



Tuesday, 21 March 2023

(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, Y Kumar, Y Mohamud, A Monk, B Nutland, R Payne, S Smith, R Tucker, A Varney, D Wilcox and M Shelford
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** to be held on **Wednesday, 29 March 2023** commencing at **14:00 hrs.**

The meeting will be held at **Severn Park Fire and Rescue Training Centre, Smoke Lane, Avonmouth, Bristol, BS11 0YA.** 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 [Avon Fire Authority](http://www.avonfire.gov.uk).

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



Clerk to Avon Fire Authority
PO Box 37, Police and Fire HQ, Valley Road, Portishead, Bristol BS20 8JJ
Telephone 0117 926 2061 Extension 231 the.clerk@avonfire.gov.uk



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; 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) 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 or statement. If preferred, the Chair or Clerk can read out a written statement on the individual's behalf. There is a time limit of 30 minutes for all Public Access statements.

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, 29 March 2023

Pages

14:00

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Emergency Evacuation Procedures**
- 3. Declaration of Interests**
- 4. Public Access**
- 5. Chair's Business**
- 6. Minutes of the Avon Fire Authority**
 - 6.1 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Avon Fire Authority held on 14 December 2022 5 - 16
 - 6.2 Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Avon Fire Authority held on 17 February 2023 17 - 26
- 7. Minutes of Committee Meetings**
 - 7.1 Ordinary Meeting of Audit, Governance & Ethics Committee held on 22 September 2022 27 - 32
 - 7.2 Ordinary Meeting of People & Culture Committee held on 5 October 2022 33 - 40
 - 7.3 Ordinary Meeting of Performance, Review & Scrutiny Committee held on 7 October 2022 41 - 46
- 8. Appointment of Statutory Finance Officer** 47 - 50
- 9. Annual Update of Service Plan including IRMP** 51 - 92
- 10. Members' Allowances Scheme 2023-24** 93 - 108
- 11. Annual Review of Service Charges 2023-24** 109 - 114
- 12. Pay Policy Statement 2023/24** 115 - 126
- 13. Forward Plan 2023-24** 127 - 128
- 14. Date of next Meeting - 25 April 2023 at 11.00**
- 15. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

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.

16. Confidential Minutes of the Fire Authority

16.1	Confidential Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Avon Fire Authority held on 22 November 2022	129 - 132
16.2	Confidential Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Avon Fire Authority held on 14 December 2022	133 - 136
16.3	Confidential Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Avon Fire Authority held on 17 February 2023	137 - 140

17. Confidential Minutes of Committee Meetings

Exempt Paragraph 3

17.1	Confidential Minutes of the People & Culture Committee held on 5 October 2022	141 - 144
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AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

14 DECEMBER 2022

Present: Councillors A Ali, S Bromley, E Brown, N Butters, D Davies, P Goggin (joined at 14.30hrs), Y Kumar, B Massey, Y Mohamud, A Monk, B Nutland, S Smith, A Varney and D Wilcox.

The meeting began at 14.00hrs.

55. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs J Ashe, R Eddy, B Hopkinson, R Jacobs, R Payne and R Tucker and J Mason, Independent Person.

56. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

Members were advised by the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (CFO) that in the event of an emergency, to exit the room and meet in the rear yard.

57. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None advised.

58. PUBLIC ACCESS

None received.

59. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and drew attention to the following:

1. The Chair confirmed that the meeting took place as a face-to-face meeting. The meeting had been recorded for the public to view.
2. Members and Officers introduced themselves.
3. The voting arrangements for the meeting were as follows:
 - The Chair to ask for any votes against.
 - The Chair to ask for any abstentions.
 - The Chair to ask for a show of hands for Members voting "for".
4. The Chair confirmed that Cllr Paul May had now left the Fire Authority and the Authority wished him well for the future. We would like to welcome Cllr Dr Kumar who had replaced Cllr May from BANES.

5. The Chair advised that the Asian Fire Service Association Awards took place on 23 November and Richard Stokes and Louisa Rogers were nominated for an award. Although we didn't win on this occasion, the Service was very proud to be nominated.
6. The Excellence in Fire & Emergency Awards 2022 took place on 9 December and again both Louisa Rogers and Richard Stokes were nominated. The Chair announced that she was very pleased to advise that Richard had won an Award for the Most Influential Ethnic Minority Individual in Fire Award. Members asked that their congratulations be passed onto Richard and Louisa.
7. The Chair thanked all those that attended the Christmas Carol Service.

The CFO updated Members about the recent explosion and the help that Avon Fire & Rescue Service (AF&RS) was able to provide in Jersey. The CFO advised that Jersey followed the same rules and regulations as Avon and he would be happy to share any learnings. Members asked that their thanks were passed onto the team from Avon that attended the incident.

60. MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF AVON FIRE AUTHORITY HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2022

The minutes were moved by Cllr Massey and seconded by Cllr Nutland.

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Avon Fire Authority held on 5 October 2022 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.

61. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

7.1 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the People & Culture Committee held on 9 June 2022.

The minutes were moved by Cllr Wilcox and seconded by Cllr Bromley.

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the People & Culture Committee held on 9 June 2022 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.

7.2 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Audit, Governance & Ethics Committee held on 29 June 2022.

The minutes were moved by Cllr Wilcox and seconded by Cllr Massey.

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Audit, Governance & Ethics Committee held on 29 June 2022 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.

7.3 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Performance, Review & Scrutiny Committee held on 15 July 2022.

The minutes were moved by Cllr Nutland and seconded by Cllr Davies.

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the Performance, Review & Scrutiny Committee held on 15 July 2022 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.

62. REQUEST FROM THE AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER (PCC) TO JOIN AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

The Fire Authority received a report of the Clerk which outlined details of the request from the PCC to join Avon Fire Authority (AFA).

The PCC, made a request in writing to the Chair of AFA on 20 May 2021, seeking to join the AFA. That request was considered at the AFA's meeting on 30 June 2021 and Members decided to defer a decision on the application until their next meeting in October 2021. The PCC was invited to attend the next meeting to give his reasons for wanting to join the Fire Authority and to clarify what he would bring to the role. However, due to other commitments, the PCC had been unable to attend an AFA meeting until now.

The Clerk asked Members to consider the application by the PCC and determine whether to agree the request, and take into consideration the skills, attributes and the likely contribution of the PCC to the Fire Authority, together with any possible detrimental impact. There were no financial implications to the request.

The Clerk drew Members attention to the legislation concerning the request, shown in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 on p 46. She also reminded the AFA that they had approved the application of Sue Mountstevens, the previous PCC, who attended one meeting before standing down from the role.

The PCC remarked that he wanted to join the AFA to encourage collaboration between the Avon & Somerset Constabulary (ASC) and AF&RS. He outlined there was already successful collaboration between the two Services, but there was more that could be done together. For example, he believed that the Police could learn from the AF&RS Environment Manager and that the AFA are one of the leading Fire Services in respect of the environment. Both Services have dogs and there could be cross learnings.

The PCC advised that he would attend two meetings a year but would be available to help with collaboration. He added that the Chief Constable was also very keen to collaborate.

A Member pointed out that the boundaries of ASC and AFA were non-contiguous and asked if the PCC had also applied to Devon & Somerset Fire Authority. The PCC confirmed that he had and had been accepted. He had not yet attended a meeting as he was waiting for the AFA to make a decision.

A Member remarked that the PCC had been a Member of the AFA previously and asked whether there was a maximum tenure within the Constitution. The Clerk advised that the PCC would join the AFA in a different capacity and his term would end in May 2024.

Cllr Goggin joined the meeting at 14.30hrs.

A Member mentioned Bath Fire Station and that he was disappointed that ASC had decided not to go ahead with a joint premises, could the PCC assist. The PCC advised that he had made the decision to withdraw from the proposal as ASC needed more space.

The PCC was asked whether the agreement was reciprocal, and would AFA be able to sit on an ASC board. The Clerk confirmed that this had been looked into previously and was not possible.

A Member asked if the PCC would have voting rights if allowed to join. The Clerk confirmed that he would. However, if the PCC were to send a representative from his office, they would have no vote.

The PCC left the room and it was confirmed that if approved, the PCC would become a Member immediately.

A vote took place with the following results:
Against – 1/Abstentions – 10/For – 3.

The motion was carried and the PCC was welcomed to the AFA until the end of his current tenure in May 2024.

**It was resolved that the Fire Authority:
Agreed the application of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset to join Avon Fire Authority until the end of his current tenure.**

63. REVENUE 2022/23 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The CFO presented the report which provided the AFA with an update on the 2022/23 Revenue Budget and other key financial information for the period up to 31 October 2022. The report provided forecasts of spending against each agreed budget heading based upon spending.

This latest report forecasted that spending against the net revenue budget would be £30k overspent. This compared to the previously reported break-even position, based upon spending to the end of July 2022, as reported to the Fire Authority meeting held on the 5 October 2022.

It was noted that whilst a small overspend is projected, this represented a positive position for the Fire Authority, given the additional pay and inflationary pressures placed upon the budget, and the fact that these pressures could be mitigated by underspends elsewhere in the budget to avoid the need to utilise Reserve balances.

In response to a Member's question, it was clarified that if the proposed pay rise of 5% for operational staff was to be higher, it would cost the Service just short of £300k for each additional 1%. The current budget included a provision for a 2% pay rise. The CFO advised that the Service would have to review reserves

and consider any possible savings. This would be considered at the next AFA meeting in February 2023.

**It was RESOLVED that Avon Fire Authority:
Noted the forecast spending position against the 2022/23 Revenue Budget.**

64. AF&RS TRAINING ESTATE AND DELIVERY OPTIONS

The AFA received a report from the Property Services Manager and Area Manager, Learning & Development. Members were advised that the Service must provide the facilities and resources to ensure training could be effectively delivered. It was advised that the majority of our operational training is currently carried out at the Severn Park Joint Training Centre which is a purpose-built facility constructed and managed under a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract with Babcock which would end on 31 March 2028.

As previously advised to Members, the report outlined the Service's current and future operational training needs and presented several high-level strategic options and a recommendation for the future of training provision for AF&RS. The report sought agreement to the recommended option, and to proceed to a detailed phase of work to prepare for the PFI contract expiry and ensure a timely transition of our training functions to a new delivery model.

It was noted that the Service had diverse training estates across several sites with maintenance being a significant cost. The paper outlined some high-level options considered which had moved forward due to the PFI contract coming to an end in 2028.

Members received further information of the five proposed Training Delivery Options and were asked to make a decision after the presentation.

It had been considered whether the solution could be delivered across our sites but overall there was not enough scope without significant capital investment. Members were advised that the Service already collaborated with other Blue Light Services and discussion had taken place with other Services. Outsourcing to the Fire Service College (FSC) had been considered, but which would take firefighters out of county and have cost uncertainty.

It was recommended to Members that the preferred option was to look at the potential to acquire Severn Park at the end of the PFI and develop it as a long-term training facility. The Property Services Manager advised that he had sight of the running costs for Severn Park and it looked that in today's prices there would be a modest potential saving obtained of around £500k.

A Member asked if the AFA acquired Severn Park, as a chance to offset with estate rationalisation, would this mean leaving ASC Headquarters? The CFO advised that the Service would consider all possibilities post the PFI-expiry. It was confirmed that the next 'break clause' at HQ was in 2027.

It was confirmed that Devon & Somerset FRS had indicated that they did not want to take part in the site after expiry of the PFI. Gloucestershire FRS options currently remained open and were non-committal but they might be interested in a collaborative situation. It was confirmed that we had not approached any other local FRS.

A Member asked about timings, and if AF&RS did not remain at Severn Park, a decision would need to be made imminently. It was advised that other options would be considered in parallel in case required.

When asked whether the Service felt confident that option E would meet our training needs going forward, it was confirmed that Severn Park had the space and capacity to provide training provision and scope to expand and develop around the site.

A Member asked whether there would still be the scope for specialised training such as ship firefighting, Severn Tunnel and aircraft. He was advised that the Service would have a blended approach to our training. We used the FSC for ship training but there may be a provision for us to provide limited ship training. We also had a good working relationship with Bristol Airport in relation to their facilities. However, it should be noted that there would still be opportunities to collaborate including the Severn tunnel.

It was confirmed that initial discussions with Bristol City Council (BCC) had indicated that Severn Park could remain a long-term lease site with the option to extend the lease.

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

It was resolved that the Fire Authority:

- a) Noted the report and its recommendations.**
- b) Approved Option E - Severn Park Acquisition Model as the preferred option for the provision of operational training at the expiry of the current PFI Contract (March 2028).**
- c) Requested that the Property Manager and Area Manager of Learning & Development Manager proceed to a more detailed phase of work to plan and implement this option ensuring a timely transition of our training functions to a new delivery model, and more fully assess the potential to move other key functions to a combined site establishing detailed costs, savings and the potential for further AF&RS Estate rationalisation and consolidation of Service functions in one location.**
- d) Instructed the Property Manager and Area Manager of Learning & Development to provide assurance that the further development of our existing sites (with potential for expansion and additional outsourcing) will remain under review, in order to maintain operational training capability, should we encounter any fundamental barriers in progressing the Severn Park Option.**

65. SERVICE PLAN OVERVIEW & KEY ASSUMPTIONS

The AFA received a report from the Corporate Assurance and Business Planning Manager which provided updates on the key assumptions and findings identified by the Community Risk Management Planning (CRMP) and Business Planning teams which would form the updated Service Plan (SP) for 2023-2026.

The key findings were presented and discussed during the AFA Member's Briefing session on 4 November 2022. Therefore, this report provided a further and formal opportunity for consideration.

Highlights from the report included:

1. It was anticipated that only minor changes would be implemented in the 2023-26 plan.
2. Community Risk Management Planning showed an increase in the number of incidents with levels returning to the pre-pandemic norm.
3. Considerations around the existing themes and priorities in section 4.9.
4. The next step would be that the final draft would have a 4-week consultation in January and then be submitted for approval to the AFA in March 2023.

A Member asked in respect of section 4.4, Fires in Tall Buildings whether the additional costs for fire wardens and replacement of cladding in Bristol had been taken into account in the plan. The CFO advised that the Service was concerned with the risk of fire and the occupancy level. Analysis had been taken from incident data to manage risks through prevention and protection.

A Member added that whilst it was not the responsibility of AFA, within South Gloucestershire, they had been reassured that all buildings had been audited in respect of cladding and expected BCC to have done the same. The Member asked how it had not been identified that the building was at risk with dangerous cladding. The CFO responded that since Grenfell, the focus had been on ACM cladding. We had learnt more about cladding materials and as audit and inspections are undertaken of building materials, more risks had been identified. The Service reviewed the building owner's Risk Assessment and whether as an enforcing authority we accept the proposals.

A Member stated that they were interested in the timeline of events when AF&RS had acknowledged that expanded polystyrene cladding was a risk. The CFO advised that a building owner undertakes an audit and the Pass99A standard had recently come into force. In terms of enforcing, the Fire Services Act and legislation was changing and increased the Services' power of inspection and parameters we enforce. It was agreed that the CFO would talk offline with the Member concerned.

It was resolved that the Fire Authority:

- a) Noted the emerging community risks and keys findings identified to date in this report.**
- b) As these key findings inform the development of the SP for 2023-2026, considered whether there are further priorities or objectives for**

inclusion in the Plan at this stage and prior to the draft being submitted for review and approval in March 2023.

66. FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING DATES AND 2023/2024 FORWARD PLAN

The Fire Authority received a report of the Clerk to present the proposed meeting dates for 2023-2024 and revised Forward Plan of Key Decisions, which set out the anticipated major decisions and key papers to be delivered in 2022/23.

The Clerk advised that two dates could not be changed – the AGM in June which must be held within 4 weeks of our Unitary Authority (UA) AGMs and the extraordinary AFA meeting in February 2024 to agree the precept budget.

A Member mentioned that with regards to the AFA meeting in February, we are a Local Authority in own right and felt we shouldn't be bullied into what UAs say we should do. The Clerk added that there had been a lot of discussion and movement of dates. The Treasurer had agreed dates with the UAs, but discussion would take place when the new Statutory Finance Officer was in situ.

A Member pointed out that BCC would be in pre-election run up in March 2024, so the AFA meeting date may need to be changed as it would fall into Purdah. In addition, the other 3 UAs would be in Purdah for the AFA meeting on 29 March 2023. The Clerk reminded Members that 'Business as Usual' should take place during Purdah and she would review the Purdah guidelines for elected Members.

The Clerk pointed out that Democratic Services tried to book larger and cost-effective rooms at Severn Park and Headquarters. A fire station would be used for the June meetings. We would also try to book rooms in other venues around the area but these were often not big enough and expensive to hire. Members were asked to provide details of any suitable venues within their ward.

A Member volunteered the use of a meeting room within a local university. It was agreed that Democratic Services would provide possible dates.

The recommendations were moved by Cllr Massey and seconded by Cllr Goggin and were unanimously approved.

It was RESOLVED that the Avon Fire Authority:

- a) Approved the proposed Schedule of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2023/24.**
- b) Noted the revised Forward Plan for the remainder of the 2022/23 Municipal Year.**

67. IMMEDIATE DETRIMENT UPDATE

The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) outlined to Members that Immediate Detriment (ID) had previously been discussed with the AFA. The latest position, as of the Fire Authority meeting on 5 October 2022, was that ID processing for impacted staff wanting to retire before October 2023 remained paused, but with

a provision for individual representations to be made, and considered, in certain circumstances.

The report being considered at this meeting, referred to the position for those in the ID category who had already retired ('retirees') without ID being applied. A processing mechanism for these individuals had been proposed in a Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and Local Government Association (LGA) Framework.

The DoCS advised that the Government intended to complete the legislation to remedy the age discrimination which arose from moving from the 1992 to 2015 pension scheme, by October 2023. This would include back payments and for those already retired, interest will be applied.

We were still awaiting the Government remedy, for the group impacted who had already retired or were due to do so. In the October AFA meeting, Members reconsidered the approach for ID for staff coming up to retirement and paused ID processing due to potential financial implications and liabilities on local budgets.

The paper asked Members to consider the approach for impacted staff who had already retired and the key points raised were:

- 36 staff impacted who have retired without ID applied.
- A potential processing method is the LGA/FBU Framework.
- There is a potential significant cost implication for the AFA.
- The LGA ready reckoner projected potential cost liability of £323k.
- Members could consider that potential funding and caveats were given regarding this amount through the pension reserve but £230k had already been reserved to cover additional ill health retirement costs which would leave little resilience.
- There remains the risk that if Members do not agree ID processing for retirees, there was a potential claim risk which could be costly.
- The cost-of-living crisis has meant that family incomes had become more stretched.
- Due to demands on the administrator, if the LGA/FBU framework was agreed, the AFA would not be able to meet timescales prescribed in all cases.
- The decision was to be made by Members of the AFA as the scheme managers.
- If Members were not ready to adopt the Framework for existing retirees, it was recommended that they adopt the same case by case provision that has been agreed for forthcoming retirees. This approach would potentially help the AFA meet some of the expectations of The Pension Ombudsman and would allow consideration of hardship cases.

A Member asked for an estimate of how much the group of 36 were potentially out of pocket. The DocS advised that for the average firefighter the difference would be around £2k on the annual pension and £15k in terms of lump sum.

It was asked whether there was an option whereby the AFA could make a partial payment of 50% which would help to alleviate hardship. The DoCs advised that

the Framework did not make a provision for part payments. The LGA and FBU continued to be in discussion about the Framework and whether any amends would be made.

The DoCs was asked whether there had been any further correspondence from the Home Office regarding an update of the guidelines. The DoCS confirmed that she had spoken to the LGA this week, discussions were ongoing and no timeframe yet available.

A Member asked for an indication of how those affected were feeling and whether they may be tempted to go down the legal route. The DoCS advised that the Service is regularly in touch with forthcoming/current retirees via email and they could contact an internal pensions advisor for further information. Based on informal feedback, some staff may wish to wait for remedy to only have the calculations once and secure maximum interest. Others felt a strong sense of injustice, including those experiencing financial hardship, which is why the case by case proposal may be helpful.

