



Tuesday, 14 June 2022

**(1) MEMBERS OF THE AVON FIRE AUTHORITY**

Councillors B Massey, D Davies, A Ali, J Ashe, S Bromley, E Brown, N Butters, R Eddy, P.Goggin, B Hopkinson, R Jacobs, P May, Y Mohamud, A.Monk, B Nutland, R Payne, S Smith, R Tucker, A Varney and D Wilcox  
Independent Person: J Mason

**(2) APPROPRIATE OFFICERS**

**(3) PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Dear Member

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Avon Fire Authority Annual General Meeting** to be held on **Wednesday, 22 June 2022** commencing at **14:00 hrs.**

The meeting will be held at **Weston-super-Mare Fire Station, Milton Avenue, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 3JS.** Parking is available on site.

In order to ensure COVID-19 guidance is adhered to risk assessments have been undertaken for live meetings to identify and put in place, the measures required ensuring that meetings take place safely. Further information is available on our website [www.avonfire.gov.uk](http://www.avonfire.gov.uk) and Democratic Services.

Please note that this meeting will be video recorded and published on our YouTube channel (see the Notes on the next page).

Yours sincerely

**Amanda Brown**  
Clerk to the Fire Authority

**PROVIDING AVON FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**



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## **Notes**

**Attendance Register** – Attendance will be recorded by the Democratic Services Assistant and recorded within the Minutes of the Meeting.

**Code of Conduct – Declaration of Interests:** any Member in attendance who has a personal interest in any matter to be considered at this meeting must disclose the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent. A Member having a prejudicial interest must withdraw from the meeting room or meeting whilst the matter is considered.

**Contact:** for any queries about the Meeting please contact Democratic Services on 0117 926 2061 ext. 231; or by e mail at [the.clerk@avonfire.gov.uk](mailto:the.clerk@avonfire.gov.uk); or in person at Police and Fire HQ, Valley Road, Portishead, Bristol, BS20 8JJ (by appointment during normal office hours only).

**Emergency Evacuation Procedures:** these will be advised at the start of the Meeting if appropriate.

**Exempt Items:** Members are reminded that any Exempt Reports as circulated with this Agenda contain exempt information and should therefore be treated accordingly. They should not be disclosed or passed on to any other person(s). Members are also reminded of the need to dispose of such reports carefully and are therefore invited to return them to the Clerk at the conclusion of the Meeting for disposal.

**Inspection of Papers:** any person wishing to inspect Minutes, Reports, or a list of the background papers relating to any item on this Agenda should contact Democratic Services as above.

**Public Access:** under Standing Order 21 and providing 2 clear working days' notice has been given to the Clerk ([the.clerk@avonfire.gov.uk](mailto:the.clerk@avonfire.gov.uk)) any resident or representative of a business or voluntary organisation operating in Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset or North Somerset Council may address the Fire Authority or one of its Committees (for no more than 5 minutes) by submitting a written petition, statement, or as leader a deputation which, due to COVID-19 restrictions, will be read by the Chair or Clerk. There is a time limit of 30 minutes for Public Access.

**Reports:** reports are identified by the relevant agenda item number.

**Substitutes (for Committees only):** notification of substitutes should have been received from Group Leaders by the Clerk prior to the meeting.

**A G E N D A - Avon Fire Authority Wednesday, 22 June 2022**  
**14:00**

**Pages**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Election of Chair for the Municipal Year</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Election of Vice Chair for the Municipal Year</b>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Emergency Evacuation Procedures</b>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Declaration of Interests</b>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Public Access</b>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Chair's Business</b>	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Minutes of the Avon Fire Authority</b>	
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9.1	Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Performance, Review & Scrutiny Committee held on held on 26 January 2022	21 - 28
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## **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

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| <b>20.</b> | <b>Service Round-up</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 169 - 176 |
| <b>21.</b> | <b>Date of next Meeting - 5 October 2022 at 14.00hrs</b><br><br>5 October 2022 at 14.00hrs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |           |
| <b>22.</b> | <b>Exclusion of the Press and Public</b><br><br>To resolve that the public be excluded from the meeting during the following items of business on the grounds that they contained exempt information pursuant to Schedule 12A, Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 and that in accordance with Schedule 12A, Part 2, paragraph 10 of the Local Government Act 1972 the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. |           |
| <b>23.</b> | <b>Confidential Minutes of the Fire Authority</b><br><br>23.1 Confidential Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Avon Fire Authority held on 30 March 2022                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 177 - 178 |
| <b>24.</b> | <b>Contract Award - Software Reseller for the Provision of Microsoft Licences</b><br><i>Exempt Paragraph 3</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 179 - 188 |





## **AVON FIRE AUTHORITY**

**30 March 2022**

### **Present:**

Councillors J Ashe, S Bromley, A Brown, D Davies, R Eddy, B Hopkinson, R Jacobs, B Massey, Y Mohamud, A Monk, B Nutland, R Payne, R Tucker, D Wilcox, C Windows

The meeting began at 2.00 pm.

### **78. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr Ali, E Brown, Butters, Goggin, May and James Mason (Independent Person).

### **79. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

In the event of an emergency, Members were advised to exit the building at the nearest fire exit point and congregate in the main car park.

### **80. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest from Members of the Avon Fire Authority (AFA).

With reference to Item 12 - Annual Review of Remuneration of Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (CFO/CEO), it was confirmed that all the Service Leadership Board (SLB) Officers and Statutory Officers had a declared interest as their salaries were directly linked to the pay of the CFO/CEO.

### **81. PUBLIC ACCESS**

A public access statement received from Ms Jenni Gwynne had been published on the website. The statement was read out by the Clerk and in response the Director of Corporate Services stated that:

1. It had been previously agreed that capital reporting would be presented to the Fire Authority twice a year. In line with the forward plan, the information was last reported in October 2021, with the end of year report due to be presented in June 2022 as part of the Fire Authority 2021/22 Final Accounts process.
2. The capital programme was regularly reported to, and scrutinised by, the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee (PRSC) with the latest consideration in January 2022.

3. The Strategic Member Engagement Forum considers the development of, and progress with, the Service's core strategies and associated programme.
4. A further briefing on the specific matters referred to in the statement would be provided to PRSC at their next meeting in April 2022 and would be forwarded to all Authority Members.

## **82. CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited everyone to introduce themselves.
2. The Chair explained the voting process to be followed for the meeting.
3. As the last meeting of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive Officer (CFO/CEO), Mick Crennell, the Chair congratulated him on 30 years' service and his retirement. It was highlighted that he had led Avon Fire and Rescue Service (AF&RS) and AFA through a journey of improvements which had resulted in making AF&RS a better place for those who work within as well as the communities it serves.  
The CFO/CEO thanked Members for their good wishes and drew attention to his fantastic team who worked hard to continue to improve services and keep communities safe.
4. Cllr Windows, having completed his 8-year term as a member of AFA, was thanked for his service and wished well for the future.
5. The next meeting of AFA would be the annual meeting on 22 June 2022 prior to which a new Members induction event would take place on 9 June 2022.
6. The Chair reported that the Service had carried out a review of potential impacts to the supply chain caused by the Ukraine/Russia conflict. It had been determined that the Service had no direct links to Russian suppliers and additional due diligence would continue to ensure no links to suppliers linked with Russia.

## **83. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AVON FIRE AUTHORITY HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2022**

Cllr Massey moved and Cllr Eddy seconded that the Minutes be approved.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Avon Fire Authority held on 11 February 2022 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.**

## **84. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

1. Cllr Wilcox moved and Cllr Massey seconded that the Minutes be approved.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the People and Culture Committee held on 17 September 2021 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.**

2. Cllr Wilcox moved and Cllr Jacobs seconded that the Minutes be approved.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the People and Culture Committee held on 10 December 2021 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.**

3. Cllr Wilcox moved and Cllr Tucker seconded that the Minutes be approved.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit, Governance & Ethics Committee held on 24 November 2021 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.**

4. Cllr Payne moved and Cllr Eddy seconded that the Minutes be approved.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the Performance, Review & Scrutiny Committee held on 8 October 2021 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.**

5. Cllr Windows moved and Cllr Jacobs seconded that the Minutes be approved.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the Local Pension Board held on 3 September 2021 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.**

#### **Items for Decision**

#### **85. APPROVAL OF FINAL SERVICE PLAN INCLUDING INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (IRMP)**

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Delivery) introduced the report which sought approval to publish the Fire Authority's Service Plan 2022-2025.

The key considerations highlighted were:

1. The Service Plan 2022-25 set out the Fire Authority's strategic aims and objectives, highlighting elements considered important to enable improvement and deliver proposals. The documents identified the risk profile of the service and set out how the service would address and minimise that risk.
2. The Fire Authority's seven-week public consultation period on the draft Service Plans proposals ran from 4 January until 18 February 2022. In total 210 questionnaire responses were received which was in line with response rates in other Fire and Rescue Services (F&RS).
3. The draft Service Plan document (Appendix 3) was brought to the Fire Authority for consultation in December 2021.
4. A fully integrated approach had been applied to methods of engagement and communication listed within the methodology of the Consultation Report (Appendix 2).
5. In response to the Consultation, the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) had raised opposition to the introduction of emergency medical response. In recognition of the feedback, an alternative proposed wording was now included which stated, *"explore and consider how new ways of working would assist with medical emergencies within the community, utilising the skills and capability*

*within the Service and building on existing examples of good practice with a view to pilot different models of assistance.”*

Arising from Members questions the following points were clarified:

1. Members were pleased that the concerns of the FBU had been taken into consideration.
2. Officers were thanked for the report which had been presented to the relevant Committees and received overall endorsement of the general public.
3. With regards to the low response rate, Officers confirmed that they planned to canvas other F&RS to ascertain if anything else could be done to increase the rate of response, however, it was acknowledged that when people were satisfied with a Service, they were less likely to provide a response to say so.
4. Future communications and campaigns would show the public how the Service delivered against the service plan. As responses had been anonymous, individual feedback and engagement was not possible. Where individuals do approach with comments, Officers follow up and continue engagement if appropriate.

The recommendation was moved by Cllr Eddy, seconded by Cllr Brown.

**It was RESOLVED that the Fire Authority:**

- a) **Considered the outcomes of the public consultation.**
- b) **Approved for publication the Service Plan 2022-2025 presented for sign off by Members.**

## **86. 2022/23 to 2025/26 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

The Treasurer presented the report which recommended the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for approval. The requirement to produce and publish a MTFP was included within the current iteration of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. The report provided the Fire Authority with a 4-year Financial Strategy (April 2022 to March 2026), which covered the approved 2022/23 Annual Budgets and provided projected figures for the following three financial years.

The Medium-Term Financial Plan had been based on the previous MTFP approved by the Fire Authority in March 2021 and updated for key financial issues and forecasts. This updated 4-year Financial Strategy showed a balanced position, utilising approved reserves and additional efficiency savings from 2024/25. The updated MTFP was summarised within Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 providing further information on income and expenditure for the period. With reference to Appendix 2 the following key points were highlighted:

1. Section 5.14 of the report outlined the additional revenue Capital Financing Costs, which covered the projected interest payments and loan repayment costs for the proposed 3-year Capital Programme. As this programme would require the FA to take out additional external loans, the Treasurer advised SLB would need to undertake a review in 2022/23, to review the capital priorities, to review available reserves and to consider further revenue efficiency savings.

2. With reference to revenue efficiency savings, it was projected the Service would need further savings to be considered from 2024/25.
3. Key Financial Risks were outlined in section 6 of the report. The Treasurer highlighted risks around the uncertainty over future government funding levels and a possible reduction to future Council funding, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in relation to the increased Collection Fund deficits. It was noted one of the financial risks related to the potential of Pay Awards being agreed above the levels assumed within this Financial Strategy and there were several risks raised around non-pay costs, particularly in relation to increases in energy costs and fuel. The identified long-term risk of increased pension costs was detailed in a separate report within agenda item 18.
4. To try to mitigate those risks there were a variety of proposed management actions using financial modelling, the adoption of a contingency reserve, strengthened financial reporting and a move towards Devolved Budgets.
5. The MTFP outlined the significant uncertainty with respect to the ongoing situation in Ukraine. It was confirmed the Procurement Manager had undertaken a detailed review and assessment of the Fire Authority's contracts and confirmed the Fire Authority does not have any direct contractual relationships with Russian suppliers.

Arising from Members questions the following points were clarified:

1. The CFO role was responsible for the programme and the delivery of the Transformation programme.
2. Officers were thanked for sound management and presentation of constructive information. Whilst there were significant risks present, Members were confident that officers provided information to show they were adept at containing any pressures.

The recommendations were proposed by Cllr Eddy and seconded by Cllr Payne.

**It was RESOLVED that the Fire Authority:**

- a) Approved the 4-year Medium Term Financial Plan, as detailed in this report and its appendices.**

## **87. 2022-2025 CAPITAL PROGRAMME STRATEGY**

The Treasurer presented a report which asked the Fire Authority to approve the proposed 3-year Capital Strategy, together with the affordability and impact of the updated capital expenditure plans. When reviewing a Capital Strategy, the CIPFA Prudential Code (2017) requires all Local Authorities to demonstrate that capital expenditure and investment decisions align to the Services key objectives and take account of affordability, Value for Money, sustainability and affordability. The Treasurer confirmed the Fire Authority has the power to borrow external funds to finance its Capital Programme, but before it uses these powers, it is required to determine whether or not it is prudent to do so.

The Capital Programme outlined the projected capital expenditure and planned capital disposals over the next three years from April 2022 to March 2025. The

Strategy was based on the 2021-2024 Capital Programme, approved by the FA in March 2021 and updated for key expenditure plans and the associated borrowing requirements. The Treasurer referred to Appendix 1 which showed additional external loans (projected at £3.2m) would be required to fund this proposed Capital Programme from 2023/24. As these loans would increase the revenue costs for the Fire Authority, the Treasurer advised SLB would need to undertake a review in 2022/23, to review the capital priorities, to review available reserves and to consider further revenue efficiency savings. To support this review, it was confirmed a new Capital Programme Steering and Prioritisation Group would be set up from 2022, to review the Capital Programme aligned to affordability and prioritisation of capital expenditure.

The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) outlined the development of the following Premises plans through the proposed capital programme:

1. The completion of Avonmouth Station was due early in the financial year 2022/23 with a final spend of £500k.
2. The refurbishment of Bedminster Fire Station was due to be completed during the financial year 2022/23, with construction costs reflected in the Capital Programme proposal.
3. The capital proposal of £50k for the Bath Station redevelopment, referred to completion of the final design and feasibility work needed to present a business case to the Authority in 2022/23. Consideration of a Tri Service Collaboration could lead to the agreement of a joint development/funding model.
4. The completion of the design phase for Weston Station would be dependent on further work on design and site searches with planned presentation of a business case to the Authority in 2022/23. This was reflected in a capital proposal of £500k for 2022/23.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Delivery Support) (ACFO (SDS)) reported with reference to the current Fleet provision within the service outlined within the Service Plan 2022-25.

1. The current Fleet replacement strategy best practice life span was 15 years for front line appliances and 17 years for specialist vehicles.
2. With reference to funding for electric vehicles, it was acknowledged that the vehicles were more expensive in terms of capital outlay however, within the Authorities strategy for reduction of carbon emissions within the Fleet programme, consideration would also be given to the lifespan cost and revenue expenditure.

Arising from Members questions the following points were clarified:

1. The proposed £500,000 allocated to a hovercraft provision would be considered by a working group. The working group would consider prevention messaging and partnership working as well as any other and better solutions.
2. With reference to the public access statement received earlier in the meeting, the Clerk confirmed that the details and reasons of the case highlighted would be communicated direct to Elected Members.

3. Airwave technology was currently used by Emergency Services however, it was an outdated technology and 5G technology would be more fit for the future.

The recommendations were moved by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Tucker.

**It was RESOLVED that the Avon Fire Authority:**

- a) **Approved the 2022-2025 Capital Programme**
- b) **Approved the proposed funding and Prudential Indicators required to finance the 2022-2025 Capital Strategy.**

#### **88. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME for 2022/23**

The Clerk presented a report which asked the Fire Authority to consider the updates proposed for the Members Allowances Scheme following independent review. The eleven recommendations of the independent review report presented and approved by the Fire Authority at their meeting on 15 December 2021 had been incorporated into the updated Scheme now presented

In terms of the narrative text within the Scheme, the Clerk assured Elected Members that gender neutrality would feature throughout.

The Clerk confirmed that a pay award had been announced on 1 March 2022 to be backdated to April 2021 and this had been implemented with associated backpay within the Scheme. The next pay award for April 2022 had not yet been released.

Elected Members were pleased with the process followed and thanked Officers for their work.

The recommendations were moved by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Jacobs.

**It was RESOLVED that the Avon Fire Authority:**

- a) **Approved the 2022-2023 Members Allowances Scheme.**

#### **89. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE REMUNERATION OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/ CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Clerk presented the report which set out the recommendation of the People and Culture Committee to note the National Joint Council (NJC) 2021 pay award for Brigade Managers and to make no local pay increase for 2022/23 with regards to the remuneration of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive.

Officers of the Service Leadership Board declared an interest as their pay was determined by way of percentage of the pay of the CFO. The CFO/CEO had not requested a local pay award and no local pay award was recommended. It was noted that the NJC pay award due on 1 Jan 2022 was yet to be announced.

In response to a query from Cllr Eddy, the CFO confirmed that if anyone was to be temporarily appointed to an interim position, that person would assume the salary of the person they replaced.

The recommendations were moved by Cllr Wilcox and seconded by Cllr Windows.

**It was RESOLVED that Avon Fire Authority:**

- a) Noted the National Joint Council (NJC) 2021 pay award for Brigade Managers with effect from 1 January 2021 of 1.5%, which was announced on 24 June 2021.**
- b) Made no local pay increase to the CFO/CEO's salary for 2022/23, and**
- c) Noted that the NJC pay award for Brigade Managers for 1 January 2022 is yet to be announced.**

## **90. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/22**

The Clerk presented the report which provided the Fire Authority with the Pay Policy Statement at Appendix 1 for the financial year beginning 1 April 2022 as recommended for approval by the Fire Authority by the People and Culture (P&C) Committee.

The Fire Authority was required by the Localism Act 2011 to prepare and publish the annual Pay Policy Statement by 31 March each year. The current years statement was set out at Appendix 1.

The Fire Authority was also obliged to publish gender pay gap statistics after 31 March each year and that information would be presented to the P&C Committee in June 2022 where they will be asked to approve it for publication.

Following a request for information from the P&C Committee, the Clerk confirmed that, with reference to the internal pay comparators and lowest pay parameters, 14 employees were on the lowest pay point.

The recommendations were moved by Cllr Wilcox and seconded by Cllr Eddy.

**It was RESOLVED that the Avon Fire Authority:**

- a) Approved the proposed Pay Policy Statement 2022/23 (at Appendix 1) and directed that it be published on Avon Fire and Rescue Service web site.**
- b) Noted that Gender Pay Gap reporting for 2022 would be reported to the next People and Culture Committee meeting in June, after the 'snapshot date' of 31 March 2022.**

## **91. 2021/22 REVENUE FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Treasurer presented the report which provided the Fire Authority with an update on the 2021/2022 Revenue Budget and other key financial information for the period covering the 1 April 2021 to the 31 January 2022.



As shown within Appendix 1 the projected forecast outturn showed a very small underspend of £23,000, which equated to less than 0.04% of the approved annual budget. The Treasurer advised this was a positive financial position for the Fire Authority and the detailed figures were shown within Appendix 1 & 2.

It was noted the Premises budget was showing a forecast overspend of £68k at the year end, which related to national increased energy costs. To support these national increased costs, the Service had invested additional funding to this budget and Officers had been successful in negotiating a new contract to minimise future risk.

Appendix 3 showed the budget adjustment of £309k which had been made to update the FA budgets from 1 November 2021 to 31 January 2022. In future, Budget Adjustments between the value of £250k to £499k would be shared with PRSC, as outlined within the updated Fire Authority's Constitution.

The recommendations were moved by Cllr Payne and seconded by Cllr Eddy.

**It was RESOLVED that the Avon Fire Authority:**

- a) Noted the latest Income and Expenditure forecast on the Revenue Budget.**
- b) Approved the Budget Adjustment shown in Appendix 3.**

## **92. PUBLIC SECTOR DECARBONISATION GRANT UPDATE – COMPLETION OF WORKS**

With the agreement of Members, this item was moved for consideration earlier than indicated in the published agenda.

The report detailed the excellent progress made in delivering renewable energy and low carbon technology projects through the award of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Grant and that AF&RS was on course to deliver within the stipulated grant conditions set out by Salix (grant administration body) by 31 March 2022.

It was noted by Elected Members that HMICFRS had commented on the success of AF&RS as the only Fire & Rescue Service in England to receive a grant under the Decarbonisation Scheme.

A huge amount of work had taken place to tight deadlines for which Elected Members and Officers showed their appreciation. The Environmental Manager had been invited as guest speaker on various webinars and the work of the team had been shortlisted for a National Clean Energy Award.

Arising from Members questions the following points were clarified:

1. Linking Temple Fire Station to Temple District Heat Networks had been funded by Bristol City Council who had also received a grant through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

2. AF&RS were in the process of installing an electric vehicle charging network across the estate.
3. The fleet was in the early days of transitioning to electric power. Solar and battery storage systems had not yet been linked directly to the electric charging and generator systems.

**It was RESOLVED to note the report.**

At this point in the meeting there was a 10-minute adjournment, the meeting resumed at 15:50.

Cllrs Eddy and Nutland left the meeting during the adjournment.

### **93. HMICFRS ROUND 2 INSPECTION REPORT**

The Fire Authority received the report which formally presented the results of the last full HMICFRS inspection of AF&RS in May/June 2021. The outcome of the inspection had been published in December 2021 and a verbal update provided at the last meeting.

The inspection had reported significant improvement against the three pillars of Effectiveness, Efficiency and People. The three causes of concern identified in Round 1 had been being formally discharged and all inadequate ratings resolved. No further causes of concern were identified.

With reference to the improvement of the grading, HM Chief Inspector had commented on how rare it was to jump two grades in one inspection from 'inadequate' to 'good'.

The latest report identified 22 areas for improvement which would be presented to PRSC in April 2022. It would also be recommended that the current governance arrangements continue.

Arising from Members questions the following points were clarified:

1. Following a discussion, it was agreed that the Action Plan would be reported to the PRSC as specified within the governance structure but would also be circulated to all the Members of the Fire Authority.
2. The Action Plan would be presented to PRSC along with Officer assessments of the performance indicators/organisational scorecard in line with the new Service Plan. Those would enable Members and the Leadership Team to consider indicators and where resources may be applied for improvement. Following consideration at PRSC the Action Plan would be reported to the Fire Authority at their next meeting in June 2022.
3. The Chair of PRSC, Cllr Wilcox, indicated that following presentation at the AFA meeting in June, he would like to see it on a six-monthly basis.
4. In relation to the 22 areas for improvement identified, Officers reported that some were due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, others due to the promotion of continual improvements.

5. The CFO highlighted a specific example of 'people with the right skills' which had been rated lower as there had not been an established succession plan at the time of inspection. This had been out for consultation at that time and would now score differently.
6. 'Gap Analysis' and LGA Peer Assessment mechanisms took place to enable a sense check at any one time.
7. The new HMI Chief Inspector had hinted at a more 'thematic' approach for the next round of inspections.
8. Members welcomed the proposal to update Members on progression against elements of the HMICFRS Action Plan within regular reporting.
9. With reference to 'good use of data', it was hoped and planned that new software solutions and investment in IT would drive improvement.
10. The CFO thanked the lead Officer for his hard work and achievements and highlighted the very positive narrative of the report of HMICFRS.

The recommendations were moved by Cllr Monk and seconded by Cllr Mohamed.

**It was RESOLVED that the Avon Fire Authority:**

- a) **Noted AF&RS's Round 2 HMICFRS inspection report (Appendix 1), the covering letter from HMI Wendy Williams (Appendix 2) and the accompanying HMICFRS press release (Appendix 3).**
- b) **Re-confirmed its previous decision (taken at the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 26 March 2019) to delegate authority to the PRSC to approve the final draft of the Round 2 HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan for initial publication and provide Member-led scrutiny of progress against that action plan at each of the Committee's meetings thereafter.**
- c) **To present the new draft of the Round 2 HMICFRS Action Plan to the AFA at their next meeting in June 2022.**
- d) **Noted the current HMICFRS inspection activity and next steps.**

#### **94. FORWARD PLAN**

The Clerk reported that the Forward Plan would be updated with the following minor changes following consideration of financial reporting schedule and in consultation with both internal and external Audit teams:

1. The 18 May AGECE meeting was not required, and reports planned for that meeting would be presented to the meeting on 29 June.
2. The AGECE meeting date in December would be brought forward to November.

The Forward Plan would be updated accordingly and published on the website in due course.

**It was RESOLVED to note the report**

**95. ADDITION TO THE CONSTITUTION – NEW TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR POLITICAL GROUP LEADERS’**

The report proposed new Terms of Reference for Political Group Leaders in accordance with the recommendation of an Independent Review of Members’ Allowances Scheme. A report was presented to the Fire Authority on 15 December 2021 and all eleven recommendations were approved. A ‘role description’ for Political Group Leaders was Advisory Recommendation 10.

The Clerk confirmed that the Terms of Reference outlined the role and responsibilities of the Political Group Leaders and would be added to the Constitution.

In reply to a query, the Clerk confirmed that although there was no specific mention of absence for the reason of maternity leave within the Constitution at present, in practice, the Fire Authority respected the right of a member to take maternity leave and the political group leader would be asked to arrange for a substitute Member to attend meetings.

The Clerk was asked to confirm the arrangements and length of time a person could take maternity leave. It was suggested that if a Member of the Fire Authority were to require leave of absence for any reason, it should be formally requested through the Party Group Leader to the Clerk. A formal process would then be confirmed dependent on the circumstances and specific situation. This may need the Clerk to raise with Unitary Authorities if appropriate.

The recommendations were moved by Cllr Davis and seconded by Cllr Jacobs.

**It was RESOLVED that the Avon Fire Authority:**

- a) Approved the new Terms of Reference for Political Group Leaders at Appendix 1.**
- b) Approved the addition of the new Terms of Reference for Political Group Leaders to the latest edition of the Fire Authority Constitution.**

**96. SERVICE ROUND UP**

With the agreement of Members, this following item was moved for consideration earlier than indicated in the published agenda.

The report highlighted areas of good work across Avon Fire & Rescue Service (AF&RS), which have taken place between December 2021 and February 2022.

**It was RESOLVED to note the report**

**97. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would take place on 22 June 2022 at 2pm.

## 98. IMMEDIATE DETRIMENT UPDATE

Members were advised that any mention of the content of exempt Appendices 3 or 5 would need to be held in exempt session.

An error was highlighted in the last bullet of paragraph 5.2 of the report, that 6 April 2002 should read 6 April 2022.

The DoCS outlined the report which updated Members since the meeting of AFA in December 2021 with regards to the Immediate Detriment (ID) issue. At the December meeting, AFA had deferred the decision on formally adopting the MOU/Framework until further information was available, particularly on tax and funding. The report continued to recommend deferment until a substantive development to reasonably mitigate the financial risks and implications.

The DoCS reported that since the December meeting, the following had not changed:

1. It remained the case that impacted firefighters would be in receipt of an annual pension and a lump sum.
2. Government was fully committed to a full remedy on or before October 2023.
3. Fire and Rescue Authorities retained the power to make ID payments under the Equality Act. However, it also remained the case that the Home Office and Treasury are of the view that the power did not apply to issues around tax and contributions. To make ID payments would incur costs which would fall to local budgets.
4. Currently a number of payments for those retiring would be considered 'unauthorised payments' under the current tax legislation.
5. The LGA/FBU framework remained unchanged which outlined that Fire Authorities were liable to compensate employees for unauthorised charges until changes were made to legislation.
6. A number of National Pension Administrators had indicated that they would not be able to achieve the 62 days' timescale outlined.
7. The Fire Authority had continued to process those coming up to retirement. 15 people had retired, and 6 others were under consideration.
8. The Fire Authority had not received any legal claims in respect of ID.
9. The AF&RS pension reserve contingency was within the budget for all pension matters including ill health retirements.

The DoCS reported that since the December meeting, the following had taken place:

1. AF&RS had joined a tax consortium with 14 other F&RS to seek further specialist advice from the Tax Office.
2. The LGA had advised that they approached the FBU to discuss if there was any need to amend the MOU but no further advice on discussions had been received.
3. The LGA recognised that F&RS were faced with significant financial risk in particular due to tax implications and cost.

4. It was anticipated that Finance Act legislation would be in place by August 2022. This would make 'unauthorised' payments 'authorised' for the purposes of remedy.
5. A technical working group were developing a 'ready reckoner' to calculate the financial implications.
6. The Local Pension Board (LPB) considered the matter in February 2022 and recommended formally adopting the MOU/Framework, however, the LPB did not consider financial implications or resources within their remit.
7. News of the possible legal changes through the Finance Act in August 2022 had been released after the meeting of the LPB.
8. Officers believed that the administrative cost payments within current ID processing would be covered by Government Grant. What would not be covered would be administrative costs of processing the retiring group (£55,000) and compensation payments in respect of interest or unauthorised tax charges (approximately £300,000).

In response to the report, the following comments were made:

1. Cllr A Brown confirmed that he considered it regrettable that the Government had not been more forthcoming with further information and advice and until more information or developments have taken place, that a risk managed approach should be retained processing claims as far as possible within the current circumstances.
2. Cllr Windows confirmed that the decision at the LPB had taken on the information available at the time at the meeting. The LPB had also not been able to take into account the basis of costs. He acknowledged that it could put the authority in a difficult financial position, and he supported the recommendations proposed in the report.
3. The Independent Chair of the LPB confirmed that frustrations that legislation had not been put in place to date had put everyone in a difficult position. On a balance of risk approach, it was his opinion that adoption should be deferred until further information was in place as well as legislation to avoid the tax issues and compensatory payments. It was confirmed that Members of the Pension Scheme would receive the same benefits, albeit later than they would possibly like.

The recommendations were moved by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Hopkinson.

**It was RESOLVED that the Avon Fire Authority:**

- a) **Noted the updates since the 15 December 2021 Avon Fire Authority (AFA) meeting. These updates include Appendix 2 (Scheme Advisory Board letter to HM Treasury), Appendix 3 (LGA legal advice – exempt) and Appendix 5 (National picture – exempt).**
- b) **Considered the recommendations made by the Local Pension Board at their February 2022 meeting regarding ID and MOU/Framework adoption.**
- c) **Continued to defer a decision on formally and fully adopting the MOU.**
- d) **Decided that this matter should be referred back to the Authority for further consideration in Autumn 2022, when the tax legislation is expected**

to change and substantively reduce the financial risk arising from MOU/Framework adoption.

- e) In the interim continue processing ID cases for forthcoming retirees under the arrangements agreed by the AFA in June 2021, noting the recent extension of scope to include staff with pension contribution holidays.
- f) In preparation for future adoption of the MOU/Framework:
  - (i) Extend, until further notice, the current instruction to the pension administrators to run dual estimates for retiring scheme members who have given notice but are currently outside of ID processing due to complexities.
  - (ii) Continue to collate the data needed to run estimates for already retired/category 2 staff as described by the Framework.

#### **99. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that the public be excluded from the meeting during the following items of business on the grounds that they contain exempt information pursuant to Schedule 12A, Part I of the Local Government Act 1972 and that in accordance with Schedule 12A, Part II, paragraph 10 of the Local Government Act 1972 the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

(The public meeting ended at 17.05hrs)

#### **100. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY**

It was **RESOLVED** that the confidential minutes of the Fire Authority held on 11 February 2022 should be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.

