



Core Strategy:

Protection Strategy 2025-30

1 October 2025 to 31 March 2030



Contents

Summary: Protection Strategy 2025-30	2
Foreword	3
Introduction	4
Understanding Protection: Our role and focus for the next five years	5
Promoting Fire Safety	6
Increasing Compliance	7
Investigating and Enforcing	9
Future Fire Safety	10
CRMP 2025-30: Core aims for Protection	11
Legislative Requirements	13
Monitoring and Review	14

OUR CORE CODE OF ETHICS

We follow the [Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services \(FRS\)](#) in England which guides everything we do.

Putting our communities first

We put the interest of the public, the community and service users first.

Integrity

We act with integrity including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do.

Dignity and respect

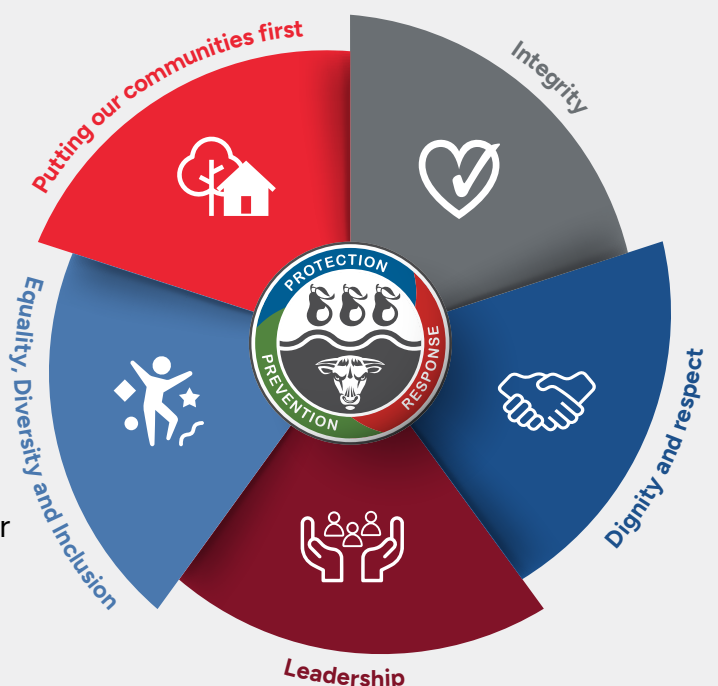
We make decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.

Leadership

As positive role models, we are accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations and celebrate difference.



Summary:

Protection Strategy 2025-30

The focus of our work over the next five years will be in three core areas:



Promoting Fire Safety

Providing fire safety advice and guidance to businesses and members of the public in line with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.



Increasing Compliance

Carry out risk and intelligence based Fire Safety inspection; and respond to Statutory Consultations.



Investigating and Enforcing

Investigating the cause of the fire; and taking proportionate enforcement action, including prosecution, where appropriate.



Foreword

This document sets out the headline objectives of the Protection Strategy. The strategy is one of three Core Strategies designed to outline how the strategic aims of our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-30 will be delivered through our Response, Protection and Prevention services. Alongside the CRMP, the Core Strategies drive everything we do, and underpin our mission of delivering high quality and sustainable services to our communities.

The Protection Strategy aims to give clarity and direction on how we will deliver our protection services across our counties. Protection is a legal responsibility and is an integral part of keeping our communities safe in our commercial and public buildings.

Protection and the understanding of risk is an area that requires a specific and complex skill set and our communities rightfully expect a high standard of knowledge and expertise in a wide range of protection matters throughout our organisation.

The Protection Strategy has a clear and unequivocal role in enforcement and, if necessary, prosecution where statutory requirements are not met. We will of course always strive to encourage changes in attitudes and approaches to Fire Safety matters before we enforce; however, this is not always possible.

WHO WE ARE

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service attended 8,213 incidents in 2024-25 ranging from property and countryside fires, road traffic collisions, collapsed structures, water rescues, hazardous materials to animal rescues. We employ over 696 full-time and part-time members of staff in 754 roles, delivering a wide range of prevention, protection and emergency response services across Herefordshire and Worcestershire (an area of 392,000 hectares with a population of over 804,000 people).

