



2024/25 Productivity and Efficiency Plan

Approved by:

GAVIN ELLIS
Chief Fire Officer

SHAYNE SCOTT
Director of Finance and Corporate Services (s151)

31 March 2024



Section 1: Part 1 Primary information

- **Budget:** 2024/25 budget by sources of income and planned spending
- **Reserves:** Summary of reserves as at 31 March 2024 and planned use

Section 1: Part 2 Secondary information

- **Efficiency:**
 - efficiency savings (in £/% terms) to be implemented in 24/25 and in what areas of spend
 - efficiencies already achieved over the course of this ongoing Spending Review period, i.e. from 2022/23 onwards.
 - Thematic areas of focus

Section 2: productivity and utilisation of wholetime workforce



Section 1: Part 1

Primary Service information



Section 1: 2024/25 budget compared to prior year

	2023/2024 Budget £000	2024/2025 Budget £000	% variance
SPENDING			
<i>EMPLOYEE COSTS</i>	79,815	85,242	7%
<i>PREMISES RELATED COSTS</i>	4,945	5,167	4%
<i>TRANSPORT RELATED COSTS</i>	3,767	2,894	-23%
<i>SUPPLIES AND SERVICES</i>	7,748	8,475	9%
<i>ESTABLISHMENT COSTS</i>	781	853	9%
<i>SUPPORT SERVICE CONTRACTS</i>	1,090	1,119	3%
<i>CAPITAL FINANCING COSTS</i>	3,210	4,526	41%
TRANSFER TO/(FROM) EARMARKED RESERVES	(3,044)	(255)	-92%
TOTAL SPENDING	98,310	108,020	10%
INCOME			
TOTAL INCOME	(12,898)	(15,398)	19%
NET REVENUE BUDGET REQUIREMENT	85,412	92,622	8%
FINANCED BY:			
<i>Formula Funding Grant</i>	7,293	11,680	60%
<i>Share of Non-Domestic Business Rates</i>	16,259	16,594	2%
<i>District Councils Collection Funds</i>	61,860	64,349	4%
TOTAL FINANCING	85,412	92,622	8%



Section A: Reserve forecast as at 31 March 2024 to 31 March 2026

		Forecasted Balance as at 31 March 2024 £'000	Forecasted balance as at 31 March 2025 £'000	Forecasted balance as at 31 March 2026 £'000
Ref	Earmarked reserves			
1	<i>Grants unapplied from previous years</i>	(772)	(265)	-
2	<i>Invest to Improve</i>	(1,789)	(800)	(300)
3	<i>Budget Smoothing Reserve</i>	(666)	-	-
4	<i>Direct Funding to Capital</i>	(12,038)	(7,322)	(2,842)
5	<i>PFI Equalisation</i>	(50)	(35)	(20)
	<i>Emergency Services Mobile Communications</i>			
6	<i>Programme</i>	(576)	(576)	(576)
7	<i>Mobile Data Terminals Replacement</i>	(144)	(72)	-
8	<i>Pension Liability reserve</i>	(1,218)	(600)	(200)
9	<i>Budget Carry Forwards</i>	(130)	(60)	(10)
10	<i>Environmental Strategy</i>	(130)	(80)	(30)
11	<i>MTA Action Plan</i>	(76)	-	-
12	<i>Control Futures Project</i>	(1,200)	(1,200)	(500)
	Total earmarked reserves	(18,789)	(9,810)	(3,978)
	General reserve			
13	<i>General Fund (non-Earmarked) Balance c5% of net-revenue</i>	(4,631)	(4,922)	(5,150)



