efficiency in this area.
DS3000 (for primary and secondary) ICCS	85,356	88,031	2,675	3.13%	A small difference in the rate of RPI used when the budget was set and the prevailing rate when the year's costs were calculated by Capita, as well as an unforeseen framework fee for contract extension has led to this variance.
Telephony and Network costs.	53,343	45,395	- 7,808%	- 14.64%	Lower than anticipated network costs have resulted in an in year saving.
Software Maintenance	715	200	- 515	- 72.03%	Lower than anticipated costs for maintenance of software have created an in year saving.

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

EISEC Services (Primary and Secondary Control)	9,000	9,000	0	0%	
Smart services to switch 999 lines to secondary control or elsewhere	17,000	17,000	0	0%	
Airwave rental ( SAN I ,B ) ( Primary,secondary ) (7+8)	14,315	14,315	0	0%	
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>250,005</b>	<b>235,600</b>	<b>- 14,405</b>	<b>- 5.76%</b>	
<b>Total Budgeted Expenditure</b>	<b>2,410,447</b>	<b>2,446,891</b>	<b>36,444</b>	<b>1.51%</b>	

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# THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE



<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE SYSTEM CONTRACTS AND HARDWARE REFRESH</b>
<b>PRESENTED TO:</b>	<b>TVFCS JOINT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>11 JULY 2022</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>AREA MANAGER JIM POWELL</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DECISION</b>

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals for the future support of key Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) systems and the requirement to refresh the mobilising system hardware to ensure TVFCS can continue to deliver a quality, robust service for the Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services (TVFRS) and the communities they serve.
- 1.2 It builds on previous reports, discussions at members' workshops and accounts for a number of complicating factors in the external environment, primarily the acquisition of the service provider of the two contracts in question (SSS Public Safety Ltd, formerly known as Capita SSS Ltd) ('SSS') by NEC Software Solutions UK .
- 1.3 The Joint Coordinating Group (JCG) is recommending that the 'Vision 4' mobilising system maintenance and support contract be extended for five years and that the Integrated Communications Control System (ICCS) 'DS3000' maintenance and support contract extension is aligned with the Vision contract.
- 1.4 It also recommends that TVFCS undertakes a hardware refresh for the Vision system using the profiled annual capital expenditure from the renewals account as set out in the 2022/23 budget.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

That the TVFCS Joint Committee:

- 2.1 AGREE** to recommend to partnership Authorities that they authorise Oxfordshire County Council and Royal Berkshire Fire Authority extending the Vision mobilising system maintenance and support contract for five years, from 10 April 2023 to 10 April 2028.
- 2.2 NOTE** the use of the annual profiled capital expenditure for 22/23 from the Renewals account to deliver the hardware refresh for the Vision system.
- 2.3 AGREE** to recommend to partnership Authorities that they authorise Royal Berkshire Fire Authority to tender for a five year maintenance and support contract, for the ICCS DS3000 from 10 April 2023 to 10 April 2028 (with options to extend for two years)

**3. REPORT**

- 3.1** Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) utilises the ‘Vision 4’ mobilising system which is provided by SSS. Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (‘RBFA’) and Oxfordshire County Council (‘OCC’) entered into a contractual agreement for this provision which formally commenced when TVFCS ‘went live’ in April 2015.
- 3.2** The duration of the TVFCS partnership agreement (the ‘agreement’) covers a 15 year period from the commencement date of April 2015, expiring in April 2030. The project team delivered the current Mobilising System contract (the Vision contract) to mirror this arrangement, building in a review at seven years, creating the option for a contract break or contract extension (in single or multiple periods of twelve months, not exceeding eight years).
- 3.3** In March 2021, Capita Secure Information Solutions Limited and Capita (USA) Holdings Inc. announced their intention to sell SSS as part of a restructuring programme. This created some uncertainty for customers and, based on a recommendation from the Joint Committee in July 2021, the partnership authorities (Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority, OCC and RBFA) resolved to extend the Vision Maintenance and support contract for one year whilst the sale took place.
- 3.4** In January 2022 the sale was completed to NEC Software Solutions UK Limited (NECSWS). This acquisition is subject to a Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) investigation. This investigation is concerned with three SSS products. It does not include Vision, but does include the SSS DS3000 ICCS product.
- 3.5** Both the current Vision and DS3000 maintenance and support contract periods end in April 2023. Therefore TVFCS needs make provision beyond that date and provide certainty and stability in the medium to long term.