#### **101. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

It was **RESOLVED** that the confidential minutes of the Audit, Governance and Ethics Committee held on 24 November 2021 should be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.

#### **102. DELEGATION OF SOFTWARE RESELLER FOR MICROSOFT CONTRACT AWARD**

The Head of Procurement presented the report which outlined the process required to seek a contract for the provision of Microsoft Licensing.

**The Fire Authority RESOLVED to:**

**Delegate the decision regarding award of contract to PRSC meeting scheduled for 21 April (or via an extraordinary PRSC meeting, if tender has not been completed in time for this meeting).**

The meeting ended at 17:20hrs.

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CHAIR





## **PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**26 JANUARY 2022 at 10.30 am**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councillors Davies, May, Massey (substitute for Cllr Ali), Nutland, Payne (Chair), Windows (substitute for Cllr Eddy)

### **30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Ali, Eddy and Monk.

### **31. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

The Chair confirmed the emergency evacuation procedure for the building.

### **32. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **33. PUBLIC ACCESS**

None received.

### **34. CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

Members and Officers introduced themselves.

1. The Chair made a statement regarding the continuing need for restrictions due to COVID-19. As no press or public were able to attend in person, the meeting would be recorded and uploaded to the AFA website.
2. The Chair explained the voting system for the meeting, ie votes against a motion would be recorded first, followed by abstentions, then votes in favour.

### **35. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 OCTOBER 2021**

It was moved by Cllr Payne and seconded by Cllr Massey that the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

**RESOLVED – that the Minutes of 8 October 2021 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.**

### **36. PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Performance Manager outlining the performance of the organisation against targets for the period April to November for the financial year 2021/22.

The key points summarised in the report were -

1. All fire performance indicators were on target with fewer incidents which indicated less risk within the community.
2. With reference to attendance at alarms, attendance at commercial premises for false alarms continued to be slightly lower than the target. The spike in figures in October 2021 had been attributed mainly to attendance at hospitals and halls of residence and figures in November and December returning to target levels which indicated that it was not a trend.
3. Officers continued to perform community fire safety activity including Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) to fit smoke alarms and provide prevention advice. The impact of the pandemic had resulted in a reduction in visits and lower referral activity compared to the target set. Officers continued to work with partners and other agencies through new referral methods and signposting and it was expected that reporting activity would increase.
4. Work continued with regards to improving the levels of sickness and return to work interviews (RTWI) to bring levels in line with other fire and rescue services (FRSs). The completion of RTWI had dropped to 85% completion within the target timescale which showed as amber. Improvements to managerial and digital processes were being implemented to streamline the submission of sick notes for all absences.
5. Members were advised that 95% of Performance and Development Reviews (PDR) had now taken place compared to the 92% cited within the report (which was a 10% increase since the October meeting). Increased focus and action would continue to ensure that levels were maintained and target levels reached by the end of the reporting year. Some difficulties were due to the use of a legacy system which was not entirely compatible with other technical upgrades taking place.
6. At the next meeting, the Committee would be asked to consider the targets to be set for the new financial year.

Following questions from Members it was confirmed that all targets were set with full consideration of the inspection action plan and the overarching aim to ensure and improve the quality of internal processes.

The report recommendations were moved by Cllr Payne and seconded by Cllr May.

**RESOLVED – That the Performance Report for April to November 2021/22 be approved.**

### **37. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Area Manager, Head of Service Transformation Team (HST) which provided an update on the Avon Fire Authority's (AFA) Transformation Programme.

The key points highlighted were:

1. In December 2021, the Transformation Programme Board had approved the programme timeline extension from an end date of 31 March 2023 to 31 March 2024. Following full consideration of the financial implications, it had been confirmed that the additional year would result in cost neutral spend following underspends attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and delays with the recruitment of specialist staff.
2. Of the 60 work packages identified in total, a quarter had been started and implementation would increase in pace when the Digital Project Manager starts in post as of 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2022.
3. The vacancies of Digital Project Manager and Fire Upgrades Coordinator had now been filled. Existing staff in other roles had been recruited which would add the benefit of the associated experiences and skills of already working within the service.
4. Workplace visits continued to update staff and ensure everyone had opportunity to feed into the programme.
5. An internal audit was currently taking place with an interim report expected within a week. Early indications were that the programme had utilised best practice and operated in line with plans.
6. Following approval by the Fire Authority, the Transformation Programme Board had agreed the following changes to the Programme Brief to provide clarity within contracts with regards to reference to 'new ways of working':
  - Flexible Working Policy removed from the Programme Brief
  - WP44 renamed 'Flexible Working Hours Policy (Flexi Time)'
  - WP45 renamed 'Agile Working Framework and processes'
7. Regarding the Corporate Risk Register (CRR) entry CRR 19 - Change and Transformation, the current Risk Rating was reported as 12 however it was expected that the risk rating would reduce to 9 once digitisation begins following the appointment of staff.

Following questions from Members it was confirmed that:

1. With reference to the transformation timeline document (Appendix 1), 'WP06 Corporate A6' was on hold while evaluation of the implications of removal of the form in its current format takes place. Once Fire Watch has been upgraded, the issue and work package would be able to be completed.
2. Roles and contracts involved fixed term contracts which would end at the end of the programme. Work had taken place with the Finance Manager

and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to identify where costs would be ongoing after the end of the programme (such as Fire Watch and Business Management Information System).

3. With reference to the overall risk process, the Clerk & Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Avon Fire Authority (AFA) held responsibility for the Reserve Strategy and the Audit, Governance and Ethics Committee (AGEC) held responsibility for the Corporate Risk Register.

**RESOLVED – that the report be noted.**

### **38. HER MAJESTY’S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) INSPECTION ACTION PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the Service Liaison Officer (SLO) providing an update on HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan. The second ‘round 2’ HMICFRS inspection report was formally tabled following its publication on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and presentation to the AFA on the same date. The covering letter and press release were also included as appendices.

The key points highlighted were –

1. For clarity, it was noted that in para 5.4, December 2022 should say December 2021.
2. Ongoing progress against the ‘round 1’ action plan (Appendix 1) reported that the inspection plan was 94% complete with six outstanding actions remaining out of 102.
3. In the latest inspection report (‘round 2’), it had been confirmed that the three causes for concern from 2018 had been discharged with no further causes for concern. New areas of improvement were now being addressed within a ‘round 2’ action plan. Those six remaining outstanding actions from ‘round 1’ would be consolidated into the ‘round 2’ action plan.
4. The established governance arrangements had gained favourable comment, with a maintained corporate focus on driving forward improvement. The update reports regarding the HMICFRS findings would continue to be presented to PRSC with an action plan to be presented in April 2022 for scrutiny and approval.

Following questions from Members it was confirmed that:

1. Councillor Massey requested focus on the under-representation of women and members of ethnic minorities within FRS’s. Officers confirmed that the HMICFRS Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England acknowledged that the recruitment of minority groups and females presented recruitment challenges across the fire services which were not unique to AF&RS and that the action plan would address the challenges and look to make improvements.

Members acknowledged the positive improvements and achievements from round 1, however, they were keen to focus on the improvements now required following the round 2 inspection.

Councillor Windows joined the meeting during this item.

**RESOLVED –**

- 1. That the progress made against the seven remaining outstanding actions contained within the most recently approved version of AF&RS' HMICFRS Round 1 inspection action plan (Appendix 1 of the report) be noted.**
- 2. That the AF&RS Round 2 HMICFRS inspection report (Appendix 2 of the report), the covering letter from HMI Wendy Williams (Appendix 3) and the accompanying HMICFRS press release (Appendix 4) be noted.**
- 3. That the current HMICFRS inspection activity and next steps be noted.**

**39. 2021/22 CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Head of Finance presented the report which provided a summary of the third quarter update (as of 30 November 2021) on the 2021/22 Capital Programme.

The following key points were highlighted:

1. Capital expenditure from April to November 2021 was £2.233m, with a forecast outturn position of £3.445m.
2. The underspend was largely attributed to fleet appliances that had been ordered but delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit. In November 2021 and January 2022, deep dives had taken place into Fleet and Premises programmes which had then fed into the capital programme proposals for the next three years which were due to be presented to AFA in March 2022.
3. It was noted that in future, only actual expenditure would be reported rather than hard commitments.

In response to the presentation, Councillor Davies queried if there was any operational or inflationary impact of the trend of capital programme delays. The Head of Finance confirmed that the deep dive evaluations had reviewed how the Capital Strategy and the Fleet Strategy were programmed. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) (Service Delivery) confirmed that the direct operational impact was currently minimal.

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Fleet Capital Programme had been considered by the Fire Authority in December 2021 with some adjustments made following comments received. Comments made above would be communicated to the relevant officers.

The Capital Strategy would be presented to the March 2022 meeting of AFA for approval and then monitored through the PRSC.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the latest expenditure position on the 2021/22 Capital Programme be noted.**

#### **40. GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Committee received a report which provided a detailed update on the progress that had been made in respect of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report and recommendations.

The following key points were highlighted:

1. Of the 29 internal actions; 14 had been completed and 15 remain in progress.
2. Despite progress in many areas, the extension of a number of target completion dates had been due to a number of reasons. These include the link to and progress of other significant projects such as the Provision of Operational Risk Information (PORIS) and the requirement for national projects to deliver as detailed in paragraph 5.1 of the report.
3. Work was ongoing in collaboration with Bristol City Council to produce Computer Aided Design (CAD) plans annotated with additional information. These plans improved the site-specific risk information in relation to high rise residential buildings (HRRB) with 42 plans now live on front line appliances (an increase of 23 from October 2021).
4. A business case had been approved in October 2021 for a PORIS solution relating to internal actions 2, 3, 4, 12, 18 and 20.
5. Hearings for phase 2 of the inquiry had commenced on 27 January 2022 and were ongoing.

In response to the report, the following points were clarified:

1. PORIS involved risk information such as the presence of hazardous materials and the number of floors and lift information for a building.
2. It was confirmed that the Business Fire Safety Department had responsibility for the audit of all buildings that fell under the definition outlined by the Grenfell inquiry. Using the original definition, AF&RS had identified 187 buildings however, a different criteria and category had now been outlined. The new criteria had been taken into consideration and actions were being reconsidered.
3. The Clerk & Monitoring Officer agreed to ask the Business Fire Safety Department to provide a map which identified those buildings that fell within the category.
4. Further information would be provided to Elected Members within a briefing session to outline the new category of buildings and explain the link between the Business Fire Safety Teams and operational actions.

**RESOLVED – That the report be noted.**

#### **41. COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING UPDATE**

The Collaboration and Partnerships Manager (CPM) provided the Committee with an update on Collaboration and Partnership working undertaken by the Services since the launch of the Services Collaboration Strategy 2021-2026.

The following areas of activity were highlighted:

1. It was confirmed that the informal Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) referral partnerships were now the responsibility of the Community Partnerships Advisor (CPA) within the Risk Reduction (Service Delivery) team. The CPA monitored the planning, provision and evaluation of training.
2. An audit had provided evidence of completed reviews and gathered feedback to help improve the effectiveness of partnership working. Recommended actions included a referral agencies performance rating system to monitor performance.
3. The CPM role focussed on 34 formal collaboration and partnership relationships and ensured relevant documents were completed during a formal planning process before collaborations commence.
4. Reviews had taken place with the 34 partnerships to capture the impact of COVID-19 on those arrangements.
5. Work continued to review the Collaboration Strategy and Framework, bring processes in line with best practice and adopt the principles of ISO accreditation.
6. New collaborations had been established with The Prince's Trust and South Gloucestershire and Stroud College to increase engagement with young people. Objectives and outcomes had been set with which to measure performance against.
7. Practitioner training had been very popular which had led to the offer being extended.
8. Service personnel continued to support the challenges faced by the South West Ambulance Service Foundation Trust (SWAST) with their work in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Work included support with Category 1 response and at Mass Vaccination Centres (MVSs). At present there are nine trained vaccinators. The support provided to SWAST in various forms has totalled over 570 hours support from June 2021 to December 2021.

In response to the report, the following comments were received:

1. The ACFO (Service Delivery) confirmed that AF&RS safeguarding leads connected with safeguarding boards and officers within each of the Local Authority area Councils.
2. Councillor May highlighted the potential of linking further with the Safeguarding Boards of large corporate organisations.
3. The presentation information from a recent Members Development Session on safeguarding would be provided to Councillor May, including the names of relevant officers.
4. Elected Members asked for their thanks and appreciation to be communicated to the nine trained vaccinators who have spent a lot of time supporting the COVID-19 vaccination centres.
5. Councillor May volunteered to be the 'Collaboration Champion' on behalf of the PRSC.

The report recommendations were moved by Cllr Payne and seconded by Cllr May.

**RESOLVED:**

1. **Noted the report which demonstrated that the Avon Fire & Rescue Service is working collaboratively with other Fire and Rescue**

Services, emergency responders and external organisations and agencies to support the Service's strategic priorities of making our communities safer and making our Service stronger.

2. That Councillor May be appointed the 'Collaboration Champion' and serve as a key contact for collaboration matters.
3. That a vote of thanks and letter of appreciation be sent to those nine trained Vaccinators who had been assisting the COVID-19 pandemic response with SWAST.

#### **42. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that the next meeting take place on 21 April 2022 at 10.30am.

The meeting closed at 11:50

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**Chair**



## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>22 June 2022</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>The Clerk</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Appointments for the Municipal Year 2022/23</b>

### 1. **SUMMARY**

This report sets out the Membership of the Fire Authority as of June 2022.

Appointments made by the Fire Authority generally last for a Municipal Year which runs from one Annual Meeting until the next. There are a range of appointments that the Fire Authority needs to make today.

### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Allocate Members to the Fire Authority Committees (with the Committees to appoint their Chairs in accordance with paragraph 2.2 of Standing Orders).
- b) Appoint its representative on the Local Government Association.
- c) Appoint its representative on South West Councils.
- d) Appoint its representative on South West Councils' Employers' Panel.
- e) Appoint its Employer Representatives for the Local Pension Board.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

#### **Membership of the Fire Authority**

- 3.1. The current membership of the Fire Authority of 20 Members is as follows:

	<b>Member</b>	<b>Appointing Authority</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Ward</b>
1.	<b>Ali, Amal</b>	Bristol	Labour	Frome Vale
2.	<b>Ashe, John</b>	South Glos	Conservative	Bradley Stoke South
3.	<b>Bromley, Shelley</b>	BANES	Liberal Democrats	Weston
4.	<b>Brown, Ernie</b>	South Glos	Conservative	Stoke Gifford
5.	<b>Butters, Neil</b>	BANES	Liberal Democrats	Bathavon South
6.	<b>Davies, Don</b>	N Somerset	Independent	Pill
7.	<b>Eddy, Richard</b>	Bristol	Conservative	Bishopsworth
8.	<b>Goggin, Paul</b>	Bristol	Labour	Hartcliffe and Withywood
9.	<b>Hopkinson, Brian</b>	South Glos	Conservative	Charlton and Cribbs
10.	<b>Jacobs, Ruth</b>	N Somerset	Conservative	Wick St Lawrence and St Georges
11.	<b>Massey, Brenda</b>	Bristol	Labour	Southmead
12.	<b>May, Paul</b>	BANES	Conservative	Publow with Whitchurch
13.	<b>Mohamud, Yassin</b>	Bristol	Green	Lawrence Hill
14.	<b>Monk, Adam</b>	South Glos	Labour	Filton
15.	<b>Nutland, Ben</b>	South Glos	Liberal Democrats	Yate North
16.	<b>Payne, Robert</b>	N Somerset	Liberal Democrat	Weston-Super-Mare Central
17.	<b>Smith, Steve</b>	Bristol	Conservative	Westbury-on-Trym and Henleaze
18.	<b>Tucker, Richard</b>	N Somerset	Labour	Weston-Super-Mare Milton
19.	<b>Varney, Andrew</b>	Bristol	Liberal Democrat	Brislington West
20.	<b>Wilcox, David</b>	Bristol	Green	Lockleaze

## **Allocation of Committee Places**

- 3.2. In accordance with Standing Orders (paragraph 1.28) each Member is allocated a minimum of one committee place, and this is done on the nomination of the relevant Political Group Leaders. Group Leaders have agreed the following Committee nominations:

	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat</b>	<b>Green/Ind</b>
<b>Audit, Governance &amp; Ethics Committee</b>	John Ashe Ernie Brown	Paul Goggin <b>(Chair)</b> Richard Tucker	Neil Butters Robert Payne	David Wilcox
<b>People &amp; Culture Committee</b>	Ruth Jacobs Brian Hopkinson	Brenda Massey Richard Tucker Adam Monk	Shelley Bromley Andrew Varney	David Wilcox – <b>(Chair)</b> Don Davies (in place of an additional Member from the Conservatives)
<b>Performance Review &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b>	Richard Eddy Paul May	Amal Ali Adam Monk	Robert Payne <b>(Chair)</b> Ben Nutland	Don Davies
<b>Local Pension Board Independent Chair</b>	Steve Smith Richard Eddy (Sub)		Andrew Varney	Yassin Mohamud (Sub)
<b>Total numbers</b>	9 committee appointments for 7 Elected Members	7 committee appointments for 5 Elected Members	7 committee appointments for 5 Elected Members	4 committee appointments for 3 Elected Members

## **Appointment of Committee Chairs**

- 3.3. The table above includes proposed Committee Chairs, which ensure that Chair posts are shared amongst the political parties. The appointment of the Chairs shall be a matter for each Committee to decide (paragraph 2.2.1 of Standing Orders) at the first Committee meetings of the new municipal year.

## **Local Government Association (LGA)**

- 3.4. The Fire Authority is invited to appoint one representative to the LGA (including the Fire Commission). By convention the Chair of the Authority is appointed to this position.

### **South West Councils**

- 3.5. The Fire Authority is invited to appoint one representative to South West Councils which meets twice a year. Representatives are only requested to attend meetings in person, if items on the agendas may have an impact on the Fire Authority. The Vice Chair has offered to continue as the Fire Authority's representative.

### **South West Councils' Employers' Panel**

- 3.6. The Fire Authority is invited to appoint one representative to the South West Councils' Employers' Panel, which meets twice a year. As the Panel considers employment issues it is recommended that the appointed Member is also a Member of the People and Culture Committee. Representatives are only requested to attend meetings in person if items on the agenda may have an impact on the Fire Authority.

### **Employer Representative of the Local Pension Board**

- 3.7. The Fire Authority is required to have two representatives on the Local Pension Board, together with substitute Members. New Fire Authority Members, Cllr Steve Smith and Cllr Andrew Varney have agreed to fulfil these roles. The Board has a pension expert as an independent Chair and advises the Fire Authority on matters connected with the Firefighter Pension Schemes.

## **4. Working Groups**

- 4.1 Members are invited to consider appointment to the following:
- Member Strategic Engagement Forum
  - Constitution Working Group (when required)
  - Trustees of Gambia and Avon Fire Service in Partnership (GAFSIP)

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This report has no financial implications, as Members Allowances have already been approved by the Fire Authority on 30 March 2022 and are included in the baseline budget.

## **6. KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 Robust and transparent governance arrangements are key to service delivery and meeting policy priorities.

## **7. RISKS**

- 7.1 None

**8. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 None

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**10. APPENDICES**

None

**11. REPORT CONTACT**

Amanda Brown, Clerk to the Fire Authority ext.347

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## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>22 June 2022</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>The Clerk</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Member Information 2021/22</b>

### 1. **SUMMARY**

This report provides details of Member attendance at meetings during the 2021/22 municipal year. It also provides information on the amount of Members' allowances and expenses paid in that municipal year.

### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to note the report and to authorise publication of the statistics at **Appendices 1 and 2** on the Fire Authority website.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 Robust and transparent governance arrangements are key to service delivery and meeting policy priorities. This includes transparency around the activities of Members, which details are published every municipal year in addition to the Members' allowances and expenses they have received.

3.2 Records are also maintained of Members' attendance at training and other events, which information is available upon request.

### 4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 This report has no financial implications.

The costs arising from this report have been met from existing budgets.

### 5. **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

5.1 This report provides statistics for 2021/22:

- Members' Attendance at meetings (**Appendix 1**).
- Members' Allowances Scheme payments (**Appendix 2**).

5.2 Following the meeting today the statistics will be published on the Fire Authority's website.

## **6. RISKS**

6.1 None

## **7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 In accordance with section 15 of The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Fire Authority is obliged to keep a record of payments made by it in accordance with a Members' Allowances Scheme and to publish the expenses paid to Members in the preceding financial year.

## **8. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Whilst the information contained within this report can be regarded as personal data in respect of each Member, the Fire Authority is publishing the information (a type of 'processing') in accordance with Article 6(1)(e) of the General Data Protection Regulation, which makes processing lawful as it is:

*'...necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller'*

8.2 The publication is necessary to ensure openness and transparency in the activities of Members to encourage public scrutiny and accountability.

## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

## **10. APPENDICES**

1. Members' Attendance at meetings
2. Members' Allowances Scheme payments

## **11. REPORT CONTACT**

Amanda Brown, Clerk to the Fire Authority ext. 347



Member	Authority	PEOPLE & CULTURE	FIRE AUTHORITY	PEOPLE & CULTURE (ACFO Shortlisting)	AUDIT, GOVERNANCE & ETHICS	PERFORMANCE, REVIEW & SCRUTINY	LOCAL PENSION BOARD	LOCAL PENSION BOARD (Re: arranged from 12.8.21)	PEOPLE & CULTURE (IDRP)	PEOPLE & CULTURE (ACFO Interviews)	PEOPLE & CULTURE (ACFO Interviews)	PEOPLE & CULTURE	AUDIT, GOVERNANCE & ETHICS	LPB Independent Specialist Chair Shortlisting	LPB Independent Specialist Chair Interview	PERFORMANCE, REVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY	AUDIT, GOVERNANCE & ETHICS	PEOPLE & CULTURE (CFO Shortlisting)	PEOPLE & CULTURE	FIRE AUTHORITY	PEOPLE & CULTURE (CFO Interviews)	PERFORMANCE, REVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AUDIT, GOVERNANCE & ETHICS	FIRE AUTHORITY (Extraordinary)	Local Pension Board	People & Culture Committee	FIRE AUTHORITY	PERFORMANCE, REVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE (Extraordinary)
		17/06/21	30/06/21	07/07/21	14/07/21	16/07/21	12/08/21	03/09/21	03/09/21	15/09/21	17/09/21	17/09/21	23/09/21	27/09/21	05/10/21	08/10/21	15/10/21	24/11/21	02/12/21	10/12/21	15/12/21	07/01/22	23.01.22	11.02.22	11.02.22	25.02.22	04.03.2022	30.03.22	21.04.22	18.05.22
Allocated Committee																														
Councillor Ali	BCC																													
Councillor Ashe	SG																													
Councillor Bromley	BANES																													
Councillor A Brown	BCC																													
Councillor E Brown	SG																													
Councillor Butters	BANES																													
Councillor Davies	NS																													
Councillor Eddy	BCC																													
Councillor Goggin	BCC																													
Councillor Hopkinson	SG																													
Councillor Jacobs	NS																													
Councillor Massey	BCC																													
Councillor May	BANES																													
Councillor Mohamud	BCC																													
Councillor Monk	SG																													
Councillor Nutland	SG																													
Councillor Payne	NS																													
Councillor Tucker	NS																													
Councillor Wilcox	BCC																													
Councillor Windows	BCC																													

**Key:**  
 AGEC - Audit, Governance & Ethics Committee  
 PRSC - Performance Review & Scrutiny Committee  
 P & C - People & Culture  
 LPB - Local Pension Board

Attended  
 Substitute  
 Apologies  
 Absent - no apologies

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2020/2021 £	Recipient	Basic Allowance £	Special Responsibility Allowance £	Travel & Subsistence Expenses £	2021/2022 £
-	Councillor A Ali	1,343	-	37	1,380
1,584	Councillor J Ashe	1,612	-	65	1,677
1,307	Councillor S Bromley	1,612	-	73	1,685
-	Councillor A Brown	1,343	-	-	1,343
-	Councillor E Brown	1,343	-	92	1,435
1,584	Councillor T Butters	1,612	1,768	167	3,547
409	Councillor H Clough	-	-	-	-
11,280	Councillor D Davies	1,612	4,021	-	5,633
3,749	Councillor A Davis	238	326	-	564
1,584	Councillor R Eddy	1,612	-	-	1,612
2,721	Councillor P Goggin	1,612	1,083	22	2,717
1,584	Councillor H Hopkinson	1,612	-	-	1,612
1,584	Councillor R Jacobs	1,612	-	-	1,612
1,584	Councillor C Johnson	263	-	-	263
1,584	Councillor T Jones	264	-	-	264
1,167	Councillor S Khan	264	-	-	264
3,691	Councillor C Lake	243	323	-	566
3,749	Councillor B Massey	1,612	7,821	-	9,433
-	Councillor P May	1,312	-	-	1,312
-	Councillor Y Mohamud	1,343	-	-	1,343
1,584	Councillor A Monk	1,612	1,630	-	3,242
1,584	Councillor P Myers	264	-	-	264
-	Councillor B Nutland	1,343	-	125	1,468
1,584	Councillor R Payne	1,612	815	-	2,427
1,584	Councillor C Phipps	158	-	-	158
277	Councillor B Shearn	-	-	-	-
1,584	Councillor R Tucker	1,612	-	-	1,612
-	Councillor D Wilcox	1,343	815	-	2,158
3,749	Councillor C Windows	1,612	2,165	-	3,777
-	Mr J Mason	-	1,000	-	1,000
<u>51,107</u>		<u>32,020</u>	<u>21,767</u>	<u>581</u>	<u>54,368</u>

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## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 22 June 2022</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>The Treasurer</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>2022-2026 Reserve Strategy</b>

### 1. **SUMMARY**

This report provides the Fire Authority with an updated Reserve Strategy for the period 2022-2026. This updated strategy is based on the previously approved 2021-2025 Reserve Strategy and reflects movements in reserves and provisions which have taken place to the end of 31 May 2022.

### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Approve the 2022-2026 Reserve Strategy, attached within **Appendix 1**.
- b) Agree for the approved 2022-2026 Reserve Strategy to be published on the website.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework, the Fire Authority is asked to review an updated Reserve Strategy on an annual basis and publish their Reserve Strategy on their website, once approved.
- 3.2 This Reserve Strategy review allows the Fire Authority to consider the relevance and adequacy of the organisation's reserves. The organisations reserves are an integral part of the Financial Planning and Governance processes and are reflected within the Annual Budget Setting, Medium Term Financial Plan and the Final Accounts process.

### 4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The financial impact of this Reserve Strategy has been included within the approved 2022/2023 Annual Budget and the 2022-2026 Medium Term

Financial Plan (MTFP) and has been reviewed by the Service Leadership Board, working with the Treasurer.

## **5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 In accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework, Fire Authorities are expected to provide for reserves to manage their financial position and to manage risks. It is important for the Fire Authority's reserves to form an integral part of the longer term financial planning process and to be incorporated into the Medium Term Financial Plan. Fire Authorities should establish a policy on reserves in consultation with their Treasurer/Chief Finance Officer and a copy of the proposed 2022-2026 Reserve Strategy is attached in **Appendix 1** for Members consideration and approval.
- 5.2 Reserves are required to provide sufficient resources to support approved priorities and strategies, such as the three-year Capital Strategy and the Transformation and IT Programmes. The Fire Authority's reserves should also provide sufficient cover to fund working balances and unexpected events and/or emergencies, to support the financial health of the organisation.
- 5.3 As approved within the 2022-2025 Capital Strategy and advised within the 2022-2025 Treasury Management Strategy, the Fire Authority needs to ensure capital expenditure and investment plans are affordable, prudent, sustainable and demonstrate Value for Money. As such, the Treasurer has been working with the Service Leadership Board to identify and prioritise available reserves to support the approved three-year Capital Strategy. This information has been updated as part of this strategy and will be reported to the Fire Authority during 2022/2023, as part of the financial reporting arrangements. This approach will reduce the costs of additional external borrowing for the Fire Authority and thus demonstrates sound financial management and Value for Money.
- 5.4 Section 42A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires precepting authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the Fire Authority's budget requirements.
- 5.5 As part of the Annual Budget process and the Medium Term Financial Planning and in accordance with section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Treasurer has a duty to report to the Fire Authority on the robustness and adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.
- 5.6 The updated Reserve Summary (**Appendix 2**) shows the details of the current and future planned reserve levels over a four-year period, to align to the approved Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The Reserve Strategy should include details of the current and future planned reserve levels, setting out the total amount of reserves and the amount and purpose for each reserve. This information is shown in **Appendix 2** and includes provision for capital, revenue and general reserves.

## **6. RISKS**

- 6.1 The key risk to the Fire Authority is to provide for an appropriate level of reserves to enable the Service to meet its approved strategic priorities, without disrupting service delivery, whilst maintaining financial viability.
- 6.2 As noted above, the Fire Authority's reserves provision is required to cover unexpected events and/or emergencies and working balances, in addition to supporting planned strategies. Reserves must therefore be set at an appropriate level to cover both internal and external risks and to provide sufficient resources to finance estimated future expenditure.
- 6.3 The effective management of the Fire Authority's reserves links to Corporate Risk 20 – Funding and Resource Pressures. To mitigate risks to the Fire Authority, the Service has integrated the review of reserves into its Financial Planning processes, through the MTFP and Annual Budget Setting processes. As part of management actions to mitigate risk, the Treasurer reviews the level and adequacy of reserves with the Service Leadership Board.

## **7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 When setting the Annual Budget for each financial year, section 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, requires the Fire Authority, as a major precepting authority to have regard to the level of reserves needed to provide sufficient resources to finance estimated future expenditure.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- a) 2020-2025 Fire Authority Reserve Strategy

## **9. APPENDICES**

1. 2022-2026 Reserve Strategy
2. Reserve Summary at 31 May 2022.

## **10. REPORT CONTACT**

Danielle Neale, Treasurer.

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## **2022–2026 Reserve Strategy**

### **a) Background:**

Reserves are an essential part of a Fire Authority's Financial Planning and Governance processes. It is important for a Fire Authority to ensure the organisation is holding sufficient reserves to ensure long term financial stability, whilst attaining its strategic priorities. Reserves are particularly important when the Fire Authority is facing increasing cost pressures and funding challenges over the medium term.

There are a number of reasons why the Fire Authority holds reserves and these are explained within this strategy. It is important to note there is no statutory minimum or maximum level of reserves, but the Fire Authority, supported by the Treasurer, must review that reserves are set at a realistic level.

### **b) Reasons for a Fire Authority to hold Reserves:**

Reserves are important to Fire Authorities as they cannot borrow money over the medium term, other than for the investment in assets. Reserves are therefore essential to ensure the financial health of the organisation and to manage risks. Fire Authorities generally hold reserves for the following key purposes:

- Building up funds to meet known or predicted requirements, such as Capital reserves to fund an approved Capital Strategy, which are referred to as Earmarked Reserves.
- Working Balance reserves (referred to as a General Reserve) which is needed to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and to ensure the Fire Authority has sufficient working balances to pay its debts in a timely manner.
- Future investment needs, for example, in a major Transformation Programmes.
- Contingency reserves which help cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies.

### **c) Statutory Requirement:**

The following statutory requirements apply to Fire Authority reserves:

- Section 42A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires precepting authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.

- Under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 the Chief Finance Officer (Treasurer) has a duty to report on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves when the authority is considering its budget requirement
- Section 26 of the Local Government Act 2003 gives the Secretary of State power to set a minimum level of reserves for the Fire Authority. However, the government has undertaken to apply this only where an authority does not act prudently, disregards the advice of its Chief Finance Officer and is heading for serious financial difficulty

In addition Fire Authorities are expected to provide for any deficit on the revenue account, for an earlier financial year which has not already been provided for.