Section A: Planned use of earmarked reserves

Ref	Earmarked reserve	Planned use
1	Grants unapplied from previous years	The balance of £0.772m pertains to historical grants received (e.g. pension admin grant, protection uplift grant, Grenfell infrastructure grant etc.) which will continue to be utilised through the forthcoming years as and when the conditions of the respective grants are satisfied.
2	Invest to improve	<p>This reserve is managed by the Portfolio Board and is used to fund transformation projects which do not form part of business-as-usual spending. On-going and new areas of investment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in replacement systems such as a new HR system (c£0.535k) is in the implementation phase with the initial go live during Q3 2023. Further phases during 2024/25 will also aim to align and integrate improved finance and training requirements with our HR workforce data. The estimated cost of the Finance element is estimated to be c£0.567k. The reserve is also planned to be used for the purchase of new hardware in the form of tablets for operational crews to enable recording and repatriation of assets to their parent appliance and station, as well as enhancing processes for standard testing of equipment. This project is also in the implementation phase with c£0.156k remaining in the budget. Funds are also expected to be invested in a new command support system to enhance implementation of recommended outcomes from the Grenfell Report (c£0.126k) An upgrade to systems for recording the Service prevention and protection activity is also in progress with an allocated budget of c£0.176k along with some possible enhancements to our core estate in terms of technology to enhance flexible/hybrid working building on the new ways of working adopted during Covid. A further adjustment is planned for our availability system to enable proposed changes to our whole-time duty system which is expected to roll out during Q4 2024 c(£0.100k). Funds are also allocated to further enhance and improve our performance monitoring through the use of Microsoft 365 products including power BI and to improve our Service intranet.
3	Budget smoothing	Residual reserve which has been drawn on periodically to accommodate any adverse budget impact from delays with implementing saving initiatives.
4	Direct funding to capital	This reserve was created to fund the capital programme and remove the requirement to borrow funds externally from the PWLB. This includes the replacement of fire engines (e.g. Medium Rescue Pumps/ Area Ladder Platform etc.) and also on station rebuild and enhancements. The strategic aim is to transfer a minimum of c£2m annually to this reserve to suppose the multi-year capital programme and defer the need to borrow.
5	Public Finance Initiative (PFI) Equalisation	Based on the performance of the PFI fund, it may be possible to release this reserve into the general fund balance. The PFI contract ends on 31 March 2028 so the risk of underperformance over the remainder of the contract is low.



Section A: Planned use of earmarked reserves cont...

Ref	Earmarked reserve	Planned use
6	ESMCP	This reserve has been created via grant funding to support the completion of the Airwave system replacement which is currently on hold. This reserve could be utilised sooner once the project is declared live again but cannot be used for any other purpose.
7	Mobile data terminal replacement	The current mobile data terminals in service are all due replacement. We plan to replace half by March 2024 with the remainder during 2024/25.
8	Pension liability reserve	This reserve has been created and maintained to respond to any additional costs which fall on the Authority with respect to legislative changes impacting the firefighters pension scheme. Forecast utilisation is uncertain.
9	Budget carry forwards	We forecast a modest balance will remain at the end of 2023/24, the remainder will be utilised over the course of the next two financial years.
10	Environmental strategy	Investment in renewable energy, electric vehicle charging points and a grant funding officer will see the remainder of this reserve utilised.
11	MTAP	Investment in replacement equipment for our MTA officers will ensure this reserve is spent during 2024/25.
12	Control Futures Project	Reserve created to meet our financial obligation toward the procurement of a new command and control system which is being acquired through our partnership arrangements with Network Fire Control Partnership (NFSP)



Section 1: Part 2

Secondary information



Section 1: Part 2 2024/25 efficiencies (cash)

In achieving a balanced revenue budget for 2024/25 the following efficiencies have been budgeted for:

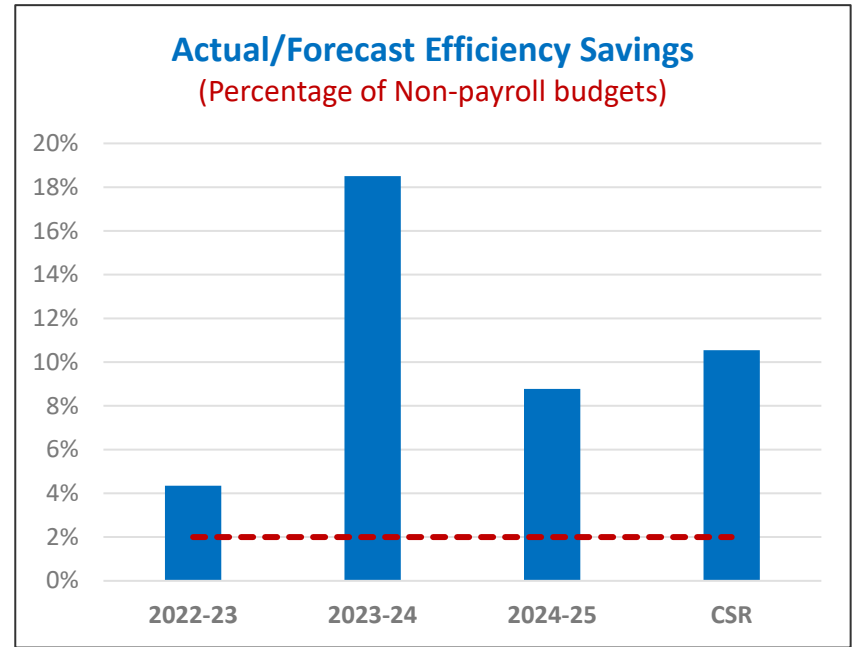
- **£1.3m:** changes to the whole-time duty system allowing for better utilisation of the workforce and a reduction of supervisory management establishment through natural attrition.
- **£0.250m:** renegotiation of the payment for availability terms and conditions.
- **£0.133m:** changes to the operating model for specialist rescue capability (e.g. boat, animal rescue etc.)
- **£0.069m:** amendments to the policy and practice with respect to responding to unwanted fire signals.

Total reductions: **£1.752m**



Section 1: Part 2 2024/25 efficiencies (cash) cont

	Actual 2022-23	Forecast 2023-24	Forecast 2024-25	CSR
Opening Revenue Expenditure Budget (Net)	93,747	98,310	108,020	
Less Total Direct Employee Costs	74,366	76,413	84,285	
Non Pay Budget	19,381	21,897	23,735	
Efficiency Target (2% of non-pay budget)	388	438	475	
Efficiency Savings				
<u>Direct Employee</u>				
Reduction in Prevention/Protection/Response Staff		-1,593	-1,752	
Reduction in Support Staff	-256	-1,484		
<u>Indirect Employee (e.g. training, travel etc.)</u>				
All Indirect Employee Costs				
<u>Premises</u>				
Utilities	-100	-11		
Rent/Rates	-100	-41		
Other Premises Costs	-87	-67		
Shared Premises				
<u>Transport</u>				
Fleet	-100	-245	-169	
Fuel	-100	-282		
Other Transport Costs		-118		
<u>Supplies and Services</u>				
Procurement Savings	-100			
Other Technology Improvements		-79	-45	
Decreased Usage				
<u>Capital Financing</u>				
Revenue Expenditure Charged to Capital				
Net Borrowing Costs				
<u>Other</u>				
Other Savings 1				
Increase in coresponding income		-132	-117	
Total Efficiency Savings	-843	-4,052	-2,083	
Efficiency Savings as a Percentage of Non-Payroll Budgets	4.35%	18.50%	8.78%	10.54%
Efficiency Savings Target	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%



Date	FTE	
	WT	Support
31/03/2022	577	336
31/03/2023	559	309
28/03/2024	542	309
% reduction over period	6	9



Section 1: Part 2 Collaboration

The Service continues to build on opportunities for collaboration in the following areas:

- **Internal Audit:** As a full voting member of Devon Audit Partnership which has enhanced the quality of our internal audit function, afforded greater flexibility of resources and resilience (**non-cash efficiency**)
- **Sector indemnity:** DSFRS continues to play a leading role as a member of the Fire and Rescue Service Indemnity Company (FRIC), combining the benefits of insurance with those of risk and financial pooling. Annual returns are c£0.070m (**cash efficiency**)
- **South-West Ambulance Service:**
 - Developed a regional co-responding policy and memorandum of understanding to ensure recovery of costs are efficient and fair. Building on this an agreement to provide clinical governance supplied by SWAST at no cost in exchange for gaining entry on their behalf at medical incidents is underway. (**non-cash efficiency**)
 - Provided co-responders from twenty fire stations across Devon and Somerset for over twenty years. (**non-cash efficiency**)



Section 1: Part 2 Collaboration

cont...