- 3.6 In relation to any periods of extension, the Vision contract required SSS to provide a 'system report' (the report). The report sets out expected performance levels and recommends hardware refresh options that would be necessary for TVFCS to maintain an appropriate, robust and resilient level of technological capability that will ensure the service can continue to take the software upgrades aligned to the Vision pathway. Equally, any hardware refresh would also minimise risk in relation to issues affecting system stability and reduce the likelihood of experiencing critical system failures.
- 3.7 The report was received, reviewed and challenged by the Joint Coordinating Group (JCG), consisting of a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) from each service, technical subject matter experts from each service and the TVFCS management team and a final version was agreed in March 2021
- 3.8 The current hardware, based on a specification that was defined approximately ten years ago, is coming to end of its seventh year of operational use. The requirement to undertake a refresh programme is becoming an increasing priority to mitigate the escalating risk of poor system performance or failure as the equipment is nearing 'end of life'.
- 3.9 In considering the term of any extension, the Vision contract can be extended for a minimum of one year up to a maximum of seven years (aligning to the 2030 expiration date of the partnership agreement). As set out in past papers, an optimum extension period would provide value for money on refreshed hardware and enable the service to maintain system stability and performance, particularly in relation to the implementation of the Emergency Services Network (ESN, the replacement for the current Airwave communications system) currently planned for 2027.
- 3.10 Therefore it is proposed that the Vision contract is extended for a period of five years, April 2023 – April 2028. During this period the JCG will consider a number of internal and external factors and make recommendations on when to commission a tender project for a full system replacement, which would take circa three years to deliver. RBFA and OCC will still have the option to make further extensions to the Vision contract beyond 2028 (up to 2030) should that be advantageous based on circumstances during the extension period.
- 3.11 The decision to extend the Vision contract will enable TVFCS to commence with the hardware refresh. The pricing structure, provided by SSS in the system report, was correct as of December 2020. The actual cost is therefore now likely to be higher than the overall total (supply and fit) of the circa £400k given in the report. The Annual Capital Expenditure (Capex) profile, agreed by partnership authorities for 22/23, included a number of factors to account for likely increases in price as well as an additional contingency. The total profile identified for 22/23 is £676k.
- 3.12 The additional contingency of £88k can be accessed as per schedule 7 of the Inter-Authority Agreement which defines the level of decision making dependent on the amount required. Should this be necessary the JCG will provide relevant proposals at the December meeting.

3.13 The renewals account will stand at just over £2m for 22/23. Therefore, in using the maximum profiled Capex for 22/23, including the additional contingency, the account will stand at £1.38m at year end 22/23. This forecasting was included as part of the long term forecast set out in the 22/23 budget.

3.14 In relation to the DS3000 ICCS, the intent would be to secure a maintenance and support contract to align to a similar timeline, namely a five year contract from April 2023 – April 2028 with options to extend for a further two years (in one year increments). Whilst there is still some uncertainty around this product due to the CMA investigation, the timeline for a tender process can be designed to account for the outcomes of the investigation. An unfavourable outcome could result in changes to the DS3000 product and the JCG would need to consider the impact of this and make appropriate recommendations at the time. At this time Joint Committee members are being asked to make a decision in principle to the commencement of a tender process and the JCG will bring back further information for decision as required at a future meeting.

#### **4. COMPLIANCE WITH THE TVFCS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

4.1 This paper complies with the partnership agreement.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The financial implications are set out in 3.11 – 3.13 of the report and the 22/23 budget papers.

#### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The ‘DS3000’ (ICCS) contract and the ‘Vision 4’ mobilising system contracts are defined in the Inter Authority Agreement as requiring the unanimous consent of the three fire and rescue authorities for its extension or renewal (per clauses 17.3, 17.5 and Schedule 6; and Schedule 5, para 1.2.15).

6.2 RBFA is a party to the ‘DS3000’ (ICCS) contract. OCC and RBFA are parties to the ‘Vision 4’ mobilising system. The legal implications of terminating or extending the contract are set out in the contract and procurement teams of RBFA and OCC have been engaged to ensure that the contracting authorities comply with the relevant legislation.

6.3 The DS3000 tender will be undertaken in compliance with the requisite legislation by RBFA on behalf of the partnership authorities.

#### **7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no equality and diversity implications identified at this time

#### **8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 If suitable maintenance and support arrangements for TVFCS systems and appropriate provision of equipment to deliver those systems are not

secured, a number of key areas of functionality will be compromised resulting in a high risk to delivering an effective control function that may result in risk to life or property.