### **Fire and Rescue National Framework:**

Under Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (“the 2004 Act”), the Secretary of State must prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework. The Framework:

- a) must set out priorities and objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities in connection with the discharge of their functions;
- b) may contain guidance to fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of any of their functions; and
- c) may contain any other matter relating to fire and rescue authorities or their functions that the Secretary of State considers appropriate.

The latest framework was issued in May 2018 and can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england--2>

Specific reference to reserves is made under section 5 in relation to achieving Value for Money. In addition to the statutory requirements outlined above the framework includes the following requirements:

1. Fire and Rescue Authorities should establish a policy on reserves and provisions in consultation with their chief finance officer. General reserves should be held by the authority and managed to balance funding and spending priorities and to manage risks. This should be established as part of the medium-term financial planning process.
2. Each Fire and Rescue Authority should publish their Reserve Strategy on their website, either as part of their Medium Term Financial Plan or in a separate Reserve Strategy document. The Reserve Strategy should include details of current and future planned reserve levels, setting out a total amount of reserves and the amount of each specific reserve that is held for each year. The Reserve Strategy should cover resource and capital reserves and provide information for the period of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

3. Sufficient information should be provided to enable understanding of the purpose(s) for which each reserve is held and how holding each reserve supports the Fire Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan. The strategy should be set out in a way that is clear and understandable for members of the public, and should include:
  - how the level of the general reserve has been set;
  - justification for holding a general reserve larger than five percent of budget; and
  - details of the activities or items to be funded from each earmarked reserve, and how these support the FRA's strategy to deliver a good quality service to the public. Where an earmarked reserve is intended to fund a number of projects or programmes (for example, a change or transformation reserve), details of each programme or project to be funded should be set out.
4. The information on each reserve should make clear how much of the funding falls into the following three categories:
  - a. Funding for planned expenditure on projects and programmes over the period of the current medium term financial plan.
  - b. Funding for specific projects and programmes beyond the current planning period.
  - c. As general contingency or resource to meet other expenditure needs held in accordance with sound principles of good financial management (e.g. insurance).

**d) Professional Guidance:**

Best practice guidance on the use and management of reserves and balances is provided by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Local Authority Accounting Panel (LAAP) guidance, specifically LAAP Bulletin 99 - 'Local Authority Reserves and Balances' issued in July 2014.

**e) Role of the External Auditor:**

As part of their role the external auditor is required to satisfy themselves that the Fire Authority has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources and demonstrating Value for Money. They are also required to obtain sufficient and appropriate audit evidence about the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern assumption in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements and to conclude whether there is a material uncertainty about the Fire Authority's ability to continue as a going concern. It is not their responsibility to prescribe the optimum or minimum level of reserves for the Fire Authority.

**f) The Fire Authority's Strategy on Reserves:**

As part of the Annual Budget Setting process, the 3-year Capital Strategy and the Medium Term Financial Plan, the Fire Authority will consider the establishment, maintenance and use of reserves. The nature and level of reserves will be agreed by the Fire Authority, informed by the judgement and advice of the Treasurer. This will be based on an assessment of what is appropriate and necessary in the light of the risks and circumstances facing the Authority.

In accordance with the approved 2022-2025 Capital Programme Strategy, the Fire Authority will review the utilisation of all internal funds, including reserves to support its Capital Programme, prior to seeking additional external borrowings. This will ensure Value for Money is attained and reduce the pressure on the Revenue budget and the 4-year Financial Plan.

The Treasurer will review the reserves on an annual basis with the Senior Leadership Board to review the adequacy and need for reserves being held. Any reserves no longer required for their original earmarked purpose will be released to fund the approved Capital Strategy and other approved strategic priorities. In-year movements from the approved Reserve summary, will require the approval of the Chief Fire Officer and the Treasurer, through the approved Budget Adjustment process.

**g) Categories of reserves:**

The reserves held by the Fire Authority are categorised into two separate categories as follows:

- **Usable reserves** – these are cash backed reserves that can be utilised by the Fire Authority to support future service provision.
- **Unusable reserves** – these cannot be used to support services and arise out of the interaction between legislation and proper accounting practices. These reserves, which are not resource-backed, will be detailed in the annual Statement of Accounts.

The Fire Authority maintains the following types of useable reserves:

- **General Reserve (Working Balance):** to manage the impact of uneven cash flows and unexpected events or emergencies;
- **Earmarked reserves:**
  - **Cash backed:** sums set aside to meet known or predicted specific requirements;
  - **Non-cash backed:** sums set aside to meet known or predicted specific requirements, where the sums are not held by the Fire Authority

## **h) Principles to assess the adequacy of reserves:**

In accordance with the Fire & Rescue National Framework, the Fire Authority is required to review an updated Reserve Strategy on an annual basis and publish their Reserve Strategy on their website, once approved.

The Treasurer will advise the Authority on the adequacy of reserves as follows:

1. Reserves to support the delivery of approved Service Plan priorities and approved Strategies, such as the Capital Programme Strategy.
2. Contingency reserve which would cover unforeseen events and additional costs.
3. Sufficient reserves are in place to finance working balances, to help finance uneven cash flow and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing.
4. Specific reserves are provided for to support approved projects.

### **General Reserve (Working Balance):**

In considering the General Reserve the Treasurer will have regard to:

- Strategic priorities approved by the Fire Authority linked to operational and financial risk within the medium-term;
- Legislation requirements and professional guidance on the management of Reserves.
- the overall effectiveness of governance arrangements and the system of internal control;
- the robustness of the financial planning and Budget Setting process;
- the effectiveness of the budget monitoring and management process

Having had regard to these matters, the Treasurer will advise the Authority on the monetary value of the required general reserve.

### **Earmarked Reserves:**

In considering earmarked reserves, the Treasurer will have regard to matters relevant in respect of each reserve and will advise the Authority accordingly.

### **Risk assessment to determine the adequacy of the General Reserve:**

Reserves are an integral part of the financial risk assessment for the Fire Authority over the medium term. The Fire Authority needs a General Reserve (Working Balance) to provide protection against unforeseen events that impact on resources, without disrupting service delivery.

It is for individual Authority's to determine the required level of its General Reserve based on local conditions, but taking into account national factors. Although advice can be sought from the external auditors, it is not their responsibility to prescribe the appropriate level.

As part of the Annual Budget Setting and Medium Term Financial Planning process and in accordance with section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Treasurer will report

to the Fire Authority on the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. The Fire Authority is required to have regard to this document when making decisions about the necessary calculations.

The Fire Authority has agreed that the level of General Reserve (Working Balance) should be £1.5m, which represents 3% of the Revenue Income Budget.

If the Fire Authority decides to utilise the General Reserve (Working Balance), then it would be necessary to replace this in the budget for the following financial year, to ensure this minimum level of General Reserve is maintained.

### **Earmarked Reserves:**

The process for the determination of earmarked reserves will be based upon the principles of effective operational and financial risk management. Budget Holders are required to submit Business Cases in respect of any earmarked reserve, if considered material, such as the Transformation reserve. Business Cases are required to be supported by the relevant Service Management Board member and approved by the Service Management Board and Treasurer.

### **Use of earmarked reserves:**

As part of the Annual Budget Setting process, Members will agree the use of earmarked reserves on the advice of the Treasurer. The Treasurer will monitor the use of earmarked reserves and keep Members advised through normal financial monitoring processes.

A number of earmarked reserves have been created to provide protection against unforeseen events that could impact on the Authority. These reserves have to be used carefully as they can only be used once and are therefore defined as 'Non-Recurrent' funds. Any decision to use reserves to fund on-going spending or hold down Precept increases, can only apply for one year. The Medium Term Financial Plan will need to identify where budget reductions can be made and/or further efficiency savings will be required. There is a significant risk of future financial instability if significant levels of reserves are used to fund on-going spending or reductions in the Fire Authority's Precept.

### **Annual review of earmarked reserves:**

A full review of existing earmarked reserves will be undertaken annually to ensure continuing relevance and adequacy. This review will be undertaken by the Service Management Board in conjunction with the Treasurer, as part of the Final Accounts process. This review will take into consideration existing and potential financial pressures on a risk basis and this will be informed by the Medium Term Financial Planning (MTFP).

Any movement in earmarked reserves will be required to be endorsed annually by Members, on the advice of the Treasurer.

The details of earmarked reserves held at 31 May 2022 are shown in Appendix 2.

### **i) Provisions:**

In accordance with proper accounting practices, provisions will be created where an event has taken place that gives the Fire Authority a legal or contractual obligation, which will probably require settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. For instance, the Fire Authority may be involved in a court case that could eventually result in the need to make a settlement or the payment of compensation.

Provisions will be charged as an expense in the year that the Fire Authority becomes aware of the obligation, and will be measured at the best estimate at the Balance Sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties.

When payments are eventually made, they will be charged to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet. Provisions will be reviewed at the end of each financial year to ensure continuing relevance and adequacy. Where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision will be reversed and credited back to the revenue account.

Where some or all of the payment required to settle a provision is expected to be recovered from another party (e.g. from an insurance claim), this is only recognised as income for the relevant service if it is virtually certain that reimbursement will be received, if the Fire Authority settles the obligation.

Provisions will be analysed between short term provisions, amounts expected to be paid within twelve months of the Balance Sheet date and long term provisions, amounts expected to be paid after twelve months of the Balance Sheet date.

June 2022

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**Reserve Summary at 31st May 2022**

Reserve	Purpose	Reserve Balance at 31 May 2022	Reserve Balance projected at 31 March 2026
		£'000	£'000
<b>A) Cash backed - Earmarked Revenue Reserves:</b>			
Transformation Reserve	This reserve has been created to undertake the strategic desire for the organisation to create a Service Transformation Team to evaluate all AF&RS policies, processes & methods of operation as strategic outcomes are implemented, whilst developing methodologies and ways of working in a fully digitised and digitalised Service.	1,355	0
Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) Reserve	Government grant received to fund the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme.	611	0
Immediate Detriment Pension Reserve	To mitigate the impact of Immediate Detriment payments.	347	347
National Operational Guidance Reserve	To implement the new National Operational Guidance (NOG).	300	0
IT Infrastructure Reserve	To address problems identified with the existing IT structure resulting from the review undertaken.	253	0
Ill Health Pension Reserve	To fund fluctuations in Ill Health retirements.	230	230
Technical Fire Safety Reserve	Additional funding from the Government to support Fire Safety, following the Grenfell Tower fire.	167	0
Investment Fund Reserve	To support the implementation of new ways of working.	98	0
Document Management and Retention System Reserve	To fund the development of a Corporate wide document system to improve administration and information security requirements, including GDPR.	60	0
Medical Intervention	To fund medical interventions and prevention initiatives	31	0
Legal Fees Reserve	To finance unexpected Legal Costs	30	0
Communications - UPS/Station End - Upgrades reserve	To enable the upgrade of fire station call-out equipment, UPS and call-out PCs	30	0

Reserve	Purpose	Reserve Balance at 31 May 2022	Reserve Balance projected at 31 March 2026
		£'000	£'000
Community Fire Safety Reserve	To support the update of Community Fire Safety systems and processes.	25	0
Control and Communications - Welfare/Site	To enable the welfare and rest areas for Control and Communications to be built and updated	25	0
<b>Cash backed Earmarked Revenue Reserves</b>		<b>3,562</b>	<b>577</b>
<b>B) Non Cash backed - Earmarked Reserves:</b>			
PFI Equalisation Fund	Grant from the Government for the PFI project, along with contributions from partners is paid into an Equalisation Fund. This fund is administered by Gloucestershire County Council, on behalf of the partner organisations.	1,240	1,240
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>		<b>4,802</b>	<b>1,817</b>
<b>C) General Reserve (Working Balance):</b>	To fund working capital for the Fire Authority	1,500	1,500
<b>Total Earmarked Revenue Reserves</b>		<b>6,302</b>	<b>3,317</b>
<b>D) Cash Backed Earmarked Capital Reserves:</b>			
Earmarked Capital Reserve	This reserve is to support the funding of the Capital Strategy.	9,530	0
Unapplied Capital Receipts Reserve	This reserve is the remaining funding available from the sale of the previous HQ building, which will part-fund the 2022/23 Capital Programme.	3,889	0
<b>Total Reserves</b>		<b>19,721</b>	<b>3,317</b>

## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 22 June 2022</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>HMICFRS Action Plan</b>

### 1. SUMMARY

- HMICFRS [published](#) its latest ('Round 2') assessment of Avon Fire & Rescue Service's (AF&RS) performance on 15 December 2021. It reported good progress has been made with all three of the Round 1 causes of concern being formally discharged.
- A new inspection action plan has been developed to address the areas for improvement (AFIs) identified in our Round 2 report. This was approved for publication by the Fire Authority's Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee (PRSC) at its meeting on 21 April 2022 in line with its delegated authority as detailed in its approved [Terms of Reference](#).
- At its last meeting on 30 March 2022, the full Fire Authority noted the importance of the HMICFRS inspection action plan and requested that it be tabled to its next meeting to ensure visibility and awareness for **all** Members.
- The new action plan will continue to be a live document which is regularly monitored by the Service Leadership Team (SLT) and tabled to each meeting of the PRSC for ongoing scrutiny by Members (arrangements which were unanimously re-confirmed by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 30 March 2022).

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) note AF&RS' Round 2 HMICFRS inspection action plan (**Appendix 1**).

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 HMICFRS undertook its Round 2 inspection in summer 2021 and the report was published on 15 December 2021 (previously tabled to the Fire Authority at its meeting on 30 March 2022).
- 3.2 HMICFRS' Round 2 inspection reported significant improvements with the three causes of concern identified in Round 1 being formally discharged and all inadequate ratings being resolved. In particular, our graded judgment for promoting the right values and culture under the people pillar leapt two grades from 'inadequate' in 2018/19 to 'good' in 2021/22<sup>1</sup> and the Inspectorate highlighted our grant funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme as an example of innovative practice.
- 3.3 HMI Wendy Williams said: *"We are very pleased with the progress the service has made ... [and] I am delighted that I can now discharge the three causes of concern we found in our 2018 inspection. In this inspection, we identified no further causes of concern."*
- 3.4 As with every inspection, the focus is on continuous improvement and 22 AFIs were identified which now form the basis of our new Round 2 HMICFRS inspection action plan. Members will recall that the development of the draft Round 2 action plan was undertaken in conjunction with the SLT (at its meetings held on 27 January and 24 February 2022) and approved for submission to the PRSC by Directors at their meeting held on 3 March 2022.
- 3.5 At its meeting held on 30 March 2022, the Fire Authority re-confirmed its previous decision<sup>2</sup> to delegate authority to the PRSC to approve the final draft of the Round 2 HMICFRS inspection action plan for initial publication and provide Member-led scrutiny of progress against that action plan at each of the Committee's meetings thereafter. The Fire Authority also requested that the Round 2 action plan be briefed to the full Fire Authority at its Annual General Meeting in June.
- 3.6 The PRSC subsequently approved the draft plan for publication at its meeting held on 21 April 2022 and the current version of the action plan is now tabled at **Appendix 1** for Members' information.
- 3.7 The current approved version of the HMICFRS inspection action plan is also available on AF&RS's public website at <https://www.avonfire.gov.uk/our-performance/hmicfrs>

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<sup>1</sup> In his evidence to the [Home Affairs Select Committee](#) on 2 March 2022 Sir Thomas Winsor, the retiring HM Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services, commented: "... Avon jumped two grades in this round from 'inadequate' right up to 'good' – it's very rare for an inspected body to go from – you know, jump two grades" (at 10:20:14am).

<sup>2</sup> originally taken at its meeting held on 26 March 2019

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no direct additional financial costs associated with the HMICFRS inspection. However, some of the changes required to implement the AFIs within the Round 2 inspection report will have a financial impact but are not directly relevant to this report.

#### **5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 The four remaining outstanding actions from the Round 1 inspection action plan have been carried forward into the Round 2 action plan (two as standalone actions and two assimilated into new Round 2 actions) to ensure continued corporate focus on all agreed actions.
- 5.2 As our Round 2 inspection report does not include any new formal recommendations (against either a cause of concern or AFI) we have not been subject to the formal 56 working day deadline to develop and submit a new action plan to HMICFRS. However, given the benefits of the process developed for monitoring and scrutiny of our HMICFRS inspection action plan during Round 1, these arrangements will be maintained during Round 2 (albeit that SLT will monitor progress on a bi-monthly basis rather than monthly as was the case during Round 1, in order to apply a degree of proportionality and reduce the administrative burden on lead officers).

#### **6. RISKS**

- 6.1 The outcomes of the HMICFRS inspection process are relevant (but not limited) to the following corporate risks: CR01 – Performance targets; CR02 – Risk reduction; CR03 – Response and rescue; CR04 – People resources, capacity, capability and succession planning; CR08 – Financial capacity; CR11 – Financial systems; and CR16 – Health, safety and welfare.

#### **7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The HMICFRS' fire and rescue services' inspection programme is prepared under Section 28A of the [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#).
- 7.2 The outcomes of HMICFRS inspections are directly relevant to the two strategic priorities detailed within the Service Plan 2022-2025: making our communities **safer** and making our Service **stronger**.

#### **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- a) AFA report: 30.03.22 (paper 17)
- b) PRSC report: 21.04.22 (paper 9)

**9. APPENDIX**

Round 2 HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan (V2.1 – 16 May 22)

**10. REPORT CONTACT**

Peter Davis, HMICFRS Service Liaison Officer, extension 243



**Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary  
and Fire & Rescue Services**

# **Inspection Action Plan**

**Version: 2.1**

**Date: Monday 16 May 2022**



## i Document history

Review date	Version	Summary of changes
15 Nov 21	1.37	Twenty-ninth round of updates for SLT monitoring (25 Nov 21)
14 Dec 21	1.38	Thirtieth round of updates for SLT monitoring (22 Dec 21)
17 Jan 22	1.39	Thirty-first round of updates for SLT monitoring (27 Jan 22)
21 Mar 22	2.0 - DRAFT	Draft Round 2 inspection action plan following publication of <a href="#">second HMICFRS inspection report</a> on 15 Dec 21
21 Apr 21	2.0	Approved for publication by Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee
16 May 21	2.1	First Round 2 update for SLT monitoring (26 May 22)

## ii Distribution history

Date	Name	Version
15 Nov 21	SLT, all staff, external website, HMICFRS (via Service Liaison Lead)	1.37
14 Dec 21	SLT, all staff, external website, HMICFRS (via Service Liaison Lead)	1.38
17 Jan 22	SLT, all staff, external website, HMICFRS (via Service Liaison Lead)	1.39
21 Mar 22	Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee (for approval)	2.0 - DRAFT
21 Apr 21	SLT, all staff, external website, HMICFRS (via Service Liaison Lead)	2.0
16 May 21	SLT, all staff, external website, HMICFRS (via Service Liaison Lead)	2.1

<b>Document owner:</b>	Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive
<b>Next review date:</b>	18 July 2022
<b>Filename and path:</b>	G:\Strategic Planning\Internal Improvement Team\HMICFRS\Fire Authority Report - 22 Jun 22\HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan - V2.1 16 May 22.doc

### Notes:

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**Review date: 18 July 2022**  
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Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality Team  
Avon Fire & Rescue Service  
Police & Fire Headquarters, PO Box 37, Valley Road, Portishead, Bristol BS20 8JJ

**iv 'At a glance' dashboard – 2021/22 actions<sup>1</sup>**
**Table iv(1): Summary of progress against the 63 individual actions**

 <b>Effectiveness (total of 27 individual actions)</b>			
Not started	In progress (on track)	In progress (unresolved issues)	Complete
15 (↓ from 16)	7 (→ at 7)	1 (↑ from 0)	4 (→ at 4)
 <b>Efficiency (total of 9 individual actions)</b>			
Not started	In progress (on track)	In progress (unresolved issues)	Complete
2 (→ at 2)	5 (→ at 5)	0 (→ at 0)	2 (→ at 2)
 <b>People (total of 27 individual actions)</b>			
Not started	In progress (on track)	In progress (unresolved issues)	Complete
9 (→ at 9)	13 (→ at 13)	0 (→ at 0)	5 (→ at 5)

**Note:** the figure in brackets provides a visual indication of the direction of travel since the last update report: → (steady), ↑ (increased) and ↓ (decreased)

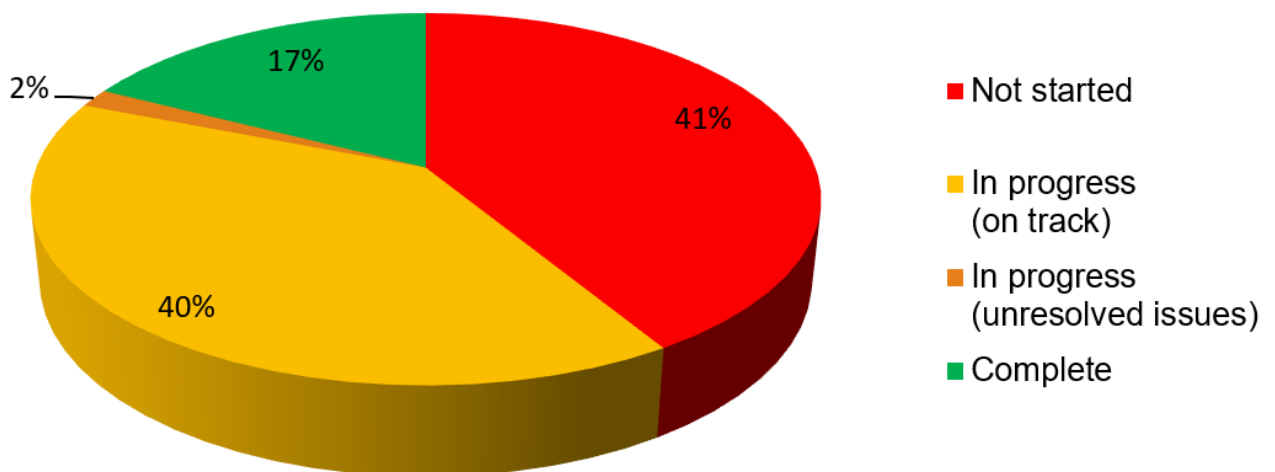

**Fig. 1: Progress against our 2021/22 HMICFRS inspection action plan**
<sup>1</sup> Figures correct as at Monday 16 May 2022

Table v(1): Summary of progress against the 102 individual actions

Effectiveness (total of 33 individual actions)				
Not started	In progress (on track)	In progress (unresolved issues)	Carried forward into Round 2 Action Plan	Complete
0 (→ at 0)	0 (→ at 0)	0 (→ at 0)	0	33 (→ at 33)
Efficiency (total of 6 individual actions)				
Not started	In progress (on track)	In progress (unresolved issues)	Carried forward into Round 2 Action Plan	Complete
0 (→ at 0)	0 (→ at 0)	0 (→ at 0)	0	6 (→ at 6)
People (total of 63 individual actions)				
Not started	In progress (on track)	In progress (unresolved issues)	Carried forward into Round 2 Action Plan	Complete
0 (→ at 0)	1 (↓ from 2)	1 (↑ from 0)	4 (2 x standalone, 2 x assimilated into new Round 2 actions)	57 (→ at 57)

**Note:** the figure in brackets provides a visual indication of the direction of travel since the last update report: → (steady), ↑ (increased) and ↓ (decreased)

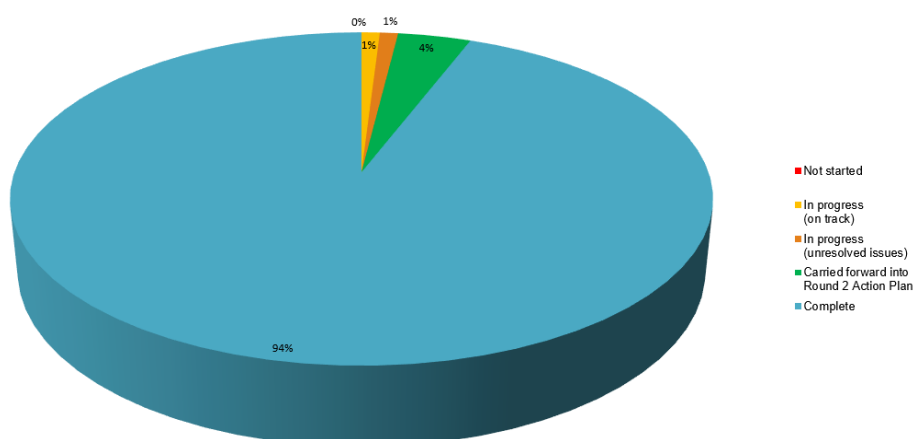


Fig. 2: Progress against our 2018/19 HMICFRS inspection action plan

<sup>2</sup> Figures correct as at Monday 16 May 2022



**AVON**  
FIRE & RESCUE

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***“Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning.”***

(Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1790)



**Councillor Brenda Massey**

Chair,  
Avon Fire Authority

Following an unavoidable delay caused by the coronavirus pandemic during 2019/20, HMICFRS undertook its [second full inspection](#) of Avon Fire & Rescue Service in 2021 and published its findings on 15 December 2021.

The latest findings show encouraging progress has been made since our [last full inspection](#) with the previous causes for concern and ‘inadequate’ ratings being resolved thanks to the hard work, determination and commitment of the whole workforce.

While the absence of any further causes of concern or inadequate grades is not the bar against which we judge ourselves, we’re obviously pleased that the fantastic efforts made since our last inspection have resulted in significant improvements across so many areas. Our communities quite rightly deserve a fire and rescue service which is independently judged as ‘good’ across the board and our Service Plan is clear that we continue to strive for those grades – and our latest HMICFRS report is an important stepping stone on our improvement journey.



**Simon Shilton**

Chief Fire Officer / Chief  
Executive  
Avon Fire & Rescue  
Service

Three years ago HMICFRS said that they “... did not underestimate how much improvement was needed” and set us a huge challenge to make rapid and sustained progress to improve our service. They recognised that it takes time for new approaches to bed in and longer still to change an organisation’s culture – indeed, as the recently retired HM Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services Sir Tom Winsor said himself in October 2021: *“Changing the culture of an organisation is the hardest thing you can do in management and leadership – by far.”*<sup>3</sup>

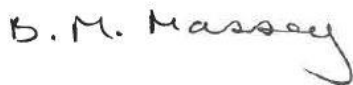
<sup>3</sup> HOME AFFAIRS SELECT COMMITTEE. 2021. *Formal meeting (oral evidence session): The state of policing and the fire and rescue services (Wednesday 27 October 2021, public session starting at 10:00am)* [Online]. London: UK Parliament. Available <https://committees.parliament.uk/event/6041/formal-meeting-oral-evidence-session/> [accessed 27 October 2021].

We are immensely proud that the Service has risen to that challenge with our latest report showing just how far we've come – but we still have more to do.

The new report includes 22 'areas for improvement' (AFIs) which form the basis of this new version of our HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan. We have analysed the Inspectorate's findings and developed our response with a range of actions to ensure that each AFI is fully addressed, as well as carried over the last remaining actions from our 2018/19 action plan to ensure that they are not lost from our corporate radar.

Given the welcome absence of any new 'causes of concern' (and associated recommendations) in our latest inspection report, there is no formal requirement to provide a regular commentary on progress against this new action plan to HMICFRS.<sup>4</sup> However, our previous approach to monitoring progress against our first action plan through the Service Leadership Team and the Fire Authority's Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee has served us well and focused our attention on the improvements which we needed to make. As a result, we'll continue to apply a proportionate level of corporate scrutiny to progress against this new action plan and keep HMICFRS informed as part of our regular ongoing engagement.

Finally, we both wish to fully acknowledge the pride, passion and professionalism – qualities which the Inspectors themselves recognised – of all our staff who dedicate themselves day in, day out to providing a service our communities can rely on. Their individual efforts and achievements are truly valued as we continue to fulfil our strategic priorities of **making our communities safer** and **making our Service stronger**.



**Councillor Brenda Massey**

Chair  
Avon Fire Authority

April 2022



**Simon Shilton**

Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive  
Avon Fire & Rescue Service

April 2022

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<sup>4</sup> Fire and rescue authorities must give due regard to reports and recommendations made by HMICFRS (section 7.5 of the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018](#)). See also section 55 of [Police Act 1996](#).

**2.1** Following unavoidable delays caused by the coronavirus pandemic during 2020, Avon Fire & Rescue Service was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in Tranche 1 of its postponed [2020/21 \(Round 2\) inspection programme](#). As a result of strict infection control procedures imposed during the pandemic, the fieldwork was predominantly undertaken virtually via MSTeams between 10 May and 18 June 2021. However, a number of physical 'in person' visits were made to fire stations between 7 and 9 June 2021 in accordance with robust risk assessments developed in partnership between Avon Fire & Rescue Service and the Inspectorate.

**2.2** Excluding the [COVID-19 thematic inspection](#) undertaken in 2020, this was the second time that HMICFRS has inspected fire and rescue services (FRSs) across England and they have continued to focus on:

- how effective each fire and rescue service is at preventing, protecting against and responding to incidents, and whether the service understands where future risks lie;
- whether the service provides value for money; and
- the ability of the service to train staff, embrace diversity and develop a positive working culture to reflect the level of public and professional interest.

**2.3** Avon Fire & Rescue Service's second 'all service' inspection report is available on the HMICFRS website by clicking [here](#) and the results are summarised in [Table 2\(4\)](#) below.

**2.4** In carrying out their inspections of all 44 fire and rescue services in England, HMICFRS answers three main questions as shown in [Table 2\(1\)](#) below:

<i>Table 2(1): HMICFRS principal questions and inspection focus</i>	
Principal question	Inspection focus
How <b>effective</b> is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?	How well the fire and rescue service understands its current and future risks, works to prevent fires and other risks, protects the public through the regulation of fire safety, responds to fires and other emergencies, and responds to national risks.
How <b>efficient</b> is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?	How well the fire and rescue service uses its resources to manage risk, and secures an affordable way of providing its service, now and in the future.
How well does the fire and rescue service look after its <b>people</b> ?	How well the fire and rescue service promotes its values and culture, trains its staff and ensures that they have the necessary skills, ensures fairness and diversity for its workforce, and develops leaders.





2.5 The [HMICFRS report](#) sets out their inspection findings. After taking all the evidence into account, they applied a [graded judgment](#) for each of the three questions as shown in [Table 2\(2\)](#) below:

<i>Table 2(2): Summary of HMICFRS graded judgments</i>	
Graded judgment	Meaning
<b>Outstanding</b>	If a fire and rescue service exceeds what HMICFRS expects for good, they will judge it as <b>outstanding</b> .
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> is HMICFRS' 'expected' graded judgment for all fire and rescue services. It is based on policy, practice or performance that meet pre-defined grading criteria, which are informed by any relevant national operational guidance or standards.
<b>Requires improvement</b>	If HMICFRS finds shortcomings in the fire and rescue service, they will judge it as <b>requires improvement</b> .
<b>Inadequate</b>	If HMICFRS finds serious critical failings of policy, practice or performance of the fire and rescue service, they will judge it as inadequate.

### Keeping track of progress

2.6 Section 7 of the [National Framework](#) deals with inspection, intervention and accountability and requires those FRSs which received formal recommendations from HMICFRS to "... prepare, update and regularly publish an action plan detailing how the recommendations are being actioned."

2.7 However, we are naturally pleased that our Round 2 inspection report does not include any new [formal recommendations](#) (which result from any identified 'causes of concern'). However, it does include 22 new areas for improvement (AFIs) which this action plan is designed to address. Therefore, in order to maintain our corporate focus on continual improvement this plan will be reviewed by the Service Leadership Team at bi-monthly intervals and updated to reflect our progress. The current status of each of the actions listed within the tables contained in sections 3, 4 and 5 of this plan will be identified using the following symbols:

<i>Table 2(3): Action status monitoring key</i>		
No.	Meaning	Symbol
1	Project / activity ongoing with known issues being resolved	
2	Project / activity ongoing with unresolved issues / risks	
3	Project / activity not started or halted	
4	Project / activity complete	



**2.8** At its meeting on Tuesday 26 March 2019, Avon Fire Authority resolved that ongoing Member-led scrutiny of progress against this HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan will be provided by its Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee (PRSC). This has since been incorporated into the PRSC's standing [Terms of Reference](#) and this arrangement will continue during the lifespan of this Round 2 action plan (as re-confirmed by the full Fire Authority at its meeting held on Wednesday 30 March 2022).