Over the next five years, the strategy has a number of headline aims and objectives which will determine how we will work as a Service to improve the safety and wellbeing of our communities by reducing risk and incidents in the built environment. It focuses on educating and regulating those responsible for keeping buildings safe to adopt safer behaviours and robust fire protection activities. In this respect, our work will aim to align with the [Fire Standards Board Protection Standard](#). The strategy also sets out how we will support our overarching core purpose, vision and mission and will be guided by the [NFCC Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services](#).

As a living document, the strategy must remain agile and flexible to be able to respond to the changing needs of our local communities, our workforce and other circumstances as necessary. We will maintain this through continual monitoring and review of all aspects of the strategy.



PURPOSE

Why we are here

Keeping people safe from fire and other risks.
Responding efficiently and effectively to incidents and emergencies.

VISION

What we want to do

Building on our successes to continue to make a difference, improve lives and help secure resilient communities.

MISSION

What we do every day

As one professional team we will work hard every day to deliver high quality, sustainable services to our communities.

Introduction



The main principle behind Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service's (HWFRS) Protection Strategy will be to reduce the risk of fire in commercial and other public premises where people live, work, shop and visit, whilst mitigating the impact of business disruption and the cost to the local economy and the environment. This will be achieved by ensuring premises comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Our protection work is focused on ensuring businesses have appropriate fire safety precautions in place, including ways of preventing and restricting the spread of fire at their premises and ensuring access to means of escape. Much of this work is guided by the duties set out by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. We are also guided by recent legislation, such as the Fire Safety Act 2021 and the Building Safety Act 2022. It involves our specialist protection and operational staff working closely with local businesses to support and advise them on meeting their fire safety requirements, including, where necessary, using our enforcement and regulatory powers to ensure their premises are safe.

HWFRS's approach to protection is directly linked to our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), it will be data-driven, underpinned by our professional judgement, using local and national incident and enforcement trends to develop an understanding of risk in order to target our protection activity and resources appropriately. Additionally, we will utilise systems and national guidance to ensure that we provide efficient and sustainable services. This includes sharing information and intelligence about building risks with staff and partners to support our Response Strategy and continually improve public and firefighter safety.

Our core aim is to reduce the risk of fire in commercial and other premises where people work, shop and visit, and mitigate the impact of business disruption and the cost to the local economy and the environment.

Understanding Protection:

Our role and focus for the next five years

Our Protection capability consists of a specialist fire safety department, and fire safety trained and competent staff on each wholetime fire station. Staff are trained and experienced at understanding fire safety issues in a range of premises. With a database of around 42,000 premises across our two counties, the department takes a risk-based approach to ensure that high risk premises are prioritised for inspection. While the majority of premises are low-risk, the department, supported by our operational crews, inspect and audit over 1,350 premises every year. In addition, the department also respond to approximately 700 Statutory Building Regulation and Licensing Applications each year.

HWFRS work with local businesses to support and advise them on meeting their fire safety requirements. Where necessary, we will use our enforcement and regulatory powers to ensure their premises are safe. Our protection work is designed to deliver the CRMP aims of protecting people, firefighters, property and the environment, and our protection activities are guided by the [Fire Standards Board Protection Standard](#).

As we look ahead to 2030, our Protection activities will focus on:



Promoting Fire Safety



Increasing Compliance



Investigating and Enforcing

This Protection Strategy sets out our plans for the next five years towards achieving our overarching Core Purpose, Vision and Mission and our work will be guided by the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services.

Our activities will include:

Risk Based Inspection Programme:

Assessing how well buildings meet the Fire Safety Order.

Multi-agency Targeted Enforcement (MATE):

Sharing intelligence between agencies, and accessing premises on a single visit, to ensure compliance with several pieces of legislation.

Sprinklers:

Advocating sprinklers in all new housing and retrofitted in existing houses. Working with developers and local authorities to promote sprinklers in all new residential and commercial developments.

Supporting Intel:

Share insights from protection activity with operational crews (Response), enhancing our understanding of community risks, and their potential impact on people, infrastructure, and the local economy.