- 8.2 There is a risk that the CMA investigation may result in changes to the DS3000 product. By undertaking the ICCS maintenance and support tender to account for the investigation conclusion this will enable more informed decision making in relation to the future of this system. At this time this risk is perceived as low and it is unlikely any changes, should they be required, would have an immediate operational effect. A significant proportion of UK FRS use the DS3000, any CMA decision should not impact on the operational effectiveness of those services. The JCG have regular meetings with SSS and will monitor the situation closely.

## **9. CONTRIBUTION TO SERVICE AIMS**

- 9.1 The contents of this report support the following primary objectives as set out in the TVFCS partnership agreement:
1. To satisfy the core functions of the Fire Authorities as defined in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
  2. To satisfy the statutory duty of all the Fire Authorities as category one responders as defined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
  3. To improve the resilience of the control room function
  4. To improve performance
  5. To generate efficiencies

## **10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 TVFCS Joint Coordination Group

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 TVFCS mobilising requirements 12 July 2021  
 11.2 TVFCS budget 2022/23 16 December 2021  
 11.3 Capita contract novation 16 December 2021  
 11.4 [TVFCS Inter Authority Agreement](#)

## **12. APPENDICES**

- 12.1 None

## **13. CONTACT DETAILS**

- 13.1 Area Manager Jim Powell [powellj@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:powellj@rbfrs.co.uk) 07774215664

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# THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE



<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>NFCC MAIT CONNECT PROJECT - EXPRESSION OF INTEREST</b>
<b>PRESENTED TO:</b>	<b>JOINT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>11 JULY 2022</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>AREA MANAGER JIM POWELL</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DECISION</b>

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 MAIT (Multi-Agency Incident Transfer) is a robust, secure and virtually instantaneous inter-agency messaging solution that allows fire controls to share incident information between other fire control rooms and agencies.
- 1.2 Adoption of MAIT has a range of benefits and will enable FRS to meet the Grenfell Tower phase 1 recommendation 33.16 'that steps be taken to investigate methods by which assisting control rooms can obtain access to the information available to the host control room.'
- 1.3 The Home Office is providing a section 31 grant of £1.34 million towards the initial costs of providing the MAIT system to all English Fire Controls as well as period of running costs.
- 1.4 A National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) 'MAIT Connect' project has been established to undertake a national procurement exercise that will provide access to MAIT, enabling FRS to sign up to a contract with the successful service provider and take advantage of the Home Office funded subscription and messaging costs.
- 1.5 FRS will, individually, need to undertake work to configure Fire control systems to be able to use MAIT in their control environment. The cost of this

work will be the responsibility of each FRS. There are currently two options to achieve this.

- 1.6 The project is requesting expressions of interest from all English FRS in order to inform the procurement exercise and maximise economies of scale. This report informs members of the intent to opt into the procurement exercise and the proposed method of implementation.

## 2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That the TVFCS Joint Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the expression of interest at appendix A, that TVFCS will opt into the national MAIT procurement exercise and is likely to adopt Option A.
- 2.2 **NOTE** that the cost of any integration will be identified in the TVFCS budget that will be presented at the December meeting.

## 3. **REPORT**

- 3.1 MAIT is an electronic method of communication that allows fire controls to share incident information between other fire control rooms and agencies. Incidents often require a cross-border and/or multi-agency response that includes emergency services and other agencies. Currently the emergency service receiving the initial emergency call from the public will rely on telephone calls to other agencies and these agencies will manually record the information to create an incident record on their own systems. This process can be time consuming and prone to human error. When incidents are in progress it is also difficult and time consuming to ensure all involved agencies are similarly up to date with the current situation.
- 3.2 It was highlighted in the Grenfell Tower Phase 1 report that communication between emergency services could have been improved, with different agencies declaring a 'Major Incident' at different times without that information being shared. The report recommended several changes to ensure better communication in the future.
- 3.3 The benefits to fire controls include:
  - Provide more effective methods of communication between fire controls when call-redistribution plans have been enacted, by allowing incident information to be shared quickly between affected and assisting fire controls.
  - Provide faster sharing of information between emergency service controls that does not involve telephone communication, enabling emergency service control personnel to focus on the task at hand, saving time.
  - Provide significant benefits when used in conjunction with Operation Willow Beck by providing a more effective method of returning incident related information for mobilisation by the affected fire control.
  - MAIT creates an audit trail of incident exchange between fire controls and other agencies.