- Final stages of implementing a pilot on the Tri-Service safety officer (TSSO) which is a collaboration between Devon and Cornwall Police, SWAST and DSFRS to provide an officer in a rural area of Devon who engages with the local community on prevention initiatives for crime, health and fire. This officer is also able to respond to category 1 health emergencies and as an On-Call fire fighter. This initiative has already been successfully implemented in Cornwall and we are benefiting from advice given by Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service. **(non-cash efficiency)**
- **Community co-responding:** Community responders are on-call fire-fighters and special constables who work at Dartmouth, Cullompton and Newton Abbot. Whilst on duty they engage in crime reduction activity, community safety initiatives as well as being available to respond to fire calls. 25% of the costs covered by Devon and Cornwall police. **(non-cash efficiency)**
- **Fire investigations:** We are in partnership with three other FRS's, Avon, Hampshire and Kent to achieve the accreditation standard (ISO 17020) to be able to conduct investigations of deliberate and fatal fires through the criminal justice system before 2025. **(non-cash efficiency)**



- **Diversity and Inclusion:** our partnership continues with Dorset and Wiltshire FRS, Devon & Cornwall Constabulary, Dorset Police and Devon County Council to deliver the 'Our Time' programme which pairs talented women with champions at a senior level that can open professional networks and opportunities for them. **(non-cash efficiency)**
- **Partnership with Local Resilience Forums (LRF):** an ongoing process of collaboration takes place in line with our responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA). This is a collaboration with Avon and Somerset LRF (ASLRF), and Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (DCIoS LRF) and that focuses on horizon scanning, risk assessment, the preparation of contingency and emergency plans, sharing information, and on business continuity planning. **(non-cash efficiency)**



Section 1: Part 2 Transformation cont...

- **Implementation of a new mobilisation system:** We are collaborating through NFSP (Network Fire Service Partnership) with Dorset and Wiltshire, Hampshire & Isle of Wight and Kent FRSs to procure and implement a mobilisation system (c£1.4m DSFRS contribution), which will bolster collaboration, business continuity and facilitate effective cross border and control room mobilisation. Additionally, the partnership is introducing in summer 2024, software and hardware to enhance the way the participating FRSs operate such as a Dynamic Coverage Tool which will provide real time data on risk and resources. **(non-cash efficiency)**
- **Environmental investments:** We continue to invest in 2024/25 towards our transition to a more sustainable, environmentally friendly Service. This will include the roll-out of electric vehicles, charging infrastructure, solar panels and energy efficiency improvement works enabled by funding of c£0.400m, of which, £0.325m was externally secured via grant funding **(non-cash efficiency)**
- **Site optimisation/ rationalisation of Estates:** In an effort to better utilise our estate, non-operational office space, which is surplus to requirement, has been identified and will be disposed of within the forthcoming years. We anticipate proceeds of c£2m which will be recycled into our capital programme. We are working with public sector partners within Plymouth to consider options to optimises the public estate. **(cash-efficiency)**



Section 1: Part 2 Charging policies

Under section 18A of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 fire authorities may charge for non-emergency services, as long as they do not make any profit.

The Service does not charge for attending incidents, but charges are applied for special services such as copies of fire reports, provision of some fire safety equipment to businesses, attending automatic false alarms to repeat locations and interviews with officers.

Further information can be found here:-

[Standard charges | Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service \(dsfire.gov.uk\)](http://www.dsfire.gov.uk)



Section 1: Part 2 Asset and Technological investment

Fleet

- There are 112 rescue pumping appliances across the Service area based on three different sizes and capabilities and a range of specialist and support vehicles and equipment.
- Since 2011, through our fleet replacement programme, we have altered the specification of our assets to reflect local evolving risks which has led to a £1.8m reduction in our capital programme. The fleet review will continue the process of realigning appliances to match greatest risk and introducing new fleet and capabilities to the latest standards with a view of making further reductions to our capital spending plans.
- In 2024, in addition to the agreed front line appliances we are expecting to introduce to the fleet three new 45m aerial ladder platforms (which replaces existing vehicles), five new water carriers (replacing six obsolete vehicles) and six incident support vehicles which have been designed to improve our ability to manage contaminated equipment and improve welfare facilities for the incident ground.