**2.9** Additionally, the relationship with our HMICFRS Service Liaison Lead (SLL) is crucial. We will maintain regular contact through our HMICFRS Service Liaison Officer (SLO) and via our SLL's ongoing engagement activity with the Service to keep the Inspectorate updated with progress.

**Commitment to continuous improvement**




**2.10** Our refreshed three-year Service Plan 2022-2025 was approved by Avon Fire Authority at its meeting on Wednesday 30 March 2022 and was published on Monday 1 April 2022.

**2.11** The Service Plan outlines our two strategic priorities which will focus our work activities for the next three years: making our communities **safer**; and making our Service **stronger**. In order for us to achieve these strategic priorities, we have identified seven key objectives as shown in the diagram below.



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**2.12** As part of objective five – ‘improving our Service’ – we have committed to achieving an HMICFRS rating of ‘**Good**’ across all three pillars of effectiveness, efficiency and people over the next three years. We will do this by addressing the findings of our HMICFRS report by assigning responsibility, actions and timescales to all AFIs as detailed within sections 3, 4 and 5 of this action plan. We will continue to commit resources to co-ordinate and report progress to our Service Leadership Team, the Fire Authority and HMICFRS as described above.

<b>Table 2(4): A summary of Avon Fire &amp; Rescue Service’s inspection results</b>			
<b>Pillar</b>		<b>2021/22 graded judgment</b>	<b>Trend</b>
	<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>	↔
Understanding fires and other risks (2018/19: Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies)		<b>Requires improvement</b>	↓
Preventing fires and other risks		<b>Requires improvement</b>	↔
Protecting the public through fire regulation		<b>Requires improvement</b>	↑
Responding to fires and other emergencies		<b>Good</b>	↑
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents (2018/19: Responding to national risks)		<b>Good</b>	↔
	<b>Efficiency</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>	↔
Making best use of resources		<b>Requires improvement</b>	↔
Future affordability (2018/19: Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future)		<b>Good</b>	↔
	<b>People</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>	↑
Promoting the right values and culture		<b>Good</b>	↑↑
Getting the right people with the right skills		<b>Requires improvement</b>	↓
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity		<b>Requires improvement</b>	↑
Managing performance and developing leaders		<b>Requires improvement</b>	↔

### 3 Effectiveness (How effective is the service at keeping people safe and secure?)





#### Overall 2021/22 summary

Effectiveness	Understanding fires and other risks	Preventing fires and other risks	Protecting the public through fire regulation	Responding to fires and other emergencies	Responding to major and multi-agency incidents
Requires improvement (↔)	Requires improvement (↓)	Requires improvement (↔)	Requires improvement (↑)	Good (↑)	Good (↔)

#### 2021/22 action plan (there are no outstanding actions in the effectiveness pillar from the 2018/19 inspection action plan)

HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks	
<b>Understanding fires and other risks</b>									
9	Area for improvement	The service should make sure it gathers and records relevant and up-to-date risk information to help protect firefighters, the public and property during an emergency.	<p>Resilience is embedded in all the 'business as usual' work we do as a Service and includes business continuity, risk modelling, community risk management planning, operational procedures and guidance, our work with the Avon &amp; Somerset Local Resilience Forum, operational learning and reserve capacity.</p> <p>To ensure continuous improvement in our resilience work, we will introduce new community risk profiling software to help us better understand the risks within our community in respect of both people and businesses. Our Service Plan Proposals 2022-2025 include new actions as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>update and improve our geographical directory (Proposal 1):</b> we will update and improve our geographical directory data (commonly referred to as our 'gazetteer') held by our operational systems, to enhance datasets and informing risk profiling software;</li> <li><b>gather and deliver operational risk information to crews (Proposal 1):</b> we will improve how we collect, manage and deliver risk information to operational crews and commanders;</li> <li><b>prevention risk profiling (Proposal 1):</b> we will utilise our new data warehouse to analyse risk in our Service area, identify and prioritise those at risk to inform our prevention work to mitigate against risk and inform other areas of the Service to inform business planning.</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, and in order to address the AFIs in our latest HMICFRS inspection report, <b>we will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a full business case for the proposed replacement of our current Provision of Operational Risk Information System (PORIS) for approval by the Service Leadership Board (SLB) – to include sufficient revenue and capital financial resources to cover a dedicated PORIS team and the upgrade/replacement of relevant hardware and software.</li> <li>Recruit a new dedicated PORIS team in line with the approved business case (2 x Watch Managers or corporate staff Hay Grade equivalents, 1 x CAD technician and 1 x administrative support role).</li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Area Manager – Risk Management	19 October 2021	✓	<a href="#">Service Plan Proposals 2022-2025</a> (pages 39-42)  PORIS business case approved at SLB meeting held on 19 Oct 21	<p><b>Update May 22:</b> We have successfully recruited a PORIS team leader (Phil O'Connor - Green Book) and a PORIS Support Officer (Sally Woods - Green Book) but have had no</p>
				ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Area Manager – Risk Management	30 April 2022 30 June 2022	↻		

HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a formal procurement exercise to select our preferred replacement PORIS software.</li> <li>Work with the successful PORIS software supplier to develop the specification for our replacement PORIS hardware and undertake a further formal tendering process to procure the equipment required.</li> <li>Develop the organisational PORIS policy and process to supersede our current 7(2)(d) inspection arrangements.</li> </ul>	<p>ACFO – Service Delivery Support</p> <p>ACFO – Service Delivery Support</p> <p>ACFO – Service Delivery Support</p>	<p>Area Manager – Risk Management</p> <p>Area Manager – Risk Management</p> <p>Area Manager – Risk Management</p>	<p>30 June 2022 31 January 2023</p> <p>31 December 2022</p> <p>30 June 2023</p>	<p>➡</p> <p>➡</p> <p>✘</p>	<p>interest in the Watch Manager position. This is being readvertised to external transferees and Avon FRS Watch Managers, Crew Managers and Firefighters. There are two interviews for CAD technicians planned in May 22.</p> <p><b>Update May 22:</b> Extensive market research and scoping has been completed this year; final demonstrations planned for late May/early Jun 22. We believe we will then have explored all options available. No single off-the-shelf solution (viewed so far and within budget) provides all the functionality we require, as well as linking to current Service systems. Therefore, a hybrid solution of combined systems is currently the likely direction.</p> <p><b>Update May 22:</b> Having carried out initial market research of software options, a decision has been made to proceed with hardware procurement. This will be a Windows operating system device, not an Android or Apple device. This will ensure full convergence with existing Airbus ScResponse software, as well as providing a flexible hardware solution for a wide range of internal departments. Formal procurement process has started.</p> <p><b>Update May 22:</b> New PORIS team manager and data/systems support officer have taken ownership of existing system. Despite limitations of current system as identified, it must be maintained in the short term to mitigate risk for operational crews. Numerous work packages to address gaps are being documented and will then be</p>

HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a bespoke data warehouse – the ‘<b>Avon Data Warehouse (ADW)</b>’ – to store risk information from all sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS) – including Business Fire Safety (BFS), Vulnerable Adults (VA), Children and Young People (CYP) and internal RP/011 forms;</li> <li>PORIS – including ‘over-the-border’ risk information;</li> <li>NFCC Building Risk Review (BRR);</li> <li>Historical incident data – VISION command and control system and Home Office Incident Reporting System (IRS); and</li> <li>Site-specific risk information (SSRI) from other sources.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Area Manager – Risk Management	<p>1 April 2022 31 July 2022 (for risk-based inspection programme)</p> <p>31 December 2024 (fully populated as currently envisaged)</p>		<a href="#">Service Plan Proposals 2022-2025</a> (pages 39-42)	<p>prioritised. A series of workshops are being planned for Jun and Jul 22 to consider and plan the new system and process; this will require extensive consultation both internally and externally. This will then need to be integrated with new software.</p> <p><b>Update May 22:</b> Risk-based inspection programme (RBIP) delayed due to IT issues related to MS365 migration.</p>
9	Area for improvement	The service should make sure staff are trained in how to carry out and identify site-specific risk information.	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the PORIS team quality assure the 7(2)(d) process to ensure continued compliance with statutory duties.</li> <li>Following the procurement and roll-out of new PORIS software and hardware, train all relevant staff in how to identify, collect and upload site-specific risk information using the new process (including accessing, viewing and interpreting SSRI).</li> <li>Train all Watch Managers to become qualified to Level 3 Certificate (Fire Auditors) standard to carry out appropriate level inspections.</li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Area Manager – Risk Management	30 June 2023		<a href="#">Service Plan Proposals 2022-2025</a> (page 30)	<p><b>Update May 22:</b> Team maintaining current arrangements whilst replacement system is identified.</p>
			ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Group Manager – Learning & Development	30 June 2023		<p><b>Update May 22:</b> The recruitment of a Business Fire Safety Team Leader has been completed and the successful applicant started on 01 May 22. He will now have the responsibility of planning and organising this training to complete this action.</p>		
			ACFO – Service Delivery	Area Manager – Prevention and Protection	31 December 2023				
<b>Preventing fires and other risks</b>									



HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks	
12	Area for improvement	The service should make sure staff carry out HFSVs and wider prevention activities competently.	As well as 'business as usual' prevention activities to protect vulnerable people and children and young people, our Service Plan Proposals 2022-2025 include new prevention actions as follows:				<a href="#">Service Plan Proposals 2022-2025</a> (pages 20-26)		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Service-wide targeted interventions (Proposal 1):</b> we will ensure we undertake an holistic approach to prevention so our focus and activity is targeted to those most at risk (including identifying local risk, enhancing our suite of nationally supported campaigns and enhancing our road traffic collision prevention and water safety activities);</li> <li><b>community health and wellbeing (Proposal 2):</b> enhancing our intervention activity through identifying and connecting with appropriate support services to improve outcomes for those in the community who are negatively impacted by their health and wellbeing; and</li> <li><b>safeguarding (Proposal 3):</b> ensuring that the principles of Making Every Contact Count (MECC), the Person-Centred Approach and 'Think Family' underpin our community-facing activities.</li> </ul>						
			Additionally, and in order to address the AFIs in our latest HMICFRS inspection report, <b>we will:</b>						
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that all wholetime operational staff receive training in the delivery of home fire safety visits (HFSVs).</li> <li>Ensure all on-call operational staff receive training in the delivery of HFSVs.</li> <li>Ensure all operational staff are trained to deliver all education packages appropriate to their role.</li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery	Area Manager – Prevention and Protection	31 March 2024			✘
			ACFO – Service Delivery	Area Manager – Prevention and Protection	31 December 2024	✘		<p><b>Update May 22:</b> Discussions are being held with Resource Planning Unit to book in these dates in the annual training plan. Vulnerable Adults Manager is taking the lead for this. This is a joint two-day training session linked to the <a href="#">action below</a>.</p> <p><b>Update May 22:</b> Not yet started</p> <p><b>Update May 22:</b> Discussions are being held with Resource Planning Unit to book in these dates in the annual training plan. Vulnerable Adults Manager is taking the lead for this. This is a joint two-day training session linked to the <a href="#">action above</a>.</p>	
12	Area for improvement	The service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands what works.	<b>We will:</b>						
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce evaluation models for HFSVs in line with the National Fire Chiefs' Council's (NFCC) Evaluation Model.</li> <li>Produce evaluation models for Children and Young People's (CYP) prevention activities in line with the NFCC's Evaluation Model.</li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery	Area Manager – Prevention and Protection	31 December 2023			✘
				ACFO – Service Delivery	Area Manager – Prevention and Protection	31 December 2023		<p><b>Update May 22:</b> Not yet started although this will be a focus of the newly formed NFCC South West Prevention strategic meeting/group.</p> <p><b>Update May 22:</b> Not yet started although this will be a focus of the newly formed NFCC South West Prevention strategic meeting/group.</p>	
<b>Protecting the public through fire regulation</b>									
16	Area for	The service should assure	As well as 'business as usual' protection activities including licensing applications, fire safety audits, prosecutions, provision				<a href="#">Service Plan</a>		

HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
	improvement	itself that its RBIP prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk.	<p>of advice, enforcement of legislation, Primary Authority Scheme (PAS) partnerships and membership of local Safety Advisory Groups, our Service Plan Proposals 2022-2025 include new protection actions as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>embed, refine and evaluate business risk profile:</b> enhancing our Risk-Based Inspection Programme by embedding the newly-created risk profile for commercial premises within our Service area;</li> <li>• <b>upskilling our workforce in the area of protection:</b> enhancing our RBIP by providing our staff with the appropriate skills and qualifications to coach and comply and carry out fire safety inspections competently; and</li> <li>• <b>emerging risks in the built environment:</b> remaining agile to the outcomes of reviews, reports and/or inquiries to ensure that their recommendations can be considered and adopted where necessary.</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, and in order to address the AFIs in our latest HMICFRS inspection report, <b>we will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an internal monitoring system incorporating the Risk-Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) to ensure that the premises deemed most at risk are prioritised and allocated to inspecting staff.</li> </ul>				<a href="#">Proposals 2022-2025</a> (pages 27-31)	
				ACFO – Service Delivery	Area Manager – Prevention and Protection	31 December 2022	<a href="#">Service Plan Proposals 2022-2025</a> (page 30)	<p><b>Update May 2022:</b> Not yet started but will be the focus of the new BFS team leader. Due to IT issues there is a delay to the introduction of the new RBIP – <a href="#">see above</a>.</p>
16	Area for improvement	The service should make sure it has effective arrangements for providing specialist protection advice out of hours.	<p>We note HMICFRS' view that we don't "... have sufficient 24/7 fire safety cover" (page 19). They concluded:</p> <p><i>"The service's duty rota doesn't make sure that the specialist fire safety knowledge needed for responding to certain fire safety concerns is always available. Outside of office hours, there may be dangerous situations where access to a premises needs to be prohibited or restricted – only a limited number of staff on the rota system have the specialist protection knowledge required to authorise this decision. We expect all services to have the capability to respond to fire safety concerns at all times."</i></p> <p>We discussed this emerging finding with the inspectors during their fieldwork in May/June 2021 and raised it again when we received a draft of our report for pre-publication checks in October 2021.</p> <p>While it is correct that we do not necessarily have a member of the Business Fire Safety (BFS, or 'protection') department on each of our three operational flexi-duty groups providing operational officer cover 24/7/365, that is not the only way in which suitable BFS cover is secured. Even if we <b>did</b> have a member of the BFS department providing their protection specialism (in addition to generic supervisory officer cover) on each flexi-duty group, that would still not guarantee availability at all times. In order to achieve that, we would have to have at least two BFS officers attached to each flexi-duty group to account for any sickness, annual leave or course leave.</p> <p>In the event that the flexi-duty group does not include an officer from the BFS department out-of-hours, we are able to provide suitable protection advice in other ways. Our Mobilisation Policy (V3.1 – 21 Jun 21, section 2.12) provides for the recall to duty of a BFS officer via our Everbridge staff notification system, including arrangements for a Level 4 Diploma-qualified officer who has the ability to authorise a Prohibition Notice if required.</p> <p>In the event that a suitably qualified BFS officer is not available, the Duty Group Manager will nominate a Station Manager from the flexi-duty group to attend to ensure the basic requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 are being met. To assist them, we provide fire safety <i>aide-mémoires</i> which include ensuring that the means of escape is maintained clear, fire doors close and that there is an effective method for raising the alarm and where extinguishers are provided that they are in date. They are then responsible for ensuring that the matter is brought to the attention of the appropriate BFS office at the earliest opportunity to enable a specialist officer to attend as soon as practicable. In a worst case scenario, operational resources may be ordered to stand by outside premises during the 'silent hours', pending the arrival of a BFS officer, to ensure the safety of anyone remaining inside the premises (with practical experience showing that even where a Prohibition Notice is served, it is not always possible to secure the immediate evacuation of the premises during the night).</p> <p>The proposal to develop a corporate staff (Green Book) fire safety manager was also approved by the Service Leadership Team at its meeting on 22 December 2021 and this will provide further resilience in the BFS department.</p>					

HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
			<p>In summary, we are satisfied that our current arrangements for providing specialist BFS advice out-of-hours are as robust as reasonably practicable without spending disproportionate amounts of money (which would itself be contrary to the efficiency of the Service) to be able to absolutely <b>guarantee</b> a Level 4 Diploma-qualified officer is immediately available 24/7/365.</p> <p>That said, we are still keen to respond positively to the Inspectorate's finding and therefore <b>we will</b>:</p>					
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bolster the pool of BFS staff (including Green Book fire safety inspectors) available for out-of-hours contact to assist operational staff whilst performing their duties when they require fire safety advice out of normal business hours.</li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery	Area Manager – Prevention and Protection	28 February 2022	✓	Service Delivery Memo 04/2022
16	Area for improvement	The service should make sure it works with local businesses to share information and expectations on compliance with fire safety regulations.	<b>We will:</b>					
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with different business types across the four unitary areas by holding seminars and webinars to share information on fire safety compliance.</li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery	Area Manager – Prevention and Protection	31 March 2023	✗	<p><b>Update May 22:</b> Not yet started although this will be the responsibility of the new BFS team leader.</p> <p><b>Update May022:</b> Not yet started.</p>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refresh and develop our external web pages to assist businesses with fire safety compliance and ensure we put in appropriate internal mechanisms to monitor content to ensure the most up-to-date information is provided.</li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery	Area Manager – Prevention and Protection	31 March 2023	✗	
<b>Responding to fires and other emergencies</b>								
20	Area for improvement	The service should make sure it has an effective system for learning from operational incidents.	<b>We will:</b>					
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise, refresh and streamline our operational assurance and debrief process in line with sector best practice, national guidance (including NOL and JOL), NFCC workstreams and regional multi-agency partners – leading to an appropriate level of debrief for all operational incidents being undertaken with the outcomes recorded and shared as appropriate.</li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Group Manager – Assurance	31 December 2024	🔄	<p><b>Update May 22:</b> Business case for increased staffing within Operational Assurance function being drafted for financial review on 02 Jun 22 and presentation to the Service Leadership Board in Jun 22.</p> <p>Development of a three-phase Operational Assurance process to satisfy a wide range of drivers (including this report) – basis for business case after policy review started in Mar 22.</p> <p>Consultation with stakeholders planned for start of Jun 22.</p>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a new section to the Service's internal monthly <i>Bulletin</i> called "Quality Assurance Corner" – intended to share how debriefs and incident insights have led to improvements and/or resolutions across the organisation, to help make our communities safer and our Service stronger.</li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Group Manager – Assurance	September 2021	✓	



HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale		Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and amend the current reporting and investigation process including lost time incidents (LTIs), medical treatment incidents (MTIs) and breathing apparatus (BA) emergencies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>avoid any missed opportunities to identify root causes and put in place appropriate corrective and preventative actions;</li> <li>ensure compliance with our legal duty to report injuries, illnesses and dangerous occurrences to the Health and Safety Executive;</li> <li>ensure reasonable adjustments (where required) and provide adequate wellbeing support to the affected person(s); and</li> <li>contribute to a proactive health and safety culture where organisational learning is supported.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Revise and re-issue HSW SOP 5: Incident Investigation.</li> <li>Provide refreshed incident investigation training to all responsible staff.</li> <li>Update the analytical risk assessment (ARA) process in line with sector best practice, national guidance and NFCC workstreams to ensure that it is suitable and sufficient with regards to capturing key risk information.</li> <li>Provide training to all Incident Commanders on the updated ARA process</li> <li>For all appropriate incidents which are subject to an internal health and safety investigation, convene a Panel of Learning (POL) within 60 days of the incident occurring to provide a platform for wider learning and consideration of action points resulting from the investigation.</li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Health, Safety, Welfare, Wellbeing and Fitness Manager	31 January 2022	✓	FiRe Alert! 04/2022 (Amendment to HSW SOP 5: Incident Investigation)	
				ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Health, Safety, Welfare, Wellbeing and Fitness Manager	31 March 2022	🔄	FiRe Alert! 04/2022 (Amendment to HSW SOP 5: Incident Investigation)	
				ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Health, Safety, Welfare, Wellbeing and Fitness Manager	30 September 2023	✗		
				ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Group Manager – Assurance	31 December 2023	✗		
				ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Group Manager – Learning & Development	31 December 2024	✗		
				ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Area Manager – Service Delivery Support	January 2023 <i>(to establish and embed the POL process – thereafter 'business as usual')</i>	🔄	FiRe Alert! 04/2022 (Amendment to HSW SOP 5: Incident Investigation)	
				ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Health, Safety, Welfare, Wellbeing and Fitness Manager				

HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
20	Area for improvement	The service should make sure its operational staff have good access to relevant and up-to-date cross-border risk information.	<p>We currently share cross-border risk information with our neighbouring fire and rescue services via dedicated pages on the the Government's secure extranet known as ResilienceDirect. However, the operational reality of this system means that such information is not easily accessible on the incident ground as ResilienceDirect does not dovetail with our mobile data terminals on frontline fire engines. Therefore, as an integral part of the PORIS improvements detailed above <b>we will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that our new PORIS system includes the ability to enable timely and effective access to cross-border risk information received from neighbouring fire and rescue services.</li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Area Manager – Risk Management	30 June 2023	X	<b>Update May 22:</b> Ongoing – looking to ensure Resilience Direct is updated with all relevant info. over 10km reach either side of borders.







## 4 Efficiency (How efficient is the service at keeping people safe and secure?)

### Overall summary

Efficiency	Making best use of resources	Future affordability
Requires improvement (↔)	Requires improvement (↔)	Good (↔)

2021/22 action plan (there are no outstanding actions in the efficiency pillar from the 2018/19 inspection action plan)

HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
<b>Making best use of resources</b>								
27	Area for improvement	The service should have effective measures in place to assure itself that its wholtime workforce is productive and that their time is used as efficiently and effectively as possible to meet the priorities in the service plan.	<p>We are committed to ensuring that our Service and its people are prepared and resilient to deliver our strategic priorities of <b>making our communities safer</b> and <b>making our Service Stronger</b>. We continually seek more efficient and safer ways of working and facilitate continual improvement to realise benefits from the Service's investments, resources and technology to deliver better outcomes for our staff and communities. 'Business as usual' activities in this area include assets, collaboration, assurance, procurement and finance, communications and performance.</p> <p>In particular, we will ensure we continually explore opportunities to enhance our service provision and adopt a 'business partner' model to increase efficiency and effectiveness across the service. As part of optimising productivity (Proposal 2) we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>evaluate the operational working day (Proposal 2):</b> evaluate the current working day to optimise productivity and match resource to risk; and</li> <li><b>adopt a 'business partner' model (Proposal 2):</b> we will evaluate modern business practices to optimise efficiency and effectiveness of our business processes.</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, and in order to address the AFIs in our latest HMICFRS inspection report, <b>we will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake analysis and staff consultation on the format of the current working day to identify options to deliver a more effective and efficient service to the communities we serve.</li> <li>Undertake analysis on a station-by-station basis to ensure that outcomes and capacity are specific and bespoke to each operational fire station.</li> <li>Consult with staff on the outcome of the reviews, with a view to putting recommendations in place.</li> <li>Revise the construct of the working day to ensure that staff feel empowered to deliver local initiatives.</li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery	Area Manager – Response	31 December 2023	🔄	<a href="#">Service Plan Proposals 2022-2025</a> (page 48)  <b>Update May 22:</b> Work package assigned to Unitary Manager and included in the draft Operational Response directorate plan.
			ACFO – Service Delivery	Area Manager – Response	31 December 2023	🔄		
			ACFO – Service Delivery	Area Manager – Response	31 December 2023	✗		
			ACFO – Service Delivery	Area Manager – Response	31 December 2023	✗		

HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
27	Area for improvement	The service should assure itself that its IT systems are resilient, reliable, accurate and accessible.	<p>Avon Fire Authority approved significant capital expenditure (c.£1.5m over the next five years) for IT infrastructure improvements at its <a href="#">extraordinary meeting held on Friday 9 October 2020</a>. This will include upgrades to improve remote (eg home) working capability/capacity.</p> <p><b>COVID-19 thematic inspection – ‘areas for focus’</b></p> <p>In its report on our response to the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic published on 22 January 2021, HMICFRS identified two areas for focus and recommended that we should determine how we:</p> <p>a) ... will adopt, for the longer term, the new and innovative ways of working introduced during the pandemic, to secure lasting improvements; and</p> <p>b) ... can improve [our] IT and systems so that staff can effectively work remotely.”</p> <p>We will deliver an IT infrastructure that enables Avon Fire &amp; Rescue Service to support varied ways of working, which will reflect the ‘new normal’ during and post-COVID recovery. In particular, <b>we will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the roll-out of Microsoft 365 across the Service which started with the pilot migrations in autumn 2021 (and replacing our current Citrix remote access system).</li> <li>• Develop a series of user guides and frequently asked questions (FAQs) to support staff with the introduction of Microsoft 365 as our new operating platform.</li> <li>• Upgrade our existing IT infrastructure including servers, firewalls and disaster recovery (DR) arrangements.</li> <li>• Complete the migration of our current IT applications to the new IT infrastructure.</li> <li>• Complete the replacement of our existing station-based IT hardware to enable the benefits of Microsoft 365 to be fully realised across the whole workforce.</li> </ul>	Director of Corporate Services	Procurement and Supplies Manager	30 June 2022		<p><a href="#">COVID-19 inspection: Avon Fire &amp; Rescue Service</a></p> <p><a href="#">State of Fire and Rescue 2021</a> (page 80)</p> <p><b>Update May 22:</b> On track to complete by the end of Jun 22.</p> <p><b>Update May 22:</b> On track to complete by the end of Jun 22.</p> <p><b>Update May 22:</b> On track to complete by the end of Jun 22.</p>
			• Complete the roll-out of Microsoft 365 across the Service which started with the pilot migrations in autumn 2021 (and replacing our current Citrix remote access system).	Director of Corporate Services	Procurement and Supplies Manager	30 June 2022		
			• Develop a series of user guides and frequently asked questions (FAQs) to support staff with the introduction of Microsoft 365 as our new operating platform.	Director of Corporate Services	Procurement and Supplies Manager	31 December 2021		
			• Upgrade our existing IT infrastructure including servers, firewalls and disaster recovery (DR) arrangements.	Director of Corporate Services	Procurement and Supplies Manager	31 December 2021		
			• Complete the migration of our current IT applications to the new IT infrastructure.	Director of Corporate Services	Procurement and Supplies Manager	30 June 2022		
			• Complete the replacement of our existing station-based IT hardware to enable the benefits of Microsoft 365 to be fully realised across the whole workforce.	Director of Corporate Services	Procurement and Supplies Manager	30 June 2022		
<b>Future affordability</b>								
30	Area for improvement	The service should assure itself that it has the capability and capacity it needs to achieve future change.	<p>Following the successful completion of our Internal Improvement Programme in October 2019 (which addressed the recommendations of the <a href="#">Statutory Inspection</a> published in July 2017) we established our current Transformation Programme with a dedicated Transformation Team. As the <a href="#">HMICFRS inspection report</a> notes, the Transformation Programme aims to improve our policies and processes through the use of digital technology including significant investment in our <a href="#">IT infrastructure</a> (as detailed in the action above). The programme will also improve our existing arrangements for policy development, review and maintenance and funding for the Transformation Programme has recently been extended to the end of the 2023/24 financial year.</p> <p>Since the time of the last HMICFRS inspection, the Transformation Team has also been expanded to provide enabling capacity for transformation projects and work packages, including the appointment of a Digital Project Manager and FireWatch Co-ordinator.</p> <p>There have been several recent examples of business cases being approved by the Service Leadership Board and Service Leadership Team which have led to increased capacity through temporary and permanent staff growth. These have included (but are not limited to) the Transformation team, National Operational Guidance (NatOG) team, Business Fire</p>				<a href="#">Service Plan Proposals 2022-2025</a> (page 43)	

HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
			<p>Safety team, Corporate Communications team, Health, Safety and Wellbeing team etc.</p> <p>Additionally, our capability and capacity to achieve future change is inextricably linked to other areas for improvement (AFIs) in this action plan including <a href="#">succession planning</a> and <a href="#">selection, development and promotion of staff</a>.</p> <p>Capability and capacity have also been enhanced through improvements to organisational ways of working – including the introduction of business partnering in our Corporate Communications and Finance departments.</p> <p>Through our ongoing workforce planning we ensure that the Service is sufficiently resourced and has the tools and capability to deliver services and support the organisation. Our Service Plan Proposals 2022-2025 include new actions as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Workforce planning (Proposal 2):</b> through understanding the employee life cycle, we will improve our workforce planning processes to attract and retain skills across the Service.</li> </ul> <p>In summary, we are assured that we have the capability and capacity we need to achieve future change but will of course keep our policies, plans and processes under continual review to ensure that we flex to meet dynamic demand.</p>					

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**5 People (How well does the service look after its people?)**






**Overall summary**

People	Promoting the right values and culture	Getting the right people with the right skills	Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	Managing performance and developing leaders
Requires improvement (↑)	Good (↑↑)	Requires improvement (↓)	Requires improvement (↑)	Requires improvement (↔)

**2021/22 action plan**

HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
<b>Promoting the right values and culture</b>								
35	Area for improvement	The service should assure itself that managers are appropriately trained and understand the wellbeing provisions available to them and wider staff.	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise and re-issue our health, safety and welfare policy (including convening a stakeholder group as part of the policy development and review process).</li> <li>Deliver training in Health and Wellbeing Conversations to all staff via e-learning.</li> <li>Provide managers with training and practical guidance concerning the completion of <a href="#">Wellness Assessments</a> and internal wellbeing support provisions (including recognising safe/unsafe behaviours).</li> <li>Update <a href="#">HSW SOP 15: Mental Health and Wellbeing in Work</a> to include internal referral processes and procedures concerning the management of welfare cases (including crisis management).</li> </ul>	<p>Director of Corporate Services</p> <p>Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive</p> <p>ACFO – Service Delivery Support</p> <p>ACFO – Service Delivery Support</p> <p>ACFO – Service Delivery Support</p>	<p>HR Manager</p> <p>Head of Transformation Team</p> <p>Health, Safety, Welfare, Wellbeing and Fitness Manager</p> <p>Health, Safety, Welfare, Wellbeing and Fitness Manager</p> <p>Health, Safety, Welfare, Wellbeing and Fitness Manager</p>	<p>31 March 2024</p> <p>30 September 2023</p> <p>30 September 2023</p> <p>30 September 2023</p>	<p>✗</p> <p>✗</p> <p>✗</p> <p>➡</p>	<p><a href="#">Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan</a></p> <p><b>Transformation Work Package 47:</b> Welfare process</p> <p><b>Transformation Work Package 46:</b> Health, Safety and Welfare Policy</p>



HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue our roll-out of mental health first aider training to managers and staff across the organisation. <b>(Note:</b> Mental health first aid at work training is already included within the <a href="#">supervisory promotion framework</a>.)</li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Health, Safety, Welfare, Wellbeing and Fitness Manager	30 September 2023		
35	Area for improvement	The service should assure itself that managers are appropriately trained to manage staff absence.	<p>We have processes in place for aiding sickness absence and these are there to protect our workforce. However, we acknowledge that they are not always entirely supportive and that some need improvement, yet the intention remains – that they are to protect every member of Avon Fire &amp; Rescue Service.</p> <p>In particular, our current procedures allow line managers up to 15 days to complete a ‘return to work interview’ (RTWI) when a colleague comes back to work after a period of four consecutive days of sickness (including illness and injury). Staff feedback and performance data suggest that is not effective or efficient when colleagues may need more immediate additional health and wellness support. Where RTWIs are not conducted in a timely manner, staff do not always receive the necessary support for returning to the workplace, important sickness details can be overlooked and RTWI can be forgotten about completely.</p> <p>We are committed to taking steps to make improvements to our existing processes. Therefore, <b>we will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise and re-issue our attendance management policy (including convening a stakeholder group as part of the policy development and review process).</li> <li>Revise our processes so that all return-to-work conversations will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>focus on the individual’s welfare; and</li> <li>be completed and recorded digitally on the first shift back to work following every period of sickness.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Review the existing form and create a new, more user-friendly electronic version; once available, this will be shared with all staff and made available on the intranet.</li> <li>Provide training to all managers on the return-to-work welfare conversation, the process involved and the importance of timely and accurate recording focussed on individuals’ wellbeing and welfare.</li> </ul>	<p>Director of Corporate Services</p> <p>Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive</p> <p>Director of Corporate Services</p> <p>Director of Corporate Services</p> <p>Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive</p> <p>Director of Corporate Services</p>	<p>HR Manager</p> <p>Head of Transformation Team</p> <p>HR Manager</p> <p>HR Manager</p> <p>Head of Transformation Team</p> <p>HR Manager</p>	<p>31 May 2022</p> <p>7 March 2022</p> <p>31 August 2022</p> <p>31 March 2023</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p><b>Transformation Work Package 12:</b> Sickness and RTWI</p> <p><b>Transformation Work Package 08:</b> Attendance Management Policy</p> <p>See SLT message sent to all staff on 23 Feb 22</p>



HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
<b>Getting the right people with the right skills</b>								
37	Area for improvement	The service should put in place a credible succession plan, for the whole organisation.	<p>Avon Fire &amp; Rescue Service expects all staff to regularly consider their own development and career path and is committed to employing, developing, and promoting talented people and to providing equality of access to promotion opportunities. Our promotion process defines clear pathways for development of staff and for progression into operational positions (Firefighter to Group Manager). It also provides information to help the development and progression of other fire service staff. Application of the policy supports a fair, consistent, and transparent approach to development and progression.</p> <p>By effectively managing our talent, the Service will create a culture that ensures that the appropriate people from all staff groups with the relevant skills and attributes are in the correct place at the correct time to ensure our strategic priorities of <b>making our communities safer</b> and <b>making our Service stronger</b> are achieved. We will use this process to ensure business continuity and to retain and engage the best possible people within the Service, thus 'future-proofing' Avon Fire &amp; Rescue Service for the challenges ahead.</p> <p>In addition, we are committed to the consideration of a Direct Entry approach, in line with the recommendations and outcomes of the 2021/22 NFCC project.</p> <p>Naturally, this area for improvement (AFI) is closely linked to the one below regarding the <a href="#">selection, development and promotion of staff</a> and this commentary is equally applicable to both. However, in particular, <b>we will:</b></p>					<p><a href="#">NFCC Direct Entry (DE) Scheme high-level plan</a></p> <p><b>Phase 2: Design and develop</b> (April 2021 – September 2022)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inaugural Project Board meeting</li> <li>• Work packages established</li> <li>• Stakeholder engagement analysis completed</li> <li>• Communication plan developed</li> <li>• DE programme design</li> <li>• Consultation</li> <li>• Procurement and IT process / contract awarded</li> <li>• Funding/'back office' support Phase 3 implementation</li> <li>• NFCC governance sign-off</li> </ul> <p><b>Phase 3: Implementation</b> (September 2022 – 2026)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handover to implementation function in the NFCC Central Programme Office (CPO)</li> <li>• Recruitment process (8-12 months)</li> <li>• Two-year Area Manager programme (ends 2025)</li> <li>• Three-year Station Manager programme (ends 2026)</li> </ul> <p>The TAP Policy Board is now established and holds quarterly meetings as part of 'business as usual' – therefore marked as complete.</p>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop, agree and publish our new succession planning policy.</li> <li>• Continue to manage succession planning and anticipated workforce retirement profiles through the Transfer, Appointments and Promotions (TAP) Board.</li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery Support	ACFO – Service Delivery Support	30 September 2021	✓	
				ACFO – Service Delivery Support	ACFO – Service Delivery Support	31 March 2022	✓	
37	Area for improvement	The service should assure itself that all staff are appropriately trained for their role.	<p>In assessing our performance under 'getting the right people with the right skills' in our <a href="#">latest report</a>, HMICFRS said:</p> <p><i>"The service should make sure that all staff are appropriately trained for their role. We were disappointed to find that some staff told us they haven't received the appropriate training for their roles for several years. For example, it has been more than three years since some operational staff received training in carrying out home fire safety visits (HFSVs), or how to gather risk information. Most managers that we spoke to hadn't received the appropriate training in how to resolve workforce concerns or how to conduct a performance development review."</i> (page 38)</p> <p>This action plan directly addresses the identified training needs in respect of <a href="#">HFSVs</a>, <a href="#">gathering risk information</a> and <a href="#">PDRs</a></p>					

HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
			<p>against other areas for improvement detailed elsewhere. In addition, <b>we will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend and enhance our current MOST system to cover skills required by the whole organisation to cover role-based competency training across operational and managerial/leadership skills (as required).</li> <li>Deliver formalised incident investigation to managers and other staff who are required to conduct incident investigations.</li> </ul>	<p>ACFO – Service Delivery Support</p> <p>ACFO – Service Delivery Support</p>	<p>Area Manager – Service Delivery Support</p> <p>Health, Safety, Welfare, Wellbeing and Fitness Manager</p>	<p>31 March 2025</p> <p>31 December 2022</p>	<p>x</p> <p>x</p>	<p>FiRe Alert! 04/2022 (Amendment to HSW SOP 5: Incident Investigation)</p>
<b>Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity</b>								
40	Area for improvement	The service should make sure that it has effective grievance procedures. It should identify and implement ways to improve staff confidence in the grievance process.	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise and re-issue our grievance policy (including convening a stakeholder group as part of the policy development and review process).</li> </ul>	<p>Director of Corporate Services</p> <p>Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive</p>	<p>HR Manager</p> <p>Head of Transformation Team</p>	<p>30 September 2022</p>	<p>➡</p>	<p><b>Transformation Work Package 42:</b> Grievance Policy</p>
40	Area for improvement	The service should make sure that its bullying, harassment and discrimination policy is up to date and is understood by all staff.	<p>As part of our <b>making our Service stronger</b>, we will continue to demonstrate our commitment to an inclusive workforce where everyone is valued and are able to reach their potential. As part of promoting diversity, inclusion, culture and equality (DICE) and accessibility (Proposal 3) we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Code of Ethics for our staff (Proposal 3):</b> align to the <a href="#">Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services</a> and embed this within the workforce; and</li> <li><b>culture (Proposal 3):</b> build on progress already made to create a fully inclusive and adaptable working environment that will enable us to maximise the potential of a diverse, agile and adaptable workforce delivering the best service to our communities.</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, and in order to address the AFIs in our latest HMICFRS inspection report, <b>we will:</b></p>	<p>Director of Corporate Services</p> <p>Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive</p> <p>Director of Corporate Services</p>	<p>HR Manager</p> <p>Head of Transformation Team</p> <p>HR Manager</p>	<p>30 September 2022</p> <p>31 March 2023</p>	<p>➡</p> <p>x</p>	<p><a href="#">Service Plan Proposals 2022-2025</a> (pages 49-50)</p>
40	Area for improvement	The service should make sure it has robust processes in place to undertake equality impact assessments and	<p>As part of our <b>making our Service stronger</b>, we will continue to demonstrate our commitment to an inclusive workforce where everyone is valued and are able to reach their potential. As part of promoting diversity, inclusion, culture and equality (DICE) and accessibility (Proposal 3) <b>we will:</b></p>					<p><a href="#">Service Plan Proposals 2022-2025</a> (pages 49-50)</p>

HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
		review any actions agreed as a result.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a streamlined and digitised process for <b>Combined Impact Assessments</b> (including people, environment, data protection, safeguarding and health/safety/welfare impacts).</li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery Support  Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive	Culture and Inclusion Manager  Head of Transformation Team	December 2023	➔	See <i>Transformation Matters</i> newsletter (Issue 3 – Jan 22) <b>Transformation Work Package 03:</b> Policy Production and Review
40	Area for improvement	The service should make sure that all staff understand the benefits of equality, diversity and inclusion, and their role in promoting it.	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote and implement the <a href="#">Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services</a> across the Service and within our Service Leadership Charter.</li> <li>Refresh our current Values and Behaviour Framework (to become the Values, Ethics and Behaviour Framework) to take account of the new national <a href="#">Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services</a> and use this as guidance for managing unacceptable behaviour.</li> <li>Use focus groups consisting of mixed ranks and roles to assist with implementation.</li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery Support  Director of Corporate Services  ACFO – Service Delivery Support  Director of Corporate Services  ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Culture and Inclusion Manager  Head of Corporate Communication  Culture and Inclusion Manager  Head of Corporate Communication  Culture and Inclusion Manager	31 August 2022   31 December 2022   30 April 2023	➔   ✘   ➔	
<b>Managing performance and developing leaders</b>								
42	Area for improvement	The service should improve all staff understanding and application of the performance development review process.	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold a series of workshops to help staff understand the manager's role in the existing PDR process – including what a PDR is; expectations and preparation; and the PDR template.</li> <li>Review our organisational approach to PDRs and determine the way ahead to improve the process for the whole workforce.</li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery Support    Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive	Organisational Development Manager    Head of Transformation Team	31 December 2022    31 December 2022	➔    ➔	<p><b>Note:</b> This action supersedes a similar action from our Round 1 HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan (which has now been marked as 'carried forward').</p> <p><b>Transformation Work Package 33:</b> PDRs</p> <p>First three PDR workshops: 10 Feb 22, 24 Feb 22, 17 Mar 22 <b>Note:</b> PDR training is also included as a standard element of our supervisory management development course (see <a href="#">Development Pathways</a> on the Service intranet). <b>Update May 22:</b> Further workshops to be scheduled in autumn 2022 and will become 'business as usual'; however, there was very little uptake for first three workshops.</p>

HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the recommendations resulting from the review of the PDR process (as per the action above).</li> </ul>	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive	Head of Transformation Team	31 March 2023	x	
42	Area for improvement	The service should make sure its selection, development and promotion of staff is open and fair.	<p>This area for improvement (AFI) is closely linked to the one above regarding <a href="#">succession planning</a> and the associated commentary is equally applicable to both.</p> <p>We also discussed this area with the inspection team during our visit in May/June 2021, and again during the pre-publication check process before the release of our final <a href="#">Round 2 report</a>. They said that "...from the files sampled, we didn't find the promotions process consistent for all roles across the Service. For example, we found the HR function wasn't always involved in the shortlisting and selection process of senior leadership roles." However, we provided confirmation (and supporting evidence) that HR specialists supported each senior leadership appointments process and this has continued through more recent strategic managers' appointment rounds. While the Human Resources department may not always be directly involved in interviews and shortlisting for every post from the most junior staff to the CFO, they are of course involved in the most senior recruitments but part of the more progressive partnering model is a focus on upskilling managers to ensure there is consistency and fairness in every interview process and applying scrutiny.</p> <p>We also keep our promotion policy under regular review, making adjustments where required in response to feedback, experience, sector best practice and other revision triggers.</p> <p>However, in particular, <b>we will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop, agree and publish our new development / promotion pathways for progression to Crew, Watch, Station and Group Manager (equating to supervisory and middle manager levels).</li> <li>Review and publish our new promotion policy incorporating our new development / promotion pathways (as per the action above) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify leaders who demonstrate and promote the Service values;</li> <li>promote those who currently perform well and have the potential to perform well in a higher leadership role; and</li> <li>enable us to invest in our staff.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Following liaison with colleagues in Avon &amp; Somerset Constabulary, establish a virtual Leadership Academy to construct and deliver a personal development programme (consisting of technical and leadership courses, including Spring Forward) for firefighters entering the supervisory promotion process for promotion to Crew Manager.</li> <li>Run and evaluate a further Level 5 coaching course to maintain our cadre of 12 qualified</li> </ul>	ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Organisational Development Manager	30 September 2021	✓	<p><b>Note:</b> The promotion policy and Leadership Academy create 'talent pools' at all levels which allows us to identify talented individuals and front load their development so they are ready to take up roles with a substantial part of the required development already in place. These actions therefore also directly contribute to the AFIs regarding <a href="#">capability/capacity</a> and <a href="#">succession planning</a> detailed above.</p> <p><b>Update May 22:</b> Meeting to launch this project taking place 24 May 22.</p> <p><b>Update May 22:</b> Five Avon FRS candidates commenced training</p>
				ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Organisational Development Manager	30 September 2021	✓	
				ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Organisational Development Manager	30 September 2023	➡	
				ACFO – Service Delivery Support	Organisational Development	30 April 2023	➡	

HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
			workplace coaches within the Service.		Manager			programme on 09 May 22.




Outstanding actions carried forward from the 2018/19 action plan (where not already incorporated into the 2021/22 Round 2 action plan above)

HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
<b>Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity</b>								
32	Cause of concern	<p>We acknowledge Avon FRS has recently carried out a cultural review and has a plan in place to improve its organisational culture. But it should act immediately to change staff behaviours. It should also make sure all staff understand equality, diversity and inclusion principles and that this is a routine part of behaviour across the whole organisation.</p> <p><b>Recommendations<sup>5</sup></b> By <b>31 March 2019</b>, the service should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implement the improvements identified from the cultural review;</li> <li>make more staff support networks available; and</li> <li>train all staff in equality, diversity and inclusion.</li> </ul>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create and support spaces for staff to talk by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introducing a shadowing scheme for all new staff;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Director of Corporate Services	HR Manager Deputy Director of Corporate Services	<p>Trial introduced by Sep 20 (delayed until Jan 21 due to COVID-19) January 2022 April 2022</p>	<p><a href="#">State of Fire and Rescue 2019</a> (pp 36-37, 49, 115-119, 124-128) <a href="#">State of Fire and Rescue 2020</a> (pp 24, 41-44)</p> <p>Cultural Change Plan (V5, items 6.7 and 6.8)</p>	<p>Actions to embed our Service values are covered in the “promoting the right values and culture” section above and are therefore not repeated here.</p> <p><b>Update May 20:</b> New Technical Fire Safety (TFS) team each have a mentor. The TFS Manager will be asked to do a case study after three months and share lessons learned with colleagues. Need to understand the different approaches to shadowing, ie in-role or wider organisational context. Looking to trial some shadowing with next wholetime cohort in Sep 20 (now delayed to Jan 21 due to COVID-19 pandemic).</p> <p><b>Update Apr 21:</b> This will be discussed in more detail as part of the Cultural Advocates Working Group to clarify the intention of a shadowing scheme for all staff as distinct from the other provisions in place (coaching, mentoring, workplace buddy/support and shadowing for underrepresented groups as indicated in a previous section). HR will then work with Learning &amp; Development, DICE and Service Delivery to introduce a pilot support scheme for the 15 new wholetime firefighter recruits</p>

<sup>5</sup> In the [press release](#) accompanying the publication of the HMICFRS inspection report for Avon Fire & Rescue Service, HMI Wendy Williams said: “... I recognise that Avon has seen a lot of upheaval over the past year and has been working hard in difficult circumstances. The Service has a new chief fire officer who is keen to improve Avon’s performance, and I am confident that this will translate into a better service under his leadership. We know that it takes time for new approaches to bed in, and longer still to change an organisation’s culture.”

HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
								<p>who graduated in Apr 21. The feedback from this pilot will inform the format of a wider scheme for all new staff.</p> <p><b>Update Sep 21:</b> A meeting has been arranged (04 Oct 21) to discuss the introduction of a shadowing scheme. This meeting will involve examining the project scope and timelines, along with developing key messages and information to circulate to staff and providing open channels for feedback.</p> <p><b>Update Nov 21 (JW-L):</b> The Deputy Director of Corporate Services and Head of Corporate Comms. have initiated the first stage of this project. A member of operational staff will participate in the first 'shadowing' event in Dec 21.</p> <p><b>Update Nov 21 (KS):</b> Mentoring workshops will take place in Feb/Mar 22 to train staff across the organisation. Expressions of interest sought in Oct 21. Plan is for all 48 new Firefighters to be allocated a mentor when they start on station in Apr 22; consideration will be given to those from under-represented groups to ensure the allocated mentor is cognisant of any specific support required.</p> <p><b>Update Jan 22:</b> The Deputy Director of Corporate Services and Head of Corporate Comms. have initiated the first stage of this project. An 'expressions of interest' request was sent to all staff and 31 staff have asked to be placed on the list. A meeting will be held on 11 Jan 22 to discuss next steps.</p> <p><b>Update Jan 22:</b> The Deputy Director of Corporate Services and Head of Corporate Comms.</p>

HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ sense-checking policies to improve tone and language when they come up for review.</li> </ul>	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive	Head of Transformation Team	2020 – 2023	 Cultural Change Plan (V5, item 6.10)	<p>have completed the pairing exercise and produced correspondence to commence the shadowing scheme as of 01 Feb 22. Feedback will be obtained after four weeks to evaluate the effectiveness and benefits of the pilot scheme. It is anticipated an evaluation report will be presented to SLT at its meeting in either Mar 22 or Apr 22.</p> <p><b>Update Jan 20:</b> The Head of Service Transformation took up their role on 01 Jan 20 and is currently in the process of recruiting/appointing a Programme Management Officer. When both roles are in place the process of determining the scope of the team will take place which will incorporate policy review as one of its workstreams, most likely commencing in Apr 20 once further relevant team members/project leads are recruited and appointed.</p> <p><b>Update Mar 20:</b> Programme Management Office manager has been appointed and an analyst should be in post for 01 Apr 20 to begin the process of reviewing and sense-checking policies.</p> <p><b>Update May 20:</b> Following appointment of the Programme Management Officer. a Communication Officer has been appointed in order to engage all staff groups across the Service and a Programme Management Office Analyst has also been appointed and has begun the task of analysing various areas of current work within Avon FRS.</p> <p><b>Update Nov 20:</b> In the preceding months clarity has been provided around the revenue budget for the Transformation Team which has been secured until Apr 23. This</p>



HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
								<p>has allowed further recruitment to take place with a COVID-secure recruitment process held for the roles of Project Manager (Processes) and Project Manager (Policies). These staff have been appointed and by mid-Nov 20 both will have started in role. A governance structure/steering group has been developed which is scheduled to have its initial meeting in mid-Dec 20. During the summer months the Transformation Team has been heavily involved with the Head of Procurement and Director of Corporate Services in securing agreement through the Fire Authority for the IT infrastructure business case which will provide the foundations upon which many of the aspirations of the Transformation Programme will sit.</p> <p><b>Update Jan 21:</b> The new Project Managers (PM) for processes and for policies have started in role and the PM (Policies) has started to review all policies currently in use and has identified: (i) which policies require reviewing; and (ii) in which priority order these reviews need to be actioned.</p> <p>A Corporate Policy Framework is being developed and will be used to structure all Avon FRS policies now and in the future. The current objectives being worked towards are</p> <p>a) to implement a new accessible and engaging policies framework with policies that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide flexibility and autonomy;</li> <li>• are easy to access and understand by all;</li> <li>• reduce administrative</li> </ul>

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HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
								<p>burden and unnecessary bureaucracy;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enable supervisors and middle managers to feel empowered to make decisions;</li> <li>are applied fairly, consistently and transparently;</li> <li>are more benevolent (kindness / goodwill) and empathetic;</li> </ul> <p>b) policy mapping, identifying the precise number of policies in existence, who owns them, what is out-of-date and what policies are problematic;</p> <p>c) engagement – focus groups to review a number of issues raised; and</p> <p>d) identify and prioritise ‘quick wins’ versus larger challenges for policies.</p> <p><b>Update Mar 21:</b> Work continues as detailed above which continues at pace by the Project Managers for policies and processes with a work plan in place for policy review whilst ensuring a sense check of each policy when they are reviewed to ensure they reflect the Service values and put staff at the heart of their ethos.</p> <p><b>Update Apr 21:</b> Work continues to progress as detailed above.</p> <p><b>Update Aug 21:</b> The 57 work packages currently in place continue to be progressed sequentially across all areas. A number of attempts have been made to recruit a Digitisation Project Manager to the team in a number of guises with the latest recruitment process closing on 16 Aug 21. In order to progress the upgrades to the Service’s use of</p>

HMICFRS report page ref.	Item	Issue	Our actions and/or response	Lead Director / Statutory Officer	Lead Officer	Timescale	Cross-reference to other plans and documents	Remarks
								<p>FireWatch an expression of interest process is currently being run internally to recruit an existing staff member (or two) on a secondary contract using existing budgets to progress this element of transformation following the review of FireWatch conducted in 2020.</p> <p>A number of key decisions have been progressed via the Transformation Programme Board governance structure and will continue to be the case for the remainder of the programme.</p> <p><b>Update Oct 21:</b> Significant work has been progressed by the policies project team in conjunction with a number of departments and policy owners across the Service as well as engaging external agencies and other FRSs. The team is currently in the progress of identifying a new policy management system for future use within the Service.</p>



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**A1.1** Fire and rescue authorities in England **must** have regard to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England which is issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 21 of the [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#).

**A1.2** The [current National Framework](#) was published in May 2018 and came into force on 1 June 2018. The Framework:

- a) must set out priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of their functions;
- b) may contain guidance to fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of any of their functions;
- c) may contain any other matter relating to fire and rescue authorities or their functions that the Secretary of State considers appropriate.

**A1.3** Section 7 of the [National Framework](#) deals with inspection, intervention and accountability. In particular, section 7.5 of the National Framework states:

*“Fire and rescue authorities **must** give due regard to reports and recommendations made by HMICFRS and – if recommendations are made – prepare, update and regularly publish an action plan detailing how the recommendations are being actioned. If the fire and rescue authority does not propose to undertake any action as a result of a recommendation, reasons for this should be given. When forming an action plan, the fire and rescue authority could seek advice and support from other organisations, for example, the National Fire Chiefs’ Council and the Local Government Association; and, for those areas where a PFCC has responsibility for fire governance, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.”*

**A1.4** This document constitutes our action plan for the purposes of section 7.5 of the National Framework and is published on our public website at:

<https://www.avonfire.gov.uk/our-performance/hmicfrs>



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Term or abbreviation	Meaning
ACFO	Assistant Chief Fire Officer
ADW	Avon Data Warehouse
AF&RS	Avon Fire & Rescue Service
AFA	Avon Fire Authority
AFI	Area for improvement
ARA	Analytical risk assessment
BA	Breathing apparatus
BFS	Business Fire Safety (formerly <i>TFS</i> )
BRR	<i>NFCC</i> Building Risk Review
CAD	Computer-aided design
CFO/CE	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive
CPO	<i>NFCC</i> Central Programme Office
CYP	Children and young people
DE	Direct entry
DICE	Diversity, inclusion, cohesion and equality
DR	Disaster recovery
FAQ	Frequently asked questions
HFSV	Home fire safety visit
HM	Her Majesty's
HMCIFRS	<i>HM</i> Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services
HR	Human Resources
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
HSW	Health, safety and welfare
IT	Information technology
JOL	Joint organisational learning
LTI	Lost time incident
MECC	Make every contact count

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Term or abbreviation	Meaning
MOST	Maintenance of Skills Training
MTI	Medical treatment incident
NatOG	National Operational Guidance
NFCC	National Fire Chiefs' Council
NOL	National operational learning
PDR	Personal (professional) development review
POL	Panel of learning
PORIS	Provision of risk information system
PRSC	Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee
RBIP	Risk-based inspection programme
RRO	Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
RTWI	Return to work interview
SLB	Service Leadership Board
SLL	<i>HMICFRS</i> Service Liaison Lead
SLO	<i>HMICFRS</i> Service Liaison Officer
SLT	Service Leadership Team
SOP	Standard operating procedure
SSRI	Site-specific risk information
TFS	Technical Fire Safety (now <i>BFS</i> )
VA	Vulnerable adults



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**AVON**  
FIRE & RESCUE



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## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 22 June 2022</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>The Treasurer</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>2022/2025 Treasury Management Strategy Update</b>

### 1. **SUMMARY**

The proposed Treasury Management Strategy for the period 2022/2025 is included at **Appendix 1**. This strategy is based on the previously approved 2021/2024 Treasury Management Strategy and provides an updated position for the Fire Authority.

### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/2025.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Treasury Management is defined by CIPFA as “the management of the organisation’s borrowings, investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”
- 3.2 The majority of the Treasury Management functions are undertaken on behalf of the Fire Authority by Bristol City Council (BCC), working with the Head of Finance and Treasurer, in accordance with the terms of the Financial Services Contract. BCC provide all of the financial indices and financial forecasts which support this Treasury Management Strategy. Whilst BCC provide the Fire Authority with its Treasury Management services, the Fire Authority has overall responsibility for the implementation and regular monitoring of its Treasury Management policies and practices.

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Treasury Management Strategy is largely driven by the approved 2022/2025 Capital Strategy, where external borrowings have been projected to fund the majority of the planned capital programme. The Treasurer is working with the Senior Leadership Board to explore all other internal funding sources, including reserves and this updated position will be reported to the Fire Authority during 2022/2023.

#### 4.2 Summary of 2022/2025 Capital Strategy (approved in March 2022)

<b>Funding and Expenditure</b>	<b>2022/23 Programme £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 Programme £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 Programme £'000</b>	<b>Total Programme £'000</b>
Capital Reserve	4,489	302	0	4,791
Capital Receipts (from sale of HQ)	2,692	0	0	2,692
Capital Receipt from house sale	125	0	0	125
Capital Receipt from fleet disposals	25	25	25	75
Prudential borrowing	0	3,211	4,230	7,441
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>7,331</b>	<b>3,538</b>	<b>4,255</b>	<b>15,124</b>
Premises	3,588	1,038	688	5,314
Fleet	2,646	1,834	3,167	7,647
Control	450	0	0	450
ICT	300	300	300	900
Transformation	285	286	0	571
Operational Equipment	62	80	100	242
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>7,331</b>	<b>3,538</b>	<b>4,255</b>	<b>15,124</b>

#### 5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 To ensure effective Treasury Management, the Fire Authority develops and maintains:

- An annual Treasury Management Strategy (Appendix 1).
- A Treasury Management Policy Statement (Appendix 1).
- Suitable Treasury Management practices, setting out the manner in which the Fire Authority will seek to achieve those policies and objectives and outlining how it will manage and control those activities (Appendix 1).

5.2 In developing a Treasury Management Strategy, it is important to align to the CIPFA Code of Practise for Treasury Management in the Public Services (2021) which requires Fire Authorities to demonstrate Value for Money, when using public money. This strategy, in line with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Local Authorities (2021), needs to ensure capital expenditure and investment plans are affordable, prudent, sustainable, in addition to

demonstrating Value for Money. This includes reviewing the long term financing implications of proposed Capital Strategies, including the repayment of loans.

- 5.3 With the Authority projecting to undertake external borrowing from 2023/2024 (for the first time since 2015), a review of available internal funding sources, particularly with regards to reserves has been recommended by the Treasurer. This review of Reserves has been undertaken with the Treasurer and Senior Leadership Board (SLB) in May 2022, with a view of reducing the need for the Fire Authority to take out additional external borrowings within 2023/2024. Further work around the review of capital proposals and prioritisation will take place within the new Capital Programme Steering and Prioritisation Group, which will commence in June 2022.
- 5.4 Consideration has been given this year to whether the Treasury Management Strategy could be simplified and reduced in length. However, reference to the CIPFA Prudential Code for Local Authorities (2021) and the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services (2021) confirms the comprehensive requirements for the Strategy and therefore this strategy cannot be abridged.

## **6. RISKS**

- 6.1 The Fire Authority has the power to invest to finance its Capital Programme, but the Prudential Code, supported by the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice, makes it clear the Fire Authority is responsible to ensure all capital investment plans and borrowing are prudent, affordable and sustainable, together with the need to demonstrate Value for Money. This risk will be managed in accordance with this strategy, the advice from the Fire Authority's external Treasury Management advisors and with the review and prioritisation of future capital proposals.
- 6.2 This is consistent with the existing controls and planned mitigating actions relating to this risk (CR20 – Funding and Resource Pressures) within the Corporate Risk Register and further detailed information on key risks is captured within the attached Strategy document. The organisation will act in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy and Policy Statement; Treasury Management practices and the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services.

## **7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The Authority is required by section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to such guidance as the Secretary of State may issue; and to the Code of Practice contained in the document entitled “Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes” published by CIPFA.

7.2 Under section 12 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Authority has the power to invest for “any purpose relevant to its functions” and “for the purposes of the prudent management of its financial affairs”. The Fire Authority must determine its Treasury Management decisions prudently and comply with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Local Authorities (2021) and the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services (2021).

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

a) 2021/2024 Fire Authority Treasury Management Strategy.

## **9. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Treasury Management Strategy, Policy Statement and Glossary of Treasury Management definitions.

## **10. REPORT CONTACT**

Claire Bentley - Head of Finance  
Ollie Lincoln - Interim Financial Accountant

# Avon Fire Authority

## TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY & POLICY STATEMENT

**2022/23 – 2024/25**

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this Strategy is to provide a plan for the management of the Fire Authority's borrowing, investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.
2. The Fire Authority regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its Treasury Management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of Treasury Management activities will focus on their risk implications for the Fire Authority.
3. Effective Treasury Management will provide support towards the achievement of the Fire Authority's approved business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving Value for Money in Treasury Management and to employing suitable, comprehensive performance management techniques within the context of effective risk management.

### **Key Principles and Objectives of a Treasury Management Strategy**

4. The key principles and objectives of a robust Treasury Management Strategy are:
  - To support the Fire Authorities strategic priorities approved within the Service Plan and other Strategies, with particular reference to the Fire Authority's proposed Capital Strategy.
  - To ensure Value for Money is attained on public spending with regards to Treasury Management activities.
  - To take a prudent and sustainable approach to the proposed Capital Programme and funding sources, to ensure this programme is affordable

within the approved Annual Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

- To ensure ethical investment is adopted in all investments, where possible.
  - To manage and minimise risk to public funds.
  - To accord to the required CIPFA prudential indicators (contained within the CIPFA Prudential Code), to ensure external borrowings on capital expenditure are affordable, prudent and sustainable. This ensures the Fire Authority are following professional good practice.
  - To ensure the Treasury Management function and its activities will be undertaken with openness and transparency, honesty, integrity and accountability.
  - To ensure the Fire Authority has the required liquidity to undertake its activities, including funding the approved Capital Programme.
  - To utilise all available internal funding sources, before taking on additional external debt, to reduce risk and to ensure an affordable and sustainable approach is being adopted.
5. Under section 12 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Authority has the power to invest for 'any purpose relevant to its functions' and 'for the purposes of the prudent management of its financial affairs'.
  6. The effective management and control of risk are prime objectives of the Treasury Management Strategy for the Fire Authority. It is important for a public sector organisation to consider its appetite for risk. Within this strategy, the Fire Authority prioritises the safeguarding of its capital assets, through the repayment of loans and annual interest, rather than to maximise investment return. Whilst Value for Money (VfM) will always be considered, a balance needs to be struck with a keen responsibility for public money. This approach is in line with best practice and the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the public sector.
  7. The Fire Authority has complied with this Treasury Management Strategy and external borrowing to fund the Capital Programme has continued to be deferred to date. This has been achieved by utilising internal sources of funding, mainly relating to the unused capital receipt from the sale of the previous HQ, (which equated to £8m) and underspends from previous Capital Programmes. As noted, within the 2022/2025 Capital Programme, additional external borrowing may need to commence towards the end of 2023/24, but this will be subject to a review of reserves by the Treasurer and the Senior Leadership Board.
  8. Further information on the Treasury Management Strategy, including the Fire Authority's Investment Strategy and its approach to borrowing can be found below.