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

It was resolved that the Fire Authority:

- a) Noted the current position with the FBU and LGA Framework.**
- b) Considered the potential implications and costs of adopting the Framework for those in the ID category who have already retired.**
- c) Continued to defer a decision on adopting the Framework pending any changes (legislative or otherwise) which would reduce the financial impact on local budgets.**
- d) Agreed that, in the interim, representations from impacted individuals who have already retired (without ID applied) can be made to, and determined by, the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive Officer (CFO/CEO) and Director of Corporate Services.**

68 SERVICE ROUND UP

The Fire Authority received an information report from the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Service Delivery (ACFO, SD) who highlighted areas of good work across AF&RS, which had taken place between October and November 2022 including:

1. Section 5.1 – Following multiple high-rise incidents, Members were updated that ongoing work had continued with Business Fire Safety (BFS)/Community Fire Safety and BCC. Twenty joint visits had taken place with 10 more planned by the end of 2022.
2. Section 5.10 – two trucks had been wrapped with a focus on Black History Month. A further two trucks had been wrapped with support for Pride, Blood and organ doner campaigns and also Home Fire Safety Visit activities.
3. Section 5.17 - a number of teams represented AF&RS in the United Kingdom Rescue Organisation Challenge (UKRO) with notable successes. Although, the Service supported the initiative, staff volunteered and represented the Service in their own time with pride and professionalism.

Members commented that the truck wrapping was successful and congratulated the Service on its UKRO success and work celebrating Black History Month.

A Member mentioned the recent tragic accident in a pond and asked if there was anything the Service should look for in our local area. The ACFO SD advised that the Service had ongoing winter safety campaigns and also took part in multi-agency awareness campaigns.

It was pointed out that in paragraph 5.3 this should say Mr Howard Evans.

**It was RESOLVED that the Avon Fire Authority:
Noted the report.**

69. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was RESOLVED that Avon Fire Authority noted the date of the next meeting as being 17 February 2023 at 10.30hrs.

70. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The recommendation was moved by Cllr Massey and seconded by Cllr Bromley.

It was RESOLVED 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.

Cllrs Brown and Nutland left the meeting prior to going into exempt session.

Cllr Monk left the meeting at 15.30hrs

71. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2022

Confidential minutes of the ordinary meeting of Avon Fire Authority held on 5 October 2022.

The minutes were moved by Cllr Massey and seconded by Cllr Goggin.

It was RESOLVED that the confidential minutes of the ordinary meeting of Avon Fire Authority held on 5 October 2022 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.

72 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE PEOPLE & CULTURE MEETING HELD ON 9 JUNE 2022

Confidential minutes of the ordinary meeting of the People & Culture Committee held on 9 June 2022.

The minutes were moved by Cllr Wilcox and seconded by Cllr Davies.

It was RESOLVED that the confidential minutes of the ordinary meeting of the People & Culture Committee held on 9 June 2022 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.

73. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE & ETHICS COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 JUNE 2022

Confidential minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Audit, Governance & Ethics Committee held on 29 June 2022.

The minutes were moved by Cllr Goggin and seconded by Cllr Wilcox.

It was RESOLVED that the confidential minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Audit, Governance & Ethics Committee held on 29 June 2022 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.

74. IT SERVICES CONTRACT AWARD

The AFA received a report from the Head of Procurement which outlined that the Authority used an external contractor to provide the majority of its IT services. These were critical to the operation of the Authority's infrastructure and being able to deliver our objectives as a Service.

**It was RESOLVED that the Avon Fire Authority:
Approved the award of contract to the preferred bidder Amicus.**

The meeting closed at 16.10 hrs.

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Chair



EXTRAORDINARY AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

17 FEBRUARY 2023

Present: Councillors A Ali, S Bromley, N Butters, D Davies, R Eddy, B Hopkinson, R Jacobs, B Massey, Y Mohamud, A Monk, B Nutland, R Payne, S Smith, R Tucker, A Varney and D Wilcox, M Shelford, Police & Crime Commissioner and J Mason, Independent Person.

The meeting began at 10.40 hrs.

75. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs J Ashe, E Brown and P Goggin and Y Kumar.

76. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

Members were advised by the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (CFO) that in the event of an emergency, to exit the room and meet in the rear yard.

77. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None advised.

78. PUBLIC ACCESS

None received.

79. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and drew attention to the following:

1. The CFO mentioned the recent sad passing of Barry Martin, a firefighter in Scotland and advised that the Service had sent a letter of condolence. A minute's silence was held.
2. The Chair confirmed that the extraordinary meeting would take place as a face-to-face meeting. The meeting had been recorded for the public to view on our YouTube channel.
3. Members and Officers introduced themselves.
4. The voting arrangements for the meeting were as follows:
 - The Chair to ask for any votes against.
 - The Chair to ask for any abstentions.
 - The Chair to ask for a show of hands for Members voting "for".

5. The Clerk confirmed that Members of People & Culture Committee had on behalf of the Fire Authority, conducted a recruitment exercise for a new Statutory Finance Officer and had offered the role to Ms Verity Lee, who had accepted the position. A paper would be presented to the next Fire Authority meeting in March to ask the Fire Authority to ratify the appointment in May.
6. The Clerk advised that paper number 10 regarding the recruitment of an Assistant Chief Fire Officer, was withdrawn from the agenda, as the vacancy was no longer available.

80. 2023 to 2026 CAPITAL PROGRAMME, STRATEGY AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

The Interim Treasurer presented a report to Members which asked them to consider the proposed 3-year Capital Strategy, together with the affordability and impact of the updated capital expenditure plans.

The Capital Strategy outlined the projected capital expenditure and planned capital disposals, proposed by lead Directors, over the next three years from April 2023 to March 2026 and built on the 2022-2025 Capital Programme, which was approved by the Fire Authority in March 2022.

The purpose of the report was to bring a refresh of capital spending until 2026 and to present prudential indicators to assure Members of the affordability of the programme. Members attention was drawn to the table on p7, which summarised the spending proposals. It was confirmed that the spending over the last 7 years amounted to £22.2m which averaged approx. £3m per annum. The Interim Treasurer advised that the proposed spending levels for the next three year programme are broadly in line with historic spending levels with the inclusion of slippage from the existing programme of £3.6m. Whilst spending levels were broadly constant it was emphasised that, given the current cost of living crisis and the significant impact on construction costs, these levels would deliver less for the same expenditure.

It was confirmed that there was continuity in terms of approval by the Authority in previous years. With regards to formulating budgets, there had been a process of liaising with Lead Directors and Heads of Departments. It was also confirmed that the Capital Steering & Prioritisation Steering Group ensured that the figures brought to Members had been prioritised and reviewed.

The Interim Treasurer presented highlights from the report concentrating on areas of the Service such as Fleet, Premises and Control. It was confirmed that the Service has now fully utilised the money from the sale of Headquarters in Temple, which meant there had been no need to move to borrowing as we had capital reserves available to use.

The Interim Treasurer drew Members attention to the Prudential indicators shown on p21 where external borrowing was confirmed at £7m. The training centre at Severn Park was funded from a Private Funded Initiative (PFI) project

for which the Service had 5 years of payment commitments of £1.3m, giving a total Authority debt of £8.3m which was recognised on the balance sheet.

This Prudential Indicators gave flexibility to take out borrowing in advance of proposed spending, subject to the Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit for external debt Indicators not being breached. The Interim Treasurer emphasised to Members that given current high interest rates and the fact that securing loans of up to 25 years would commit the Service to higher debt repayments over this period, that there are no plans for the Service to borrow in advance until interest rates were lower.

The Interim Treasurer advised that the Service's Debt ratio was in the lower quartile when compared to other Fire & Rescue Services (FRS) but looking forward over the next 7-year challenge, there will be requirement to resort to borrowing at some point. There would be significant charges associated with borrowing and the Service would be locked into repayments within the revenue budget for a long time, which couldn't be changed. Whilst it is recognised within the proposed programme that some external borrowing would be required the challenge ahead will be to achieve revenue efficiencies and to look to build into the capital budget to cover future investment.

In response to Member's questions:

1. It was advised that the house sale mentioned in the report was a property in Yate which was previously linked to Avon Fire & Rescue Service (AF&RS) employment - a protected tenancy exists with the tenant having the right to buy. The Clerk had obtained specialist legal advice on this issue.
2. Paragraph 5.5 stated that the fleet provision expenditure programme for 2024/25 was £3.2m. However, appendices 1 and 2 showed £2.099m. The Interim Treasurer advised that his understanding was that the £3.2m was over the whole period of the Capital Programme not just for 2024/25. In addition, the narrative in paragraph 5.5 was to emphasise the total spend of £3.5m but there were other issues not clarified in the narrative. The CFO provided clarification that an appliance could be ordered but may not be in Service and payment made for a further 18 months. It was agreed that clarification would be sought and reported back to Members.
3. It was confirmed that the rebuild at Bath Fire Station had been paused. The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) advised that the Service was disappointed that the tri-service flagship building would not go ahead. It was confirmed that the Bath rebuild would be reviewed over the next few years. Factors that would influence the decision would be the optimum time to borrow, possibility of taking over Seven Park along with reviewing the facilities at Weston Super Mare and the ongoing training programme. The Property Services Manager added that the building showed defects which needed to be addressed (capital had been allocated). There was also scope to look at further designs including a review of a standalone design.
4. It was mentioned that the capital allocated for the replacement of the hovercraft seemed excessive. It was confirmed that this also included purchase of a vehicle with a crane to move the hovercraft.
5. It was noted that in respect of the Operational Control Capital Programme, there had been delays with the Emergency Services Network (ESN) since

2019 and delivery would not be until 2026 and a Member queried whether there were any other critical systems at risk. The CFO advised that this had resulted in delays in terms of upgrades to connectivity, code of connection and data security. Work was ongoing but, in the meantime, there had been minimal investment within the operating system itself, which was coming to the end of life. It was becoming increasingly critical that investment was required in fire control, but we needed to make best use of our capital assets.

6. The Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) suggested that there was work that both Services could do, possibly by overlapping the programme as the police also had significant issues as well. The CFO advised that he was happy to consider but added that AF&RS mobilisation systems were different to the police. He added that some areas of the hardware and airwave network were also different but there could be some possible efficiencies. AF&RS were focused on our internal systems but there could be possibilities for collaboration. The CFO advised that the Corporate Risk Register was monitored monthly and in particular the ability to respond.
7. It was mentioned that the Service was spending 'free money' which would run out during the programme and did the Interim Treasurer have any modelling on how this would look in 6 years' time. It was advised that there would be some impact in 2025/26 with additional debt charges. Borrowing would be deferred as much as possible, and it would be suggested that the Service used internal money first. It was emphasised that each £1m borrowed would commit an additional £70k of annual debt charges to the revenue budget.

The recommendation was moved by Cllr Monk and seconded by Cllr Eddy.

It was RESOLVED that Avon Fire Authority:

- a) **Approved the 2023-2026 Capital Programme.**
- b) **Approved the proposed funding and Prudential Indicators, as detailed in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 required to finance the 2023-2026 Capital Strategy.**

81. REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX LEVELS 2023-24

The Interim Treasurer presented this report alongside Item 8 on the agenda.

The Interim Treasurer presented a report to Members which outlined the latest revenue budget position following consultation. Members were asked to consider the contents of the report and agree a revenue budget and Council Tax precept for 2023/24. The report set out two options in relation to Council Tax:

Option 1 – An increase in Council Tax of £5, equivalent to an increase of 6.41% (from £77.95 in 2022/23 to £82.95 in 2023/24 for a Band D Property) in line with the Governments announced specific referendum limit for fire and rescue authorities.

• **Option 2** – An increase in Council Tax of 3% (from £77.95 in 2022/23 to £80.29 in 2023/24 for a Band D Property), representing an increase of £2.34, in line with the Governments announced core referendum limit for shire counties and Unitary Authorities (UA).

Legislation required that the Authority set, before 1 March, a level of revenue budget and Council Tax for the forthcoming financial year to inform each of the four Council Tax billing authorities within the area of Avon, of the level of precept required by the Authority for 2023-24.

The Interim Treasurer advised that he was aware that restraints had been placed on referendum limits. In recent years Avon Fire Authority (AFA) had been constrained by a limit of 2% and had not considered going above this. However, some Authorities were in a strained situation and considering higher limits. It was pointed out that the AFA now had flexibility to select a £5 flat rate, which was welcome news.

The Interim Treasurer drew Member's attention to the key considerations highlighted in paragraph 5. The Local Government Finance Settlement followed the Autumn statement and allowed an increase in our Government grant of 10.1% in line with CPI.

There was also some disappointing news, in the current financial year we had received a Services grant obtained through Government which had been reduced from £752k to £424k.

Member's attention was drawn to Table B on p27, which showed an increase in the council tax base, which resulted in an increase of £400k into our revenue budget. In addition, the council tax deficit was smaller than in previous years.

Paragraph 5.11 provided clarification on the two options available. Option 1 – an increase of £5 for Band D (less than 10p a week). Option 2 is an increase of 3% which equated to less than 5p a week. If option 2 was selected in 2023/24, the AFA would have to look to reserves to balance the £1m shortfall.

It was a legal requirement to consult with businesses and the public concerning the precept which had been completed. 329 responses had been received, 78% in agreement that the Service offered value for money in terms of its spending and 75% responded that it was reasonable to increase council tax by £5.

The Interim Treasurer pointed out that Table F confirmed changes in business rates. The Service does not collect this so is reliant on UAs to advise the revenue they collect in 2023/24.

Member's attention was drawn to paragraph 5.22. Revised copies of the appendices had been provided to reflect the revised pay offer for Grey book staff of 7% in 2022 and 5% in 2023. Money would be moved from contingency funds to cover the financial impact of the revised offer.

There was £1m revenue difference between option 1 and 2 and if option 2 was selected, the Interim Treasurer would look to other options to balance the budget.

The Interim Treasurer, reassured Members that under Section 25 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003, the budget and level of reserves were adequate to get through 2023/24. The budget was robust for 2023/24 and level of reserves

were adequate but could be improved. If the £5 option was not chosen, the Service could make use of its reserves but in terms of future budgets that would cause difficulties. There are significant risks associated with the budget around future funding and cost implications.

The Interim Treasurer then reviewed the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) from p57 on the agenda, before taking Members questions.

A Member hoped that AFA was reassured and that there was confidence in the plans proposed. It was added that the AFA had a responsibility to provide key statutory services and to prevent risk to communities. Despite the increased cost of living faced along with the large increase in inflation, it was suggested that Members opted for option 1.

It was noted that firefighters must be protected with the right equipment. A Member pointed out that although the number of additional homes had increased, which would provide additional precept, these properties would also require protection. Therefore, the Member was happy to support option 1.

Appendix 7 highlighted the reserves which AFA expected to start the year with. A Member asked which of the reserves does the £600k come out of in option 1 and the £1.6m in option 2. The Interim Treasurer advised that the £600k in option 1 is not there to balance the budget, it was investment previously agreed by the AFA to fund specific projects. The £1m for option 2 would have to come from reserves and a review of our reserves and strategy would be required. The Head of Finance confirmed that the £600k was allocated to the transformation project and also for posts within Business Fire Safety which had received a specific reserve received from the Home Office.

A Member asked about the impact on reserves in 2023/2024 and the long term if option 2 was voted for. The Interim Treasurer advised that the Service would look to reserve balances initially. Beyond that, savings would be required leading up to 2025/26. The CFO advised that the Service could possibly use some reserves but would have to look at efficiency and infrastructure changes to fund this. The Service had a saving plans which had not been used recently but the MTFP assumptions would clearly be a deficit in our revenue and how we would look at efficiencies in the long term.

A Member mentioned inflation and potential pay increases and proposed that as the AFA had the £5 option available it should be taken. He would like to propose option 1.

A Member thanked the Interim Treasurer and Head of Finance in obtaining a balanced budget. In respect of making efficiencies in the future, this would mean cuts and as an Authority, they could only cut so much before failing in its duties. It was felt that the AFA needed to be realistic with the public, as it could possibly not be able to meet its obligations in coming years. They mentioned that the AFA should not take this decision lightly as residents were suffering from the cost-of-living increases, but it did need to meet obligations.

The recommendation was moved by Cllr Hopkinson and seconded by Cllr Eddy.

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

- a) Considered the information contained in this report.
- b) Agreed a Revenue Budget and Band “D” Council Tax level for 2023/24.
- c) Agreed that the Fire Authority’s basic amount of Council Tax (i.e., precept per Band D property) for 2023/24 is increased to:
 - 1) Option 1 - £82.95, an increase of £5 (6.41%) equivalent to less than ten pence per week.
- d) Made the statutory determinations which are set out in Appendix 1, based upon the 2 options contained in the report
- e) Agreed that precepts be issued to the Unitary Authorities in the Avon Fire Authority area in proportion to the tax base determined by them as detailed in paragraph 5.14 of this report.
- f) Noted the amount of Council Tax for 2023/24 for properties in each tax band is:

Amount per Council Tax Band	Option 1 Value
Band A	£55.30
Band B	£64.52
Band C	£73.73
Band D	£82.95
Band E	£101.38
Band F	£119.82
Band G	£138.25
Band H	£165.90

82. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023 TO 2027

The Interim Treasurer presented the report which provided the AFA with an update on the requirement to produce and publish a Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which is incorporated in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. This report provided the AFA with an updated MTFP covering the financial years 2023/24 to 2026/27.

This 4-year Financial Strategy showed a forecast budget shortfall of £1.9m in 2026/27, based upon Option 1 within the Revenue Budget and Council Tax levels report. This forecast increased to £2.9m should Option 2 of that report be approved.

The Authority had three primary sources of income; Council Tax Precept, Government Grants and Locally Retained Non-Domestic Rates. The 4-year Financial Strategy had been based on the 2023/24 Annual Budget Income levels with assumptions made in relation to changes in funding over the following three years.

The Interim Treasurer advised that it was difficult to predict what would happen in the future and over the next 3 years, so he had been prudent with the forecasts. It was advised that there had been some assumptions made of funding in table 1 and after 2023/24, AF&RS would receive some support with the revenue grant on the basis that inflation comes down. It had also been assumed that council tax would return to the 2% limit as the Service needed to plan without it.

It had been assumed that pay costs would return to normal levels. The Interim Treasurer advised that there seemed to be an expectation that there would be savings made in the fire sector in the future and money would be required to cover future pay awards and spending pressures from our existing budgets. It was mentioned that it is expected that difficult decisions would need to be made over the next few years.

Following the revised pay offers, Members were provided with two amended appendices.

The recommendation was moved by Cllr Nutland and seconded by Cllr Smith.

**It was RESOLVED that Avon Fire Authority:
Approved the 4-year Medium-Term Financial Plan, as detailed in the report and its appendices.**

Members took a break.

The CFO advised that as a result of Member's decision in Items 7 and 8 and Option 1 precept £5, in 2024/25 onwards there would still be a funding deficit. It was advised that the CFO would bring a paper to Members at a future meeting, concerning how the AFA would move forward to balance budgets.

83. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2023-2026

The Fire Authority received a report from the Interim Treasurer who provided an update on the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for the period 2023/2026. This strategy was based on the previously approved 2022/2025 Treasury Management Strategy and provided an updated position for the Fire Authority.

The majority of the Treasury Management functions were undertaken on behalf of the AFA by Bristol City Council (BCC), working with the Head of Finance and Treasurer, in accordance with the terms of the Financial Services Contract. BCC provided all of the financial indices and financial forecasts which supported this Strategy. Whilst BCC provided the AFA with its Treasury Management services, the AFA had overall responsibility for the implementation and regular monitoring of its Treasury Management policies and practices.

The strategy contained a refresh by BCC with narrative around the increased cost pressures. From an AFA point of view, the Interim Treasurer would not propose any changes for 2023/24 but the newly appointed Statutory Finance Officer may take a different view once in post. It was pointed out that there was

one change, as outlined in paragraph 5.3 of the report, where it is planned for an investment to be made at a higher rate of interest.

It was advised that BCC had been instructed to invest £5m in a fixed rate deposit and details would be provided to Members at a later date. A Member asked whether BCC would use their own broker to negotiate the rate and why AFA did not negotiate ourselves. Another Member advised that previously it was felt that the amount of money the AFA had to invest was too small and to mix with bigger organisations would give us more leverage.

The recommendation was moved by Cllr Eddy and seconded by Cllr Monk.

**It was resolved that Avon Fire Authority:
Approved the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023 / 2026.**

84. RECRUITMENT OF ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

The report was withdrawn from the papers as the vacancy is no longer available.

Member request to speak, granted by the Chair:

The Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) advised that he had completed some background work on Gallantry Awards for the 3 Emergency Services. This began after attending an awards dinner for police gallantry, where those recognised did not receive a nationally recognised medal. The PCC undertook some research to see if it was possible to establish a medal for all 3 services. A new pamphlet was being written in conjunction with the Cabinet Office for the Police. This would be offered to fire and ambulance as a mechanism to allow recognition and to win gallantry medals. These will be classed from 1- 4. Class 1 George Cross for acts of greatest heroism and courage, Class 2 George Medal, Class 3 Kings Gallantry Medal, Class 4 Kings Commendation for Bravery. It would be made as easy as possible for Services to put forward nominations for medals and further details would be passed on when available.