2011 Front Line profile			Agreed Front Line profile			
112			112			
MRP	LRP	RIV	MRP	LRP	RIV	4x4 MRP
63	37	12	49	38	17	8



Section 1: Part 2 Asset and Technological investment cont...

Implementation of new ICT systems:

- **Asset management:** upgrade of systems to enable reporting of availability and defects for all vehicles and critically identified equipment which includes dashboards and status performance reporting and is linked to mobilisation system.
- **Human resource management systems:** The introduction of the new system has enabled greater self-service and workforce planning across the organisation and will enable greater alignment between HR and finance systems. This will remove the need for several manual processes across the service and boost productivity
- **Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS):** we are currently undergoing implementation of CFRMIS within our community safety function which is expected by summer 2024. This system will improve the processes for our protection, prevention and risk management activities.
- **Microsoft 365, Power-BI:** Increased ability for virtual/flexible working and increased visualisation of performance data.
- **Telematics:** Telematics have been introduced which ensures we have the intelligence available to determine where our light vehicle fleet should be based to enable optimum utilisation. It will also be used to determine the priority roll-out of the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure as we will know who travels where and when. The case for further expansion of the programme in 2024 to the front-line appliances is currently being considered.



Section 1: Part 2 Resourcing

- **Review of whole-time duty system:** a significant project is currently underway which aims to revise the whole-time duty system by 2025 . It is likely that this will be based on the principles of annualise hours which will enable the more efficient utilisation of workforce contracted hours. This would represent a significant step forward from the current system which is dependent on the four-watch system. Once implemented, the Service will be able to provide the same level of operational cover with a reduced wholetime establishment.
- In anticipation of implementing this new duty system, we have constrained our recruitment into the whole-time workforce to ensure that once implemented the financial benefits are more readily realised. This temporary reduction within the existing duty system has been made possible through the active management of the workforce and utilisation of a 'hierarchy of cover' (as per below) which provides a series of step-down options which can be called on to fill resourcing gaps as they emerge.
- Hierarchy of cover:
 - Stand-by moves (shift by shift movement of firefighter resource between watches)
 - Day duty staff being deployed to cover shifts
 - Additional hours at flat-rate
- **Review of payment for availability (P4A):** negotiations are underway in line with the agreed plan to update the terms and conditions relating to P4A (alterative to retained duty system) which will seek to improve financial sustainability and achieve collective agreement by placing all On-Call firefighters on the same contractual terms and conditions.



Section 1: Part 2 Procurement

- **Collaboration with external partners:** we are on the NFCCs Strategic Commercial Board (Procurement Hub) and are one of the NFCC's five Commercial Leads- responsible for the 'Fleet' category. As part of this role we work closely with UK FRS's and BlueLight Commercial on the identification of Emergency Services Collaborative opportunities – promoting them across the sector. As a Service, we lead on the National NFCC Emergency Response Vehicles Framework, collaborating with the sector and its suppliers on its development. DSFRS have also led on other sector wide collaborative procurements including the NFCC Self Contained Breathing Apparatus Framework. Additionally, we routinely collaborate with Dorset & Wiltshire, Hampshire and Kent FRS for procurements related to its Network Fire Service Partnership.
- **Use of national frameworks:** DSFRS are users of the Police/Fire Contract Management and E-Tendering Portal (InTend). Contracts are recorded on this system and collaborative procurements can be identified from our register and procurement documentation. As a matter of policy, we require the use of national collaborative procurements and there would need to be a strong business case to consider any procurement not being conducted through national approaches. DSFRS are represented on the project team (led by Kent FRS) developing the next NFCC National PPE/Workwear Framework.