## **Treasury Management Policy Statement**

9. The Fire Authority defines its Treasury Management activities as:
  - The management of the Fire Authority's borrowings, investments and cash flows.
  - Its banking, money market and capital market transactions.
  - The effective control of the risks associated with those activities.
  - The pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.
10. The Fire Authority regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the Fire Authority.
11. The Fire Authority acknowledges that effective Treasury Management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principals of achieving Value for Money (VfM) in Treasury Management, and to employing suitable comprehensive performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.
12. The Fire Authority's high level policies for borrowing and investments are:
  - The Fire Authority's borrowing will be affordable, sustainable and prudent and consideration will be given to the management of interest rate risk and refinancing risk and VfM. The source from which the borrowing is taken and the type of borrowing should allow the Fire Authority transparency and control over its debt.
  - The Fire Authority will always identify and where possible seek to utilise all internal sources of funding in the first instance, before seeking additional external borrowings.
  - The Fire Authority's primary objective in relation to investments remains the security of capital. The liquidity or accessibility of the Fire Authority's investments followed by the yield earned on investments remain important but are secondary considerations.

## **Treasury Management Practices**

13. The Treasury Management function is undertaken on behalf of the Fire Authority by Bristol City Council (BCC), in conjunction with the Finance Team, under the terms of a Financial Services Contract. The Head of Finance and Financial Accountant work with the BCC Treasury Management lead to receive regular updates and to provide up to date briefings to the Treasurer.
14. Treasury Management practices include key issues such as Risk Management, Performance Management and reporting and budgeting arrangements. These practices will be undertaken by the Head of Finance and the Financial

Accountant role, working with the BCC technical leads during 2022/23. The Treasurer will review these practices on an annual basis.

### **Statutory & CIPFA Code Requirements**

15. The Fire Authority is required to adhere to the Local Government Act 2003 and by regulation 24 of The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003, to have regard to any prevailing CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice.
16. The Fire Authority must determine its Treasury Management decisions prudently and comply with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (2021) and the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services (2021).
17. The Fire Authority must be able to monitor and review its ability to borrow and invest effectively, demonstrating Value for Money and affordability, whilst effectively managing its risk.
18. In considering additional external borrowing, the CIPFA Prudential Code requires authorities to self-regulate the affordability, prudence and sustainability of their capital expenditure and borrowing plans, by setting estimates and limits, and by publishing actuals, for a range of prudential indicators. The Prudential Code has been developed alongside the Treasury Management Code and it is important for the Fire Authority to be aware of the interaction between the two codes. Compliance with both codes is a statutory requirement for local authorities in the UK.
19. As confirmed within the 2022/25 approved Capital Strategy, the Prudential Code recognises that, in making its capital investment decisions, the Fire Authority must take into consideration its strategic objectives included in its Service Plan. The code allows the Fire Authority to borrow external funding as part of its funding options evaluation, to ensure Value for Money.

### **Existing Fire Authority Loans**

20. At present, the Fire Authority has loans totalling £7m owed to the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) as shown below.

Loan Period (years)	Start date	End date	Financial year		Interest rate
15	05/03/2015	05/03/2030	2029/30	£3,500,000	2.99%
25	05/03/2015	05/03/2040	2039/40	£3,500,000	3.33%

These loans are provided on an interest only basis and additional repayment estimates are included within the revenue budgets of the Service to enable repayment of these loans when due. The repayment of the capital loans will need to be funded through the Fire Authority earmarked reserves and this is a key priority for future budget setting and financial planning. The Treasurer and SLB will review the Reserves position on an annual basis and review the affordability of proposed Capital Programmes, within the Capital Programme Steering and Prioritisation Group.

### **Economic Forecast**

21. Bristol City Council (BCC), the Fire Authority's Treasury Management advisors, in conjunction with their professional advisors, provide economic forecasts and interest rate movement forecasts to the Fire Authority.
22. The last economic forecast, provided in April 2022, advised the following:
  - With inflation set to keep rising, households are in for a prolonged period of negative real wage growth.
  - CPI inflation is expected to peak at around 8.3% in April/ May 2022 and will be expected to stay above 7.0% for most of 2022 and above 3.0% for most of 2023.
  - Job vacancies increased to a new record high of 1.3 million in February 2022 and have maintained an upward pressure on wage growth.
  - After the Bank of England became the first major western central bank to put interest rates up in this inflationary upswing in December 2021, it has quickly followed up this 0.15% rise by a further three 0.25% rises (in February, March and May 2022) to 1.0%, in what is very likely to be a series of increases during 2022.
23. Since BCC's April forecast, global inflationary pressures have intensified sharply and concerns about further supply chain disruption have also risen, both due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and to Covid-19 developments in China. In the UK, low unemployment (3.8%), Brexit and record high job vacancies have caused additional supply-chain difficulties. Inflation is currently at 9% and the Bank of England now expects inflation to peak at around 10% this year.

### **Treasury Management Borrowing Approach**

24. The main reason the Fire Authority needs to undertake external borrowing is to fund the approved 2022-2025 Capital Programme. As shown in the main report to the Capital Strategy, the Fire Authority has agreed projected prudential borrowings of up to £7.441m over the next 3 years. This assumes there is no slippage on the 2022/23 Capital Programme. To ensure Value for Money and affordability, the financing of the Capital Programme will be through the utilisation of usable reserves, thereby reducing the cost of borrowing to the Fire Authority.

25. In line with the Treasury Management Strategy, the following approach to borrowing will be applied:
- The Fire Authority will take the most appropriate form of borrowing depending on the prevailing interest rates at the time. This information will be supplied through the Treasury Management SLA provided by Bristol City Council (BCC). Working with BCC and the Finance Team, the Treasurer, under delegated powers, will secure the most appropriate external borrowing, in line with Value for Money principles.
  - The strategy of deferring borrowing by utilising all internal funding sources, including usable reserves and reducing investment balances has been applied throughout 2021/22. This approach will continue to be applied in future years until balances are reduced to adequate liquidity requirements, unless it was felt that there was a significant risk of a sharp rise in interest rates.
26. The Fire Authority's borrowing strategy will consider new borrowing in the following ways:
- The cheapest borrowing will be utilising internal cash and reserve balances.
  - Public Works Loan Board (WPLB) loans for up to 10 years where rates are expected to be significantly lower than rates for longer periods.
  - PWLB loans in excess of 10 years where rates are considered to be low and offer the Fire Authority the opportunity to lock into low value long-term finance.
  - Long term fixed rate market loans at rates significantly below PWLB rates for the equivalent maturity period (where available) and to maintain an appropriate balance between PWLB and market debt (e.g. Banks/Pension Institutions) in the debt portfolio. PWLB standard interest rates are currently 3% for a 20 year loan.
27. Market debt is currently considered to be less attractive to the Fire Authority than PWLB for the following reasons:
- UK banks are not currently very active in the Local Authority debt market, limiting options.
  - The scale of the Authority's expected borrowings eliminates larger scale funding opportunities (e.g. bond issues) and is likely to deter other lenders, such as commercial banks.
  - PWLB is very accessible – market debt (which may have a more attractive headline rate) will involve additional fees, considerable support and documentation, ongoing conditions to be met and time to drawdown the funds.
  - Market rates are not published as they are commercially sensitive – to obtain a rate, the Authority would need to commence an application, obtain a credit rating, etc.
28. The most significant consideration from a Treasury Management perspective is the timing and duration of additional external borrowing. Should borrowing be

deemed advantageous, the Fire Authority may seek to borrow long-term loans (25 years) below a target rate of 3.00% and short-term medium term (10–15 years) loans below a target rate of 2.50%.

29. There is uncertainty over future interest rate increases and as such the Fire Authority will take a cautious approach to its Treasury Management Strategy. This uncertainty is compounded by global volatility arising from the war in Ukraine and the current surge in inflationary pressures in the UK and elsewhere. As the Bank of England's strategy to tackle this inflationary pressure (interest rate rises against quantitative tightening) is not yet clear, interest rate predictions are even more uncertain and this uncertainty should be factored into the Fire Authority's borrowing approach.
30. Temporary Borrowing – The Fire Authority will seek to undertake temporary borrowing loans (less than one year) to cover day-to-day cashflow requirements as and when required. Such a decision will be based on the availability of and access to cash in deposit accounts and other money market funds, for example held by Bristol City Council, to consider the most efficient method for the Fire Authority.

### **Treasury Management Investment Strategy**

31. The current Investment Strategy is to invest all day to day cash balances in Bristol City Council (BCC), the Fire Authority's Financial Services provider, which effectively is at zero risk. Interest is then paid on these balances based on the 7 day LIBID rate which is currently 0.06%. In addition, the Fire Authority's strategy is to reduce additional new borrowings where possible and fund some of the existing capital programme by utilising all available internal sources of funding, including reserves. This enables the Fire Authority to reduce its cash balances and thus reduce counterparty risk exposure, as well as providing a hedge against the fall in investments returns.
32. The Fire Authority's investment approach remains consistent, with the primary objectives of:
  - i. Safeguarding the re-payment of the principal and interest of its investments on time.
  - ii. Liquidity – adequate cash resources, borrowing arrangements, overdraft or standby facilities are available, to achieve the Fire Authority's business/service objectives.
  - iii. The level of investment return.
33. The primary principle governing the Fire Authority's investment criteria is the security of its investments, although the yield or return on the investment is also a key consideration for Value for Money considerations.
34. One of the key principles of a robust Treasury Management Strategy is to invest ethically. AFA is working towards this principle.

35. As part of the Treasury Management service BCC maintain a counterparty list in compliance with the following criteria. The criteria is monitored and will be revised if necessary and submitted to the Fire Authority for approval.
36. The minimum rating criteria, which is set by BCC, uses the lowest common denominator method of selecting counterparties and applying limits. This means that the application of the agreed minimum criteria will apply to the lowest available rating for any institution. For instance, if an institution is rated by two agencies, one meets the minimum criteria, the other does not, that institution will fall outside the lending criteria. This is in compliance with a CIPFA Treasury Management Panel recommendation in March 2009 and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice.
37. Credit rating information is supplied to BCC, by their treasury consultants, on all active counterparties that comply with the criteria below. Any counterparty failing to meet the criteria would be omitted from the counterparty (dealing) list maintained by BCC. Any rating changes, rating watches (notification of a likely change), rating outlooks (notification of a possible longer term change) are provided to BCC's officers almost immediately after they occur and this information is considered when undertaking Treasury Management decisions. For instance, a negative rating watch applying to a counterparty at the minimum approved criteria could result in that counterparty being suspended from use, with all others being reviewed in light of market conditions and the applicable action taken by BCC's Treasury Management team.
38. The criteria for providing a pool of high quality investment counterparties (both Specified and Non-specified investments) is:
- Banks 1 - Good Credit Quality – BCC only use banks which:
    - i. Are UK Banks;
    - ii. Are non-UK and domiciled in a country which has a minimum Sovereign long term rating of AA-.

And have, as a minimum, the following Fitch (or equivalent Moody's and Standard and Poor's) credit ratings (where rated):

    - i. Short Term – *F1 (or equivalent)*
    - ii. Long Term – *A- (or equivalent)*
  - Banks 2 – Part nationalised UK banks – eg: NatWest Group Plc (including subsidiaries). This bank can be included if they continue to be part nationalised or they meet the ratings in Banks 1 above.
  - Banks 3 – BCC's own banker for transactional purposes if the bank falls below the above criteria, although in this case balances will be minimised in both monetary size and time.
  - Bank Subsidiary and Treasury Operations – BCC will use these where the parent bank has the necessary ratings outlined above.
  - Building Societies – BCC will use all Societies which:

i. Meet the ratings for banks outlined above;

- Money Market Funds (CNAV - Constant Net Asset Value) – AAA rated (sterling)
- Money Market Funds (LVAV - Low Volatility Asset Value) – AAA rated (sterling)
- Money Market Funds (VNAV - Variable Net Asset Value) – AAA rated (sterling)
- UK Government (including gilts and the DMADF)
- Local Authorities, Parish Councils etc.

BCC apply a limit of £100m to the use of Non-Specified investments. The limit applied for the Fire Authority is £10m, as approved by the Fire Authority in previous Treasury Management Strategies.

39. Country and sector considerations - Due care will be taken to consider the country, group and sector exposure of investments. In part the country selection will be chosen by the credit rating of the Sovereign state in Banks 1 above, as per confirmation from BCC. In addition:

- no more than 25% will be placed with any non-UK country at any time;
- limits in place above will apply to Group companies;
- Sector limits will be monitored regularly for appropriateness.

40. Use of additional information other than credit ratings – Additional requirements under the Code requires the Authority to supplement credit rating information. Whilst the application of credit ratings provides the pool of appropriate counterparties, before making any specific investment decisions, BCC's officers will also apply additional operational market information. This additional market information (for example Credit Default Swaps (CDS), negative rating watches/outlooks) will be applied to compare the relative security of differing investment counterparties.

Time and Monetary Limits applying to Investments – Based upon the time and monetary limits set by BCC for institutions on their Counterparty List the time and monetary limits for the Fire Authority are as follows (these will cover both Specified and Non-Specified Investments). The table illustrates the long-term credit ratings:

	Fitch (or equivalent)	Money Limit £m	Time Limit
Banks 1 Higher Quality	AAA	£5m	5 years
Banks 1 Medium Quality	AA-	£2m	3 years
Banks 1 Lower Quality	A-	£1m	1 year
Banks 2 – part nationalised	n/a	£15m	1 year

Limit 3 Category – Bristol City Council’s banker (not meetings bank1 / 2 )	-	£100k	liquid
Other Institutions limit*		£10m	1 year
DMADF	AAA	unlimited	1 year
Local authorities		£10m	5 years
Money Market Funds (Including CNAV, LVNAV, VNAV)	AAA	£10m	liquid

\*The Other Institution Limit will be for Gilt and Supranational investments. These are all considered high quality names. No limit applies to investments with BCC.

41. In the normal course of cash flow operations, it is expected that both Specified and Non-specified investments will be utilised for the control of liquidity, as both categories allow for short-term investments.
42. The use of longer-term instruments (greater than one year from inception to repayment) will fall in the Non-specified investment category. These instruments will only be used where the Fire Authority’s liquidity requirements are safeguarded. This will also be limited by the longer-term investment limits.
43. Economic Investment Considerations - Expectations on shorter-term interest rates, on which investment decisions are based, are that rates will rise. The Fire Authority’s investment and borrowing decisions are based on comparisons between the rises priced into market rates with those forecast by BCC and their advisers.
44. The Fire Authority will avoid locking into longer term deals while investment rates are down at historically low levels, unless attractive rates are available with counterparties of particularly high creditworthiness, which make longer term deals worthwhile and within the risk parameters set.
45. The criteria for choosing counterparties set out above provide a sound approach to investment in “normal” market circumstances. Whilst Members have approved this criteria above, under exceptional market conditions the Treasurer may temporarily restrict further investment activity to those counterparties considered of higher credit quality than the minimum criteria set out for approval. These restrictions will remain in place until the market returns to “normal” conditions. Similarly the time periods for investments will be restricted.
46. The Fire Authority normally invests with BCC or the PWLB, who are considered to be zero risk, although investments have previously been made with counterparties classified under category “Bank 1” identified above. Other restrictions could be the greater use of the Debt Management Deposit Account Facility (DMADF – a Government body which accepts Local Authority deposits), Money Market Funds, guaranteed deposit facilities and strongly rated institutions offered support by the UK Government.



## Key Risks

47. Making investments in the Authority's own name means that the Authority bears the risk of any counterparty failure. This risk will be managed in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy and with advice from BCC and external Treasury Management advisors. The Fire Authority will act in accordance with the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy and Policy and CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management. There are several risks attached to a Treasury Management Strategy, with the key risks being identified as follows:

- **Interest Rate exposures** – this is concerned with the balance between fixed and variable rate loans and the associated risk in interest changes.
- **Maturity Structures** – concerning the profile of loan repayment periods and associated risks of refinancing.
- **Management of counterparty risk** - to minimise the risk of loss on investments.
- **Liquidity** - to ensure adequate availability of funds to meet short term needs as they arise.
- **Return on investments** – to set out investment return targets and performance.

Given the current economic and financial market turmoil as a result of Coronavirus, significant inflationary pressures in the UK and uncertainty surrounding interest rates, the current forecasts included within the attached strategy may need to be revised. Members will be kept updated as part of the Fire Authority reporting process.

## Mitigation of Risks

48. The aforementioned risks will be mitigated as follows:

- There are risks associated with Treasury Management external funding and the associated financial impact. The risks are reduced by ensuring that:
  - Strategic planning is undertaken to demonstrate the affordability of the Fire Authority's proposed Capital Programme. This will include a comprehensive review of all future capital proposals, which may incorporate re-prioritising capital expenditure.
  - Treasury Management option appraisals are undertaken for all significant capital projects to demonstrate Value for Money. This will involve asset management planning to support capital investment decisions.
  - A new Capital Programme Steering and Prioritisation Group will be introduced during 2022/23.

- Bristol City Council (BCC) provide regular, updated technical Treasury Management services, through the Fire Authority's Financial Services Contract. The Head of Finance monitors the information provided by BCC on a regular basis and provides half-yearly updates to the Treasurer, or where necessary more regular briefings to the Treasurer, where there are significant changes to the key Treasury Management assumptions and/or interest and borrowing rates.

## **Glossary of Key Terms – Treasury Management**

### **AAA rating**

The highest grade assigned to a debt obligation by a rating agency. It indicates an unusually strong capacity to pay interest and repay principal. Also called 'Triple A', this rating is reserved for instruments that carry virtually no risk, e.g. government gilts.

### **Affordable Capital Expenditure Limit**

The amount that the Fire Authority can afford to allocate to capital expenditure, as approved within its three-year Capital Strategy.

### **Authorised Limit for External Debt**

This is a limit for total Fire Authority external debt, as set by the Fire Authority, based on debt levels and plans.

### **Base Rate**

The interest rate for the UK as set each month by the Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of England.

### **Capital Expenditure**

Expenditure on or for the creation of fixed assets that meets the definition of Capital Expenditure under the accounting rules as set-out in the annual Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) and for which the Fire Authority are able to borrow.

### **Capital Financing Requirement**

This is a Prudential Indicator that can be derived from the information in the Fire Authority's Balance Sheet. It generally represents the underlying need to borrow for capital expenditure.

### **CIPFA**

CIPFA is the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy who produce guidance, codes of practice, and policy documents for Local Councils, including Fire Authorities.

**CNAV** (Constant Net Asset Value) are short-term MMFS. Funds must invest 99.5% in government assets. Units in the fund are purchased or redeemed at a constant price rounded to the nearest percentage point.

### **Counterparty**

Another organisation involved in a deal i.e. if the Fire Authority enters a deal with a bank, then the bank would be referred to as the "Counterparty".

### **CPI**

The Consumer Price Index – calculated by collecting and comparing prices of a set basket of goods and services as brought by typical consumer, at regular intervals over time.

### **DMADF**

Stands for Debt Management Account Deposit Facility. The Debt Management Account Deposit Facility is a facility offered to pre-authorised UK Local Authority Treasury Managers, wishing to deposit funds on a fixed term basis with central government. This ensures maximum safety, liquidity and flexibility for Local Authorities and, at the same time, offers a possible cost saving for the Government's own cash management operations.

## **Equity**

A share in a company with limited liability. It generally enables the holder to share in the profitability of the company through dividend payments and capital gain.

## **Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's (S&P)**

All three are credit ratings agencies, considered the 'big three' within the industry. They provide long-term and short-term investment ratings. These ratings are used as an evaluation of credit risk of a prospective debtor, predicting their ability to pay back the debt and an implicit forecast of the likelihood of the debtor defaulting.

Fitch's long-term ratings range from: AAA to D (AAA representing the lowest risk rating)  
Fitch's short-term ratings range from: F1+ to D (F1+ representing the lowest risk rating)  
Moody's long-term ratings range from: Aaa to C (Aaa representing the lowest risk rating)  
Moody's short-term ratings range from: P-1 to Not Prime (P-1 representing the lowest risk rating)  
Standard & Poor's long-term ratings range from: AAA to D (AAA representing the lowest risk rating)  
Standard & Poor's short-term ratings range from: A-1+ to D (A-1 representing the lowest risk rating)

The minimum Sovereign AA- rating is taking the lowest credit rating of a country from the 3 main rating agencies (Fitch, Moody's and S&P). The sovereign rating of Banks domiciled outside of the UK, require a minimum sovereign rating of AA- to qualify to invest.

## **Fixed Rate Funding/Investments**

Funding or investments where the interest rate that applies to payments or receipts of interest on the funding or investments is fixed and does not change.

## **Gilts**

Gilts are bonds (i.e. debt certificates) that are issued (i.e. sold) by the UK Government. When they issue gilts, the Government sets the interest rate that applies to the gilt, sets when they will repay the value of the gilt and it agrees to make interest payments at regular intervals until the gilt is repaid or redeemed. Gilts are traded in the financial markets with the price varying depending on the interest rate applicable to the gilt, when the gilt will be repaid (i.e. when it will mature), on base rate expectations, and on market conditions.

## **Gilt Funds**

Pooled fund investing in bonds guaranteed by the UK government.

## **Gilt Yields**

A gilt yield is the effective rate of return that someone buying a gilt at the current market price will receive on that gilt. Since the market price of a gilt can vary at any time, the yield will also vary.

## **Government Money Market Fund**

Money Market Funds that invest solely in government securities, or reverse repurchase agreements backed by government securities.

## **Incremental Impact of Capital Investment Decisions**

These are Prudential Indicators that reflect the impact on Council Tax and Housing Rents of movements in projected and estimated capital expenditure within and between financial years.

## **LIBID**

Stands for 'London Interbank Bid Rate'. It is the average rate that banks are willing to pay for euro-currency deposits in the London interbank market.

**LVNAV** (Low Volatility Net Asset Value) are short-term MMFS. Funds are primarily invested in money market instruments, deposits and other short-term assets. Units in the fund are purchased or redeemed at a constant price so long as the value of the underlying assets do not deviate by more than 0.2% (20bps) from par (i.e. 1.00).

### **MHCLG**

Stands for The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (formerly the Department for Communities and Local Government).

### **Money Market Funds (MMF)**

A well rated highly diversified pooled investment vehicle whose assets mainly comprise of short term instruments. It is very similar to a unit trust, however in a MMF. MMFs are split into four types; CNAV, LVNAV, Short-term VNAV & Standard VNAV.

### **Net Borrowing Requirement**

This is the difference between the Fire Authority's net external borrowing and its capital financing requirement. Under the Prudential Code the Council's net external borrowing should not, except in the short term, exceed its capital financing requirement. The Net Borrowing Requirement should therefore normally be a negative figure.

### **Non-Specified & Specified Investments**

Specified investments are sterling investments of a maturity period of not more than 364 days, or those which could be for a longer period but where the Service has the right to be repaid within 364 days if it wishes. Non-specified investments are any other type of investment, beyond one year.

### **Operational Boundary**

This is a level of debt set by the Fire Authority, which the Fire Authority's debt levels should not normally exceed during normal operations.

### **Prudential Code**

Fire Authorities are required to comply with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities that supports Local Authorities in taking decisions on capital investment.

The Key objectives of the Code are to ensure, that

- Local Authorities and Fire Authorities capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable;
- Treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with these plans;
- Local strategic planning, asset management planning and proper option appraisal are supporting these capital investment decisions.

These requirements include the production of Prudential Indicators.

### **Prudential Indicators**

Prudential Indicators are set-out in the Prudential Code. These are a set of financial indicators and limits that are calculated in order to demonstrate that Councils and Fire Authorities capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable. These prudential indicators are used to cover the categories of affordability, prudence, capital spending, external debt/borrowing and treasury management.

### **PWLB**

The Public Works Loans Board is a government agency and part of the Debt Management Office. The PWLB provides loans to local authorities and other specified bodies.

### **PWLB Rates**

The interest rates chargeable by the Public Works Loans Board for loans. The rates for fixed rate loans are determined by the day on which the loan is agreed. The rates to be charged by the PWLB for loans are set each day based on gilt yields at the close of business on the preceding business day. PWLB rates are typically the benchmark used by local authorities though may not always be more attractive than market debt.

**Short-term VNAV** (Variable Net Asset Value) MMFs are primarily invested in money market instruments, deposits and other MMFs. Funds are subject to looser liquidity rules than Public Debt CNAV and LVNAV funds. Units in the funds are purchased or redeemed at a variable price calculated to the equivalent of at least four significant figures (e.g. 10,000.00).

**Standard VNAV** MMFs are funds that are primarily invested in money market instruments, deposits and other short-term assets. Funds are subject to looser liquidity rules than Public Debt CNAV and LVNAV funds and may invest in assets of much longer maturity. Units in the funds are purchased or redeemed at a variable price calculated to the equivalent of at least four significant figures (e.g. 10,000.00).

### **Supranational Bonds**

Bonds issued by supranational bodies, e.g. European investment bank. These Bonds – also known as Multilateral Development Banks bonds – are generally AAA rated and behave similarly to GILTS, but pay a higher yield (spread) given their relative liquidity when compared with GILTS.

### **Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (2021)**

This is a code of practice for Council Treasury Management activities, which is produced by CIPFA.

### **Treasury Management Practices**

This is a Fire Authority document which sets out the organisations policies and procedures for Treasury Management, as required by the CIPFA “Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice” (2021).

### **UK Municipal Bonds Agency**

A Local Government Funding Agency that exists primarily to reduce councils' capital long term financing costs in the United Kingdom. It allows local authorities to diversify funding sources and borrow at a lower cost than is available from Central Government via the Public Works Loan Board.

### **Yield**

The yield is the effective rate of return on an investment.

### **Base Rate**

The interest rate for the UK as set each month by the Monetary Policy Committee (“MPC”) of the Bank of England.

## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>22 June 2022</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>The Clerk</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Fire Authority meeting dates and Forward Plan 2022/23</b>

## 1. **SUMMARY**

- The purpose of this report is to present for Fire Authority approval the proposed schedule of meetings for the Municipal Year 2022/23.
- In addition, the report presents a revised Forward Plan of Key Decisions, which sets out the anticipated major decisions which will need to be taken by Members in the immediate future.

## 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- Approve the proposed Schedule of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2022/23
- Note the revised Forward Plan 2022/23

## 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1. At the December 2021 meeting, the Fire Authority approved provisional meeting dates for the 2022/23 Municipal Year. Those dates have been amended to ensure that they align with key financial and other deadlines.

## 4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The cost of community venue for meetings will be met from existing budgets.

## 5. **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1. The proposed dates for the Municipal Year 2022/23 are set out in the table below.

Meeting	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23
<b>AFA</b>	Wed 22				Wed 5		Wed 14		Fri 17	Wed 29		
<b>AGEC</b>	Wed 29			Thu 22		Tue 22				Wed 22		
<b>LPB</b>		Wed 20						Thu 26				
<b>P&amp;C</b>	Thu 9			Fri 16			Fri 9			Fri 3		
<b>PRSC</b>		Fri 15			Fri 7			Wed 18			Thu 20	
<b>Member Briefing</b>		Fri 8				Fri 4		Fri 20			Fri 14	

- 5.2. The dates proposed follow the previous arrangements with the Fire Authority meeting on a Wednesday, and committee meetings later in the week, where possible.
- 5.3. It is proposed that Member training (Member Briefing) will take place on separate dates to enable sufficient focus on key issues for individual and organisational development.
- 5.4. Meetings take place at the main conference room at the Police & Fire Headquarters in Portishead or, at the training facility in Severn Park, Avonmouth. Wherever possible, meetings will be rotated at venues across the Fire Authority area to include Fire Stations at Weston-Super-Mare, Temple, Hicks Gate, Bath, Nailsea and a suitable community venue in South Gloucestershire.
- 5.5. The proposed dates will be checked against the key meetings of the Unitary Authorities when these are available to avoid any clashes, with any necessary adjustments reported to a future meeting of the Fire Authority.
- 5.6. The Clerk presents to Fire Authority meetings a Forward Plan to enable Members to have a strategic overview of the issues that they will need to consider. It also enables Members via their Committees to undertake pre-decision scrutiny, providing an opportunity to enhance the governance arrangements of the Fire Authority.



- 5.7 The Forward Plan highlights key decisions that need to be discussed in the immediate future and is subject to an element of flexibility regarding contents (**Appendix 1**).

**6. RISKS**

Ensuring that Members have sufficient notice of meeting dates and key decisions which need to be taken ensures that there is effective governance and manages any risk that governance is not sufficiently robust.

**7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. The meeting schedule and Forward Plan ensures that key dates in the annual governance cycle are met, and robust and transparent governance arrangements are in place to ensure effective service delivery.
- 7.2. Under Standing Orders, the Fire Authority shall meet at least once a quarter and the Annual Meeting of the Fire Authority shall be held each year after the annual meetings of the constituent Authorities and within a month (paragraph 1.1.2).
- 7.3. To ensure equality and diversity, appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that venues have suitable access for those with a disability who need or wish to attend the Fire Authority's meetings.

**8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**9. APPENDIX**

1. Forward Plan 2022/23

**10. REPORT CONTACT**

Amanda Brown, Clerk to the Fire Authority, ext. 347

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## Avon Fire Authority

### Forward Plan 2022-23 - Key Decisions

#### 1. Fire Authority

Meeting Date	Item / issue requiring decision	Exempt Item? (Yes/No/Part)	Contact Officer for Further Details
5 Oct 22	2022/23 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report	No	Treasurer
	2022/23 Capital Programme Update	No	Treasurer and Directors
	Local Pension Board Annual Report	No	Independent Chair of Local Pension Board and Director of Corporate Services
	Forward Plan 2022/23	No	Clerk

#### 2. Audit, Governance & Ethics Committee

The lead Director for this Committee is Angie Feeney, Director of Corporate Services, who is the contact for reports, unless stated in the final column below.

Meeting Date	Item / issue requiring decision	Exempt Item? (Yes/No/Part)	Contact Officer for Further Details
29 Jun 22	External Audit Plan 2022/23	No	Treasurer
	2021/22 Draft Statement of Accounts and Narrative Report	No	Treasurer
	Update on Internal Audit recommendations	No	
	Internal Audit Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Transformation</li> <li>• Follow-up</li> </ul>	No	
	Internal Audit Annual Report (for 2021/22)	No	
	Internal Audit Plan 2022/23 for approval	No	
	Corporate Risk Register including review of Commercial Contracts	Yes	

### 3. People & Culture Committee

The lead Director for this committee is T/ACFO Vaughan Jenkins, Director Service Delivery Support, who is the contact for reports, unless stated in the final column below.

Meeting Date	Item / issue requiring decision	Exempt Item? (Yes/No/Part)	Contact Officer for Further Details
16 Sep 22	HR & Recruitment update	No	
	DICE – Strategy (2022/2024) and cultural change update	No	
	Trauma Risk Incident Management (TRiM) Update	No	
	Quarterly Training Report	No	

### 4. Performance, Review & Scrutiny Committee

The lead Director for this committee is ACFO Steve Imrie, Director Service Delivery, who is the contact for reports, unless stated in the final column below.

Meeting Date	Item / issue requiring decision	Exempt Item? (Yes/No/Part)	Contact Officer for Further Details
15 Jul 22	Performance Report	No	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive
	Transformation Programme Update	No	
	Round 2 HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan	No	
	2022/23 Capital Programme Update	No	Treasurer and Directors
	Grenfell Tower Inquiry Progress Update	No	
	Annual Environmental Report 2021-22	No	
	Collaboration & Partnership Working Update	No	

## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 22 June 2022</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Annual Review of Service Charges 2022/23</b>

### 1. **SUMMARY**

- Approval of proposed charges for 2022/23 is requested in line with Section 18A of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, which allows a Fire and Rescue Authority to charge a person for any action taken by the Authority (with limits on charging set out at section 18B).
- The amount of charges is to be set by the Fire Authority for each financial year and must ensure that the Authority's income from charges does not exceed the cost to the Authority of taking the action for which the charges are imposed. The charges have been increased by 3% from 2021/22 to 2022/23 in line with our inflation assumptions within the Medium Term Financial Plan.

### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- Approve the charging structure set out in **Appendices 1 and 2** with effect from 1 April 2021. That the charges be levied in full in all cases but power be delegated to the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive to remit the whole or part of the charge if, in all the circumstances, he considers it appropriate to do so.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 sets out the services for which a charge may currently be made and the persons who may be charged.

- 3.2. Where the Fire Authority is able to make a charge, it has to decide whether it wishes to do so, and, if it does, it must set the amount of the charge. The Fire Authority has the power to charge different amounts in different circumstances or to charge nothing at all.
- 3.3. A revised schedule of charges, to be applied from April 2022, is included at **Appendices 1 and 2.**

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The financial implications of this report are set out in the appendices attached. The proposed increase of 3% on previous charges aligns with the inflation assumptions made when setting the 2022/23 budget.

#### **5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1. In setting the charges the Fire Authority is required to secure that, taking one financial year with another, its income from charges does not exceed the cost to the Fire Authority of taking the action for which the charges are imposed. The Fire Authority is therefore not able to fix charges with the objective of making a profit.
- 5.2. Further guidance on the definition of a special service charge is provided within the Home Office 'Incident Recording System' (IRS), which states:

Non-fire incidents (also known as Special Service incidents) are incidents requiring the attendance of an appliance or officer. They include, but are not limited to:

- Local emergencies e.g. road traffic incidents, responding to medical emergencies, rescue of persons and/or animals or making areas safe;
  - Major environmental disasters e.g. flooding, hazardous material incidents or spills and leaks;
  - Domestic incidents e.g. persons locked in/out, lift releases;
  - Suicide/attempts;
  - Prior arrangements to attend or assist other agencies, which may include some provision of advice or standing by to tackle an emergency situation.
- 5.3. It should be noted that not all incident types provided within the Home Office IRS definition above are chargeable, although they are classed as a Special Service. For example, by virtue of the limits on charging set out at section 18B of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, a Fire Authority is not authorised to

charge for rescuing individuals or protecting individuals from serious harm in the event of an emergency; emergencies which have occurred as a direct result of severe weather; or emergencies resulting from road traffic incidents, all of which are included within the examples above.

- 5.4. In summary, an incident classed as a Special Service Charge cannot incur a charge if emergency medical assistance is provided, or individuals are rescued or protected from harm.

## 6. **RISKS**

- 6.1 There are no specific risks in relation to this paper

## 7. **LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This paper contains reference to the relevant legal provisions; a link to the legislation can be found here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/21/section/18B>

## 8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Financial records used to calculate charging rates are held within the Finance Department.

## 9. **APPENDICES**

1. Details of Services for which a charge can be made
2. Charging Rates for 2022/23

## 10. **REPORT CONTACT**

Claire Bentley, Head of Finance,

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**Review of Charges**

**Details of Services for which a charge can be made**

Area	Service	Charge?	Criteria / Policy	Differentiate Charge	Charge Basis	Rate
1	Hiring out of Equipment	Yes	N/A	No - but potential	On a cost recovery basis with an administration charge	Sections 1 & 2. Non standard items to be costed on request.
2	Inspection and Testing	Yes	N/A	No	On a cost recovery basis with an administration charge	Section 2. Non standard items to be costed on request
3	Containment and clearance	Yes where no humanitarian issues	CFO	No - but potential	On a cost recovery basis with an administration charge	A combination of Section 1 and 2 charges dependant on additional materials used
4	Provision of Removal of water	Yes where no humanitarian issues	CFO	No - but potential	On a cost recovery basis with an administration charge	Section 1
5	Effecting Entry	Yes where no humanitarian issues	CFO	No - but potential	On a cost recovery basis with an administration charge	Section 4
6	Rescuing Person from Lift	Yes where no humanitarian issues	CFO	No - but potential	On a cost recovery basis with an administration charge	Section 1
7	Rescuing Animals	No	N/A	No	N/A	N/A
8	Provision of documents	Yes - with consideration to the appropriate Acts and Regulations.	N/A	No	On a cost recovery basis with an administration charge on a case by case basis	Section 5 Non standard items to be costed on request
9	Provision of Training	Yes	CFO	No - but potential	On a cost recovery basis with an administration charge	Individually costed in conjunction with service provider
10	Removal of dangerous structures	Yes	CFO	No - but potential	N/A	Sections 1 & 2. Non standard items to be costed on request.
11	Giving of advice	No	N/A	No	N/A	N/A
12	Lifting of incapacitated person	No	N/A	No	N/A	N/A
13	Extinguishing fires at sea	No	N/A	No	N/A	N/A
14	Provision advice or services related to the operation of a regional fire control centre	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Review of Charges**

**Charging Rates for 2022/23**

**Charging Rates for 2022/23**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Actual 2021/22</b>	<b>Proposed 2022/23</b>
<b>Section 1</b> <b>Appliances:</b> Major pumping appliance - charge per hour or part thereof (subject to minimum charge of one hour)*  All other vehicles will be charged at the relevant hourly rate to reflect cost*  NOTE: The above charges are inclusive of personnel, petrol, oil, mileage & normal equipment	£473	£487
<b>Section 2</b> Miscellaneous equipment*	Current Cost	Current Cost
<b>Section 3</b> <b>Other materials: e.g.</b> Spill safe (per litre) Foam concentrate(per litre) Radiation gloves (per pair) Chemical protection suits (each) Gas T suits (each) 45 gallon drum overbag 5 gallon drum overbag Salvage sheets HAZMAT bag Charges updated regularly to reflect changes in cost	Current Cost Current Cost Current Cost Current Cost Current Cost Current Cost Current Cost Current Cost Current Cost	Current Cost Current Cost Current Cost Current Cost Current Cost Current Cost Current Cost Current Cost Current Cost
<b>Section 4</b> <b>Gaining access:</b> Fixed charge*	£196	£202
<b>Section 5</b> <b>FIRE INVESTIGATION/ FIRE SAFETY (NO VAT) - Minimum *</b> Incident Report Fire Investigation Report Interview (per officer for up to 1 hour - relevant hourly rate per officer chargeable thereafter) Specialist or extended reports to be costed on an hourly basis to recover costs. Client to be consulted in advance	No charge £122 £122	No charge £126 £126

\* plus £34 administration fee

## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 22 June 2022</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>The Treasurer</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>2021/2022 Revenue Financial Report</b>

### 1. **SUMMARY**

This report provides the Fire Authority with the final Revenue budget results for 2021/2022.

### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Note the final Income and Expenditure position for the Revenue Budget.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In line with the 2021/2022 Annual Budget approved by the Fire Authority in February 2021, this report outlines the final revenue financial position as at the 31 March 2022.

### 4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The March 2022 revenue budget shows a break-even position for the Fire Authority. This is a very positive position for the Fire Authority and the details are shown within **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2**.

### 5. **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 This year-end budget position is in line with the annual forecast presented to the Fire Authority in March 2022.

- 5.2 The Finance Department, working closely with Bristol City Council (BCC), via the BCC Financial Service Contract, are in the process of producing the draft Statement of Accounts for 2021/2022. These draft Statement of Accounts will be reviewed by the Treasurer, before sharing with the Audit, Governance and Ethics Committee (AGEC) on the 29 June 2022.
- 5.3 The Fire Authority's External Auditors will review these draft Statement of Accounts in detail from July to October 2022, to enable the audited Statement of Accounts to be presented to AGEC in November 2022, which is in line with the national accounts deadline.
- 5.4 When the audited Statement of Accounts have been approved by AGEC, the accounts will be shared on the Fire Authority's website.

## **6. RISKS**

- 6.1 This report primarily relates to Corporate Risk 20 (Funding and Resource Pressure Risk), within the Corporate Risk Register. This risk has been minimised due to the effective budget management of the revenue budgets throughout 2021/2022.

## **7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- a) AFA Paper: 30.03.2022 – Paper 14: 2021/2022 Revenue Financial Report.
- b) AFA Paper: 15.12.2021 – Paper 11: 2021/2022 Revenue Financial Report.
- c) AFA Paper: 15.10.2021 – Paper 13: 2021/2022 Revenue Financial Report.
- d) AFA Paper: 10.02.2021 – Paper 9: 2021/2022 Revenue Budget Report.

## **9. APPENDICES**

1. Revenue Financial Summary – 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.
2. Detailed Revenue Financial Summary – 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

**10. REPORT CONTACT**

Danielle Neale, Treasurer.

Financial Appendices – Claire Bentley, Head of Finance.

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**AVON FIRE AUTHORITY****Revenue Financial Summary - 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022**

Income and Expenditure	2021/ 22 Original Annual Budget	2021/22 Revised Annual Budget	Movement on Annual Budget	2021/22 Actual Expenditure	2021/22 Actual Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Income from Councils	-33,280	-33,280	0	-33,090	190
Income from Central Government	-16,246	-17,594	-1,348	-17,623	-29
South West Ambulance Income	-219	-744	-525	-747	-3
Other Income	-235	-250	-15	-335	-84
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-49,980</b>	<b>-51,868</b>	<b>-1,888</b>	<b>-51,795</b>	<b>73</b>
Employees	38,199	38,757	559	38,878	119
Premises	2,467	2,282	-185	2,210	-72
Transport	1,397	1,321	-77	1,259	-62
Supplies and Services	5,594	5,706	112	5,716	10
Investment Fund	1,123	848	-275	848	0
Capital Financing Costs	741	741	0	756	15
Collection Fund Deficit	209	209	0	328	119
Contingency	250	325	75	120	-205
Reserve Transfers	0	1,680	1,680	1,680	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>49,980</b>	<b>51,868</b>	<b>1,888</b>	<b>51,795</b>	<b>-73</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>0</b>

*Note: A minus refers to Income budgets and denotes an underspend*

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**AVON FIRE AUTHORITY****Detailed Revenue Financial Summary - 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022**

Income and Expenditure	2021/22 Original Annual Budget	2021/22 Revised Annual Budget	Movement on Annual Budget	2021/22 Actual Expenditure	2021/22 Actual Variance
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
<b>SECTION A: INCOME:</b>					
Income from Councils	-33,280	-33,280	0	-33,090	190
Income from Central Government	-16,246	-17,594	-1,348	-17,623	-29
South West Ambulance Income	-219	-744	-525	-747	-3
Other Income	-235	-250	-15	-335	-84
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>-49,980</b>	<b>-51,868</b>	<b>-1,888</b>	<b>-51,795</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>SECTION B: EXPENDITURE:</b>					
<b>1. EMPLOYEE COSTS</b>					
Full-time Firefighters	25,086	24,966	-120	25,001	35
Retained Firefighters	2,734	2,734	0	2,692	-43
Auxiliary Firefighters	39	39	0	8	-31
Control Room Staff	1,822	1,872	51	1,898	25
Corporate staff	4,833	5,361	528	5,399	38
Fire Authority and Chief Executive Office	1,123	1,123	0	1,123	0
Transformation	401	343	-58	326	-17
Pension Costs	1,607	1,607	0	1,593	-14
Other employee costs - Inc Relocation, Medical Intervention, CRB Checks, Long Service Gratuities	554	710	157	838	128
	<b>38,199</b>	<b>38,757</b>	<b>559</b>	<b>38,878</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>2. PREMISES COSTS</b>					
Property Repairs, Fees and Security	780	680	-100	620	-60
Rent and Rates	980	637	-343	637	0
Cleaning and refuse	307	307	0	300	-6
Utilities	335	625	290	628	2
Property Insurance	65	33	-32	25	-8
	<b>2,467</b>	<b>2,282</b>	<b>-185</b>	<b>2,210</b>	<b>-72</b>
<b>3. TRANSPORT COSTS</b>					
Vehicle maintenance, fuel, tyres and testing	966	966	0	927	-39
Vehicle hire	22	22	0	14	-8
Travel costs, inc subsistence & public transport	15	15	0	8	-7
Insurance - Vehicles	154	77	-77	76	-1
Car Allowances	240	240	0	234	-6
	<b>1,397</b>	<b>1,321</b>	<b>-77</b>	<b>1,259</b>	<b>-62</b>
<b>4. SUPPLIES AND SERVICES</b>					
Equipment and supplies	1,061	1,061	0	1,009	-52
Fees and Services	1,313	1,393	80	1,390	-3
Communications & ICT	2,406	2,646	240	2,675	29
Expenses and allowances	69	69	0	58	-11
Scrap Cars & Extrication Challenge	43	43	0	55	12
Other supplies and services	701	493	-208	529	36
	<b>5,594</b>	<b>5,706</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>5,716</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5. OTHER COSTS</b>					
Investment Fund	1,123	848	-275	848	0
Capital Financing Costs	741	741	0	756	15
Collection Fund Deficit	209	209	0	328	119
Contingency	250	325	75	120	-205
Transfers to/from Reserves	0	1,680	1,680	1,680	0
	<b>2,323</b>	<b>3,803</b>	<b>1,480</b>	<b>3,732</b>	<b>-70</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>49,980</b>	<b>51,868</b>	<b>1,888</b>	<b>51,795</b>	<b>-73</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>-0</b>

Note: A minus refers to Income budgets and denotes an underspend

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## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>22 June 2022</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Immediate Detriment Update</b>

### 1. SUMMARY

This report updates the Authority on Immediate Detriment (ID) developments since their meeting on 30 March 2022, when the Authority decided not to adopt the Local Government Association (LGA) and Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Framework, but decided to continue processing ID for forthcoming retirees under the arrangements agreed by Fire Authority in June 2021.

In view of recent developments, this report provides Members with two potential options, a temporary cessation in ID processing, or a continuation of the current provision with a further review in the Autumn.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Note the developments since the Fire Authority meeting on 30 March 2022. These developments include (i) HM Treasury letter to Firefighters' Pensions (England) Scheme Advisory Board, dated 23 March 2022, and (ii) National Fire Chiefs Council letter to Chief Fire Officers dated 25 March 2022.
- b) Decide whether to 'pause' the processing of Immediate Detriment cases until the Authority are better able to calculate the financial liability on local budgets, informed by the anticipated Local Government Association ready reckoner, and guidance. It is proposed that this pause would be with immediate effect but that firefighters in the pipeline to retire under ID in early July 2022 are able to continue to do so.
- c) Decide whether to, instead, continue with the existing arrangement processing Category 1 cases and review the Immediate Detriment issue again at the October 2022 Fire Authority meeting, when tax

legislation should have been enacted and the tax position relating to both employer and employees should be clearer.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The full detail of the matters considered by AFA (as the Scheme Manager) at their 15 December 2021 and 30 March 2022 meetings are available on the AF&RS website. It is recommended that Members revisit these reports, and appendices:

[Documents - 2021 - Avon Fire & Rescue Service](#) and  
[Documents - 2022 - Avon Fire & Rescue Service](#)

- 3.2 In summary, AFA considered a range of updates and matters arising since their decision to process some Immediate Detriment cases (at their meeting on 30 June 2021) as follows:

- In October 2021, the LGA and FBU issued a joint MOU/Framework for managing ID issues for the consideration of Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs). The Framework sets out a method to process certain payments in advance of the full legislation in 2023 and for both retirees and those coming up to retirement.
- In October and November 2021, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and HM Treasury (HMT) issued documents which raised concerns about tax liabilities which may occur for scheme members and employers if pension adjustments, and other payments, are made before the secondary legislation is in place.
- In response, on 29 November 2021 the Home Office (HO) withdrew their Informal Guidance for processing more 'straight-forward' pipeline ID cases (i.e., those coming up for retirement) ahead of the legislation. They also issued a statement on funding which included the following:

*"... As the Government does not advise that ID cases should be processed in advance of the legislation coming into force, they would not be in a position to provide any additional funding for those costs paid outside of the pension account. These costs include payments that are not considered to be legitimate expenditure under the pension scheme regulations and any associated administration costs including any charges from your pension administrator. These will need to be funded locally by the fire and rescue authority from local budgets. In relation to ID costs paid from the pension account while processing pipeline cases, FRAs will need to ensure that these payments comply with the financing regulations of the pension scheme. If they are considered to be legitimate expenditure, then they will be considered for payment as part of the established processes for claiming the AME top up grant."*

- On 17 December 2021, the Firefighters' Pensions (England) Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) wrote an open letter to HMT (**Appendix 1**) on the withdrawal of the HO guidance requesting more information on the risks and uncertainties

outlined in the HMT note. SAB have a specific remit to advise scheme managers on the administration and management of the pension scheme.

- On 17 December 2021, a note prepared by the LGA (with input from legal advisors) was issued to FRAs. This note summarised the legal position in respect of the MOU/Framework and set out key points for FRAs to consider following the withdrawal of the HO guidance and funding. It confirms the legal basis for making payments under the MOU/Framework remains valid but recognises the **significant financial risks and uncertainties** now facing FRAs.
- On 24 February 2022, the Finance Act 2022 received Royal Assent; section 11 of the Act requires the Treasury to make changes to the Finance Act 2004 in connection with the discrimination rectification provisions. The Government have indicated that, on or by Autumn 2022, the legislation will be in place to deal with the tax implications of remedy.

#### **4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1 As the Government has advised ID cases should not be processed in advance of the legislation coming into force, the Government has confirmed it would not provide any additional funding for those costs paid outside of the pension account. This would cause an additional budget pressure for AFA. Should AFA decide to proceed with the payment of ID cases, outside of the legislation, this puts the organisation at financial risk and it is not currently possible to undertake a robust assessment on the likely financial implications, until the relevant legislation and associated guidance is in place.
- 4.2 The taxation implications and compensation payments of processing ID cases, at this stage are not known, until legislation is in place. Both HMRC and HMT have issued documents with concerns about tax liabilities, which may occur for scheme members and employers if pension adjustments, and other payments, are made before the secondary legislation is in place. As such, should AFA agree to continue progressing ID cases, there is an added financial risk that when the legislation is passed, these ID cases will need to be reassessed, as there are likely to be differential underpinning assumptions. This could put AFA at risk of potential compensation payments from retired firefighters, whose claims have been processed outside of the legislation. Should this position occur, in addition to the cost of the compensation payments, AFA could also be at risk of additional legal fees, which would represent a further cost pressure for the Fire Authority. These additional costs could be significant. The taxation risks and uncertainties from the withdrawal of the Home Office's Informal Guidance on processing certain ID cases, are covered within section 5 of this report.
- 4.3 The Local Government Association are currently in the process of developing a financial 'ready reckoner' to start reviewing potential ID costs, but this is currently not available and the underlying assumptions are not currently known, nor have these assumptions been tested in terms of robustness. Without the legislation in place and clarification on what ID costs will be funded by the Government, it is not possible to undertake a robust assessment on the likely financial implications.

- 4.4 Until the required legislation is in place, there is no legal mechanism to pay ID pension cases without undue potential financial risk to both firefighters and the Fire Authority.

## 5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 This section provides updates on developments since the March 2022 AFA meeting.

- 5.2 On 23 March 2022 (but not provided to Services until 06 April 2022), HMT responded to the SAB letter of 17 December 2021 providing more details on the factors behind the withdrawal of the Home Office's Informal Guidance on processing certain ID cases and the risks and uncertainties of relying on section 61 of the Equality Act to remedy benefits in advance of retrospective regulations (**HMT letter is at Appendix 2**). The letter outlines specific tax issues under the following headings:

- Tax relief on contributions for scheme members who paid contributions to the reformed scheme – contributions cannot be transferred to legacy schemes, as they were not a member of that scheme at the time of the contributions and only active members are entitled to tax relief on their contributions.
- Payment of benefits to date - there is a risk that if the amount that was paid as a tax-free lump sum is seen as being paid from the reformed scheme, it would be taxable because it does not meet the conditions to be paid tax free as the individual is a member of the legacy scheme.
- New or increased lump sum payments – adjusted lump sum payments could be an unauthorised payment attracting an unauthorised payments charge.
- Annual allowance tax charge – individual liability for an annual allowance tax charge may have been incorrectly reported and that may result in under or overpaid allowances charges, which would need to be compensated.
- Lifetime Allowance Charge – legislation is required to address issues in relation to higher charges paid to the reformed pension scheme.

In addition to tax issues, other issues, such as how interest is to be calculated and paid on amounts owed and rights of appeal need to be determined.

- 5.3 HM Treasury's letter to the SAB concludes with the following wording:

*'For all of these reasons, the Government's view remains that processing immediate detriment cases before all of the necessary legislation is in place could give rise to **significant consequences for schemes and members**, although that ultimately is a decision for individual scheme managers. I also*

*recognise that this places scheme managers in a difficult position and we will continue to work with Home Office colleagues and others to explore any mitigations, where this is possible.'*

- 5.4 The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) sent a letter to all Chief Fire Officers on 25 March 2022. This letter summarised the response received from HM Treasury and highlighted their wording in paragraph 5.3 above. NFCC also summarised the position of the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC), who had taken further legal advice on the impact of the withdrawal of the guidance, and HMT's comments on the power of section 61. Although, counsel's written advice to NPCC has not been shared with Chief Fire Officers, counsel's verbal advice is said to be that scheme managers should not be implementing Immediate Detriment at this time, as there is no legal mechanism to pay without undue risks to both members and the force.
- 5.5 NFCC's letter to CFOs accepts that this puts CFOs in an extremely difficult position vis-a-vis their staff, who want to receive their pension remedy as soon as possible, but recognises 'clear legal advice' that 'significant risk' would be faced by both members and FRSs by making payments without a clear legal mechanism. Since the issuing of the NFCC letter and HMT response, a number of Authority's and/or Chief Fire Officers have reviewed their position and, in some cases, decided to temporarily pause Immediate Detriment processing until the legal position is clearer and the financial liability on local budgets better established. The LGA are working to obtain this national picture, but this information is not widely available. An aggregate of the information this Service has received informally from fire service colleagues indicates that of the 5 Services who have been forthcoming with their position, 3 have decided to temporarily pause Immediate Detriment process until there is more certainty on the financial and legal implications, 2 have continued processing Category 1 (forthcoming retirees) but have paused Category 2 (pensions already in payment to those who have retired).
- 5.6 In order to protect members and FRSs, legislation is needed in three main areas:
1. The Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act 2022 (PSPJO) provided that all legacy schemes are now closed to future accrual and all service from 1st April 2022 will be accrued in the 2015 scheme.  
  
Part 1, Chapter 1 of the Act will come into force no later than 1 October 2023 and will remedy the discrimination between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 by moving members back to the legacy scheme for the remedy period.
  2. Secondary regulation amendments to the Firefighter Pension Schemes will be required that are in keeping with the primary legislation. It is the responsibility of Home Office to draft and lay these regulations by 1 October 2023 and a three-month consultation is expected in late summer/autumn this year.
  3. Section 11 of the Finance Act 2022 requires treasury to make changes to the Finance Act 2004 in connection with the discrimination rectification provisions. It is expected these will be retrospective from 1 April 2022,

however they are not yet available, and drafts are expected in summer/autumn of 2022.

5.7 This pension matter remains of significant importance to scheme members impacted. The LGA's stated position is that they are continuing to explore with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and respective legal representatives, what, if any, amendments could be agreed to the Framework to minimise risk to FRAs and scheme members in light of the recent statements from the Home Office and HM Treasury, and which would further assist FRAs in being able to process Immediate Detriment cases under their jointly agreed the Framework. In addition, LGA state they continue to apply pressure to Government seeking an earlier resolution to the points they have raised. A joint letter from the LGA and FBU was submitted to the Government on 4 April 2022 to this effect and a response is awaited. At the time of report writing, there has been no confirmation of changes to the Framework or the timescale for these discussions to conclude.

5.8 The FBU's position has long been that it will pursue legal action if Immediate Detriment issues cannot be resolved in a timely manner including using the [MoU and Framework](#) jointly agreed by the LGA and MOU in October 2021. The FBU issued a circular on 06 June 2022 at the following link:

[Pensions immediate detriment: Lodging of claims. This circular requires actions by affected members | Fire Brigades Union \(fbu.org.uk\)](#).

The circular indicates an intention to register courts claims for every member whose pension is not being rectified under Immediate Detriment. The LGA are seeking to collate information on claims received but this information is not available more widely. As at the date of writing, this Authority has not received such legal claims and has continued to process some Immediate Detriment cases for forthcoming retirees in line with the principles in the original Home Office guidance thereby adjusting the lump sum and annual pension only, and for 'straightforward cases'.

5.9 In regard to the specific impact on AF&RS forthcoming retirees (should the current provision be paused), the Immediate Detriment retirement forecast is as follows between 01 July and the next Fire Authority meeting on 5 October 2022. While there are potentially 10 people who could retire under Immediate Detriment between this period, our best forecast of likely numbers is 4 (2 in July 1 in August and 1 in September). This forecast is based on the combination of the trend, to date, of only those at age 50 with 30 years of pensionable service retiring under Immediate Detriment and the indications individuals have given the HR team about their intentions (noting that three months' notice needs to be given to process an Immediate Detriment estimate and retirement). Retirement is however a personal choice and therefore there is some unpredictably within these figures.



## 6. RISKS

- 6.1 The Firefighter Pension Scheme risk register informs the overarching Corporate Risk Register at CR15 Pensions and, when applicable, CR04 People, Resources, Capacity, Capability and Succession Planning. The risk rating of CR15 is currently high due to the issues regarding compliance, funding, and employee relations.
- 6.2 The Corporate Risk Register is regularly reviewed and scrutinised by the Service Leadership Team, Board and the Audit, Governance and Ethics Committee with scrutiny applied to ensure the controls and planned mitigations are sufficient to reasonably manage the level of risk.
- 6.3 The Authority already carries some potential legal risk of claim because it has not yet adopted the full LGA and FBU Framework, including the processing of retirees. The 'pausing' of processing Immediate Detriment cases does create an enhanced risk of litigation from firefighters who may pursue claims for discrimination due to the fact that they will be denied pension benefits fully under their legacy pension schemes. Any litigation is costly to the Fire Authority in terms of staff time and external legal fees. This risk is potentially mitigated by delaying the pause until after the processing of the firefighters currently in the retirement pipeline, as there are no firefighters then due to retire until after the October Fire Authority meeting, by which time tax complications should be clearer.
- 6.4 It has been confirmed that a decision to cease, or continue, current Immediate Detriment processing is manageable within the current workforce plan model and the Service has the flexibility on how many candidates it takes from future training schools.
- 6.5 The substantive risks are therefore legal and financial (as set out in paragraphs 4 and 5.8), and in respect of employee relations.

## 7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Clerk obtained detailed legal advice for the Fire Authority on the
- 7.2 Immediate Detriment issue from a QC, which was considered in exempt session on 22 June 2021. That advice was that AFA should be cautious and only make Immediate Detriment payments in the '*clearest and least controversial claims*' and advised that a number of claims should not be processed as they had been identified within Home Office guidance as being more complex cases to resolve.
- 7.3 Unfortunately, since the QC's advice the legal landscape has changed significantly, and the following changes suggest that the risks are now clearer and the Authority should now consider pausing Immediate Detriment payments:
  - HMRC Policy document dated 27 October 2021.
  - HM Treasury Information note issued on 29 November 2021 (which included the words: '*Therefore, HMT and HO do not advise that*

*schemes process pipeline immediate detriment cases before the legislation is in place'*

- The withdrawal in November 2021 of previous Home Office informal guidance on ID.
- LGA's advice by letter dated 17 December 2021 that the legal basis for making payments under the MOU/Framework remains valid but recognises the significant financial risks and uncertainties now facing FRAs.
- HM Treasury's letter to SAB dated 23 March 2022 which states '*Government's view remains that processing immediate detriment cases before all of the necessary legislation is in place could give rise to significant consequences for schemes and members'*
- NFCC's letter to CFOs of 25 March 2022 summarising HM Treasury's letter and NPCC legal advice that '*scheme managers should not be implementing immediate detriment at this time, as there is no legal mechanism to pay without undue risks to both members and the force'*.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Fire Authority Papers 30 June and 15 December 2021:  
[Documents - 2021 - Avon Fire & Rescue Service](#)
- Fire Authority Paper for 30 March 2022:  
[Documents - 2022 - Avon Fire & Rescue Service](#)

## **9. APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1** – Scheme Advisory Board letter to HMT dated 17 December 2021.  
**Appendix 2** – HMT response to Scheme Advisory Board dated 23 March 2022.

## **10. REPORT CONTACTS**

Angie Feeney, Director of Corporate Services, extension 284.  
Amanda Brown, Clerk Avon Fire Authority, extension 347.  
Danielle Neale, Treasurer Avon Fire Authority, extension 266.



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Cc: The Home Office Police Workforce and Professionalism Unit

Published on [www.fpsboard.org](http://www.fpsboard.org) and [www.fpsregs.org](http://www.fpsregs.org)

17 December 2021

Dear Sirs

I am writing to you as Chair of the Firefighters' Pensions (England) Scheme Advisory Board (the SAB) in connection with your note, Processing immediate detriment cases – November 2021. This note sets out HM Treasury's best assessment at this point on the advisability of processing immediate detriment cases before new legislation to enact the McCloud remedy is in place, and the implications of this assessment for the Home Office guidance on processing immediate detriment cases published in August 2020 and revised in June 2021.

You will be aware that on 29 November 2021, the Home Office withdrew its informal and non-statutory guidance on processing certain kinds of immediate detriment case ahead of legislation, with immediate effect. This decision was based on the above guidance note from HMT and the Home Office stated that, although the decision remains for scheme managers to make, it does not advise schemes to process any immediate detriment cases before legislation is in place, given the risk and uncertainty of correcting benefits before the PSPJO Bill, scheme regulations and relevant tax legislation come into force.

At our most recent SAB meeting, held on 9 December, we discussed the position as a result of these developments, given our remit to provide advice to scheme managers and local pension boards in relation to the effective and efficient administration and management of this scheme. The SAB would like to be able to fulfil this role by helping the scheme managers to understand better the nature of the risk and uncertainties mentioned in your note.

The scheme managers are the Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) who, as you will be aware, recently considered the extent of their powers. This consideration took the form of an appeal under Schedule 22 of the Equality Act 2010, in which the FRAs

argued that they were required to follow the pensions regulations and so by law they had no choice but to implement the transitional protections which have now been established as being discriminatory. On 12 February 2021, the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) gave its judgment on the FRAs appeal which was that FRAs could not rely on the Schedule 22 defence. Effectively, the EAT held that the FRAs in their capacity as scheme manager could have decided not to follow the discriminatory legislation and in fact should have done so by refusing to treat firefighters as having transferred into the 2015 scheme. This is because it held that Section 61 prohibits FRAs from acting in a manner which discriminates on the grounds of age, and it prioritises that obligation over other provisions in the pension scheme which would oblige the FRAs to act in that way. In addition, the EAT held that, under Section 62 of the Equality Act 2010, the FRAs have vested in them the power to pass a resolution making non-discrimination alterations to the scheme of which they are managers.

Legal cases concerning immediate detriment issues were brought in the High Court against two FRAs; the claimants were supported by the FBU. It was apparent similar issues would arise more widely across the sector. The FBU was clear that matters for affected individuals needed to be resolved sooner rather than later and it would, if necessary, support further legal cases.

The SAB understands that, with that in mind, the LGA and the FBU commenced discussions to identify a mutually acceptable Framework, setting out a mechanism for handling immediate detriment cases, to assist all parties prior to completion and implementation of the remedying legislation. Agreement was reached on a Memorandum of Understanding and Framework on 8 October 2021.