The CFO supported this initiative and advised that the Service had staff who acted selflessly to serve their communities. A nomination was made following the sad loss of Fleur Lombard, for an operational firefighter who was awarded the George Cross and two other firefighters who were awarded the Queens Gallantry Medal. AF&RS staff carried out selfless acts every day and this would be a welcome channel for us to nominate out staff.

Members supported the proposal and asked to be kept updated.

85. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was RESOLVED that Avon Fire Authority noted the date of the next meeting as being Wednesday 29 March 2023 at 14.00hrs.

86. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The recommendation was moved by Cllr Massey and seconded by Cllr Bromley.

It was RESOLVED 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.

87 BEDMINSTER FIRE STATION REFURBISHMENT CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT AWARD

The AFA received a report from the Property Services Manager which outlined that Bedminster Fire Station was identified as a strategic key site which needed significant investment.

The meeting closed at 12.42hrs

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Chair



**AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
AUDIT, GOVERNANCE & ETHICS COMMITTEE (AGEC)**

22 SEPTEMBER 2022

MINUTES OF MEETING

PRESENT: Cllrs Bromley (Substitute for Cllr Butters), Davies (Substitute for Cllr Wilcox) (left at 10.37), Goggin (Chair), Monk (Substitute for Cllr Tucker) (arrived at 10.34) and Payne

The meeting started at 10.30 am

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence received from Cllrs Ashe, Brown, Butters, Tucker and Wilcox and James Mason, Independent Person.

18. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Officers confirmed the emergency evacuation procedure for the venue.

19. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

20. PUBLIC ACCESS

None received.

21. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

Members and Officers introduced themselves.

1. The Chair outlined that meetings were now taking place face-to-face. The meeting would be recorded and uploaded to the Avon Fire Authority (AFA) website.
2. The Chair explained the voting system for the meeting, i.e. votes against a motion would be recorded first, followed by abstentions, then votes in favour.

22. MINUTES OF THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE & ETHICS COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 JUNE 2022

Cllr Goggin moved, and Cllr Davies seconded that the minutes be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

IT WAS RESOLVED -

That the minutes of 29 June 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

23. UPDATE ON INTERNAL AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee received a report of the Head of Corporate Assurance, Planning & Continuous Improvement, who updated Members on progress with completion of the Internal Audit recommendations and management actions as approved by the Service Leadership Team (SLT) on 25 August 2022.

IT WAS RESOLVED –

That the progress made against the Internal Audit recommendations and management actions be noted.

24. INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATES AND REPORTS

The Committee received a report from RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP (RSM) who are the AFA's Internal Auditors.

The key points emphasised were –

Progress Report

1. This report provided AGECE with an update on delivery of the 2022/23 internal audit plan.
2. One audit assignment report (Protection) had been finalised since the last AGECE meeting, when the 2022/23 audit plan was approved.
3. The audit plan remained on track to be delivered, however, the Corporate Reporting audit had been put on hold due to a proposed Local Government Association (LGA) governance peer review, to ensure no duplication exists. RSM awaited confirmation if the audit is to be rearranged for later in the year or deferred indefinitely.
4. In respect of the pension audit, due to the Fire Authority decision to pause Immediate Detriment processing and intention to further consider adoption of the LGA/Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Framework by the end of the calendar year, this audit had been put on hold pending further discussions about if, and when, there would be a stable period in which processing can be audited during the 2022/23 Audit Plan.
5. A decision had therefore been made to proceed with the Operational Assurance audit in 2022/23 on the basis that it is unlikely that both the Corporate Reporting and Pensions audit will take place in this audit year.
6. Sector briefings were included in the report for information purposes.

Protection Report

1. This audit was undertaken as part of the current three-year rolling internal audit strategy, as a risk-based assurance review to look at how Avon Fire & Rescue Service (AF&RS) had adopted new protection arrangements around risk-based inspections of business premises. This was the first audit of the 2022/23 plan and was linked to the Service Plan and key objectives and the new risk-based inspection programme.
2. RSM reported a reasonable assurance opinion and agreed one medium and one low category action with management.
3. The Business Fire Safety team had been developing its control framework over recent months and was currently on track against its inspection programme having completed 200/600 inspections in the year 2022/23 to date.
4. RSM had identified some areas of improvement around policies, guidance and staff applying consistent processes for following up and monitoring actions from inspections; as well as the need for a more robust performance monitoring process at SLT level, which is already in progress.
5. RSM outlined how staff were responsible for these follow-up actions and the need to ensure the correct process was in place, formalising documentation and guidance. It was noted that some action tracking was inconsistent.

The t/Area Manager Risk Reduction reiterated RSM's update and reassured Members that his team were working well and would soon introduce an improved risk-based inspection programme. He confirmed that every Fire & Rescue Service required a risk-based inspection policy and that an agreed definition of risk was awaited from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

He added that the HMICFRS identified in their review in 2018, that Avon needed to refresh the programme. A Station Manager along with Fire Safety Managers had spent a considerable amount of time identifying risk. The t/Area Manager Risk Reduction has a responsibility to ensure that the Service is inspecting the highest risk premises within the four Unitary areas such as high-rise residential buildings, care homes and those housing vulnerable residents.

The development of the new system has meant that the team are now operating from a live document which will be reported back to SLT. The hard work put into this system has now meant the Service is a good position locally and with the NFCC.

In response to Member's questions, the t/Area Manager:

1. Confirmed that the NFCC framework was expected over the next 12 months.
2. Confirmed that high risk premises visits were on track. However, the Business Fire Safety team had to evaluate the risks as they are unable to inspect all premises.
3. Advised in respect of Homes of Multiple Occupancy, the West of England protocol was followed which determined response and which organisation leads.

4. Advised that in respect of High-Risk properties which were poorly managed, it can be a challenge to enter the property. The team 'coach to comply' and support responsible persons but can also prosecute if required.
5. Advised the process regarding how the Service became aware of new properties i.e., a care home or bed and breakfast. When a new address is created, the Service is notified by way of a unique premises ID number system and changes in use or new build properties will be picked up through building regulations. A review will would then be undertaken, if required.
6. Confirmed that proactive monitoring/risks are reported externally to HMICFRS with prosecution updates and conclusions reported to the AFA. The Risk Reduction Team also works closely with Unitary Authorities who on occasion provided evidence for these prosecutions. A Member, who is the Communication Team Champion, agreed that it was good to record these prosecutions as it showed proactive activity. He would progress this further with the Communications Team as it was a positive and proactive approach to report these outcomes.
7. Advised that, in respect of Lithium batteries and electric cars/charging points, these have presented new challenges. The Service had been proactive through use of risk-based programmes and auditing which contained new questions around procedures. Operationally, additional training had been undertaken and advice given to crews to ensure when they arrive at a shout, they know how to deal with these situations.

Benchmarking Report – although not presented verbally to Members by RSM, the following key points were read and noted by Members:

1. The annual emergency services benchmarking report showed where AF&RS sits when compared to other blue light organisations across RSM's internal audit client base.
2. This report showed that, on average across RSMs client base, AF&RS has a higher number of reasonable assurance opinions and medium actions. RSM advised AGEC in the report, that a reasonable assurance opinion is a positive outcome, and that this picture showed the Service is directing internal audit to areas where it knows there are still improvements to be made to feed findings into its approach to organisational learning and continuous improvement. The data also indicated the progress AF&RS has made in moving some audits into substantial assurance and having no high priority actions over the last three audit years.

IT WAS RESOLVED THAT THE COMMITTEE -

- a) **Considered the Internal Audit Progress Report for 2022/23 to date (Appendix 1)**
- b) **Considered the Protection Internal Audit Report (Appendix 2), the findings and agreed the management actions.**
- c) **Considered the Emergency Services Benchmarking Report 2021/22 (Appendix 3)**

25. DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2021/22

The Committee received a report concerning the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2021/22 which sets out a framework by which the Fire Authority's internal systems and processes were directed and controlled. It enabled the Fire Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives had led to the delivery of cost-effective services.

The Head of Corporate Assurance, Planning & Continuous Improvement explained this was a requirement to ensure that high levels of governance had been provided across the organisation and provided a clear assessment of how the Governance Framework had operated over the past financial year.

In addition, Members were informed that under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the AFA is required to produce an AGS.

She pointed out on p82, the Head of Internal Audit had confirmed that the Service had an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control. On p83, sections 8.2 and 8.3 would be updated once the External Audit work had been completed.

She drew Members attention to section 8.4 and explained that the Internal Audit review of Financial Controls completed in 2021 had focused on devolved budgets. The Internal Auditors reported a reasonable assurance opinion with only four low category management actions.

Once the External Audit work had been completed, the Statement would then be finalised and signed by the Chair of Avon Fire Authority, the Chief Fire Officer, the Treasurer and the Clerk. This is due to be completed by the end of November 2022, at which point it will be uploaded to the AFA website.

A Member asked whether RSM, as the Authority's Internal Auditors, are required to be audited themselves for effectiveness, when was this last done and should this detail be recorded within the AGS. RSM confirmed that in 2021 they were audited by Deloitte and given the highest effectiveness rating. The Head of Corporate Assurance advised that she had not seen this detail in an AGS before but would complete benchmarking against other Fire & Rescue Services. It was confirmed that the final AGS would be brought to Members at the AGEC meeting in November for information only, unless there are any substantive changes on completion of the External Audit process.

The recommendation was moved by Cllr Goggin and seconded by Cllr Monk.

IT WAS RESOLVED THAT THE COMMITTEE -

- a) **Approved the content of the draft AGS subject to paragraphs 8.2 and 8.3 being updated with the Head of External Audit opinion and commentary on Value for Money, when published.**
- b) **Authorised the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, the Chair of Avon Fire Authority and Statutory Officers to sign the approved statement.**
- c) **Approved the publication of the AGS 2021/22 alongside the final Statement of Accounts when the External Audit process is complete.**

26. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Moved by Cllr Goggin and seconded by Cllr Monk.

RESOLVED – that the date of the next meeting be held on 22 November 2022 at 10.30am.

27. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The recommendation was moved by Cllr Goggin and seconded by Cllr Payne.

RESOLVED –

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.

28. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE & ETHICS COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 JUNE 2022

Cllr Goggin moved, and Cllr Monk seconded that the minutes be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

RESOLVED – that the Confidential Minutes of 29 JUNE 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Chair

The meeting ended at 11.20 hrs



**AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE**

5 OCTOBER 2022

MINUTES OF MEETING

PRESENT: Councillors Bromley, Davies, Hopkinson, Massey, Monk, Tucker and Wilcox (Chair).

The meeting started at 11.15am

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Jacobs and Varney.

18. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

The emergency evacuation procedures were explained.

19. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

20. PUBLIC ACCESS

None received.

21. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

Members and Officers introduced themselves.

1. The Chair welcomed attendees to the re-arranged meeting of the People & Culture Committee as the original meeting scheduled for 16 September 2022 had been postponed, due to the official mourning period. The agenda and papers were the same as those published for the original meeting.
2. The Chair confirmed that the meeting would take place as a face-to-face meeting. The meeting was being recorded and would be available for members of the public to view.
3. The Chair explained the voting system for the meeting, i.e., votes against a motion would be recorded first, followed by abstentions, then votes for.

22. MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 MAY 2022

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

It was RESOLVED -

That the extraordinary minutes of the People & Culture Committee held on 18 May 2022 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

23. MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 JUNE 2022

It was moved by Cllr Wilcox and seconded by Cllr Bromley that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

It was RESOLVED -

That the ordinary minutes of the People & Culture Committee held on 9 June 2022 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

24. HR AND RECRUITMENT UPDATE

The Committee received a report from the Head of HR which updated on recruitment, trends and significant issues related to Employment cases and strategic people issues.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) recruitment and selection process concluded on 9 August. Elected Members awarded the role to Richard Welch from London Fire Brigade who accepted the job offer and will join the Service mid-October. This ACFO appointment will be ratified by the full Fire Authority at their meeting later on 5 October 2022.

Wholetime recruitment had not yet been concluded and a full briefing will be provided at the next Committee meeting. 626 applications were received in total which was slightly lower than in previous years. A breakdown of applicant types were provided in the report, however, some applicants choose not to complete the monitoring form, which is not compulsory. It was advised that work would continue to ensure that all applicants felt confident disclosing this information. The Head of HR added that the Service continues to strive to increase interest from under-represented groups.

It was confirmed that the Service Leadership Team (SLT) agreed a change to the strength test training element of the selection process. This was due to the weight of the ladders used within the Service being lower than previously advised. This amendment to the strength test could assist some categories of applicants and generate increased applications.

A Member enquired whether applicants, that were previously excluded in the recruitment process, would be advised of the reduction in the weight of the ladder. The Head of HR advised that data from the last two campaigns was retained, and these applicants would be contacted and encouraged to re-apply for the next recruitment campaign.

Cllr Tucker arrived at 11.35hrs.

A Member asked, following the recent statement from the CFO on the effects of the cost of living on staff, whether the Service has tested whether its job packages were attractive especially for different communities and gender. The CFO advised that the Service recently worked with Babbasa, an organisation to help inspire and support under-represented young people in Bristol, to find out their thoughts and feelings around a career in the Fire Service, and how we could best market roles and career opportunities. He added that the salary bands could be a barrier especially currently, some applicants had taken a salary decrease to take the role.

The Head of HR mentioned that applicants were still keen to be a firefighter even in the current economic climate. She added that other Fire & Rescue Services, public sector employers and recruitment agencies were also struggling to fill roles especially within more specialised Corporate departments. The Service also continued to face difficulties recruiting to a number of critical corporate staff roles and On-Call Firefighter vacancies.

It was advised that following feedback from staff in the recent Culture survey, SLT and Service Leadership Board (SLB) had developed a 'zero tolerance statement' in consultation with key stakeholders including Human Resources, Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality (DICE), Middle and Senior Managers and the Staff Engagement Network (SEN).

The Head of HR added that SLT had participated in a development session where they reviewed a past discipline case study and worked together to review the approach taken, decisions made, and outcome to assess consistency and any future changes required to the policies and processes surrounding employment cases.

A Member asked whether 'zero tolerance' was the correct term. The Head of HR replied that the statement was designed to ensure there is a clear expectation of behaviours. This statement is not a stand-alone document but aligns with other People policies and processes including the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Code of Ethics. The CFO added that the next steps would be to ensure the statement reflected the correct position and was a direct reflection on what our staff wanted and to show that SLB/SLT had listened.

**It was RESOLVED –
That the HR & Recruitment Update be noted.**

25. TRAUMA RISK INCIDENT MANAGEMENT (TRiM) UPDATE

The Committee received a report in respect of the Trauma Risk incident Management (TRiM) wellbeing support provision which provided details in relation to the TRiM referral process and the number of referrals made within i) the last quarter and ii) the 12 months (April 2021 – March 2022).

The Committee were informed that as of September 2022, the Health, Safety, Wellbeing, and Welfare (HSWW) team did not have a TRiM Manager due to the Manager in post leaving the role. However, the HSWW team had continued to deliver mental health support to all TRiM requests.

Members were informed that there were now two Health and Wellbeing Advisers in post, and this had enabled the HSWW to divide the TRiM workload into two primary roles: TRiM Manager and TRiM Co-ordinator with the TRiM Manager overseeing the TRiM process and TRiM practitioner provision and the TRiM Co-ordinator reviewing incident referrals.

The t/Health and Safety Manager advised that a new wellbeing adviser had started today, who would look after TRiM. She advised that support was provided to the TRiM practitioners to empower them and offer support, this included guidance notes, Face to Face training, videos and workshops.

In response to Member's questions:

1. It was confirmed that some staff decided that they did not require support after an incident but could change their mind. Crew Managers are made aware when help is required after a traumatic incident. The HSWW would also contact an individual to offer support and support is available to the crews on station.
2. It was confirmed that support was offered to crews who recently attended the fire at Twinnell House.
3. Regarding firefighter welfare and whether the team would be able to identify if someone had multiple experiences of incidents and ongoing trauma, it was confirmed that software could identify those that have attended multiple incidents. This was reviewed regularly and help is offered including identifying symptoms of poor mental health.
4. It was confirmed that the 13 TRiM practitioners were based across the whole service with one at every station. Recruitment was ongoing to attract more staff into this role.

The CFO clarified that TRiM is an intervention and an individual would be automatically allocated to a Welfare Manager after a traumatic incident. This would be triggered by a request or auto referral to HSWW within 7 days. Sometimes, an individual may need to process their thoughts after an incident, prior to receiving help. A 1:1 assessment with the individual would then take place. Support would be tailored to the individuals needs at the time and would be followed up with continual monitoring. Early intervention had been recognised within the military and the aim is to prevent long term PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and to prevent the situation getting to crisis stage.

It was RESOLVED –

That the findings outlined in the report concerning the TRiM referral process and the total number of referrals made be noted.

26. QUARTERLY TRAINING UPDATE

The Group Manager, Learning & Development (L&D), provided an update on Operational Training and Organisational Development.

The key points highlighted were:

1. The number of Breathing Apparatus (BA) re-qualification courses had been increased to reduce the back log created by COVID-19. It was confirmed that this backlog should be cleared by the end of November 2022. L&D are working with the Transformation team to create a new system which would ensure that the re-qualification, which is required every 24 months, begins earlier.
2. Grenfell – Phase 2 of training in response to the Grenfell Inquiry had been running since the beginning of July and would have been delivered to all front-line staff up to and including Assistant Chief Fire Officers by the end of September. E-learning packages had been introduced for phase 2 along with crew training in high rise buildings within Bristol, to teach new methods of firefighting including fire blankets placed in a doorway to reduce travelling smoke.
3. Hazardous Detection, Identification and Monitoring (HDIM) – a change in approach would soon take place. Crews from 04 Patchway, who were mobilised each time the asset attends an incident, would be upskilled to become HDIM limited operators. This 2-day course would enable them to set up and prepare the complicated equipment and to better assist the HDIM Officers at incidents. The training would be completed by the end of October. Therefore, if someone is exposed to a substance, the Service could provide a rapid response to the NHS and intervention would be quicker.
4. Apprenticeships - It was confirmed that the Service had 47 Firefighter apprentices, all from the last 2 Wholetime Recruit Schools. All apprentices are now on station and had an assessor appointed from Weston College.
5. Personal Development Review (PDR) – a procurement process was in place and 6 companies had tendered for the new system. An update would follow.
6. Leadership Academy - It was advised that plans were in place to launch AF&RS' Leadership Academy in April 2023. The Academy would enable the Service to identify talented staff, develop their leadership skills and encourage them to further their career into a leadership role.

In response to Member's questions, it was confirmed that every two years staff attended a two-day BA re-qualification which consisted of three assessments. The course was due for review in Jan-March 2023 and would be re-designed as appropriate. Further information was requested about the number of firefighters who required BA re-qualification courses in particular statistics for previous quarters and those on long-term sick if not included in previous reports.

A Member thanked Officers and commented that they were pleased that the apprenticeship scheme was moving forward with pace.

It was RESOLVED –

That the Learning & Development Quarterly Report was noted.

27. CULTURAL CHANGE UPDATE 2022

The Committee received a report of the Culture and Inclusion Manager (CIM) which provided a progress update on the Culture Change programme, actions taken to date in response to the areas for consideration as identified in the 2021 culture survey reports. The report also proposed the next steps forward for progressing our cultural journey following analysis of the data and information collated from both report findings and focus groups sessions.

The key points highlighted included:

1. Bullying and discrimination – several focus groups have taken place and results and ideas captured had been presented to SLT.
2. A People Services Forum had been set up and provided managers with tools to tackle inappropriate behaviours.
3. Since the last cultural change update, a first draft of the zero-tolerance statement had been distributed amongst key stakeholders across the Service asking for their appreciation of the content and to provide any feedback that should be considered before affecting the approach. Areas explored include whether zero tolerance should be a policy or a practice and how to launch the statement to staff.
4. The CIM continued to work closely with HR, Corporate Communications and the Transformation team. This included working on a suite of policies including the Behaviour Framework, which once launched, will be backed up with e-learning and DICE training.
5. The recent visit from Babbasa to Hicks Gate.
6. That quarterly snapshots would be introduced to capture any new arising issues.
7. The 2022/25 DICE strategy which included the Core Code of Ethics was almost completed and would be included within the agenda for the next meeting.