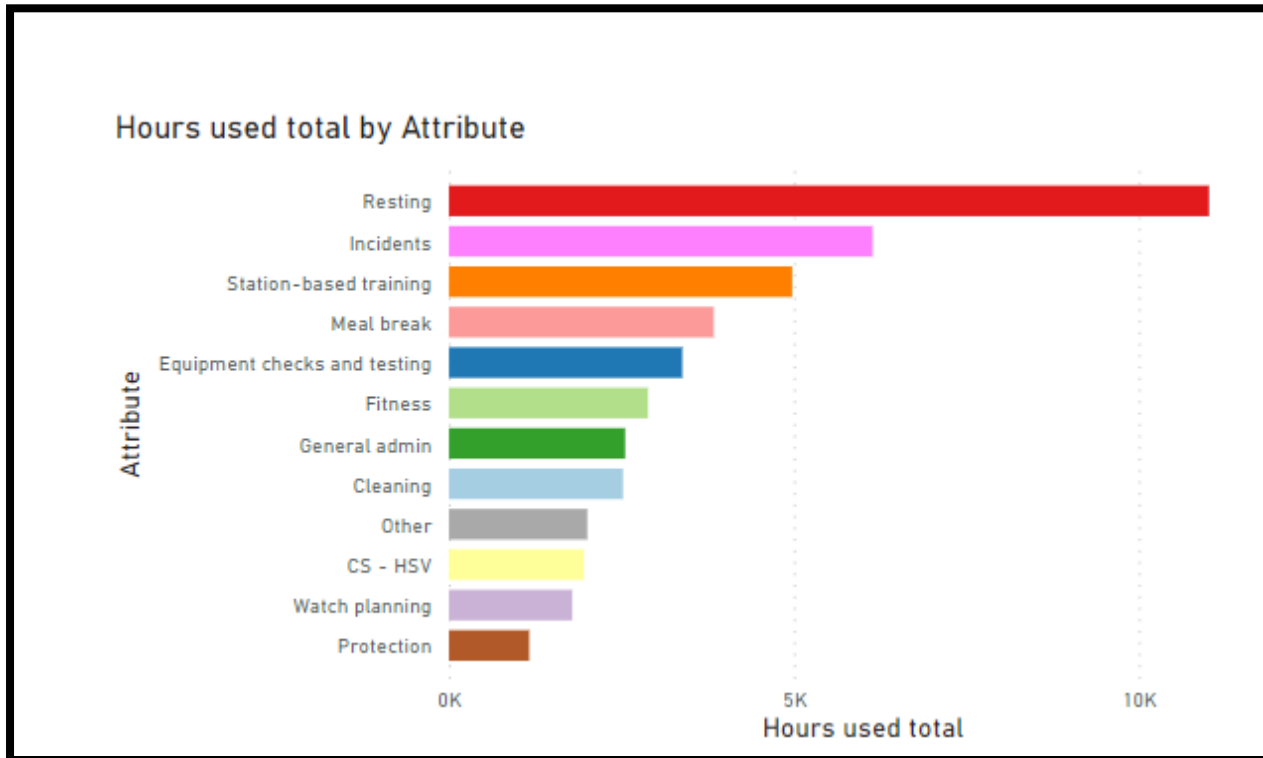
Section 2: 2024/25 productivity

- The Service is pursuing the national Spending Review (SR) target of improving productivity of wholetime firefighters by 3% over the SR period.
- Building on the initial pilot which was introduced in 2021/22 to which saw the manual utilisation of outlook calendars within a few stations to record how our whole-time workforce was being utilised, the Service has expanded this to encompass all wholetime stations. PowerBI has been introduced alongside a new data collection process and our efforts are now focused on ensuring the accuracy of this data.
- In addition to providing managers with visibility of how the workforce is being utilised, comparisons can now easily be made between watches and duty stations to determine outliers or best practice.
- This collection and data reporting process will be integral to our on-going efforts and commitment to boost productivity of our whole-time workforce. This focus has already seen benefits such as the increase in home fire safety visits by whole-time watches. I.e. an increase from 7,667 in 2022/ 23 to 8,576 in 2023/24.
- The next phase of this project will see us agree formal target for utilisation
- Examples of data extraction capability has been included within the following three slides.