Waste Fires:

We will investigate and utilise our full enforcement powers, where possible, on illegal waste storage and disposal sites.

Local Authority Planning Issues:

We will provide specialist fire safety guidance to local authorities, linked to fire prevention and mitigation guidance to manage hazards and risks, especially those linked to new and emerging technologies.

Promoting Fire Safety

Advice and Guidance

Our staff are specially trained to provide advice, guidance and support to local businesses on fire safety and the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to help them meet their legislative responsibilities. In addition, we will promote fire safety issues through our website, social media messaging and forums / presentations. We will prioritise our resources based on life risk, targeting the highest risk buildings including high rise residential buildings and complex premises and buildings providing sleeping accommodation. We will also provide guidance to businesses and in relation to sites of historic and local interest in order to reduce the economic cost of fire and support the local economy.

Statutory Consultations

HWFRS will respond to consultations and requests for advice, where the Fire Authority is a statutory consultee or has the expertise that can support public safety; this includes building regulations, licensing applications and the Safety Advisory Groups (SAG). In each of these areas HWFRS aims to promote fire safety and provide guidance to authorities, premises owners, and event organisers to keep people safe from fire.

Non-Statutory Consultations

HWFRS will also respond as a non-statutory consultee to significant applications, for example, planning applications for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) sites. HWFRS's guidance aligns to professional BESS Guidance from the NFCC. This includes access for emergency responders, provision of water supply and firefighting infrastructure, fire prevention and mitigation guidance to manage hazards and risks specific to the siting, infrastructure, layout and operations at proposed facilities.

#ThinkSprinkler
Installing sprinklers protects life and property

Q HWFire Sprinklers

Sprinklers

HWFRS advocate sprinklers in all new houses and retrofitted in all houses if possible.

Sprinklers are proven to save lives and property, reduce economic loss, reduce damage to the environment and increase firefighter safety.

We support the NFCC's stance that:

"Sprinklers are the most effective way to ensure that fires are suppressed or even extinguished before the fire service can arrive"

We will work alongside developers, local authorities, housing providers and landlords to support the installation of Automatic Fire Suppression Systems (AFSS) in both residential and commercial building stock. Furthermore, we will continue to work with Building Control bodies to promote their use in all high-risk buildings.

Increasing Compliance

The focus of the Services specialist Fire Safety department is to help keep people safe from fire; by reducing the risk of fire in commercial and other public premises, and supporting businesses to comply with their legislative requirements.

To increase compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, we carry out fire safety audits. These audits are completed in accordance with national guidelines to ensure any advice provided is consistent and proportionate to the fire risk at the premises and to keep people safe. Our two main programmes are the Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) and the Intelligence Led Inspection Programme (ILIP).

Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP)

RBIP is a yearly fire safety inspection programme that assesses the risk of different types of premises and individual buildings, based on how well they meet the Fire Safety Order. We use verified data, such as building type, size, location, maximum probable loss, and the people who live or work there to calculate risk. The main aim is to prevent death or serious injury in a fire.

Our approach is risk-based and focuses on the highest-risk buildings. We use both internal and external data, knowledge, and expertise to identify and reassess risks, ensuring our resources match the level of risk. To meet our legal duties, we follow recognised national best practice, including the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Competency Framework and Fire Standards.

We use the NFCC full audit form to check compliance with the Fire Safety Order. Our staff work with responsible persons to help them meet required standards. If advice and guidance do not achieve compliance, or if the risk of serious harm is high, we will enforce the Fire Safety Order to protect the public.

Intelligence Led Inspection Programme (ILIP)

In addition to our Risk Based Inspection Programme, we also carry out an Intelligence Led Inspection Programme (ILIP). This is a fire safety inspection programme based upon local or national fire trends and local or national non-compliance trends linked to the Fire Safety Order. This programme also includes a sample percentage of audits of low-risk premises supporting the overall number of inspections carried out by the RBIP. In recent years, this programme has consistently identified issues around non-compliance with the requirements of the Fire Safety Order. Therefore, we provide fire safety information and education advice to the responsible person(s) before an ILIP commences. As with the RBIP, the programme aims to prevent death or serious injury in the event of fire, and limit the economic cost of fire, by ensuring compliance with the Fire Safety Order.