The CIM advised that going forward, he would continue to work with the People Services Forum, to communicate the importance of diversity within AF&RS, there was still some misunderstanding about matters such as the use of positive action.

In response to Members questions:

1. The CIM agreed that an aging workforce could be an issue for AF&RS. The largest age group is between 25 and 45 and older staff are leaving the organisation. He confirmed that the Service does review statistics and the changing profile of the organisation. The Service had also considered reasonable adjustments for our workforce such as the introduction of the new IT system, it was recognised that this could cause issues with some users. However, it is expected that new younger staff would help change our cultural journey and be able to change legacy issues and the profile of the organisation.

2. A question was asked as to when the Service would hold another Culture survey. The CIM responded that from the results of the surveys held in 2018 and 2021, the Service had collected sufficient knowledge about issues including legacy embedded behaviours. He felt that for the time being we had enough information as it would take time to work through issues. He added that the introduction of the quarterly snapshots would help, but he did not wish to launch a full survey too often. In addition, there had also been surveys completed in connection with the HMICFRS inspections with a further HMICFRS inspection due in 2023. The Member added that the Service should learn from the experiences of our new recruits and would like them to be contacted, after an appropriate time in Service, to obtain their feedback since joining the Service.

**It was RESOLVED –
That the Culture Change Update 2022 was noted.**

28. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Moved by Cllr Wilcox and seconded by Cllr Monk.

It was RESOLVED – that the date of the next meeting be held on 9 December 2022 at 10.30am.

29. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The recommendation was moved by Cllr Wilcox and seconded by Cllr Davies.

**It was 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 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.”**

30. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 MAY 2022

It was moved by Cllr Wilcox and seconded by Cllr Davies that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

**It was RESOLVED -
That the confidential extraordinary minutes of the People & Culture Meeting held on 18 May 2022 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.**

31. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 JUNE 2022

It was moved by Cllr Wilcox and seconded by Cllr Bromley that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

It was RESOLVED -

That the confidential ordinary minutes of the People & Culture Meeting held on 9 June 2022 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

32. APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM TREASURER SUPPORT DURING SICKNESS ABSENCE

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (CFO) presented a report which provided an update on work undertaken in relation to the temporary arrangements to cover the Treasurer responsibilities during a period of absence.

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

Chair

The meeting ended at 13.11pm



**AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

07 OCTOBER 2022 at 10:30 am

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors, May, Nutland, Tucker, Payne (Chair), Wilcox

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Davies, Eddy and Monk.

Noted that Cllr Ali was not in attendance.

17. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

The ACFO explained the emergency evacuation procedures for the room/building.

18. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

19. PUBLIC ACCESS

None received for this meeting.

20. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

1. The Chair made a statement regarding the continuing need to be sensible due to COVID-19. To reduce the need for press or public 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, i.e., votes against a motion would be recorded first, followed by abstentions, then votes in favour.

Members and Officers introduced themselves.

21. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 JULY 2022.

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

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of 15 July 2022 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

22. PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Performance Manager (CPM) outlining the performance of the organisation against targets for the period April to August 2022

The key points summarised in the report were:

Prevention:

1. Two of the four fire indicators are off target. The exceptionally dry weather in August has had an impact upon all three Deliberate fire indicators, as a consequence the Service is now off target for Vehicle and Secondary fires.
2. Home Fire Safety Visits are just off target (87% of the target), however delivering of educational packages is ahead of target (111% of the target).

Protection:

1. The target for call challenging Malicious False Alarms has been met. The Service is just off target for reducing attendance at False Alarms in business premises.
2. The targets for processing Building Regulations and Licensing Applications have not been met, however there is confidence that this will improve as the staffing issues are resolved.

Response:

1. Almost all response indicators are on target, with the exception of calls for assistance to Service Control (93% of the target) as a result of the high volume of calls received in August. The number of 999 calls received and the number of incidents attended are both up compared to last year, 999 calls by 23% and attended by 21%.

Resilience:

1. Off target for reducing shifts/days lost to sickness. High numbers of shifts/days have been lost to COVID-19 in the first few months of the year; however, this is steadily decreasing with 42 shifts/days lost in August. Long Term sickness (over 28 days) remains the main issue, accounting for 59% of the shifts/days lost.

Improve our Service:

1. On target for reducing H&S incidents that have resulted in lost time.
2. Just off target with reducing carbon emissions. On target for incidents.
2. Revenue Budget variance is on target with zero variance against plan.

Invest in our Staff:

1. The Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs) for staff are off target with 89% in date. It is recognised that this is an area where there is a need to improve consistency of performance.

Following questions from Members the following points were made/clarified –

1. A question was raised concerning the progress of the 'net zero' goal. It was highlighted that this is a linear progression, and that the Clerk would check when another update was due from the Environmental Manager.
2. It was asked that Councillors note the significant increase in suicide attempts from 7 to 25. As the Fire Service is not the primary agency, we do not set targets to try to reduce this.
3. It was confirmed that a letter had been written to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) regarding police action being taken following deliberate vehicle fires, this will be followed up.

Resolved -

That the Performance Report for April to August 2022/23 be noted and approved.

23. 2022/23 CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Head of Finance presented the report which provided an overview of the 2022/23 Capital Programme and operational updates and additional context information for 2022/23 projects.

The key points highlighted were –

1. Control element may slip into the future year due to national issues in terms of change of supplier, and delays in supply.
2. It is expected that both Fleet and Premises will spend their allocations within 2022/23.

Following questions from Members it was confirmed that

1. The Fleet order costs were guaranteed at time of order.
2. Premises costs are going to be managed within capital allocations.
3. The only appliances to be replaced are those already outlined. Ancillary vehicle replacement will be reviewed at the Capital Steering and Prioritisation Group meetings.
4. It was confirmed that details of proposals for the redesign of Bath Fire Station will be provided at the December 2022 Fire Authority meeting.

Resolved –

That the latest expenditure position on the 2022/23 Capital Programme be noted.

24. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Area Manager, Head of Service Transformation Team (HST) which provided the sixth update on the AFA Transformation Programme.

The key points highlighted were:

1. The Transformation team are struggling to fill three vacancies, these being a Microsoft 365 trainer, a Digital Developer, and a Business Change Officer. These vacancies are proving difficult to fill due to the low salary being offered in comparison to other organisations and the private sector. The Transformation management team are working hard with our HR Business Partner to ensure suitable candidates are attracted to apply for these roles.
2. It was reported that the migration to 365 was near completion, which will free up resources. Work has started on digitalising forms, this should assist with reducing administration time, and increase efficiency.
3. The FireWatch upgrade: The Technical Design Phase is complete, the Build Phase is 95% complete, there is a one week overrun, with the completion date of installation now being mid-January 2023.

Following questions from Members the following points were made/clarified –

1. The concerns regarding the delays with the FireWatch upgrade timeline were clarified. It was agreed that a narrative outlining the delays will be provided.
2. An explanation was given regarding the avenues being investigated for alternative approaches to the three vacancies in the transformation team, it was acknowledged that this could cause delays in the project if these positions are not filled.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

25. ROUND 2 HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) INSPECTION ACTION PLAN

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 December 2021. The latest approved version was included as an appendix.

The key points highlighted were –

1. It was noted that the version of the plan (Appendix 1) was not SLT approved at the time of publishing but has subsequently been approved.
2. The action plan is currently 29% (18/63) complete with 46% (29/63) of actions in progress and 25% (16/63) not yet started, some of these are sequentially dependant on the completion of some of the actions that have been started. Of the four actions carried forward from round 1 into round 2, there were two standalone actions, and two which were similar to new actions and therefore were assimilated. The two standalone actions have been signed off as completed, therefore all legacy actions are now complete.
3. The routine biannual data request is expected 7 October 2022 which needs to be completed, quality assured, signed off and submitted by 18 November 2022.

4. Preparations are under way for the Round 3 inspection, it will be based again around the three pillars of effectiveness, efficiency, and people format. There will be a move from four to five graded judgements (with the addition of 'adequate'). There will be a focus on service improvement. Inspections will be undertaken using a hybrid approach of physical on-site inspection and remote virtual interviews.
5. The Service is taking part in an HMICFRS pilot scheme of its fire control assessment product ahead of its wider rollout during Round 3 Inspections.
6. HMICFRS plan to publish a more detailed 'characteristics of good performance' which will replace its existing judgment criteria. It is these new characteristics of good performance which should allow gap analysis to be undertaken which will, in turn, enable an informed roadmap to 'outstanding' to be developed as discussed at the last meeting.

Following questions from Members the following points were made/clarified –

1. The ambition to move to 'outstanding' was received well by Councillors. The resource implication was noted.
2. Additional resources should now address the delays with PORIS.
3. Confirmation was sought that the Service are using the four unitary area contacts to ensure engagement with the different business types to share BFS information.
4. Thanks was noted for the involvement of the IT staff in the replacement of the Citrix system.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

26. GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY PROGRESS UPDATE

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

In summary Members noted that:

1. Phase 2 of the Inquiry commenced 27 January 2021 to examine the reasons why the fire at Grenfell happened. The inquiry hearing closed on the 21 July 2022. The panel are now preparing their final report which is expected by the end of 2022.
2. The cost of the project totals £99,229, with £95,126 already allocated against specific grant funding. Benefits of this funding can already be seen in a recent incident at Twinnel House where a lot of smoke curtains were used to stop smoke spread throughout the building, and improved procedures when tackling fire in high rise buildings.
3. Of the 29 internal actions 17 are complete and 12 are in progress. Since the previous update, three internal actions have had their target completion dates delayed until December 2022. The primary reason for the delays relates to compatibility of other emergency services systems to ours.
4. The third phase of the improved tall buildings training for operational crews is underway. It consists of 20 coached exercises, taking place in local authority high rise residential buildings (HRRB), to provide a realistic environment and bring together the skills and knowledge acquired through phase one (e learning) and phase two (practical input).

5. Work with Bristol City Council (BCC) to improve site-specific risk information in relation to high rise buildings and the Computer Aided Design (CAD) plans and Premises Information Plates (PIPs) for these has continued following the appointment of a full time CAD technician into the Provision of Operational Risk Information (PORIS) team. Of the 63 HRRB in Bristol, 60 have had CAD drawings completed, leaving three plans to complete.

Following questions from Members the following points were made/clarified –

1. It was noted that of the three HRRB that have the CAD plans outstanding, two sets of plans should be completed in the next two weeks, the third has been delayed as the building is currently surrounded by scaffolding.
2. Following a recent fire in a HRRB it was confirmed that the procedures employed by the Service worked very well, and there is regular engagement with the Local Authorities.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

27. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved -

That the next meeting of the PR&SC will take place on 18 January 2023 at 10.30am.

The meeting closed at 11.35hrs

Chair

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	Avon Fire Authority
MEETING DATE:	Wednesday, 29 March 2023
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Appointment of Statutory Finance Officer

1. **SUMMARY**

The People and Culture Committee were tasked by Avon Fire Authority to conduct a recruitment process for a new Statutory Finance Officer. Interviews took place on 30 January 2023 and the Fire Authority is asked to formally appoint Ms Verity Lee as Avon Fire Authority's new Statutory Finance Officer.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Avon Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Appoint Ms Verity Lee as Avon Fire Authority's new Statutory Finance Officer from 2 May 2023.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 On 5 October 2022, the Fire Authority decided to start a recruitment process for a Statutory Finance Officer and, in accordance with the Officer Employment Rules, they delegated the recruitment exercise to Members of the People and Culture Committee.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Statutory Finance Officer is a part-time post and the full-time equivalent salary is £96,355 per annum, which is 65% of the CFO/CE's salary, in line with the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23, approved by Avon Fire Authority on 30 March 2022. The Statutory Officer's working pattern is 3 days' a week, plus an additional 24 days a year to be worked flexibly to respond to peaks in demand and capacity. This averages a 3.5 working day week and the salary, pension and annual leave entitlements are calculated on this basis.

- 4.2 The Statutory Officer's salary is already funded from the Authority's revenue budget.

5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 At People and Culture Committee's meeting on 9 December 2022, Members retrospectively endorsed the advertisement and Job Description for the role of Statutory Finance Officer, which, following approval of those documents by Members of the Committee by email, was publicised on 1 December 2022. The Committee also approved the recruitment process and timeline. The closing date for applications was 3 January 2023.
- 5.2 Applications were first reviewed by Human Resources (HR) when it was found that several applicants did not meet the essential criteria of being a qualified accountant. Members of People and Culture Committee shortlisted those suitably qualified candidates on 18 January 2023 and two candidates were invited to interview by the Committee on the 30 January.
- 5.3 Following interviews, the Committee decided to offer the role to Ms Verity Lee, who accepted the offer. Ms Lee is a qualified accountant and brings considerable experience working for an accountants, where she specialised in audit work. She has most recently worked in the aerospace industry as a finance manager with wide responsibility, including governance and compliance.
- 5.4 Under the Fire Authority's Constitution, Members are collectively responsible for appointing Statutory Officers, therefore Members are asked to formally make the Statutory Finance Officer appointment in accordance with the recommendation of the People and Culture Committee.

6. RISKS

- 6.1 Ms Lee must work notice with her current employer and is available to start her role as Statutory Finance Officer on 2 May 2023. In the meantime, the CFO/CEO has extended the appointment of Mr Kevin Woodward as interim Treasurer until 30 April 2023, to ensure that the Service is able to meet its statutory responsibilities.

7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Avon Fire Authority is required under Section 112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs. The Statutory Finance Officer is the designated officer for this purpose and is required to report expenditure and ensure compliance with The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

7.2 Both the interim Treasurer and Ms Lee, who will be formally appointed from 2 May 2023, are qualified accountants and hold full professional membership of the relevant financial body for accountants as set out in s113 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

a) Recruitment of Statutory Finance Officer, item 11 of People and Culture Committee Agenda on 9 December 2022 with appendices.

9. APPENDICES

None.

10. REPORT CONTACT

Amanda Brown, Clerk/Monitoring Officer to Avon Fire Authority, extension 347.

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AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	Avon Fire Authority
MEETING DATE:	Wednesday, 29 March 2023
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Annual Update of Service Plan including IRMP

1. **SUMMARY**

- The Service Plan (SP) 2023-2026, as detailed in **Appendix 1**, sets out the Avon Fire Authority's (AFA) strategic aims and objectives and acts as a point of reference for our staff, partners and local communities. It highlights our achievements and our areas of focus the areas that we consider are important, and will enable us to improve, evolve and deliver our SP over the next three years.
- The AFA's four-week public consultation period on the SP commenced on 3 January 2023 and ran until 31 January 2023. The results of which are detailed in **Appendix 2** and presented to the AFA for consideration.
- Based on key findings, analysis, and a consultation process which captured 444 questionnaire responses, the SP for 2023-2026 includes updated narrative in relation to key challenges and community risk findings, updated performance metrics, financial information, and recent Service achievements.
- Approval is sought from the AFA to publish the SP (2023–2026).

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Avon Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Consider the outcomes of the public consultation.
- b) Subject to recommendation (a) above approve the Service Plan 2023–2026 for publication.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. Elected Members of the AFA, Service Leadership Board (SLB) and Service Leadership Team (SLT) have been kept informed of progress on the review and refresh of the Service Plan, with opportunities for collective discussion, comment and confirmation of the revised document in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2. The results of the public consultation are summarised in **Appendix 2**. In total 444 questionnaires responses were received over four weeks. This compares to 210 responses received to the SP consultation conducted over seven weeks in 2022. Overall, respondents were supportive of our SP and agreed that our planning processes are suitable and sufficient. Respondents also agreed with the actions identified to address local risks.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report has no direct financial implications.

5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The SP was substantially renewed and consulted upon last year (2022-2025). Based on key findings and analysis, relatively minor changes and updates to the SP have been made for 2023-2026. These changes include updated narrative in relation to key challenges and community risk findings, updated performance metrics and financial information, and recent Service achievements. SP actions have been reviewed and validated to ensure they remain relevant and achievable.
- 5.2 As reported to Elected Members of the AFA at its meeting dated 14 December 2022, the SP 2023-2026 provides detail on how the Service intends to meet its strategic priorities of Making our Communities Safer and Making our Service Stronger. Key actions and workstreams align to the Service's seven key objectives: Prevention, Protection, Response, Resilience, Improving our Service, Investing in our Staff and Transformation. These actions include:

Prevention

- **Service wide targeted interventions**
We will ensure a holistic approach to prevention, so our focus and activity is targeted to those most at risk.
- **Community Health and Wellbeing**
We will understand the impact that community health and wellbeing has on local support services.
- **Safeguarding**
We will embed safeguarding across all areas of our Service provision.

Protection

- **Enhancing our business fire safety provisions**

We will broaden our protection activity to ensure our business fire safety function continues to meet current and emerging risks. We will remain agile to the outcomes of reviews, reports and inquiries, such as the Grenfell Report, to ensure that recommendations are considered and adopted where necessary, and we continue to invest in fire safety resources.

Response

- **Enhancing medical response**

We will explore and consider new ways of working to assist with medical emergencies within the community.

- **Extreme weather**

We will enhance our readiness and preparedness for extreme weather events.

- **Standards of cover review**

We will take a holistic approach to the impact of large-scale building developments on our future response provision.

Resilience

- **Community Risk Profile Software**

We will introduce new software that will help us to better understand the risk within our communities; for both people and businesses.

- **Workforce Planning**

We will ensure the Service is sufficiently resourced and has the tools and capability to deliver our services. We aim to attract and retain skills within the workforce and recognise the changing need for more flexible working. We will promote career opportunities, the Direct Entry scheme and our DICE (Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion Equality) objectives.

Improving our Service

- **Optimising (Operational) Productivity**

We will ensure we continually explore opportunities that exist to be effective and efficient in our Service provision.

- **Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality (DICE) and Accessibility**

We will continue to demonstrate our commitment to an inclusive workforce where everyone is valued and are able to reach their potential. This includes encouraging diversity at all levels in the organisation during

recruitment, promotion, development and direct entry processes. Ensuring a culture which adheres to Fire Standards and the National Fire Chiefs Council's Code of Ethics.

- **Environmental, Ecological and Ethical Leadership**
Having declared a climate and ecological emergency, we will strive to demonstrate environmental, ecological and ethical leadership in the Fire and Rescue sector.
- **Making best use of our assets**
We will make sure we have the right tools to provide the best service, while providing value for money to the community.
- **Align to National Fire Chief Councils leadership across the sector**
We will do this by adopting a best practice approach to national standards.
- **Achieve an HMICFRS rating of 'good'**
We will address the findings from the latest HMICFRS reports to achieve a 'Good' rating across all eleven diagnostic questions.

Investing in our Staff

- **People development**
We will build a resilient workforce through the provision of development opportunities for our staff, including the launch of the leadership academy.
- **Health, fitness, wellbeing and welfare**
We will enhance a number of our health, fitness, wellbeing and welfare provisions to improve the support we offer to our staff at all stages in their career. This includes our ongoing sickness improvement plan.

6. RISKS

- 6.1 The AFA is responsible for putting in place a sound system of control, including arrangements for the governance of its affairs, and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 6.2 The Corporate Risk Register includes a specific corporate risk CR14 – Governance, which is monitored and reported to the SLT each month. The Corporate Risk Register is presented to the Audit, Governance and Ethics Committee twice yearly for scrutiny and approval.

7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. The requirement for an IRMP is included in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, which was given statutory effect by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

- 7.2. Section 4.6 of the National Framework states that consultation must *‘reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies and partners’*.
- 7.3. There are a well-defined set of legal principles (known as ‘the Gunning Principles’) for a lawful public consultation process:
- The consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage.
 - The proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit of intelligent consideration and response.
 - Those consulted should be aware of the criteria that will be applied when considering proposals and which factors will be considered decisive or of substantial importance at the end of the problem.
 - Adequate time must be given for consideration and response.
 - The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any statutory proposals.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- a) Service Plan Overview and Key Assumptions report presented at the Avon Fire Authority Meeting on the 14 December 2022. Available at [Modern.Gov.](#)

8. APPENDICES

1. Service Plan 2023-2026
2. Service Plan Consultation Report

9. REPORT CONTACT

Chief Fire Office/Chief Executive – Simon Shilton
Head of Corporate Assurance, Planning & Continuous Improvement –
Caroline Taylor
Area Manager Risk Management & Lead NILO – David Hodges
Head of Corporate Communications – Amber Foreman

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AVON
FIRE & RESCUE

www.avonfire.gov.uk



Our Service Plan

Incorporating our Integrated
Risk Management Plan

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2023-2026



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**Working together
to make our
Communities
Safer and make
our Service
Stronger.**



Our Service Plan is developed using insight, understanding and the direct views of our local communities. It acknowledges the potential future we face, as well as our commitment to reviewing and improving the services we provide to those we serve.