Section 2: 2024/25 productivity cont...

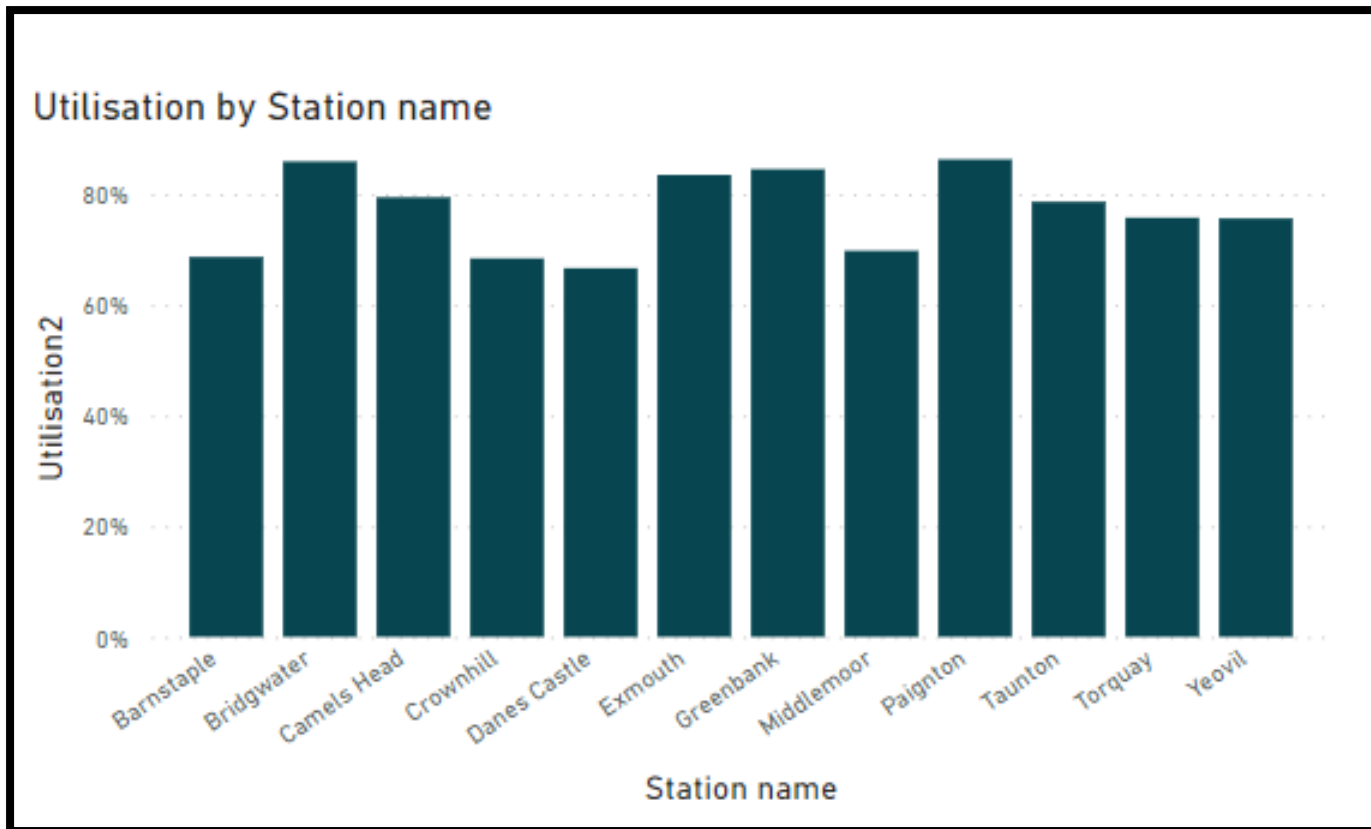
Fig 1: 1 July to 31 January 2024 activity comparison for all whole-time stations





Section 2: 2024/25 productivity cont...

Fig 2. 1 July to 31 January 2024 station utilisation comparison





Section 2: 2024/25 productivity cont...

Fig 3. 1 July to 31 January 2024 Torquay station utilisation by watch