To support this, we will gather trend data from:

- West Mercia Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partner agencies.
- NFCC and national data sources.
- Previous RBIP and ILIP findings.
- The outcomes of national recommendations following inquiries, inquests and Coroner's Rule 43 findings.
- The outcomes of local and national fire trends and fire investigation findings.

Increasing Compliance continued



Multi Agency Targeted Enforcement (MATE)

As part of the ILIP, we carry out multi-agency inspections based on information and intelligence shared between agencies. This involves working collaboratively with LRF multi agency partners, including West Mercia Police, Local Authority Housing, Trading Standards and other Regulatory Services, His Majesty's Revenue and Customs, Home Office Border Force and others.

The MATE strategy provides an effective and efficient methodology for Enforcing Authorities working within Herefordshire and Worcestershire, allowing all agencies to access premises in a single visit, to ensure compliance with several pieces of UK legislation, protecting those who are considered to be at high risk and making premises safer for all. This approach also supports the disruption of serious and organised crime in our area.

We intend to develop our ILIP, including MATE, to assist our understanding of risk and target our prevention and protection resources. In addition, we will use the data from these visits to target future inspection programmes (RBIP and ILIP) and track this through quarterly reporting and an annual action plan.

Reducing Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS)

HWFRS applies a risk-based call filtering approach to reduce the number of UwFS incidents attended by the Service. Specifically, this involves call challenging requests for our attendance at automatic fire alarms for lower risk commercial premises, such as shops and offices. This ensures that our fire appliances are available to respond to other emergencies more of the time, in line with the core foundation of availability in the Response Strategy. The protection team will continue to develop this initiative and continue to engage with businesses to reduce UwFS.



Investigating and Enforcing



Investigating the Cause of Fire

At every incident HWFRS attends we will carry out investigations to establish the fire's origin and its cause and we will use this data to both support criminal and civil court proceedings. Furthermore, we will analyse trends which will help to inform our guidance to business owners and develop our Intelligence Led Inspection Programme. Our Fire Investigation Officers will also support the post fire audit process which will seek to support business owners, who have had a fire, through education and, where appropriate, enforcement of compliance with the Fire Safety Order. Data on the cause of fire will be reported nationally and via our website.

We will also be investing in training for our staff to further enhance their understanding of the causes of fire and the signs of arson. This investment will include our specialist Fire Investigation Officers as well as front line operational crews and will be delivered in line with NFCC guidance.

Investigating Illegal Waste Sites

We will investigate and work with our partners to utilise all enforcement powers, where possible, on illegal waste storage and disposal sites.

In doing so, we will gather intelligence on these sites to improve our operational response and to help us reduce the environmental impact and risk to members of the public.

In addition, we will engage with local authorities to ensure sites comply with building regulations.

Enforcement

When an unsafe situation is identified following a fire, or as part of an audit or inspection, which indicates a failure to meet the requirements of fire safety legislation, Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service is required to determine what action to take. The action will depend on the nature of the failure and will be based on the principles set out in the Authority's Enforcement Policy, which is in accordance with the Regulators' Code 2014 and the regulatory principles required under the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006.

Inspecting officers may take enforcement action where there is an identified failure to comply with the legislation. The outcome of enforcement can include a notice of required action, the prohibiting of the use of all or part of a premises or prosecution. To provide transparency and consistency, enforcement action is also registered on a national database and statistics are annually produced for His Majesty's Government on the number and type of enforcement actions that have occurred.

A number of headline objectives will be delivered to support the investigation and enforcement:

- We will investigate the cause of fire and use this to inform our education and inspection programmes.
- We will investigate fire safety concerns and take proportionate enforcement action including prosecution where appropriate.

Future Fire Safety

Enhancing our Capability and Extending Business Fire Safety Skills

We intend to continue to embed fire safety knowledge across the Service to ensure a high quality and sustainable service to our communities by investing in training programmes for our operational staff. This programme will enhance the understanding of operational firefighters in fire safety, thereby supporting the delivery of our protection services. This also provides firefighters with increased operational intelligence and knowledge in line with our Response Strategy that will assist them when dealing with complex fires and improve firefighter safety.