This Service Plan identifies and explores the risks, challenges and opportunities to us as a fire and rescue service and to our local communities; including any potential fire and rescue-related risks to people, environment, infrastructure, or property.

It includes any new and emerging risks we face, within the Avon Fire & Rescue Service (AF&RS) area, regionally and nationally. Some of our identified risks include fires, road traffic collisions, rescues and special service emergencies, fires in tall buildings, community health and wellbeing, planned developments and a changing climate.

Any foreseen challenges and opportunities have also been outlined. These challenges help us in considering solutions to lessen the potential impact of change. Any opportunities have provided us with a chance to improve the way we work for the benefit of our communities and our staff.

We are fortunate to have highly trained, dedicated and passionate individuals working throughout the Service, who will help deliver the programme of work outlined in this plan. Similarly, we work closely with valued partners and our communities to deliver a Service we're proud of.

As a fire and rescue service, ultimately, we are committed to being there when you need us most, working hard to achieve our vision of providing the highest standard and best value service to our communities.

Cllr Brenda Massey
Chair of Avon Fire Authority

Simon Shilton
Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive,
Avon Fire & Rescue Service

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Our Vision

To provide the highest standard and best value Service to the community.

We will work closely with and help make our diverse communities safer and healthier; while ensuring our Service is a great place to work, where everyone feels valued and can achieve their full potential.



Our Mission

To improve public safety through Prevention, Protection, Response and Resilience.

Making our communities safer, by being there when we are needed, identifying and reducing risks and improving the quality of life for local people; our staff working together as one to ensure a high-quality, value for money Service which meets the needs of the people we serve.



Our Values

- Respectful
- Honest
- Courageous
- Ambitious
- Inclusive
- Transparent

Guided by the standards of behaviour captured in our values, we will support our staff to embrace challenges, recognise achievements and live out our values in Making our Communities Safer and exceeding expectations. The public expect their emergency services to be there when they need us, but also role model the very best standards of behaviour. When we make decisions and work together, our values are the things we keep in mind every time. They are important to us and non-negotiable.

[Our Values and Behaviour Framework is aligned to the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services >](#)



OUR SERVICE

Avon Fire & Rescue Service delivers a wide range of fire, rescue and community safety services across our geographic area.

Avon Fire Authority, whilst complying with the Local Government Act 1999, ensures the Service is continuously improving the way it complies with its duties; economically, efficiently and effectively. It is a locally accountable body made up of 21 Elected Members from the unitary authorities of Bath and North East Somerset (BANES), Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, as well as the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner.

In order to reduce the risk in our communities, we will ensure there are sufficient levels of staff and equipment available to provide an emergency response 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, as well as undertaking essential Prevention and Protection activity.

Acts of Parliament outline requirements for every fire and rescue service in England. In addition to this, the Home Office publishes the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England which provides guidance and priorities for fire and rescue services. As a public service, there are statutory, regulatory and compliance requirements from premises and procurement activities to ensuring cyber security accreditation and the health and safety of our staff.

Mandatory functions and powers (things we must do)



The promotion of fire safety; preparation for fire-fighting; protecting people and property from fires; rescuing people from road traffic collisions and responding to other emergencies such as terrorist attacks.

Regulatory functions and powers (other ways to protect the public)



We are responsible for undertaking fire safety inspections and audits, and on occasion we conduct prosecutions.

Discretionary functions (things we choose to do)



These are services we provide over and above those laid down in law. This includes activities like planning for and delivering rescues from water, the rescue of animals and responding to floods, as well as certain education packages such as home and water safety advice to those most at risk in our communities. Our Service goes above and beyond legislative duties to put the interests of our local communities first in respect of wider public safety; being a role model in what we do, how we interact, and our approach to diversity and inclusion.

Our key responsibilities are contained within;



- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
- Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Building Safety Act 2022.



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Our area has a residential population of more than one million people living in over 480,000 homes, over an area of 512 square miles. Understanding our diverse population helps us deliver services tailored to their needs.

Analysis of our population can be found in our Strategic Assessment and Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality (DICE) Strategy.



Population 1.17m and growing 51% Female, 49% Male¹

2.3% of the population is unemployed²

The largest population group is 20-24 year olds¹

One of the top 10 busiest airports in the UK, handling up to 10 million passengers per year³

4 universities with over 79,000 students⁴

Bristol is one of the top ten most visited cities in the UK⁵

Handles 26% of the South West's economy and has the highest growth of GDP per capita outside of London⁶

90% of the population is white, 9% Ethnic Minorities¹

39% Christian, 48% No religion, 3% Muslim¹

15% of homes are rented social housing and 64% owned outright¹

102 languages spoken across the area¹

88% Identify as Heterosexual, 2% as Bisexual, 1.7% as Gay or Lesbian, 93.56% of the population identify as the same sex that they were registered as at birth, 0.19% as Transgender, 0.13% as Non-Binary¹

We welcomed that LGBTQ+ population statistics were included in the Census for the first time in 2021, to help enrich our ongoing understanding of our communities and how best to meet their needs.

We recognise that the communities we serve are diverse and are keen to ensure Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality is embedded in our organisational culture and at the heart of decision-making.

1. Office of National Statistics – 2021 Census
2. Office of National Statistics – National Employment and Labour Market Statistics 21/22
3. Civil Aviation Authority – Airport Statistics 2018-21
4. UWE, Bristol University, Bath University and Bath Spa University – Student Population Webpages
5. Summary from Visit Britain, Original data from Office of National Statistics – Leisure and Tourism
6. Office of National Statistics Report on GDP Published Feb. 2020. (Latest Release)



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Delivering against our Service Plan



Dignity & Respect Policy launched

We all have the right to be treated with consideration, dignity and respect in work. The new policy makes clear our expectations as a Service and the responsibilities that we all have in creating a respectful and dignified working environment for everyone.

Its purpose is to promote and support a positive and inclusive culture, with a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment.



Redevelopment of Avonmouth Fire Station

The two and a half year long redevelopment of Avonmouth Fire Station was completed in September 2022. The pre-existing station at the site on St Andrew's Road, Avonmouth had stood proudly for over 60 years.

Given the extensive history of the Service in the area, and the high volume of incidents attended by the crew, it was imperative that any redevelopment was done to a high standard.



Making progress towards achieving Net Zero by 2030 target

In 2022 we hit our target, reducing emissions by an amazing 20.8% since 2019/20. The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme enabled AF&RS to fund five more solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays, three Air Source Heat Pumps and three battery storage systems, as well as installing energy efficiency measures such as cavity wall insulation, LED lighting and double glazing in many stations. There are now 25 electric vehicles in our fleet with Electric Vehicle Charge-points installed across AF&RS sites.



Success at the National Festival of Rescue

AF&RS took part in the United Kingdom Rescue Organisation (UKRO) National Festival of Rescue. After a lot of hard work our crews were awarded:

- 1st: Helm, Water Rescue Challenge**
- 2nd: Urban Search and Rescue**
- 3rd: HGV Extrication**

Our Technical Rope Rescue Team also took part in their first national challenge, and took 6th place - an outstanding achievement by all.



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Delivering against our Service Plan



Celebrating Black History

AF&RS unveiled artwork featured on our wrapped fire engine. The design created by award-winning contemporary digital illustrator Parys Gardener opens a dialogue on the importance of representing your local community and celebrates what it means to be a firefighter today.

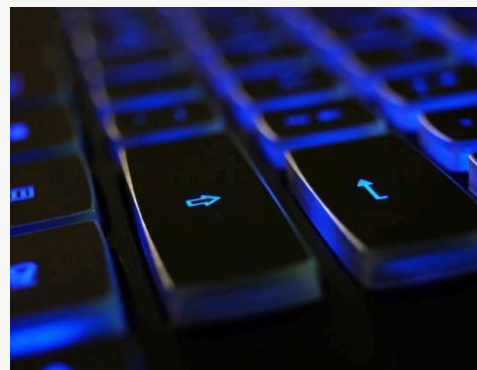
“This project represents the next step on our journey towards a better future for the organisation and provides a fantastic backdrop of the work that we’re continuing to do. The artwork that has been produced is excellent and has already sparked important conversations both within the organisation and within the community.” CFO Simon Shilton



Digitising the Incident Ground – Drones

The drone and drone team have been directly responsible for saving life within the first six months of use. They have helped locate missing individuals, been used to mitigate large grass fires during periods of drought and at major incidents to assist with situational awareness and multi-agency briefings

Footage from the drone can be live streamed directly to our Service Control and other Service locations with cutting edge technology. The drone is also used in collaboration with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and other agencies, as well as neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services. Operationally, the drone was deployed and flown over 60 times in a six-month period in 2022, helping to resolve incidents more safely and efficiently.



Avon Data Warehouse launched

The Avon Data Warehouse (ADW) collates incident and building information to analyse and compare key data trends. This information helps determine the category of risk a premises is awarded which feeds into our Risk Based Inspection Programme. Combined with audit history, our Business Fire Safety Managers use this information to prioritise the premises with higher risk scores.



Summer safety sessions a big hit

AF&RS opened up a number of their fire stations to children for a series of summer safety sessions. Children in Key Stages 1 and 2, alongside their parents/carers, were invited to Weston-Super-Mare, Yate, Southmead, Patchway and Kingswood stations to learn more about fire safety and staying safe in and around the water, plus taking part in a fitness challenge with AF&RS mascot, Fido the Fire Dog.

During the sessions, attendees were also given the opportunity to see a fire engine up close with firefighters answering questions on the equipment they use at a fire or incident.



AWARDS AND NOMINATIONS

We are proud of the hard work, dedication, and achievements of all our staff. In 2022, many individuals and projects received additional recognition.

Excellence in Fire & Emergency Awards

Most Influential Ethnic Minority Individual
in Fire

Richard Stokes, DICE

Regen Green Energy Awards 2022

Clean Energy Scheme of the Year

Bristol Dementia Action Alliance

Bronze Award for Dementia Awareness
**Vulnerable Adults Team, Prevention
and Protection**

Asian Fire Services Association

Certificate of Merit, Charitable Activity

Louisa Roger, Corporate Communications

Asian Fire Services Association

Certificate of Merit, Champion of Equality
& Diversity

Richard Stokes, DICE

UK National GO Awards

Finalist, Best Procurement Delivery Award

AF&RS Procurement Team

BusinessGreen Leaders Awards 2022

Renewable Energy Project of the Year

AF&RS and Solarsense

Stepping Up Programme

Outstanding contribution

Bristol City Council AF&RS

Stepping Up Programme

Rising Star Award 2022

Richard Stokes, DICE

The MJ Achievement Awards 2022

Commended

Leadership in Responding to Climate Emergency



OUR PERFORMANCE

AF&RS continues to make excellent progress in reducing risk in our community by reducing the number and impact of incidents attended.

We have met the reduction targets for all of our incident indicators and have improved on last year's results. Each incident that is prevented represents a reduction of risk in our community.

We are committed to doing all that we can to make our community safer and our Service stronger. We continue to analyse our data to show us what additional interventions and initiatives we can take.

AF&RS measure response using a risk-based approach, ensuring that we respond quickest to incidents with the most risk. For each of our three response categories, we set a target based upon the average time from when we alert our appliances to when they arrive on scene, and we are pleased that we have met the target in each category.

Full information regarding our performance can be found in our [Performance Report 2021/22](#) >



Calls for assistance answered within seven seconds

Target
94%

Actual
95.4%

20,979

Number of 999 calls received

10,223

Number of incidents attended as emergency

Data taken from 2021/22 Performance Report



SERVICE PLANNING

Our Service Plan is a combination of two distinct elements; Integrated Risk Management Planning and Business Planning.

This plan meets our requirement under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England to produce what it calls an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

To make our communities safer, the IRMP enables fire and rescue services to use resources in the most effective way to save lives, improve public safety and reduce emergency incidents.

To make our Service stronger we need a plan which sets our goals and methods for delivering a better Service.

To ensure we identify all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks, challenges, and opportunities, we complete an annual planning cycle:





1. Define scope

Under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, the IRMP is seeking to:

- identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue related community risks;
- put in place appropriate Prevention, Protection, and Response measures to reduce those risks;
- set out a Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) to enforce the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005;
- produce an easily accessible and publicly available IRMP;
- prioritise the need to develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

The Service Plan is seeking to:

- secure continuous improvement in the way in which our functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

2. Identification

To identify Hazards, Challenges and Opportunities the Service undertakes several work streams:

- Strategic Assessment, which identifies changes in our community and business environments.
- The Operational Baseline Report, which utilises local data intelligence to analyse and forecast patterns, trends and emerging risks and demands.
- The Community Risk Report 2022, which assesses Fire and Rescue related risks to our communities, both immediate and on the horizon.
- Workshops and engagements, with senior leaders, teams, and subject leads to gain insight from across the Service.

3. Analysis

Using the outcomes from our identification phase we determine the risks posed by our hazards, possible solutions to the challenges, and the potential benefits to our communities and for the Service from the opportunities.

This is achieved by undertaking:

- Risk Assessments for all identified hazards incorporating findings from:
 - Strategic Assessment
 - The Baseline Report
 - National Operational Guidance
 - National and Community Risk Registers
- Risk modelling
- Workload modelling

4. Decision-making, consultation and engagement

All of our analysis is presented to Avon Fire Authority, our Service Leadership Board and Statutory Officers. They set out their proposals for the strategic intent and subsequent plans for delivering, and balancing the risks, challenges and opportunities against the vision, mission, values and our available budgets.

By consulting with our community, staff, and partners on these proposals, we can ensure transparency within our planning process, adjust plans where necessary, and raise awareness of our work. After a review of our consultation feedback, we will set the actions our Service will take over the next three years.

5. Evaluation

We regularly evaluate the actions we have set in this plan to ensure the efficiency, effectiveness, and positive impacts of decisions we make.





“We strive for efficiency and safer ways of working, making continual improvements to realise benefits from the Service’s investments, resources and technology, to deliver better outcomes for our staff and communities.”

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Simon Shilton,
Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

Chief Fire Officer’s Service Management Statement

I have spent time reflecting on the past 12 months and while we have faced many challenges, the continued commitment from the passionate and dedicated colleagues I work alongside every day, to keep our Service strong and our communities safe, never ceases to amaze me.

I am extremely proud of what has been achieved this past year. Avonmouth has a new fire station, staff hosted charity events and raised money for those suffering in the war in Ukraine, and we celebrated Pride and Black history, by wrapping our trucks and continuing our journey in working to improve representation of our communities.

I am passionate about leading our Service into a position where all staff feel valued, trusted and respected. There is no place for discrimination, harassment and bullying. We are already making significant changes to ensure everyone treats one another with dignity and respect, and for those behaviours that sit outside of that, we will take a zero-tolerance approach.

The Service has been awarded for extraordinary contribution to the transition to net zero energy and for championing diversity. We have delivered hundreds of hours of prevention work, responded to many challenging incidents and undertaken protection activity particularly in high-rise buildings across Bristol, to keep our communities safe.

In the ever-changing role of the fire and rescue service, our focus remains on optimising productivity. This includes undertaking work which evaluates the operational working day, matching our resources to risk. We are also implementing modern business practices, to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of our business processes and looking at the digitisation of the Service more widely.

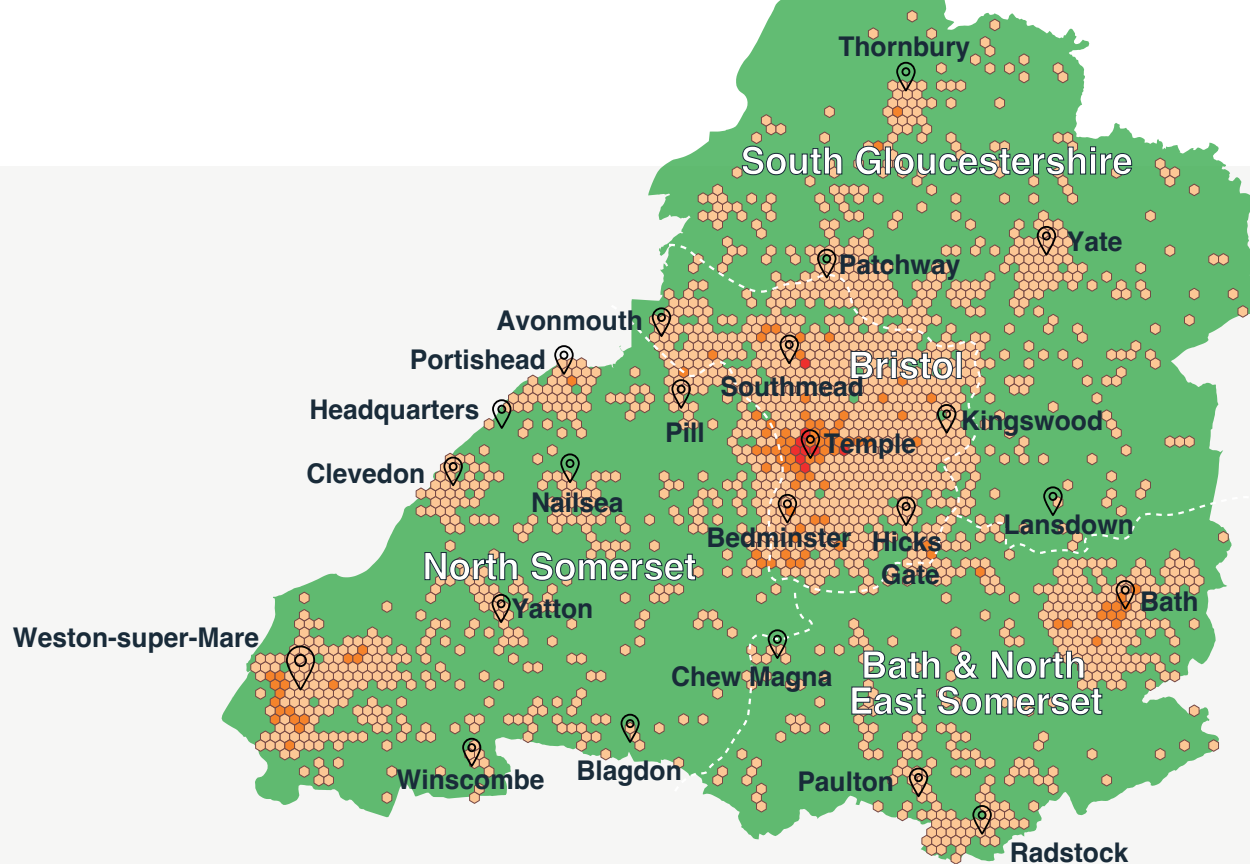
It’s also important we’re aware of our legislative responsibilities and governance arrangements, working in collaboration with partners to deliver against these. This includes the reference to governance models for fire and rescue services, as cited in the Government’s Fire Reform White Paper. Similarly, the introduction of the Building Safety Act 2022 overhauls existing regulations and focuses on effective oversight on how residential buildings should be made safe and maintained.

The Service is not immune to financial pressure and increasing demand for public services, as we continue to deliver the ambitious plans set out in this Service Plan. The Fire Authority’s approval of an increase in the fire part of the council tax, will help mitigate some of the increased costs we are facing as a Service.

Working together we can continue Making our Communities safer and Making our Service Stronger.

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Using our incident data and our definition of risk we can visualise where the greatest risk is within our Service area; then overlay the locations of our assets to show how we strategically place our resources to meet the risk profile.



Our Strategic Assessment presents changes within our community and business environments and our Operational Baseline Report utilises local data intelligence to analyse and forecast patterns, trends and emerging risks and demands. So, while we have a good understanding of the demands placed upon us and our available assets, its important this is shared with the local communities we serve.

To further inform our process of understanding risk, we have defined our activity into ‘risk’ or ‘demand’, so that we can prioritise and match our resources to ‘risk’.

These risks are split into high, medium and low risk:

High risk incidents – known risk to life or property, classed as ‘emergency: critical’.

Medium risk incidents – don’t pose an immediate risk to life or property, but without intervention could potentially develop to a high risk situation, classed as ‘emergency: non-critical’.

Low risk incidents – pose a low risk to life or property, but still require an attendance by the fire service, classed as ‘non-emergency’.



In 2022/23, the Service responded to 18,313 incidents¹, 6,754 were high risk, 11,520 were medium risk and 39 were low risk.

We have outlined our strategic objectives across seven key areas: Prevention, Protection, Response, Resilience, Investing in our Service, Investing in our Staff and Transformation. Within these objectives we've included the resources available, matched to address the identified risks covered by these areas.