- MAIT offers a way to standardise and automate the flow of information. The aim is to enable interoperability between different systems and to facilitate information exchange between fire controls and other agencies.
  - By using MAIT, emergency service controls can exchange incident related information more effectively, reducing the time it takes to mobilise resources and improving service delivery. This will help fire control personnel to build and share situational awareness with other fire controls and agencies as an incident progress.
- 3.4 The benefits of using MAIT set out in 3.3 are underpinned by real world examples. Welsh FRS have been using MAIT for several years. Their experience has demonstrated significant efficiencies in the control environment. Information that is usually passed via telephone, which is particularly challenging during significant emergencies or peak conditions, can take up several minutes of a control operators time. In Wales, this type of information transfer has been significantly reduced, on average only taking seconds, helping to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of staff when it is most needed.
- 3.5 Access to the MAIT hub will allow FRS to meet Grenfell phase 1 recommendations 33.16:  
*“33.16 The handling of emergency calls by other fire and rescue services was hampered by their lack of information about the nature of the incident and the way in which it had developed. Those who respond to emergency calls on behalf of the LFB need to have as much information as possible about the incident in order to be able to give appropriate advice. I therefore recommend that steps be taken to investigate methods by which assisting control rooms can obtain access to the information available to the host control room.”*
- 3.6 The NFCC MAIT connect project will set up a national contract with a MAIT service provider via a virtual ‘hub’. Similar to a phone contract or internet service provider there is a connection charge and tariff for utilising the service, defined by volume of messages. The Home Office funding is provided to pay for these charges and will cover approximately two years of service. This may be influenced favourably depending on uptake from the sector, hence the project requesting expressions of interest to inform the procurement exercise and leverage economies of scale.
- 3.7 The MAIT connection will be delivered ‘to the door’ of each service, essentially up to the Firewall of internal systems. FRS will need to undertake work to configure service systems and equipment to work with the MAIT connection.
- 3.8 There are two options that FRS can choose from in configuring control room systems:
- Option A – MAIT Web  
 This solution will be an application that will be loaded onto the “admin network” within TVFCS and will be displayed either on the admin PC screen, or on the mobilising system screen. The benefits of this solution are that it will be relatively easy to install and will not need any expensive integration work to be

carried out on the mobilising system, meaning a faster and more cost-effective delivery to fire controls.

The downsides to this solution are that it will require more input from fire control personnel to both send and receive incident data. This is due to the fact they will need to re-type the information from one system to another (i.e. admin screen to mobilising system).

**Option B – MAIT Integrated**

This solution is fully integrated into the Vision mobilising system and would reduce duplication of information for fire control personnel. It would enable incident related information to be sent directly to and from the mobilising system and fire control personnel would have minimal additional re-typing compared to MAIT Web.

The downsides to this option are that this would require the Vision mobilising systems to be upgraded by the supplier which is likely be expensive and the capacity of TVFCS to support integration work could significantly delay the roll out of MAIT.

**3.9 MAIT – Indicative costs (Please note that the costs shown below are indicative and will vary dependent on the outcome of the national procurement exercise.)**

**Costs to be funded by the MAIT Connect project from central funding:**

The initial subscription and messaging costs will be paid for by project funding for a period of up to two years. The table below shows the funding that each FRS will benefit from by being part of this national ICT procurement.

Onboarding fee	Up to £2,500
Licence fee and a bundle of MAIT messages	Up to £34,500
<b>TOTAL BENEFIT</b>	<b>Up to £37,000</b>

**3.10 Implementation costs to be funded by Fire and Rescue Services:**

Dependent on which option TVFCS decides to take, there will be some implementation costs incurred at an individual service level.

The following tables give indicative costs for both options.

**Option A – MAIT Web**

Initial set-up (IT support)	£4,000 - £5,000
Additional hardware **	£5,000 - £14,000
Additional software **	Up to £1,000
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>£10,000 - £20,000</b>
Initial set-up (IT support)	£4,000 - £5,000
Additional hardware **	Up to £6,000
CAD integration ***	£65,000
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>£75,000 to £80,000</b>