Furthermore, we are enhancing our capabilities by investing in fire safety qualifications, and continue to support our specialist staff in recognised Engineering Council accreditation e.g. EngTech, IEng etc.



Building Construction Remediation

Fire safety remediation refers to the process of identifying and rectifying fire safety defects in a building fabric, particularly those related to its structure or external walls, to ensure the safety of occupants and mitigate fire risks. Our RBIP programme includes inspection of this type of premises, including taking appropriate enforcement action to ensure legislative compliance.

High Rise Buildings

Grenfell Tower, located in North Kensington, London, was a residential high-rise building that tragically became the site of one of the deadliest fires in modern British history. On June 14, 2017, a fire broke out in the 24-storey tower, leading to the loss of 72 lives and causing significant injuries and displacement for many residents. The incident highlighted critical issues regarding building safety regulations and fire prevention measures and has had repercussions for all UK Fire and Rescue Services.

Whilst Herefordshire and Worcestershire have only a handful of high-rise buildings, HWFRS have been committed to addressing the recommendations made in the subsequent inquiries.



CRMP 2025-30:

Core aims for Protection

In delivering this work, we have six core aims:

OUR AIMS:

WHAT WE WILL DO TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS:

1 Fire Safety Advice

Provide advice and guidance on Fire Safety and the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. We provide Fire Safety advice for businesses via our website, social media, forums and presentations to help them meet their legislative requirements.

2 Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP)

Carry out pre-planned fire safety audits. The RBIP is based on assessing the risk posed by generic types of premises, the individual owner, individual buildings and the current level of compliance with the Fire Safety Order.

3 Investigating the Cause of the Fire

Carry out Fire Investigations and work with Police and partners to establish the origin and cause of the fire. We use the data to support criminal and civil court proceedings.

4 Statutory Consultations

Respond to consultations and requests for advice, where the Fire Authority is a statutory consultee or when we have expertise that can support public safety: this includes Building Regulations, Licensing Applications and Safety Advisory Groups. Our aim is to promote fire safety and provide guidance to authorities, premise owners and event organisers to help keep people safe from fire.

5 Intelligence Led Inspection Programme (ILIP)

Carry out an inspection programme based on local or national trends linked to the Fire Safety Order. This programme consistently allows us to identify issues around non-compliance with the requirements of the Fire Safety Order and aims to prevent death or serious injury in the event of fire and limit the economic cost of fire.

CRMP 2025-30:

Core aims for Protection continued

OUR AIMS:

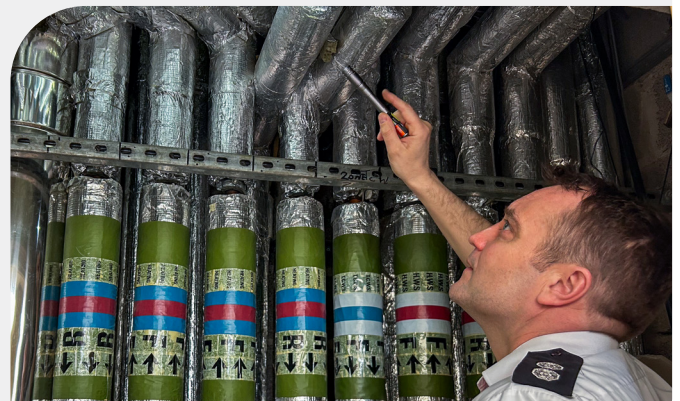
WHAT WE WILL DO TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS:

6 Enforcement

Take Enforcement Action which includes a notice detailing the required actions, the prohibition of part or all of the premises or Prosecution. To provide transparency and consistency, all our Enforcement action is registered on a national database held by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

Subject to available resources, we will endeavour to promote fire safety, increase compliance and support investigations and enforcement, which includes these headline CRMP objectives:

- We will carry out fire safety audits to ensure local businesses are complying with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- We will continue our MATE programme, sharing intelligence between agencies, and accessing premises on a single visit, to ensure compliance with several pieces of legislation.
- We will advocate for sprinklers in all new housing and retrofitted in existing houses. Working with developers and local authorities to promote sprinklers in all new residential and commercial developments.
- We will develop our common understanding of risks, trends and issues and share this intelligence with our partners and the fire sector to reduce injury and death from fire in business premises.
- We will investigate and utilise our full enforcement powers, where possible, on illegal waste storage and disposal sites.
- We will undertake appropriate levels of specialist training to ensure protection officers and operational crews can continue to provide proportionate, efficient and effective business safety advice and carry out inspections.
- We will provide specialist fire safety guidance to local authorities, linked to fire prevention and mitigation guidance to manage hazards and risks, especially those linked to new and emerging technologies.
- We will take proactive steps to reduce unwanted fire signals in lower risk commercial premises.



Legislative Requirements

There are a number of statutory functions and duties that we must carry out according to law (core legislation summarised below).

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

This is the core legislation for all fire and rescue services and it details legal powers and responsibilities of Fire Authorities.

Part 2, Section 6 – Fire safety

1. A fire and rescue authority must make provision for the purpose of promoting fire safety in its area.
2. In making provision under subsection (1) a fire and rescue authority must in particular, to the extent that it considers it reasonable to do so, make arrangements for –
 - A. The provision of information, publicity and encouragement in respect of the steps to be taken to prevent fires and death or injury by fire;
 - B. The giving of advice, on request, about –
 - i. How to prevent fires and restrict their spread in buildings and other property.
 - ii. The means of escape from buildings and other property in case of fire.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

Under Articles 25, 26 & 27 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, HWFRS is an enforcing authority for premises within its area and must enforce the provisions of the Order and, for that purpose, will appoint authorised inspectors.

Fire Safety Act 2021

This Act amends the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and clarifies that the Responsible Person for multi-occupied residential buildings must manage and reduce the risk of fire for the structure, external walls of the building including cladding, balconies, windows and entrance doors to individual properties that open onto a common part.

Building Safety Act 2022

The Act makes provision to give residents and homeowners more rights, powers and protections, including a toolkit of measures that will allow those responsible for building safety defects to be held to account.

National Framework Document

The Framework document sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for the Fire and Rescue Service. It states: Fire and Rescue Authorities (2.3) must make provision for promoting fire safety, including fire prevention, and have a locally determined risk-based inspection programme in place for enforcing compliance with the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in premises to which it applies.

Monitoring and Review

Monitoring

The headline objectives set out in this strategy are measurable. Therefore, we are able to continually monitor relevant information to make sure they will be delivered to support this Protection Strategy. Monitoring progress in implementing the headline objectives will also enable us to understand how the strategy is being used and to be fully informed of progress made.

The Protection department is monitored, measured and evaluated to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. This is achieved through the use of extensive internal and external performance management, reporting and audit systems. This has helped to identify greater efficiencies, such as training operational staff to carry out additional fire safety inspections. Our overall performance is assessed by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services.

Review

Alongside monitoring, we will review the headline objectives of the Protection Strategy. The review will be informed by the monitoring and will enable us to identify subsequent actions which may need to be carried out to ensure the headline objectives are delivered within the strategy period. The first review will be carried out no later than one year from the publication of the strategy and will then be reviewed on an annual basis.

The monitoring and review of this strategy will be reported in the Annual Service Review.

We will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of our protection activities through the following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) taking into account seasonal variations and trends:

- Response to Advice/Concerns from members of the public & staff – within 5 working days. (90%)
- Statutory Consultations – Building Regs. Actioned within 15 working days. (90%)
- Statutory Consultations – Licensing App. Actioned within 28 consecutive days. (90%)
- Fire Safety Audits / Inspections – completed by Department. 1000 per annum
- Business Fire Safety Inspections – completed by Operational Crews. 350 per annum
- Populating all Alterations Notices onto the Enforcement Register after 21-day appeal process. (100%)
- Populating all Enforcement Notices onto the Enforcement Register after 21-day appeal process. (100%)
- Populating all Prohibition Notices onto the Enforcement Register after 21-day appeal process. (100%)
- Specific Post Fire Inspections within 8 working days. (90%)

Key Performance Indicators will be regularly reviewed in Service Performance Reports to ensure that increasing compliance is effectively monitored.