Working hard to achieve our ambitious plans is a team of dedicated, professional and skilled members of staff. Simultaneously, programmes are embedded across the Service to ensure the provision of holistic health and wellbeing support, effective maintenance of premises, vehicles and equipment and sound financial management.

Incidents responded to

18,313



High risk incidents

36.9%



Medium risk incidents

62.9%



Low risk incidents

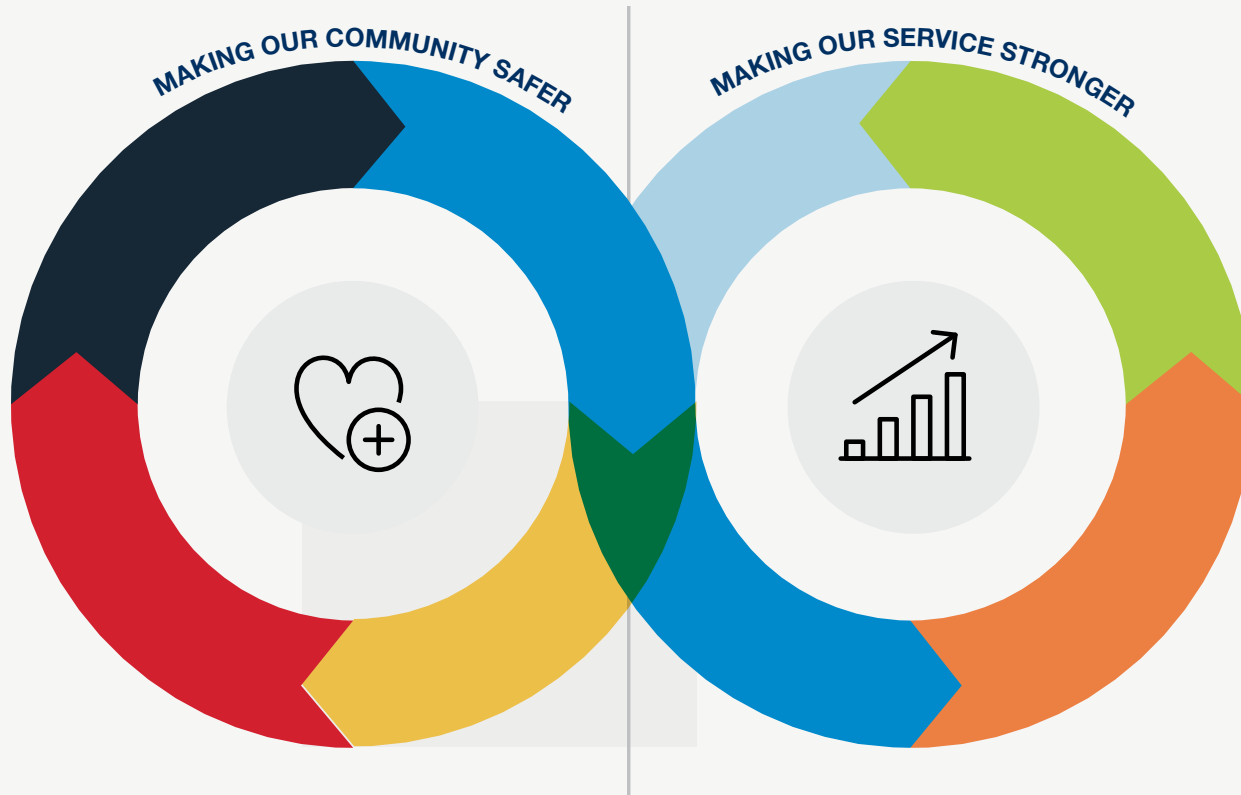
0.20%



OUR FOCUS

As a Service we have two strategic priorities which will focus our work activity for 2023-2026, these are Making our Communities Safer and Making our Service Stronger.

In order to achieve these strategic priorities, we have identified seven key objectives which are:



Working together and collaboratively on each individual objective, we will be Making our Communities Safer and Making our Service Stronger.

- PREVENTION
- PROTECTION
- RESPONSE
- RESILIENCE
- IMPROVING OUR SERVICE
- INVESTING IN OUR STAFF
- TRANSFORMATION



OUR FOCUS

PREVENTION

Prevention is at the heart of what we do. We want to ensure the local community is as safe as possible by working with vulnerable adults within the community and those most at risk of fire, as well as children and young people.

We are passionate about enabling every child and young person to thrive and we will help adults live longer and healthier lives by improving their safety, health and wellbeing.

Our core business activities:

- **Education packages** – we will deliver over 600 key stage packages per year on existing and emerging risks to all young people.
- **Fire Safety interventions** – we will work with local authorities, agencies and schools to deliver Fire Safety Interventions where young people are involved in deliberate fire setting.
- **Develop partnerships** – we work with partner agencies to identify those most at risk and who are vulnerable across our communities.

Support vulnerable people – we develop interventions and provide assistive technology to vulnerable people in the community.

Our strategic actions for Prevention include:

- **Service wide targeted interventions** – we will ensure a holistic approach to prevention, so our focus and activity is targeted to those most at risk.
- **Community Health and Wellbeing** – we will understand the impact that community health and wellbeing has on local support services.
- **Safeguarding** – we will embed safeguarding across all areas of our Service provision.



Home Fire Safety visits targeting the most vulnerable in our communities and making every contact count.

Target visits **6000** per year

We anticipate over 1,000 onward referrals, providing training to all managers at relevant agencies.

Referrals **1000** per year

552

Vulnerable Adults Manager

001

Children and Young People Manager

001

Dedicated prevention staff at various locations across the Service

016

Station-based establishment of Wholetime and On Call staff who support the delivery of Prevention work



74 OUR FOCUS

PROTECTION

We have a statutory duty as part of our role under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and Building Safety Act 2022 to work with the business community under Protection, to prevent fire from occurring across our business community.

The Service uses a Risk Based Inspection Programme to prioritise audit and inspection work towards the premises which present the highest risk to life. We will also provide support as part of our role with the Building Safety Regulator.

Our core business activities:

- **Prosecutions** – we undertake prosecutions for fire safety failings, where appropriate, following the public interest and evidential tests.
- **Enforce legislation** – we enforce fire safety legislation where necessary following issues of non-compliance.
- **Primary Authority partnerships** – we provide assured advice to support compliance to our Primary Authority partners.
- **Safety Advisory Group members** – we support the work of the safety advisory group by being active members across all authority areas.

Our strategic actions for Protection include:

- **Enhancing our business fire safety provisions** – we will broaden our protection activity to ensure our business fire safety function continues to meet current and emerging risks. We will remain agile to the outcomes of reviews, reports and inquiries, such as the Grenfell Report, to ensure that recommendations are considered and adopted where necessary, and we continue to invest in fire safety resources.



We anticipate approving over 300 licensing applications, working closely with local authority licensing teams



Approved per year
300

We anticipate delivering over 700 Fire Safety Audits, focusing on the very high-risk premises.



Fire Safety Audits per year
700

001

Business Fire Safety Manager

001

Business Fire Safety Team Leader

21.5

Inspecting Officers located at Bath, Bristol, Patchway, Weston-super-Mare and Yate



OUR FOCUS
RESPONSE

This is our ability to respond and resolve fire and rescue emergencies that affect our communities 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for the purposes of saving life, property and the environment.

Our core business activities:

- Take emergency and non-emergency calls and deploy fire service resources – we anticipate handling over 20,500 emergency 999 calls.
- Save lives and property by responding to emergency incidents – we anticipate attending over 10,000 emergency incidents.
- Liaise with and support other agencies – we work with key stakeholders to ensure a coordinated approach to managing risk.

Our strategic actions for Response include:

- Enhancing medical response – we will explore and consider new ways of working to assist with medical emergencies within the community.
- Extreme weather – we will enhance our readiness and preparedness for extreme weather events.
- Standards of cover review – we will take a holistic approach to the impact of large-scale building developments on our future response provision.



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All figures correct at time of production 13/02/2023



Control staff, working from our control room near Bath

039

Tactical and strategic commanders

032

021

fire stations with an overall establishment of:

Frontline fire engines, including four rescue vehicles

034

Wholetime firefighters

376

On Call firefighters

176



76 **OUR FOCUS**

RESILIENCE

Avon Fire & Rescue Service is required as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act to ensure it is a resilient organisation.

We must be able to anticipate, plan, prepare and respond to the changing environment that we face.

Our core business activities:

- **Business continuity** – we prepare, test and exercise our Business Continuity plans.
- **Risk modelling** – we model the risks to our community.
- **Integrated Risk Management Plan** – we identify, assess and formulate plans to mitigate all foreseeable fire and rescue service-related risks.
- **Operational guidance and procedures** – we produce, manage and test guidance and procedures for our operational staff.
- **Local Resilience Forum** – we engage with and contribute to the Local Resilience Forum.
- **Operational learning** – we coordinate operational debrief and monitoring to ensure learning and development of our operational response functions.
- **Reserve capacity** – we provide a capability during periods of staff shortages to ensure we can always provide cover to our communities.

- **National Resilience** – we support national arrangements with dedicated teams and specialists in Urban Search and Rescue, High Volume Pumping, Mass Decontamination and Hazardous Detection, Identification and Monitoring (HDIM) capabilities - all of which can be utilised on a locally or nationally.

Our strategic actions for Resilience include:

- **Community Risk Profile Software** – we will introduce new software that will help us to better understand the risk within our communities; for both people and businesses.
- **Workforce Planning** – we will ensure the Service is sufficiently resourced and has the tools and capability to deliver our services. We aim to attract and retain skills within the workforce and recognise the changing need for more flexible working. We will promote career opportunities, the Direct Entry scheme and our DICE (Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion Equality) objectives.



Operational Assurance
Guidance staff

005

Operational Risk, Business
Continuity staff

003

Frontline National
Resilience assets

011

Operational Assurance
Learning staff

006

Integrated Risk Management
Planning staff

002



OUR FOCUS

IMPROVING OUR SERVICE

We continually seek more efficient and safe ways of working and facilitate continual improvement to realise the benefits from Service investments, resources and technology, to deliver better outcomes for our staff and communities.



Our core business activities:

- **Assets** – we provide appropriate IT to our staff, fit for purpose buildings, equipment and vehicles to respond to the needs of our community, and continue to develop our approach to environmental issues.
- **Collaboration** – we work together with other people and organisations to achieve the benefits of working together, improving public safety.
- **Assurance** – we maintain effective governance arrangements, deliver an integrated approach to corporate planning, and monitor and report on the Corporate Risk Register.
- **Communications** – we deliver external and internal communication, supporting community events and campaign planning.
- **Performance** – we monitor, analyse and report on our corporate performance.

Our strategic actions include:

- **Optimising (Operational) Productivity** – we will ensure we continually explore opportunities that exist to be effective and efficient in our Service provision.

- **Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality (DICE) and Accessibility** – we will continue to demonstrate our commitment to an inclusive workforce where everyone is valued and are able to reach their potential. This includes encouraging diversity at all levels in the organisation during recruitment, promotion, development and direct entry processes. Ensuring a culture which adheres to Fire Standards and the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services in England.
- **Environmental, Ecological and Ethical Leadership** – having declared a climate and ecological emergency, we will strive to demonstrate environmental, ecological and ethical leadership in the Fire and Rescue sector.
- **Making best use of our assets** – we will make sure we have the right tools to provide the best service, while providing value for money to the community.
- **Align to National Fire Chief Councils leadership across the sector** – we will do this by adopting a best practice approach to national standards.
- **Achieve an HMICFRS rating of ‘good’** – we will address the findings from the latest HMICFRS reports to achieve a ‘Good’ rating across all even diagnostic questions.

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Procurement and Finance – we manage and monitor compliance with procurement, as well as oversee the management of financial reporting.



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OUR FOCUS**INVESTING IN OUR STAFF**

Our staff are our biggest resource and we are committed to ensuring that they are prepared and resilient to deliver our key priorities.

By ensuring that our staff have the right skills, equipment and support, we maximise opportunities to deliver better outcomes for our communities.

Our core business activities include:

- **People development** – we train our staff to ensure that the right people have the right skills, in the right place, providing opportunities for development and investing in our leaders at all levels.
- **Recruitment, retention and promotion** – we recruit and select the best staff in all areas of our Service by ensuring that we have the widest, and most diverse, pool of candidates to select from.
- **Health, fitness, safety and wellbeing** – we support a wide range of activities to maintain physical and mental health, safety and welfare for our staff, and maintain a Health and Safety team with expertise in mental health support.
- **Working groups** – we facilitate working groups and staff engagement to ensure staff can shape future ways of working.
- **Resourcing** – we ensure the Service is sufficiently resourced and has the tools and capability to deliver frontline services and support the organisation.
- **Staff communications** – we maintain regular communications with staff to keep them informed, engaged and included, embedding our values to develop an inclusive workforce where everyone is valued.

**Our strategic actions include:**

- **People development** – we will build a resilient workforce through the provision of development opportunities for our staff, including the launch of the leadership academy.
- **Health, fitness, wellbeing and welfare** – we will enhance a number of our health, fitness, wellbeing and welfare provisions to improve the support we offer to our staff at all stages in their career. This includes our ongoing sickness improvement plan.



OUR FOCUS**TRANSFORMATION**

Transformation is a multi-year programme of interlinked projects designed to review, develop and improve the Service policies, processes and systems across all areas of the Service, using technology more effectively to maximise efficiency.

The following key areas have been identified as part of this programme of work:

- **Digitising our Service** – developing software, hardware and systems that talk to each other and are integrated to enable us to be more effective, reduce paperwork and reduce our administrative burden.
- **Review of our processes** – looking at all of our processes and procedures to make them more effective, efficient and empowering.
- **Review of our policies** – streamlining the number we have, their ease of use and ensure they have people at their heart as we move into revised ways of working aligned to digitisation.
- **Continuous improvement** – we will improve ways of working to meet the needs of the users, improve services to the community, increase efficiency, capacity and cohesiveness, and maximise the added value of digital solutions.



COLLABORATIVE WORKING

Our future success is directly linked to how we work with others. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 created a statutory duty on fire and rescue authorities, police forces and ambulance trusts to collaborate.

By engaging with our staff, communities, key partners and media, we are not only able to share what we do and how we do it, but we are also better placed to identify additional opportunities to improve from others. Thereby ensuring a more efficient and cost-effective service to our communities.

Our collaborative working relationships include those with:

South West Emergency Services Collaboration Forum and the Avon and Somerset Local Resilience Forum

– to coordinate shared understanding of risk within our community and a joined-up approach to addressing the risk. For example, we currently have a number of regional collaboration agreements signed by our ‘blue light’ partners in place, including:

- **Collapse behind closed doors** – supporting the ambulance service to gain entry to premises where there is concern for welfare.
- **Requests for assistance** – ensuring requests for support across South West regional emergency services are managed efficiently and effectively.
- **Missing persons services** – ensuring regional fire and rescue services are able to support regional police forces at incidents where specialist search and rescue skills and equipment are required.

Emergency Services Network (ESN) – working to support the Government initiative which will transform public safety in the UK, when it launches. With integrated 4G voice and broadband data services, over two hundred thousand users across police, fire and emergency medical services will be able to share mission critical data that is both reliable and secure.

West of England One Public Estate programme

– to identify opportunities for further collaboration and funding including the release and disposal of publicly owned sites.



Partnership working in key areas, including:

- Licensing, building regulations and housing, to continue to drive down risk within our built and business environment.
- Engaging with local authorities and a range of organisations and groups who can help us reach and support the most vulnerable people in our communities.
- Delivering education packages on fire, road, water and student safety in schools and other educational establishments.
- Working with partner agencies such as SARI (Stand Against Racism & Inequality) and the Race Equality Commission to build relationships with community groups to advise on matters such as public and business safety and recruitment.

We also engage with our partners to explore the following areas:

- Shared estate and assets.
- Shared functions.
- The way we work together operationally.
- Joint community initiatives and partnerships.
- Shared information.
- Joint marketing and communication.
- Targeted intervention to reach the most vulnerable in our communities.

For more information about our collaboration activities, see our [Collaboration Strategy 2021-2026](#) >



GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE ASSURANCE

The Fire Authority has overall responsibility for ensuring there is a sound system of governance (incorporating the system of internal control) and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used efficiently, effectively and economically.

The arrangements in place for ensuring good governance include:

Avon Fire Authority

The Fire Authority carries out its duties through regular meetings and the following committees:

- **The Audit, Governance and Ethics Committee** – considers and reviews issues relating to audit, governance and risk management and the conduct of Members. Their work includes scrutinising and approving the Statement of Accounts, the Annual Governance Statement, Statement of Assurance and the Corporate Risk Register.
- **The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee** - considers and reviews the Fire Authority's policies, plans and objectives. Their work includes scrutinising performance against key indicators and monitoring aspects of service improvement including health, safety and welfare, equality, training and development.

- **The People and Culture Committee** – keeps under review the Authority's compliance with its duties under the Equality Act 2010. The Committee deals with the recruitment and appointment of Statutory Officers and members of the Service Leadership Board and any disciplinary matters or grievances. The Committee also determines appeals under staff disciplinary or grievance procedures and reviews of pension complaints under the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure.

- **The Local Pension Board** – assists the Fire Authority as Scheme Manager in administering the various Firefighters Pension Schemes, by providing governance and through the scrutiny of policies, pension documents, decisions and outcomes.

These meetings are recorded and available to view via the [AF&RS YouTube channel](#) >

Avon Fire & Rescue Service

The Service carries out its day-to-day responsibilities under the leadership of:

- **The Service Leadership Board** – responsible for considering strategic issues, finance and risk, setting the strategic direction for the Service and for overall management of the organisation.
- **The Service Leadership Team** – responsible for providing day-to-day leadership and management for the Service, overseeing a working environment which supports the effective achievement of goals and priorities.

Statutory Officers

- **The Clerk (and Monitoring Officer)** – responsible for overseeing and reporting on the lawfulness of decision-making and for advising upon and overseeing the governance arrangements for the Fire Authority.

- **Statutory Finance Officer** – provides independent professional advice and guidance to the Fire Authority to enable elected Members and the Service Leadership Board to effectively scrutinise financial information.

Audit

- **External Audit** – in accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, a relevant authority must appoint an external auditor to audit its accounts. The Fire Authority fully consider all external audits.
- **Internal Audit** – an independent and objective assurance service to the Fire Authority which completes a programme of reviews throughout the year and also undertakes a National Fraud Initiative and proactive fraud detection work.

Inspections

- **His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)** – independently assess the effectiveness and efficiency of fire and rescue services and all reports are considered by the Fire Authority.



OUR BUDGET

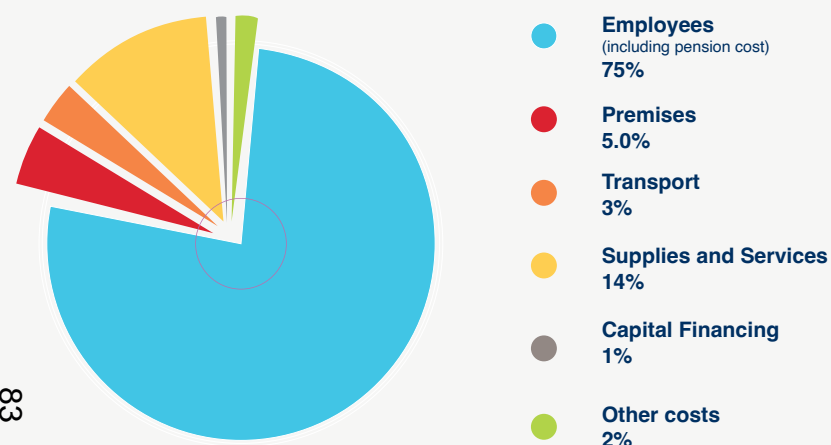
Our Service Plan will need to be delivered against a backdrop of financial pressures and increasing demand for public services.

The potential for less money will mean that providing the support and services people need will become more difficult.

We are not alone in facing these pressures in our area, so we are conscious that we do not push costs and pressures onto other services.

Avon Fire Authority has set its net budget for 2023/24 at £48.883 million. This represents a Council Tax level of £82.95 a year for a Band D property, an increase of 6.4%.