Whilst the withdrawal of the Home Office Guidance does not fundamentally alter the position of the Framework, as the MoU is separate from, and is not subject to or dependent on, any guidance issued in relation to immediate detriment before the legislation comes into force, understandably it is a cause of concern to FRAs who are considering adopting or who have adopted the MoU. This is particularly the case given the statements made with regard to funding of immediate detriment cases processed in the interim period between the guidance being withdrawn and the retrospective elements of remedy being effective.

FRAs may now be in the untenable position of having to choose to either process immediate detriment cases at what you have termed to be significant financial risk with unknown consequences for the authority and the member or facing potential legal action if they follow the latest government advice. As noted earlier, the SAB is keen to try to assist the FRAs in being able to analyse these risks and to take an informed decision on them. With over 40 FRAs involved in the English Scheme there is clearly a risk to the overall governance of this public sector scheme if the various managers get their own legal opinions and adopt different practices.

It was therefore agreed that I should write to you to request more information about the benefit risks and uncertainties that you have identified in general about relying on Section 61 (and we assume also Section 62) to remedy the benefits in advance of the retrospective regulations, so that we can consider whether these are relevant in the case of the Firefighters' Pension Schemes. You have indicated that there are some obscure areas of the McCloud remedy where Section 61's impact is not clear.

Whilst we understand that Section 61 may not override some of the taxation impacts where payments are deemed unauthorised, we do not understand for example, the problem you have quoted regarding the payment of contributions to the reformed vs legacy scheme. Contributions to fire schemes all fall into one notional account in this regard and under the EAT's interpretation of the FRA's powers to make resolutions, I might expect that either both contributions and benefits could be determined to have been both paid and earned in the legacy scheme respectively or if this were not the case that the managers could resolve to accept a notional transfer of the contribution for the purposes of remedying the discrimination. Whilst we understand that your legal advice on this issue is privileged, it would be helpful to understand the alternative legal arguments and more about the problems that might be encountered.

It would also be useful to understand whether the risks and uncertainties that have now been identified are likely to be mitigated, at least in part, once the Finance (No.2) Bill is enacted in April 2022 or whether you anticipate that the risk will only be significantly reduced once all remedying legislation is in force; expected to be October 2023 for the FPS, as indicated to me by the Home Office

In particular, we have been informed that members would prefer to see benefits remedied sooner rather than later even though they are already aware of the risk that the tax position may take a little time to sort with potentially iterations of calculations.

I look forward to hearing from you with what I hope will be a more detailed explanation of the risks so that the SAB is able to fulfil its brief. You will appreciate the urgency of this request given the competing challenges and legal risks that FRAs are facing, therefore your early attention would be welcome.

Kind regards



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██████████  
Chair, Firefighters' Pensions (England) Scheme Advisory Board  
By email

23 March 2022

Dear ██████████

Thank you for your letter of 17 December to HM Treasury regarding the processing of immediate detriment (ID) cases in the Firefighters' pension scheme. I apologise for the delay in replying.

You have asked for more detail on the factors behind the withdrawal of the Home Office's informal and non-statutory guidance on processing certain ID cases, and in particular the risks and uncertainties of relying on Section 61 of the Equality Act to remedy benefits in advance of retrospective regulations.

I appreciate that this is a difficult situation for scheme managers in the Firefighters scheme, for the reasons you have set out, and the SAB's understandable desire to have the best information possible to inform future discussions. I will therefore set out these issues in detail.

The fundamental difficulty is that retrospectively changing pension entitlement through section 61 of the Equality Act 2010 cannot mitigate all of the consequences that arise from that. Legislation is therefore needed to address these consequences, particularly in respect of the complicated interplay with the tax system which is dependent on changing facts. The tax system requires certainty about the nature of payments made to and from pension schemes in the past in order to operate predictably and to produce proportionate results.

In some situations, processing cases without the full remedy legislation, including on tax, could lead to disadvantageous outcomes. The Public Services and Judicial Offices Act addresses some of these issues but others will need to be addressed through secondary legislation, the Finance Act 2022 and tax regulations. Legislation is also necessary to allow compensation to be paid by scheme managers, for example where an individual has overpaid tax beyond the usual statutory time limits for claiming it back.

I will now set out some of the detail of the specific tax issues that may arise and will be dealt with through legislation:

1. Tax relief on contributions for members who paid contributions to the reformed scheme.

- If section 61 was used so that these members never left the legacy scheme for the remedy period, the effect would be that amounts deducted from their earnings and paid as pension contributions to the reformed scheme were paid incorrectly, because they were not a member of that scheme. This matters for tax purposes because only active members of a scheme are entitled to tax relief on their contributions.

- Tax relief can be given at the point the contributions are paid, and the legacy scheme and reformed scheme are two separate registered pension schemes. It is unclear what effect section 61 has on the contributions that were paid to the reformed scheme; it is not certain that section 61 means they can be assumed to have been paid to the legacy scheme. If section 61 can't be interpreted in that way, there is a separation of the members' contributions and the service, which mean that members were not entitled to the tax relief they received on their pension contributions (as they were not active members).
- Employers would therefore need to correct their RTI submissions for the relevant tax years to remove the tax relief that was given incorrectly. This would probably require the contributions to be returned by the scheme to the employer and then for the employer to pay them to the correct scheme, which would give tax relief at that point, but this may not equal the tax relief that members were entitled to previously. In addition, any contributions payable by or due to be returned to the member in respect of the tax years 2015-15 to 2021-22 because differences in contribution rates will also impact on their tax position, meaning that those who submit self assessment returns will need to contact HMRC to amend the information they declared previously.
- The provisions to address this are made in the PSP&JO Act, which will require commencement through scheme regulations, and in forthcoming legislation to allow tax relief to apply to contributions made during the remedy period years and for any contributions corrections to be made without the need for correcting RTI submissions.
- The combination of the PSP&JO Act, scheme regulations and tax regulations will alleviate the administrative burdens on the member, the scheme and the employer but if ID cases were processed prior to those statutory changes, existing legislation will apply. The full amount of historic contributions to a scheme where the individual is not a member would be taxable and a tax charge will be due as a result, that may not equal the tax relief the individual will be entitled to when the contributions are made to the correct scheme. So individuals in this situation may still need to have their position revised when the provisions of the PSP&JO Act are brought in.

## 2. Payment of benefits to date.

- Where an ID case is processed before legislation, there is uncertainty as to the status of payments that have been made from the Reformed Scheme to an individual who, according to section 61, is not a member of that scheme. It is not clear whether under section 61 the amounts paid would be assumed to have been paid by the legacy scheme. There is a risk that if the amount that was paid as a tax-free lump sum is seen as being paid from the reformed scheme, it would be taxable because it does not meet the conditions to be paid tax free as the individual is a member of the legacy scheme. Once commenced through scheme regulations, provisions in the PSP&JO Act will have the effect of treating pension benefits arising from remediable service paid out of the Reformed Scheme as having been paid out of the Legacy Scheme, clarifying the section 61 position.

## 3. New or increased lump sum payments.

- There could also be issues where the operation of section 61 Equality Act 2010 means that an individual has not been paid sufficient lump sum under the legacy scheme, because any further lump sum payment will be tax free only if the pension supporting the lump sum started no more than 12 months prior to the adjustment. If it is outside this time limit the adjusted lump sum would also be an unauthorised payment and an unauthorised payments charge would apply before tax legislation is in place to address this.



#### 4. Annual allowance tax charge.

- An individual's liability for an annual allowance tax charge is calculated by deducting their pension value at the start of the year from the value at the end of the year in that pension scheme. If ID cases were processed using section 61 this could lead to a situation where those values were incorrectly reported because the member was recorded as building up service in the Reformed Scheme instead of the Legacy Scheme.
- This could lead to considerable difficulties where the Reformed Scheme had reported and paid an individual's annual allowance charge. The whole payment would need to be unwound as there would be no basis for the Reformed Scheme to pay the individual's tax charge as they were not a member of the scheme. The scheme would have to adjust the return on which they originally paid the charge (which may also have an administrative impact on the scheme in relation to any tax they have paid subsequently as tax is paid on a scheme basis). The individual would then owe their annual allowance charge and interest for late payment. Similarly, any overpaid annual allowance charges for out of scope years would need to be compensated, and as set out above, in advance of legislation there are no provisions in place to enable this.

#### 5. Lifetime Allowance Charge

- Issues might arise with respect to lifetime allowance charges paid by the reformed scheme in relation to a member who, as a result of the operation of section 61, was always a member of the legacy scheme. The reformed scheme would need to claim a refund of the tax paid (where they were in time to do so), adjusting the return on which they originally paid the charge (which may also have an administrative impact on the scheme).
- The legacy scheme would now be liable to pay (i) any lifetime allowance charges in relation to that member's rights. and, (ii) any benefits payable under those rights. It is unclear what effect section 61 would have on the benefits that have been paid to the individual, whether it follows that these benefits must have been paid by the legacy scheme or the reformed scheme made payments to individuals who were not members. Depending on the interpretation of the operation of section 61 in relation to pension benefits already paid, the legacy scheme may be liable to pay benefits including amounts already paid by the reformed scheme. Legislation will be required to address these issues.
- In addition, if a member has paid their lifetime allowance charge themselves and section 61 provides that they were a member of their legacy scheme, where this provides for a lower charge, they can notify HMRC to claim for the overpayment. However, where the charge was paid for a year beyond the usual statutory time limits for correction of tax, compensation for this would not be available until the full remedy legislation is in place.

I hope that this gives you further insight into the tax issues that are likely to arise where ID cases are dealt with prior to legislation being in place and assists in future SAB discussions.

I would also note that, in addition to these tax issues, there are also other aspects of the remedy that remain to be determined and/or consulted upon on a scheme specific basis, such as how interest is to be calculated and paid on amounts that are owed to the scheme or by the scheme to a member or the specifics of rights of appeal.

For all of these reasons, the Government's view remains that processing immediate detriment cases before all of the necessary legislation is in place could give rise to significant consequences for schemes and members, although that ultimately is a decision for individual scheme managers. I also

recognise that this places scheme managers in a difficult position and we will continue to work with Home Office colleagues and others to explore any mitigations, where this is possible.

Finally, I would like to thank you for the Scheme Advisory Board's continued constructive engagement in helping to resolve the complex and difficult issues necessary to design and implement a legislative remedy.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

Workforce Pay and Pensions Team  
HM Treasury

## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 22 June 2022</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive The Treasurer</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>2021/22 Capital Programme Report</b>

### 1. **SUMMARY**

- This report provides the final Income and Expenditure position on the 2021/22 Capital Programme.

### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- Note the final income and expenditure position on the 2021/22 Capital Programme and to review any key issues to provide the required assurance on the approved Capital Programme.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1. As part of a requirement identified in the 2020/21 Finance Improvement Programme (FIP), capital is now being monitored on a quarterly basis and reported to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee (PRSC) with reports to the Fire Authority twice a year. Finance staff have continued to work more closely with capital operational leads to strengthen capital reporting. Quarterly Capital Review Meetings are being held with Premises, Fleet, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Operational Equipment Budget Holders to review progress and agree forecasts.
- 3.2. The Capital Programme budget approved for 2021/22 was £8.708m, as approved by PRSC on the 16 July 2021. The Capital Programme Report has been updated to provide updates from each of the lead operational managers

on significant budgets and this update is contained within **Appendices 2 and 3**.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The table below shows a summary of the final financial position against the approved budget. Appendix 1 shows the detail of the 2021/22 Capital Programme.

##### **Capital Programme 2021/22**

<b>Capital Programme 2021/22</b>	<b>2021/22 Final Capital Budget £'000</b>	<b>Spend for the year 2021/22 £'000</b>	<b>Variance £'000</b>
<b>Capital Funding</b>	<b>8,708</b>		
<b>Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>8,708</b>	<b>3,994</b>	<b>-4,714</b>

*NB: A minus denotes an underspend*

#### **5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

5.1 The summary above shows capital expenditure of £3.994m and a year-end underspend of £4.714m (54% of the total approved budget).

5.2 The majority of the underspend against the approved budget relates to the Fleet Capital Budget (£2.879m – 61%). This underspend mainly relates to delays in the build of Type B appliances (£2.465m) following global supply issues arising, in part due to, the COVID pandemic. Further information can be found in **Appendix 2**.

5.3 The spend for these fire appliances will now be incurred in later years as per the agreed 3-year Capital Programme.

5.4 The Premises budget is showing a final underspend of £1.077m against a projected underspend of £634k, because of ongoing work on the Bath and Weston developments in relation to further exploration of potential site relocation (Weston) and achieving a tri-service facility (Bath) with ambulance and the police. There is also a need to ensure the design of new stations takes future needs into account regarding training with the PFI at Severn Park due to end in 2028.

- 5.5 The Bedminster design phase and Avonmouth building projects are expected to be completed in 2022/23 and all other premises projects remain on track, with any underspends as at March 2022 expected to be caught up in 2022/23. The Public Sector Decarbonisation Grant (£824k) has now been fully spent and this is shown within the Premises Capital budget. A general premises update is provided by the Operational Manager within **Appendix 3**.
- 5.6. Recruitment delays have meant that the Transformation capital budget was not spent in 2021/22 and expenditure will start being incurred early in 2022/23 as per the updated 3 year Capital Strategy. It is expected that the 2021/22 budget will be spent over the next two financial years, with sub-projects including: upgrades to Firewatch (the core HR and Resource Planning system) (£78k), Smart screens on Stations (£32k), and other upgrades to core systems and digital solutions and Service Developments including the PORIS (Provision of Risk Information Service) project (£110k) investment for hardware and set up costs, and the Prevent and Protect solution to replace current systems (£36k).
- 5.7 Operational equipment includes £88k of industrial PPE washing machines, plus various pieces of rescue equipment, drones, etc.
- 5.8 The ICT operational lead has advised that capital expenditure has been delayed in line with the delays to the ICT Infrastructure Project and the supply chain issues around IT equipment relating to COVID-19 and the situation in the Ukraine. This resulted in an underspend in 2021/22 of £172k and as the allocation for future years has been increased to account for these issues, this amount will not be carried over into 2022/23.

## **6. RISKS**

This report primarily relates to CR20 (Funding and Resource Pressures), CR17 (Building Asset Condition & Physical Security) for the Premises programmes, CR19 (Change and Transformation) and CR13 (Loss of IT Systems) for the ICT programme.

## **7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- a) PRSC report: 21.04.2022 (paper 10)
- b) PRSC report: 26.01.2022 (paper 10)
- c) AFA report: 15.10.2021 (paper 10)

**9. APPENDICES**

1) 2021/22 Capital Financial Summary

2) 2021/22 Fleet Capital Operational Update

3) 2021/22 Premises Capital Operational Update

**10. REPORT CONTACT**

Claire Bentley, Head of Finance.

**AVON FIRE AUTHORITY****Capital Programme Year To Date Expenditure April - March 2022**

<b>Funding and Expenditure</b>	<b>2021/22 Capital Budget £'000</b>	<b>Forecast Expenditure at Apr'22 PRSC £'000</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure £'000</b>	<b>Variance (Budget v Actual) £'000</b>	<b>Variance (Forecast v Actual) £'000</b>	<b>Director Lead</b>
Capital Receipts (from sale of HQ)	6,170					
Prudential borrowing	840					
Public Sector Decarbonisation Grant	824					
2020/2021 Capital Programme underspend	749					
Capital Receipt from house sale	125					
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>8,583</b>					
Premises	4,281	3,647	3,204	-1,077	-443	Angela Feeney
Fleet	3,487	612	608	-2,879	-4	Simon Shilton
Transformation	571	0	0	-571	0	Vaughan Jenkins
ICT	200	40	28	-172	-12	Angela Feeney
Operational Equipment	169	142	154	-15	12	Simon Shilton
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>8,708</b>	<b>4,441</b>	<b>3,994</b>	<b>-4,714</b>	<b>-447</b>	

Original 2021/22 Capital Programme agreed by AFA March 2021 £7.959m  
Updated Programme agreed by PRSC July 2021 £8.708m

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**2021/22 Fleet Capital Operational Update**

Investment Area	Fleet
Lead Director	Vaughan Jenkins
Lead Manager	Brian Harwood
Period	1/4/2021 – 31/03/2022

**Financial Summary**

<b>Capital Programme 2021/22</b>	<b>2021/22 Annual Budget £'000</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure £'000</b>	<b>Variance £'000</b>
Type B Appliances	2,465	0	-2,465
Ancillary Vehicles	722	430	-292
Support Vehicles	300	178	-122
	<b>3,487</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>-2,879</b>

*NB: A minus denotes an underspend*

**Appliance Replacement Programme:** Due to supply chain limitations of both vehicle/chassis supply and the required build materials the expenditure for the replacement of the Type B appliances has been delayed to subsequent financial years. We are currently anticipating the costs for 4 Type B appliances in the 2022/23 year, **totalling £1.5m** and a further 6 appliances towards the end of 2022/23 and into 2023/24, **totalling £2.2m**.

**Special Appliances:** Breathing Apparatus Support Vehicle (BASV) replacement has been completed and all build costs were realised in the 2021/22. Environmental Response Unit (ERU) progression has been impacted by delays on supply of build materials with remaining build cost of £122k slipping into the current financial year.

**Ancillary Replacement Programme:** The ancillary vehicles purchased in 2021/22 were electric vehicles rather than internal combustion engine alternatives which were slightly more expensive. The original budget of £199k was uplifted in the year to allow for the purchase of these electric vehicles and additional ancillary vehicles (which had been expected in 2022/23 and 2023/24 were bought forward). Due to ongoing global supply chain issues, mainly relating to COVID and a worldwide shortage of semi-conductors, a number of these vehicles (totalling £410k) remain delayed and will now be received in early 2022/23.

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**2021/22 Premises Capital Operational Update**

Investment Area	Premises
Lead Director	Angela Feeney
Lead Manager	Simon Richards
Period	1/4/2021 – 31/03/2022

**Financial Summary**

<b>Capital Programme 2021/22</b>	<b>2021/22 Annual Budget £'000</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure £'000</b>	<b>Variance £'000</b>
Avonmouth	1,800	1,548	-252
Public Sector Decarbonisation Projects	824	824	0
General	620	454	-166
Bath	371	142	-229
Weston	323	109	-214
	<b>4,281</b>	<b>3,204</b>	<b>-1,077</b>

*NB: A minus denotes an underspend*

**Operational Summary****i) Reinvesting for the Future:**

- **Avonmouth:** Expenditure in the year was £1,548k. Phase 1 has now been completed meaning that we have moved into the new building. Phase 2 is underway and is due to be completed within the 2022/23 financial year.
- **Weston:** This project is in the design phase with expenditure in the year of £109k. The final site search report has been received and this is in the process of being reviewed by the Service Leadership Board (SLB) in advance of a decision paper to members.
- **Bath:** This project is also in the design phase with £142k of the year's budget spent. There are additional delays expected of 6-12 months as the Service continues to work with our blue light partners to deliver the optimum tri-service facility which can be achieved by fire, police and ambulance on this site.

**ii) Bedminster refurbishment:**

The Bedminster refurbishment is nearing the completion of the design phase and will shortly be going to the Service Leadership Board (SLB) for approval. The construction phase will be out to tender in June 2022. Construction is anticipated to commence in Q3 of 2022/23.

**iii) Premises General:**

The final expenditure outturn for 2021/22 is £454k and this relates to key priorities such as roof replacement works, refurbishment of whole time Station accommodation and the installation of Electric Vehicle Charge Points (EVCP). There are several additional projects that are currently being considered by the Service Leadership Team and Board particularly in relation to training facilities. The underspend of £166k was a result of delays to works for reasons outside of the Service's control. The delayed works include electrical infrastructure and supply upgrades to a number of sites to accommodate further Electrical Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP), the refurbishment of the live burn training facility at Hicks Gate and renovation of stone work at Clevedon Fire Station, where delays were experienced due to the availability of Western Power distribution and supply chain issues.

**iv) Public Sector Decarbonisation Projects:**

Expenditure was £824k, ensuring the full utilisation of the grant. The detail of delivery against this grant has been provided to PRSC.

## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 22 June 2022</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Service Round-up</b>

### 1. **SUMMARY**

- This report is to highlight areas of good work across Avon Fire & Rescue Service (AF&RS), which has taken place between March and May 2022.

### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to note the report.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

This report aims to give an overview of the work across Service Delivery, Service Delivery Support, Corporate Services and other proactive communications activity, project or team work.

### 4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

This report has no financial implications.

### 5. **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **Business Fire Safety (BFS)**

- 5.1 The department has successfully held a recruitment campaign to fill two vacant posts utilising baseline revenue funding and an additional two posts above establishment utilising a Home Office grant. This recruitment supports the succession planning of the department over the next two years.
- 5.2 Following ratification from the People and Culture Committee on 18 May 2022, two additional posts have also been agreed under 'Re-engagement' to

provide resilience on fixed term contracts to support the department and the development of new staff.

- 5.3 The Fire Safety Act 2021 and additional Regulations under Article 24 have commenced on the 16 and 18 May 2022 respectively. The Act adds external wall systems and front doors to the overall responsibilities of building owners/Responsible persons (RP) with more regulations as part of the Grenfell Tower recommendations to be in place by January 2023.
- 5.4 The Team have been promoting the benefits of sprinklers over various social media platforms during National Sprinkler Week.
- 5.5 BFS team members provided a stand with leaflets and advice on fire safety at the recent Landlords Expo, Bristol UK (May 2022).

### **Vulnerable Adults**

- 5.6 The Vulnerable Adults team recently worked in collaboration with South Gloucestershire Council and Southern Brooks to host a 'Welcome Event' for refugees from the Ukraine. The event invited sponsors and their Ukraine guests to Yate Fire Station on the 20 May 2022, to support them with information about the local area, access to council representations and the opportunity to meet other people in the same situation as them. The event was really successful, and the guests were very grateful for the opportunity.
- 5.7 The Vulnerable Adults team continue to promote home fire safety measures by conducting regular talks with local community groups and providing practitioner training to professionals.
- 5.8 The Team supported the UK Hong Kong Friendship Festival on College Green in Bristol on 21 May 2022. A crew from Bedminster Fire Station attended engaging with families and shared our prevention materials.

### **Children and Young People (CYP)**

- 5.9 The CYP manager attended the latest meeting of the Bristol Water Safety Partnership. The multi-agency group come together to support water safety initiatives in Bristol to prevent water related incidents and provide education and interventions to support water safety.
- 5.10 Operational crews have continued to deliver Key Stage education initiative to local schools. The Service DISCO (early years education/role play) packs continue to be delivered to schools with the packs being booked up until Christmas.

- 5.11 Firesetter intervention referrals continue to be received with CYP staff carrying out the educational programme. Our Firesetter lead also continues to lead on work at national level supporting the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

### **Transformation programme**

- 5.12 The introduction of a new Impact Assessment process into the Service will positively impact how the Service develops policies and procedures to be inclusive and support managers when developing or changing areas of work.
- 5.13 Work continues in delivering the Service's Digital Foundation Proposal. This includes determining the governance strategy for the implementation of Microsoft 365 applications, more specifically Teams and Sharepoint.
- 5.14 A communication strategy has been developed outlining the communication and engagement objectives for the work of the programme, supporting the three key areas: digitising our Service, reviewing our processes and reviewing our policies over the next year (2022-23).

### **UK2Ukraine fundraising event**

- 5.15 On the weekend of 8-10 April 2022, AF&RS came together to take on a 48-hour challenge to run and cycle 1823km, the distance between the UK and Ukraine, to raise much-needed funds for their communities.
- 5.16 The event was hosted in the centre of Cabot Circus in Bristol and after non-stop cycling and running for the period, staff completed a total of 2976km, smashing the target, and raised £7,100 for the Red Cross Ukraine Appeal.

### **Green Energy Awards 2022**

- 5.17 The Service, with Solarsense, was announced as winner of the Clean Energy Scheme at this year's Green Energy Awards, hosted by Regen, a leading centre of expertise in the transition to net zero energy.
- 5.18 The award recognised the installation and integration of a range of renewable technologies across five Service sites including: solar panels, battery storage, solar thermal and heat pumps and the AF&RS clean energy project will generate carbon savings of 80-90 tonnes per year and is a benchmark for the role of the Fire & Rescue sector in the Net-Zero journey.

### **International Women's Day 2022**

- 5.19 Tuesday 8 March 2022 marked International Women's Day and this year's theme was #BreakTheBias, which looks to celebrate women's achievements, raise awareness of bias against women and encourage action for equality.

- 5.20 Alongside a range of campaign activity to mark the day, Bristol Live once again revealed their list of inspiring and influential women from across the South West. We are delighted that AF&RS Director of Corporate Services, Angie Feeney and Watch Manager Anna James (recently promoted to Station Manager) were once again recognised for the second year running. In addition, this year, Environmental Manager Annabel Harford was included.

### **AF&RS support DIY SOS rebuild project**

- 5.21 In November 2021, filming for award winning TV show DIY SOS took place in Bristol, where a team of volunteers including AF&RS firefighters undertook a 10-day makeover project to help rebuild a much-loved adventure playground on Doncaster Road, Southmead.
- 5.22 Southmead's adventure playground was sadly vandalised in 2021 and was deemed unfit for purpose. Despite firefighters' best efforts to extinguish the fire following an arson attack, it was already too late, leading to the community facility being out of action ever since.
- 5.23 Throughout the rebuild, firefighters from Green Watch and Red Watch Southmead spent several days on site working alongside other volunteers, generously giving up their time and skills for the community project. The full DIY SOS episode aired on BBC on 24 May and can be viewed on iPlayer.

## **6. RISKS**

This report has no operational, financial or reputational risks.

## **7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This report has no legal or policy implications.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

This report has no background papers.

## **9. APPENDICES**

Press releases and incident reports of note March 2022 - May 2022.

## **10. REPORT CONTACT**

Amber Foreman, Head of Corporate Communications.



## Press releases and incident reports of note

### Press releases

- Yate Fire Station hosts welcome event for Ukrainian guests – *24 May 2022*
- AF&RS encourages responsible persons to prepare for new fire safety regulations – *24 May 2022*
- Important updates for landlords and business owners – *24 May 2022*
- AF&RS staff get involved in DIY SOS rebuild project – *23 May 2022*
- Retired firefighter takes on epic kayak challenge for charity – *17 May 2022*
- Local fire service issue dementia wristbands to help keep vulnerable residents safe – *16 May 2022*
- AF&RS support launch of New Rider Hub – *12 May 2022*
- AF&RS encourage safe preparations ahead of Jubilee celebrations – *12 May 2022*
- Breaking the stigma on Mental Health Awareness Week – *11 May 2022*
- Introducing second cohort of trainee firefighters for 2022 – *11 May 2022*
- Fire service staff to hold charity car wash – *10 May 2022*
- AF&RS issue Ukrainian home fire safety advice – *5 May 2022*
- AF&RS welcome new generation of Control Firefighters at graduation ceremony – *4 May 2022*
- Could you be a wholetime firefighter? – *3 May 2022*
- AF&RS stress importance of inclusion on Deaf Awareness Week – *2 May 2022*
- Be Water Aware: Simple ways to stay safe near water – *25 April 2022*
- Firefighters issue timely reminder after multiple water rescues – *21 April 2022*
- Statement issued in relation to social media 19 April 2022 – *19 April 2022*
- 24 new recruits join AF&RS after months of intensive training – *13 April 2022*
- Firefighter reunite bride and groom with wedding cake after venue fire – *11 April 2022*
- Firefighters raise over £7,000 for Red Cross Ukraine appeal – *11 April 2022*
- AF&RS encourage safe driving on Motorbike Safety Week – *10 April 2022*
- Firefighters prepare to embark on a 48-hour challenge to support Ukraine – *7 April 2022*
- Firefighters warn against deliberate fires – *4 April 2022*
- New Chief Fire Officer launches three-year Service Plan – *1 April 2022*
- AF&RS recognised for “extraordinary” contribution to the energy transition – *31 March 2022*
- Over 1000 years of Service celebrated – *28 March 2022*
- Firefighters Unite for Ukraine: the 48-hour non-stop charity race in aid of a crisis – *25 March 2022*
- Could you create a Trauma Teddy for a child in need? – *25 March 2022*
- Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer for Service Delivery Support appointed - *15 March 2022*
- Firefighters raise awareness of risks on No Smoking Day – *9 March 2022*
- Celebrating women in the fire service: International Women’s Day 2022 – *8 March 2022*

- Fire Kills: The ten second task that will help protect what you love - *4 March 2022*

### **Incident reports**

A total of 101 incident reports were uploaded to the website during this period.

- Spate of fires across Weston-super-Mare – *18 May 2022*

Between the hours of 03:59 and 05:50, crews from Weston and Portishead fire stations attended a total of eight vehicle and/or rubbish bin fires on Wooler Road, Gerard Road, Baker Street, Arundell Road, Cecil Road and Kewstoke Road, Weston-super-Mare. All the fires are thought to be deliberate ignition and we continue to support the police with their official enquiries as required.

- Firefighters extinguish refuse centre fire – Carsons Road, Mangotsfield – *17 May 2022*

At 10:50am crews from Kingswood, Hicks Gate, Temple, Yate, Portishead, Southmead, Pill and Avonmouth were mobilised to reports of a fire at a refuse centre on Carsons Road, Mangotsfield. Firefighters used two 45mm jets, two high pressure hose reels and multiple thermal imaging cameras to extinguish the blaze. 12 firefighters wore breathing apparatus for safety. The Service drone was also in use to check the severity of the blaze. Positive pressure ventilation fans were used to clear smoke logging from the building. Mechanical machinery was used on site to dig out materials to extinguish the flames. In total, 10 fire engines, the drone unit and the welfare unit attended the scene. The cause of the fire is thought to be accidental. During the incident, local residents were advised to keep their windows and doors closed due to smoke in the area. This guidance has now been removed as the fire has been extinguished.

- Crews attend property fire – Coronation Road, Southville – *14 May 2022*

Crews from Temple, Bedminster, Kingswood, Avonmouth, Southmead, Weston and Portishead were called to reports of a fire in a property at 16:43. On arrival, crews found a three-storey building including a basement, with a fire on the second floor. With six firefighters wearing breathing apparatus, crews used one turntable ladder, a short length ceiling hook, drone, one 35mm ladder, two high pressure hose reels, one covering jet and three 45mm jets to extinguish the fire. A positive pressure ventilation fan was also used to clear smoke. Neighbouring properties were also checked as smoke had entered the shared roof space. The scene was inspected multiple times by fire investigation officers, as well as by a fire investigation dog. The incident was left in the hands of police colleagues, with further investigations being carried out. The cause of the incident was determined to have been deliberate ignition.

- Crews mobilised to barn fire – Stowey Road, Clutton – *4 May 2022*

We were called at 00:41 to reports of a barn fire on Stowey Road, Clutton. Three fire engines from Chew Magna, Radstock and Paulton fire stations

attended the incident and found a barn, used to store livestock, on fire. Crews used two high pressure hose reels and one 45mm jet to extinguish the fire and two firefighters wore breathing apparatus for safety. Two goats were rescued from the barn, but unfortunately 10 lambs were severely affected by the fire. Once the fire was extinguished, crews stayed on scene damping down the area and checking for hotspots. The cause of the fire is thought to be accidental.

- Crews called to multiple car fires – Gypsy Patch Lane, Patchway - 3 April 2022

Firefighters from Temple, Southmead, Avonmouth, Patchway, Portishead, Kingswood and Hicks Gate fire stations were called to reports of multiple cars alight in a car park. On arrival, crews found a fire involving 20 vehicles with various amounts of damage. Firefighters used three high pressure hose reels, one 45mm jet, four dry powder extinguishers, battery spreaders, small gear and foam to extinguish the blaze. Six firefighters wore breathing apparatus for safety. The Services' drone was also mobilised to the scene to support Avon and Somerset Police with investigations at the scene. The cause of the fire is thought to be deliberate.

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