**Option B**

**- MAIT Integrated**



\*\* Dependent on the MAIT supplier and local FRS requirements

\*\*\* Dependent on the CAD supplier and FRS configuration

- 3.11 In the long term it is likely mobilising system suppliers will offer MAIT as part of a standard package and/or FRS controls will want to specify MAIT integration when they undertake system replacement projects. The funding offers an opportunity for TVFCS to utilise MAIT in the near term, enabling the service to further evaluate the benefits and develop and define future requirements.
- 3.12 Therefore the Joint Coordinating Group propose to 'opt in' to the national procurement exercise.
- 3.13 The Joint Coordinating Group also propose that for the duration of the funded period TVFCS utilise option A as the most cost effective option whilst the service undertakes evaluation of the use of MAIT. Adopting option A does not preclude moving to an integrated solution (option B) at a later date and this would be informed by the evaluation undertaken in the funded period.
- 3.14 Therefore, the collective response at appendix A will be provided to the NFCC MAIT Connect project.
- 3.15 Further work will be undertaken to establish more accurate costs for integration work and these will be presented as part of the TVFCS budget at the December meeting.
- 3.16 The contract is likely to 'go live' during Q4 of 2022/23, therefore the Joint Coordinating Group propose to commence MAIT provision from Q1 of 2023/24.
- 3.17 The contract will be compliantly procured through the project and managed by a single Fire Authority, likely to be Kent FRA. They will manage the section 31 grant in relation to the contract.
- 3.18 At the end of the 2 years of central funding, services will have the option to continue to fund future licences and subscriptions to MAIT. Based on suppliers currently on the Government Digital Marketplace, prices range from:

Licence fee and a bundle of MAIT messages	£10,200 - £17,250 per annum
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- 3.19 The outcomes of MAIT evaluation during the funded period along with recommendations of future provision would be presented to the Joint Committee in due course.

#### **4. COMPLIANCE WITH THE TVFCS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

- 4.1 This report complies with the legal agreement; TVFCS contracts are defined as  
*"...any contract between one or more of the Fire Authorities and a third party relating to the Purpose which is procured for the Purpose and is funded from the TVFCS Revenue Account or the Renewals Account..."*

- 4.2 As the MAIT contract is centrally managed and funded it does not meet the definition set out in the IAA and therefore does attract the governance as set out in section 17 of the IAA - TVFCS contracts.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The financial implications are set out at 3.10. Full and final costs will be presented at future meeting.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The legal implications of the procurement exercise will be bourn initially by the NFCC project and a nationally identified contract holder. Service procurement teams will be engaged appropriately to ensure services comply with this IAA and contract regulations.

**7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no equality and diversity implications at this time. An equality impact assessment will be conducted as prior to implementation

**8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 At this time there are no significant risks identified. The recommendations in this paper do not commit TVFCS to any contractual conditions or incur any cost.

**9. CONTRIBUTION TO SERVICE AIMS**

- 9.1 The contents of this report support the following primary objectives as set out in the TVFCS partnership agreement:
1. To satisfy the core functions of the Fire Authorities as defined in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
  2. To satisfy the statutory duty of all the Fire Authorities as category one responders as defined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
  3. To improve the resilience of the control room function
  4. To improve performance
  5. To generate efficiencies

**10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 TVFCS Joint Coordination Group

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 None

**12. APPENDICES**

- 12.1 Appendix A – Expression of interest

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 Area Manager Jim Powell [powellj@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:powellj@rbfrs.co.uk) 07774215664

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Appendix A



**NFCC**  
National Fire  
Chiefs Council

The professional voice of the  
UK Fire & Rescue Service

National Fire Chiefs Council  
West Midlands Fire Service  
99 Vauxhall Road  
Birmingham  
B7 4HW

Telephone +44 (0)121 380 7311  
Email [info@nationalfirechiefs.org.uk](mailto:info@nationalfirechiefs.org.uk)

**11 July 2022**

**Multi-Agency Incident Transfer (MAIT) – Expression of Interest**

The Fire and Rescue Service named below is likely to adopt:

	Please tick one choice
Option A – MAIT Web	✓
Option B – MAIT Integrated	
Option C – Do not wish to be part of this national procurement process *	

\* Please note that if choose to opt out of this national procurement (Option C) your service may not benefit from the central funding attached to this project.

Fire and Rescue Service: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority on behalf of **Thames Valley Fire Control Service, representing Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority, Oxfordshire County Council and Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.**

Chief Fire Officer Name:

Date:

Please respond by **Friday 22nd July 2022** via email to:  
[Mandy.Dixon@nationalfirechiefs.org.uk](mailto:Mandy.Dixon@nationalfirechiefs.org.uk)

Agenda Item 16

ITEM	NEXT REPORTING DATE	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Quarter One and Two 22/23 Performance Report	15-Dec-22	Note	Group Manager, TVFCS	N/A	Part I
Proposed Budget 2023/24	15-Dec-22	Agree and Recommend	Head of Finance and Procurement	N/A	Part I
Members Workshop Summary 15 September 2022	15-Dec-22	Note	Area Manager Response & Resilience	N/A	Part I