How is money spent



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Development of the 2023/24 Draft Budget		£'000
Core Budget 2022/23 (Restated)		44,537
- add back use of reserves 2022/23		419
Base Budget 2022/23		44,956
Pay awards and Inflation		3,857
Other Spending Pressures		1,190
Transformation and Change Savings		
- Employees		- 272
- Other		- 248
2023/24 Revenue Budget Requirement before use of reserves		49,483
Use of Reserves		- 600
2023/24 Revenue Budget Requirement after use of reserves		48,883
Funding		
- Locally Retained Business Rates		- 4,802
- Central Government Support		- 12,036
- City Region Deal		- 298
- Collection Fund Surplus		- 145
Amount Required from Council Tax payers after use of reserves		31,602
Assumed Tax Base		380,974
Council Tax		£ 82.95
Council Tax Increase		£ 5.00
Budget Increase (excluding use of reserves)		10%

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Avon Fire Authority

Service Plan and Budget 2023-26 Consultation Report

MEETING:	Avon Fire Authority
MEETING DATE:	29 March 2023
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive

1. Methodology and respondent profile

Background and introduction

The requirement for an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) was introduced in 2003 and was included in the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (now known as the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities). This was given statutory effect by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for England 2018 states that each Fire and Rescue Authority must produce an IRMP that:

- Identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related community risks;
- Puts in place appropriate prevention, protection, and response measures to reduce those risks;
- Sets out a Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) to enforce the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005;
- Covers at least a three year time span;
- Reflects effective consultation with the community, our staff, and partner agencies;
- Is easily accessible and publicly available.

Integrated risk management planning is simply about using resources in the most effective way to save lives, improve public safety and reduce emergency incidents. It is an approach that:

- identifies who or what is most at risk of fire and other emergencies
- determines where they are and how best to reach them
- identifies the best way to reduce and manage the risk
- ensures that resources are deployed in proportion to the size of the risk.

As a Service, we have two strategic priorities which will focus our work activity, these are: Making our Communities **Safer** and Making our Service **Stronger**

In delivering these strategic priorities, the Service will focus our work across seven overarching objectives:

1. Prevention
2. Protection
3. Response
4. Resilience
5. Improving our Service
6. Investing in our Staff
7. Transformation

Methodology

Consultation on the Service Plan and Budget ran for a 4-week period from 3-31 January 2023, through an online questionnaire. The survey set out multiple questions asking for views on our actions identified to address local risks under the seven overarching objectives, as well as on value for money and our budget.

In total 444 questionnaires responses were received (this compares to 210 responses received to the Service Plan consultation which ran in 2022).

The online questionnaire was hosted on Survey Monkey, with a direct link published on the Avon Fire & Rescue Service website homepage. The questionnaire was anonymous, with the aim of encouraging responses, and the consultation timeframe and activity was considered proportionate to the light touch refresh of the actions within the Service Plan.

Listening to the feedback from the 2022 consultation, the aim was to improve the accessibility of the survey by reducing the number of questions and therefore the average completion time (from 15 minutes to less than 10 minutes), reducing jargon and pulling out poignant parts of the Service Plan, rather than redirecting to other documents.

The table below outlines the key communication and engagement activity carried out during the consultation period:

Key stakeholders	Methods of communication/engagement
Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online survey published on Survey Monkey, available via homepage of Avon Fire & Rescue Service website – www.avonfire.gov.uk. • Local media (over 100 contacts/outlets) and subsequent media briefings and coverage via press release (2 releases, 8,100 views). • Social media content – organic and targeted, paid for advertising across Twitter (10 posts, 8,747 reach), Facebook (7 posts, 9,920 reach), Next Door and Instagram. • Community check in – 60 live viewers, 2,200 views of the recorded video posted on Facebook and 2,313 reach • Information shared for wider circulation with Avon and Somerset Local Resilience Forum, Warning and Informing Group. • Included in Chief Fire Officer’s weekly update to Avon Fire Authority Members. • E-mail distribution to the recruitment mailing list (approx. 7,000). • Shared with community contacts distribution list (approx. 20 partners).
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online survey accessible via Survey Monkey and the AF&RS website, with alternative formats available on request. • Details published on the intranet. • Everybody email sent to 1,000 recipients. • Publicised in <i>The Shout</i>, a weekly internal communication. • Shared on internal social media channels. • Included in discussions at Station, Control and Workplace visits. • Details shared and update provided to Service Leadership Team. • Emails sent to Unions – Fire Brigades Union, Fire and Rescue Services Association and Unison.
Partners and local businesses	<p>The following partners and local businesses were all emailed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authority Leaders and Chief Executives. • Avon and Somerset Constabulary.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avon and Somerset Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. • South West Ambulance Service Foundation Trust. • Neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services. • Avon and Somerset Local Resilience Forum. • Business West. • Bristol Chamber of Commerce. • West of England Combined Authority. • West of England Local Enterprise Partnership. • Federation of Small Businesses. • Local MPs.
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Respondent profile

A total of 444 responses were received during the consultation period.

The survey was also set up to ensure that only one response was permitted per URL, discouraging multiple entries from the same respondent. All questions were optional.

The decision was taken to anonymise the survey to encourage increased engagement in the responses provided. However, it is assumed from the language used in the free text responses, a proportion of these individuals/responses are closely associated to the fire and rescue service community.

An optional 'About You' section was included at the end of the survey, to help us better understand the profile of those responding and draw assumptions on the effectiveness of our consultation activity in engaging with our stakeholders.

Of those who opted to complete the 'About You' section, just over half of respondents (58.8%, 174 people) were male, 32.8% (97 respondents) were female, 0.6% (2 respondents) non-binary and 7.7% (23 respondents) preferring not to say (148 respondents did not provide their gender).

The majority of the responses came from the 65+ (20.4%, 61 respondents) age group. Of the 299 respondents who provided their age range (145 did not provide their age) there was an equal spread of ages between 16-64 years.

One quarter of respondents (25%, 75 people) stated they had a disability or health condition (of the 225 people that responded to this part of the survey).

The majority of respondents (72.7%, 211 people) described their ethnic group or background as English, with responses provided by people from 8 other ethnic groups and background including Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Welsh, Scottish and Gypsy or Irish Traveller. 154 people did not provide a response to this question.

Further data was gathered in relation to respondents' sexual orientation, religious beliefs, caring responsibilities, and postcode locations.

Respondents were also asked how they heard about the consultation, with the majority (50.9%, 118 responses) hearing about the consultation through social media, followed by email (13.4%, 31 responses) and through local media outlets. 213 people chose not to respond to this question.

2. Executive summary

There has been a 110% increase in responses during this 4-week consultation period (444 responses) compared to the 210 responses gathered during the 7-week Service Plan Consultation in 2022. Despite extensive communication and engagement activity, it is recognised that this represents a small percentage (0.04%) of the population served by Avon Fire & Rescue Service.

Over half (60%, 126 people) strongly agree or agree that our planning process is suitable and sufficient and 80.9% of respondents (140 people) strongly agree or agree with the risk identified to them and our local communities across the Avon Fire & Rescue Service area. A range of feedback was provided on our planning process and identified risk and can be found within this report.

Responses to our actions to address local risk for each of the seven objectives were as follows:

Objectives	Strongly agree/agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree/strongly disagree	Don't know/other
Prevention (444 responses)	79.51% (353)	8.33% (37)	6.08% (27)	6.08% (27)
Protection (409 responses)	83.13% (340)	6.36% (26)	2.94% (12)	7.58% (31)
Response (380 responses)	79.48% (302)	6.84% (26)	4.22% (16)	9.47% (36)
Resilience (356 responses)	73.87% (263)	11.80% (42)	7.59% (27)	6.74% (24)
Improving our Service (342 responses)	72.81% (249)	10.53% (36)	6.73% (23)	9.94% (34)
Investing in our Staff (336 responses)	75.59% (254)	9.23% (31)	4.76% (16)	10.42% (35)
Transformation (334 responses)	74.85% (250)	11.68% (39)	4.79% (16)	8.69% (29)

All objectives received further feedback, ideas and suggestions for consideration and a breakdown of these responses can be found within this report.

This consultation also included questions in relation to the budget. For the financial year 2023/24, central Government have increased the flexibility for the fire precept to £5 per band D property (which equates to less than 10p per week). This represents an increase of 6.24% on the fire precept part of the council tax, which will help us to mitigate the increased costs we are facing as a Service and the subsequent impact on our communities following the unprecedented inflationary rates (currently at 10.1%) in 2022/23. Therefore, the Service recommended this increase to our 2023/24 budget.

Of the 329 responses to this question, 74.77% (246 people) either strongly agree or agree that the Service should consider increasing its charge for 2023/24 by £5 of the current precept. Since the consultation, this recommended increase in the precept has been approved by the Fire Authority.

3. Results

The following results provide the statistics captured to demonstrate whether those who responded either strongly agree/agree or strongly disagree/disagree with our Service Plan actions. For the majority of each of the questions, a free text follow-up question was asked, requiring any further thoughts, suggestions, and ideas from respondents.

Full responses from the Survey Monkey questionnaire are available upon request.

Q1 – Do you agree with our actions to address local risk for Prevention?

Of the 444 respondents to this question, 42.12% (187 people) strongly agree and 37.39% (166 people) agree with the Prevention actions to address local risk.

Of the total respondents, 4.50% (20 people) disagree and 1.58% (7 people) strongly disagree; 2.48% (11 people) have responded with don't know.

When asked if there is anything that appears missing from our Prevention activity, we received 16 free text responses including the following suggestions: *“empowering crews to signpost vulnerable people to support”* and *“working more with local outreach projects”*. Other responses suggested increasing public engagement through digital assets, however a few respondents felt that this engagement should be dealt with by other agencies.

Q2 – Do you agree with our actions to address local risk for Protection?

Of the 409 respondents to this question, 42.05% (172 people) strongly agree and 41.08% (168 people) agree with our Protection actions to address local risk.

Of the total respondents, 1.96% (8 people) disagree and 0.98% (4 people) strongly disagree; 2.69% (11 people) have responded with don't know.

When asked if it was felt that anything had been missed from our Protection objective, we received 20 free text responses. Within those free responses, suggestions were submitted to improve education for small businesses and requesting more insight on the issues arising from high rise accommodation. Responders suggested: *“spot checks, communicating requirements to small businesses”* and the need to have more information in relation to our Grenfell response.

Q3 – Do you agree with our actions to address local risk for Response?

Of the 380 respondents to this question, 51.32% (195 people) strongly agree and 28.16% (107 people) agree with our Response actions to address local risk.

Of the total respondents, 2.11% (8 people) disagree and 2.11% (8 people) strongly disagree; 1.58% (6 people) have responded with don't know.

When asked if it was felt that anything had been missed from our Response objective, we received 30 free text responses. Within those free responses, concerns were raised regarding resources and training needed to cover medical response, and suggestions that we work collaboratively to lessen the impact of on street parking access. These points were highlighted in the following comments: *“[The Fire Service] needs additional funding before undertaking medical responses and flooding incidents”* and *“more involved with planning departments with lack of street parking and the subsequent effect [on] emergency access”*.

Q4 – Do you agree with our actions to address local risk for Resilience?

Of the 356 respondents to this question, 38.20% (136 people) strongly agree and 35.67% (127 people) agree with our Resilience actions to address local risk.

Of the total respondents, 5.90% (21 people) disagree and 1.69% (6 people) strongly disagree; 2.53% (9 people) have responded with don't know.

When asked if it was felt that anything had been missed from our Resilience objective, we received 15 free text responses. Some of which raised issues of firefighter pay or more flexibility for reserve firefighters so they can cover a wider area, including the following comments: *"increase reserve capacity in all communities"* and *"increase pay"*.

Q5 – Do you agree with our actions to address local risk for Improving our Service?

Of the 342 respondents to this question, 37.72% (129 people) strongly agree and 35.09% (120 people) agree with our actions for Improving our Service.

Of the total respondents, 4.68% (16 people) disagree and 2.05% (7 people) strongly disagree; 1.75% (6 people) have responded with don't know.

When asked if it was felt that anything had been missed from Improving our Service objective, we received 28 free text responses, this included the following comments: *"consider peer reviews"* and *"consider revelations from the London Fire Brigade report... to ensure best working practices in Avon"*, whilst others felt that the plans did not focus enough on operational response believing *"investment in response is a better way of serving your community"*.

Q6 – Do you agree with our actions outlined in Investing in our staff?

Of the 336 respondents to this question, 45.83% (154 people) strongly agree and 29.76% (100 people) agree with our actions for Investing in our Staff.

Of the total respondents, 2.38% (8 people) disagree and 2.38% (8 people) strongly disagree; 2.68% (9 people) have responded with don't know.

When asked if it was felt that anything had been missed from Investing in our Staff objective, we received 26 free text responses including the following comments: *"bring in experience and best practice from outside"*, *"proactively target why we don't retain diverse staff"* and *"health, fitness, wellbeing and welfare are key"*.

Q7 – Do you agree with our actions outlined in Transformation?

Of the 334 respondents to this question, 37.13% (124 people) strongly agree and 37.72% (126 people) agree with our actions for Transformation.

Of the total respondents, 3.89% (13 people) disagree and 0.90% (3 people) strongly disagree; 2.10% (7 people) have responded with don't know.

When asked if it was felt that anything had been missed from our Transformation objective, we received 22 free text responses, this included the following comments: *"what part does collaboration play in transformation"* and *"consider refreshers of the new systems in place and backups in case the tech fails"*. Whilst many supported digital transformation, the importance of putting people at the centre of any developments was key.

Q8 – Avon Fire & Rescue Service currently costs each taxpayer 10p per day. Do you consider Avon Fire & Rescue Service good value for money?

Of the 329 people who responded to this question, 54.10% (178 people) strongly agree and 24.32% (80 people) agree the Service provides value for money.

Of the total respondents, 10.94% (36 people) neither agree nor disagree, 4.26% (14 people) disagree and 2.43% (8 people) strongly disagree; 3.95% (13 people) have responded with don't know.

Q9 – How much do you agree or disagree that it is reasonable for Avon Fire & Rescue Service to consider increasing its charge for the year 2023/24 by £5 of our current precept?

For the financial year 2023/24, central Government have increased the flexibility for the fire precept to £5 per band D property (which equates to less than 10p per week). The Service will be recommending this increase to our 2023/24 budget.

Of the 329 responses to this question, 48.33% (159 people) strongly agree and 26.44% (87 people) agree that the Service should consider increasing its charge for 2023/24 by £5 of the current precept.

Of those respondents, 10.33% (34 people) neither agree nor disagree, 6.08% (20 people) disagree and 6.69% (22 people) strongly disagree; 2.13% (7 people) responded with don't know.

4. Conclusion

We would like to thank all those members of the community, staff and our partners who took part in the Service Plan and Budget 2023-2026 consultation. All feedback and comments have been considered within the final Service Plan 2023-2026. In response to feedback, we have increased the narrative on our response to Grenfell and outlined our cultural journey and future intention further.

Given the extent of our communication and engagement activity, it is acknowledged there has been a fairly low level of response to the consultation. This may be partly due to the nature and subject matter of the actions, as well as despite people having views about Avon Fire & Rescue Service, they may not wish to take part in the consultation process. For future consultation processes, we will endeavour to increase engagement by providing a longer window for input and views on our Service Planning, working closely with our DICE team to ensure we gather more feedback from our diverse community.

Despite this, the results show that overall, the majority of people who responded to the survey support our actions to address local risk under our seven overarching objectives as outlined in the Service Plan.

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AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	Avon Fire Authority
MEETING DATE:	29 March 2023
REPORT OF:	The Clerk
SUBJECT:	Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24

1. SUMMARY

This paper concerns the Members' Allowances Scheme:

- In accordance with Local Government legislation, the Fire Authority updates its Members' Allowances Scheme each financial year.
- The Scheme updates the basic allowance paid to Elected Members, special responsibility allowances, the Independent Person's allowance and travelling and subsistence allowances.
- The Scheme was independently reviewed by Bryony Houlden, Chief Executive of South West Councils and her report dated November 2021 was presented to the Fire Authority on 15 December 2021 when all eleven recommendations were approved.
- This 2023/24 Scheme incorporates the remaining changes recommended in that Independent Review for the 2023/24 financial year and NJC Green Book pay awards.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Approve the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2023-24 (**Appendix 1**).

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, which was amended by the Local Government Act 2000, provisions were made in relation to the payment of allowances for Members of Local Authorities. Regulations made under these statutory provisions, require Local Authorities to make a 'scheme of allowances' for their Members.

- 3.2 The Members' Allowances Scheme is increased annually in accordance with the National Joint Council for Local Government Services terms and conditions (Green Book) pay award.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 This report has financial implications in the table below for '23/24', which were set out in the report to the Fire Authority meeting of 15 December 2021, when the Fire Authority approved the changes recommended by the Independent Review of Member Allowances.

- 4.2 In addition to the changes recommended by the Independent Review, Member allowances also track the pay increases awarded by the NJC for Green Book local government staff. The pay award for 1 April 2022 was announced on 1 November 2022 and allowances were updated by 4.04%, therefore the figures recommended in the Independent Review for 2023/24 need to be adjusted to reflect that pay award – the NJC adjustments are shown in red in the table below:

Basic allowance £2,817, increased to £2,907

Chair's allowance £12,110, increased to £12,496

Vice Chair's allowance £2,833, increased to £2,923

Chairs of Committees allowance £2,817, increased to £2,907

Group Leaders allowance £2,253, increased to £2,325

Allowance	22/23 allowances	23/24 increases: • Independent Review • NJC 2022 Pay award	Total increased cost from 23/24
Basic	£2,220	+ £597 + £90	20 x £597 + £90 = £13,740
Chair	£9,543	+ £2,567 + £386	£2,567 + £386 = £2,953
Vice Chair	£2,220	+ £613 + £90	£613 + £90 = £703
Committee Chair	£2,220	+ £597 + £90	3 x £597 + £90 = £2,061
Political Group Leaders	£1,776	+ £477 + £72	4 x £477 + £72 = £2,196
Total additional cost		+ £4,851 + £728	+ £21,653

- 4.3 The increased Member allowances set out at paragraph 4.2 above will be subject to a further increase when the annual Green Book pay award for 1 April 2023 is announced by the NJC.

5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003 No.1021 (2003 Regulations), provide that it is for each Local Authority (which includes Fire Authorities constituted by a combination scheme under the Fire Services Act 1947) to make such a scheme, which shall provide for the payment of a basic allowance, payable to all Members, and may include provision for the payment of special responsibility allowances and travelling and subsistence allowances for attendance at any Authority or committee meeting or any other duty approved by the Authority.
- 5.2 Fire Authorities are excluded from the provisions in the Regulations relating to the establishment of an Independent Remuneration Panel, however, before '*making or amending a scheme*', the authority shall '*have regard to*' the recommendations made by any remuneration panels in relation to any authority of which its Members are nominated (Regulation 19(2)).
- 5.3 Under Regulation 10(4) of the 2003 Regulations, a scheme may make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances by reference to such index as may be specified by the authority, and, where the only change made to a scheme in any year is that effected by such annual adjustment in accordance with the index, then the scheme shall be deemed not to have been amended. In accordance with this Regulation, the Fire Authority makes automatic annual adjustments of Member allowances in accordance with the annual NJC Green Book pay award.
- 5.4 Under Regulation 10(5) the Authority must not rely on the index for automatic annual adjustments for longer than a period of four years before seeking a recommendation from an independent remuneration panel. Therefore, every four years, the Fire Authority must commission an external advisor to fully review the Members' Allowances Scheme, who will '*have regard to*' the recommendations made by the remuneration panels of the four unitary authorities. An independent review will next take place in the autumn of 2025 in readiness for the Scheme is issued for the financial year 2026-27.

6. RISKS

- 6.1 The Members' Allowances Scheme was independently reviewed alongside extensive bench marking with the unitary authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities. This has ensured that appropriate allowances are paid to Elected Members and has minimised the risk of challenge.

7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The relevant statutes and regulations are set out in the body of this report.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- a) Independent Review of Members' Allowances Scheme – report 10 to Avon Fire Authority meeting 15 December 2021 and Appendix 1 Report of Bryony Houlden, Chief Executive of South West Councils dated November 2021.
- b) Members' Allowances Scheme 2022/23 – report 11 to Avon Fire Authority meeting 30 March 2022.

9. APPENDIX

- 1. Members' Allowances Scheme 2023-24

10. REPORT CONTACT

Amanda Brown, Clerk and Monitoring Officer to Avon Fire Authority, Extension 347.



AVON FIRE AUTHORITY MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

UPDATED FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2023/24



Local Government and Housing Act 1989
Local Government Act 2000
The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

Avon Fire Authority in exercise of the powers conferred by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, hereby makes the following Scheme:

General

1 This Scheme may be cited as the Avon Fire Authority Members' Allowances Scheme.

2 (1) In this Scheme the following terms have the meanings respectively assigned to them below:

"Member" means a Member of the Authority appointed to the Authority by one of the four Unitary Authorities.

"Authority" means Avon Fire Authority

"the Act" means the Local Government Act 2000

"Basic Allowance" means an allowance payable under paragraph 3 of this Scheme

"Financial Year" means the period beginning on 1 April and ending on 31 March

"Special Responsibility Allowance" means an allowance payable under paragraph 4 of this Scheme

"the 2003 Regulations" means The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended)

"the 1990 Regulations" means The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990

"Independent Person's Allowance" means an allowance payable under paragraph 5 of this Scheme

"Travelling and Subsistence Allowance" means an allowance payable under paragraph 6 of this Scheme

"Group Leader" means the leader of a group within the Authority constituted in accordance with Regulation 8 of the 1990 Regulations

"Approved Duty" means a duty specified in Schedule 2 to this Scheme



“Valid Written Claim” means a claim on-line via the ESS system submitted by the claimant and which contains or has appended to it the details required by the Authority and receipts for expenditure in relation to which an allowance is being claimed.

- (2) In this Scheme words importing the masculine gender shall include the feminine and vice versa.

Basic Allowance

- 3 (1) Each Member shall be entitled to a basic allowance amounting to £2,907 in respect of the Financial Year, subject to and in accordance with the Scheme. This figure represents the figure of £2,817 recommended by an Independent Review in November 2021, plus 4.04% for the NJC Green Book pay award for 1 April 2022 (announced 1 November 2022).
- (2) Where the term of office of a Member begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning or end of the Financial Year, his/her entitlement shall be to payment of the proportion of basic allowance for the number of days during which his/her term of office as Member subsists.
- (3) Where a Member is suspended or partially suspended from his/her responsibilities or duties as a Member of the Authority in accordance with Part III of the Act or regulations made under that Part, the part of basic allowance payable to him/her in respect of the period for which he/she is suspended or partially suspended may be withheld by the Authority for that period of suspension or partial suspension.

Special Responsibility Allowance

- 4 (1) In respect of the Financial Year a special responsibility allowance shall be payable to a Member who has a special responsibility in relation to the Authority that is specified in Schedule 1 to this Scheme subject to and in accordance with the provisions of this Scheme.
- (2) The amount of the allowance shall be the amount specified against that special responsibility in that Schedule.
- (3) For the avoidance of doubt a Member shall be paid only one special responsibility allowance in addition to their basic allowance in relation one such special responsibility at any one time during the Financial Year. If a Member fulfils more than one special responsibility role for which different amounts are paid, then the Member will be entitled to receive the higher of the amounts involved.
- (4) Where a Member does not have throughout the whole of the Year such special responsibilities as entitle him/her to a special responsibility allowance, his/her entitlement shall be to payment of a proportion of the special responsibility allowance for the number of days during which he/she has such special responsibility in the Year.
- (5) Where a Member is suspended or partially suspended from his/her responsibilities or duties as a member of the Authority in accordance with Part III of the Act or regulations made under that Part, the part of any special responsibility allowance payable to him/her in respect of the responsibilities or duties from which he/she is suspended or partially suspended may be withheld by the Authority.



Independent Person's Allowance

- 5 Each Independent Person shall be entitled to an allowance amounting to £1,000 in respect of the Financial Year in respect of attendance at conferences and meetings subject to and in accordance with the provisions of this Scheme.

Travelling and Subsistence Allowance

- 6 (1) An allowance in respect of travelling and subsistence shall be payable to a Member if undertaken in connection with or relating to a duty specified in Schedule 2 to this Scheme subject to and in accordance with the provisions of this Scheme. The travel allowances are in line with HMRC approved travel rates.
- (2) An allowance in respect of travelling and subsistence shall be payable to an Independent Person if undertaken in connection with or relating to a duty specified in Schedule 2 to this Scheme subject to and in accordance with the provisions of this Scheme.
- (3) The amounts of allowances in respect of travelling and subsistence payable by the Authority are set out in Schedule 3 to this Scheme.

Election to Forego Allowances

- 7 Any person may, by notice in writing given to the Clerk to the Authority, elect to forego his/her entitlement or any part of his entitlement to allowances under this Scheme.

Claims and Payment

- 8 (1) (a) A claim for Travelling or Subsistence Allowance shall be made on-line by the person entitled to receive payment **within three months** following the date of the meeting or event in respect of which the entitlement to the allowance arises.
- (b) An Independent Person's Allowance in respect of the Year shall be payable by two equal instalments, paid in arrears; the first instalment relates to the period January to June, and the second for the period July to December. A claim for Independent Person's Allowance shall be made in writing by the person entitled to receive payment not later than two months after the end of the period to which the payment relates.
- (2) The Authority shall not be required to make a payment where the provisions of paragraph 8(1) have not been complied, with but may do so at its discretion.
- (3) Payment in relation to the following allowances, namely:
- (a) Basic Allowance
(b) Special Responsibility Allowance
- shall (subject to paragraphs 3(3), 4(5), 8(5) and 10) be made by equal monthly instalments in arrears on the last day of each calendar month.
- (4) Payment in relation to the following allowances, namely:
- (a) Travelling and Subsistence Allowance
(b) Independent Person's Allowance



shall (subject to paragraphs 5, 6, 8(5) and 10) be made on the last day of the calendar month following the month in which a valid written claim in relation to it is received by the Authority.

(5) Where any of the following paragraphs apply, namely:

- (a) paragraph 3(2); or
- (b) paragraph 4(4)

the first or last instalment (as the case may be) shall be adjusted by such amount as the Authority may determine is necessary to accord with the provisions of the relevant paragraph and shall be paid no later than the last day of the calendar month following the month in which the relevant allowance commences or ceases to be payable (as the case may be).

Repayment of Allowance

9. Where payment of any allowance has already been made in respect of any period during which the Member or Independent Person concerned:
- (a) ceases to be a Member or Independent Person; or
 - (b) is in any other way not entitled to receive the allowance in respect of that period

the Authority may require that such part of the allowance as relates to such period be repaid to the Authority, within three months.

Duplication of Allowances

- 10 (1) Where a Member is also a Member of another authority (within the meaning of Regulation 3 of the 2003 Regulations) that Member may not receive allowances from more than one authority (within the meaning of Regulation 3 of the 2003 Regulations) in respect of the same duties.
- (2) No allowance under this Scheme shall be paid or claimed by a Member unless he shall have given to the Authority a certificate stating that he has not claimed or received, nor will he claim or receive, an allowance from any other authority (within the meaning of Regulation 3 of the 2003 Regulations) in respect of the same duties.

Resolution

- 11 The Basic Allowance will be updated annually based on any headline percentage increase agreed by the National Joint Council (NCJ) for Local Government as the pay award for staff on the national pay scale (Green Book). This Scheme was amended by the Authority in accordance the NJC Green Book pay award for 1 April 2022, which was belatedly announced on 1 November 2022. Pay negotiations are ongoing and in due course a further Green Book pay award will be announced by the NJC for 1 April 2023 and all the allowances in this Scheme will be updated accordingly.
- 12 During the 2021/22 financial year, the Clerk to the Fire Authority commissioned an external advisor to fully review the Scheme and make recommendations for the Scheme from 1st April 2022. That Independent Review was conducted by Bryony Houlden of South West Councils, who prepared a report dated November 2021, which was presented to the Fire Authority meeting on 15 December 2021. All eleven recommendations outlined within the report were adopted for the 2022-23 and 2023-24



financial years. This Member Allowances Scheme includes the second phase of uplifts recommended for 2023/24.

Clerk to the Fire Authority



SCHEDULE 1

Special Responsibility Allowance

Special Responsibility Allowance	2023/24 £
Chair	12,496
Vice Chair	2,923
Chairs of Committees	2,907
Group Leaders	2,325

These Special Responsibility Allowances are those recommended by the Independent Review of Member Allowances of November 2021, for the Chair of £12,110, Vice Chair £2,833, Chairs of Committees £2,817, and Group Leaders of £2,253 plus 4.04% for the NJC Green Book pay award for 1 April 2022 (announced November 2022).



SCHEDULE 2

Duties for which Travel and Subsistence Allowance Payable

A duty falling within one or more of the following categories:

- (1) Meetings of the Authority, its committees, working parties and forums formally convened by the Clerk, or Chief Fire Officer, including (a) seminars, training sessions, workshops etc., to which all Members have been invited and (b) cases where a Member is invited and officially notified to attend a meeting of a committee, working party or forum of which he/she is not a Member.
- (2) Attendance at meetings of a joint committee of the Authority and one or more other authorities or a sub-committee, working party or forum of that joint committee formally convened, provided that the person attending is entitled to do so as a Member or substitute Member of the joint committee.
- (3) Formal briefings by the Chief Fire Officer or other Officer, provided Members of at least two political groups have been invited to attend.
- (4) On-site inspections or visits authorised in advance by the Authority or a committee or made in pursuance of a policy approved by the Authority or a committee.
- (5) Official and courtesy visits undertaken by the Chair of the Authority or, in the case of a particular visit, such other Member as he/she may ask to represent him/her.
- (6) Attendance as an officially appointed representative of the Authority or any other body, including a committee, sub-committee or working party of that body, or a further body to which that body has appointed the representative, provided there is a connection with the functions of the Authority.
- (7) Attendance (arranged by the Authority, Committee, Joint Committee or Officer) at conferences, courses, workshops, and seminars.
- (8) Attendance at graduations or medal presentation ceremonies within or involving Avon Fire & Rescue Service.
- (9) Subject to the provisions of the 2003 Regulations, such other duties for the purpose of or in connection with the discharge of the functions of the Authority as the Authority may from time to time determine.



SCHEDULE 3

Amount of Travel and Subsistence Allowance

Travel Rates

The following rates shall apply where expenditure on travel is actually and necessarily incurred by the claimant to enable him to perform an Approved Duty:

1 The rate of travel by public transport (other than travel by air) shall be the amount of the ordinary fare or any available cheap fare and, where more than one class of fare is available, the rate shall be determined by reference to second class fares. Where appropriate, seat reservation charges will also be paid.

2 The rate for travel by a Member or Independent Member's own private motor vehicle or motorcycle or one belonging to a member of his family or otherwise provided for his use shall be as follows:

motor car	=	45p	per mile
motorcycle	=	24p	per mile
cycle	=	20p	per mile

Plus, the actual cost of tolls, ferries and parking fees.

3 The rate for travel by taxi or private hire vehicle shall be:

(a) in the case of emergency, or where no public transport is reasonably available, the amount of the actual fare.

(b) in any other case, the amount of the fare for travel by appropriate public transport.

4 The rate of travel by air shall be:

(a) Where the saving of time is so substantial as to justify travel by air, the lower of:

i) the ordinary economy class fare or any available cheap economy class fare for travel by regular air service; or

ii) the fare actually paid

(b) in any other case, the lower of:

i) the rate applicable to travel by appropriate alternative public transport plus the amount of any saving in subsistence allowance consequent upon travel by air; or

ii) the fare actually paid

Rates of Subsistence

The following rates of subsistence shall apply where expenditure on subsistence is actually and necessarily incurred by the claimant to enable him to perform an Approved Duty outside the area of the District Councils of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire:



- 1 In the case of absence not involving an absence overnight, from the usual place of residence:
 - (a) of more than 4 hours before 11 am
(Breakfast allowance) - £5.57
 - (b) of more than 4 hours including the period between
12 noon and 2 pm
(Lunch allowance) - £7.70
 - (c) of more than 4 hours including the period between
3 pm to 6 pm
(Tea allowance) - £3.04
 - (d) of more than 4 hours ending after 7 pm
(Evening meal allowance) - £9.54

Where any meal (including sandwiches and/or a light buffet) is provided free of charge by the Authority or a third party in respect of a meal or the period to which an allowance relates, the rates set out above shall be reduced by the whole amount of the allowance.

A claimant shall not be entitled to both a tea allowance and an evening meal allowance in relation to the performance of the same Approved Duty.

- 2
 - (a) In the case of an absence overnight from the usual place of residence - £75.31
 - (b) For such absence overnight in London or for the purposes of attendance at a Conference of the Local Government Association - £87.12
 - (c) The rates set out in paragraphs 2(a) and 2(b) above are deemed to cover a continuous period of absence of 24 hours
 - (d) Where any meal (including sandwiches and/or a light buffet) is provided free of charge by the Authority or a third party in respect of a meal or the period to which an allowance under paragraphs 2(a) or 2(b) above relates, the rates set out in paragraphs 2(a) and 2(b) shall be reduced by the amount set out in relation to that meal in paragraph 1.
 - (e) For the purposes of this Schedule, "London" means the City of London and the London Boroughs of Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wadsworth, and Westminster
- 3 Where breakfast, lunch or an evening meal are taken on trains during a period for which there is an entitlement to the day subsistence allowance, the reasonable cost of the meal(s) (including VAT) shall (subject to paragraph 4 below) be reimbursed in full and in such circumstances the day subsistence allowance for the appropriate meal period shall not be payable.



- 4 Paragraph 3 above shall only apply:
- (a) in relation to breakfast, if there is an absence of more than 4 hours before 11 am
 - (b) in relation to lunch, if there is an absence of more than 4 hours including the period between 12 noon and 2 pm
 - (c) in relation to dinner, if there is an absence of more than 4 hours ending after 7 pm.

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AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	Avon Fire Authority
MEETING DATE:	Wednesday, 29 March 2023
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Annual Review of Service Charges 2023-24

1. **SUMMARY**

This report proposes increases in the Service charges for 2023/24 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 7% from 2022/23 to 2023/24 in line with our inflation assumptions within the Medium Term Financial Plan.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Avon Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Approve the charging structure set out in **Appendices 1 and 2** with effect from 1 April 2023.
- b) 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 2023, 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 7% on previous charges aligns with the inflation assumptions made when setting the 2023/24 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 2023/24

10. REPORT CONTACT

Claire Bentley, Head of Finance,
Kevin Woodward, Temporary Treasurer,

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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 2023/24

Charging Rates for 2023/24

Service	Actual 2022/23	Proposed 2023/24
Section 1 Appliances: 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	£487	£521
Section 2 Miscellaneous equipment*	Current Cost	Current Cost
Section 3 Other materials: e.g. 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
Section 4 Gaining access: Fixed charge*	£202	£216
Section 5 FIRE INVESTIGATION/ FIRE SAFETY (NO VAT) - Minimum * 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 £126 £126	No charge £135 £135

* plus £34 administration fee

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	Avon Fire Authority
MEETING DATE:	Wednesday, 29 March 2023
REPORT OF:	The Clerk
SUBJECT:	Pay Policy Statement 2023/24

1. **SUMMARY**

At their meeting on 3 March 2023, the People and Culture Committee reviewed the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year beginning on 1 April 2023, and recommended its approval by the Fire Authority. The Fire Authority is therefore asked for approve the Pay Policy Statement 2023/24 at **Appendix 1** for publication.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Avon Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Approve the Pay Policy Statement 2023/23 for the financial year beginning 1 April 2023 for publication.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Fire Authority is required under the Localism Act 2011 to prepare an annual Pay Policy Statement. This states the Fire Authority's policy towards a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce and in particular the senior staff and the lowest paid employees.

3.2 The Statement must include the following:

- Remuneration of its Chief Officers.
- Remuneration of its lowest paid employees.
- The relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and the remuneration of those employees who are not Chief Officers.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Funding for staffing costs is contained within existing budgets.

5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 Under the Localism Act 2011, Pay Policy Statements must be prepared for each financial year, approved by the full Fire Authority, and published before 31 March, immediately preceding the financial year to which it relates. The proposed Statement for 2023/24 is attached at **Appendix 1**. No substantive changes are proposed from last year's Statement.
- 5.2 Under the Terms of Reference for the People and Culture Committee, the Committee is required to review the Pay Policy Statement annually and make recommendations to the Fire Authority. At the Committee's meeting on 3 March 2023, the Committee reviewed the Pay Policy Statement and made no changes to it and recommended its approval by the Fire Authority. Since that Committee meeting, on 6 March 2023, the Fire Brigades Union announced that its Members accepted the Grey book pay offer made by employers of 7% backdated to 1 July 2022 and 5% effective from 1 July 2023. That updated position has been included in the Pay Policy Statement at **Appendix 1**.
- 5.3 As an employer of 250 or more staff, the Fire Authority is also obliged to comply with gender pay gap reporting in accordance with The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017. As a public authority, the Fire Authority must publish its pay gap information after the 'snapshot date' of 31 March each year (and within 12 months of that snapshot date). It is intended to present the Gender Pay Gap Information, combined with a voluntary Ethnicity Pay Gap Report, to the People and Culture Committee meeting in June 2022.

6. RISKS

- 6.1 There is a risk to the Fire Authority if it does not comply with the Localism Act 2011 and approve and publish a Pay Policy Statement by the deadline date of 31 March. There is also a risk to reputation if the Fire Authority is not transparent about its pay policy for all staff; the Pay Policy Statement can also impact upon recruitment and retention of staff.

7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Localism Act 2011 and the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 apply to Avon Fire Authority.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- a) Pay Policy Statement 2023/24 – item 8 of Agenda for People and Culture Committee meeting 3 March 2023.

9. APPENDICES

- 1. Proposed Pay Policy Statement 2023/24.

10. REPORT CONTACT

Amanda Brown, Clerk/Monitoring Officer Avon Fire Authority, Extension 347.

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Pay Policy Statement 2023/24

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with sections 38 to 43 of Chapter 8 of the Localism Act 2011 this Pay Policy Statement outlines the Fire Authority's policies relating to:

- Remuneration of its Chief Officers,
- Remuneration of its lowest paid employees,
- The relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and the remuneration of those employees who are not Chief Officers.

This will ensure that there is the appropriate accountability and transparency of salaries and in particular the salaries of senior staff. The Fire Authority will publish the statement on its website and update it on an annual basis or at such times as it is amended.

In applying its policy, the Fire Authority will work to eliminate any elements which may, directly or indirectly, discriminate unfairly on the grounds of sex, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, age, marital status, having dependants, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, trade union activity, disability or any other factors. Part-time workers receive the same pay and remuneration as full-time workers undertaking the same job role on a pro-rata basis.

Decisions on the pay and conditions of employment of Chief Officers are made by Members at a meeting of the Fire Authority itself.

2. REMUNERATION OF CHIEF OFFICERS

The Fire Authority is responsible for establishing the pay policy for all employees and reviewing the pay level of the Chief Fire Officer.

The Pay Negotiating Body for Chief Fire Officers is the National Joint Council (NJC) for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services. The NJC annually reviews the level of pay increase applicable to all those covered by the national agreement and determines any pay settlement. The Fire Authority applies the annual negotiated pay settlements. All other decisions about pay levels and remuneration for individual Brigade Managers are taken locally by the Fire Authority.

The annual NJC pay award for Brigade Managers applies retrospectively from 1st January each year. The annual NJC pay award of 1.5% on basic salary from 1st January 2021 was not announced until 24 June 2021. The pay awards from 1st January 2022 and 1st January 2023 have not yet been announced.

The salary structure for the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (CFO/CEO), other Principal Officers and the Statutory Officers is determined by the Fire Authority and is subject to future salary reviews in accordance with the Constitution and Scheme of Conditions of Service of the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services, known as the 'Gold Book'.

The Fire Authority undertakes negotiations with its recognised representative bodies on local agreements which affects the terms and conditions of its employees, and which may include agreement of local allowances. The Representative Bodies recognised for negotiating purposes for Chief Fire Officers is the Fire Leaders' Association, which is a branch of the Prospect Union.

3. REMUNERATION OF OTHER UNIFORMED/OPERATIONAL STAFF

The CFO/CEO has delegated responsibility to ensure pay arrangements for all other employees of the Fire Authority comply with the nationally agreed Grey or Green Book terms and conditions of employment.

This includes Wholetime, Retained Duty staff and Control Room staff. The remuneration levels for these staff are subject to national negotiation as contained in the Scheme of Conditions of Service of the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire & Rescue Services which is known as the 'Grey Book'.

The NJC announce an annual award from 1st July each year. On 8 February 2023 the National Employers made a pay offer of 7% effective from 1 July 2022 and 5% effective from 1 July 2023. The Fire Brigades Union, which is the representative body recognised for negotiating purposes, announced on 6 March 2023 that its members accepted this pay offer.

4. REMUNERATION OF CORPORATE SERVICES STAFF

The Scheme of Conditions of Service for these staff are set out within the National Joint Council for Local Government Services known as the 'Green Book'.

The National Joint Council negotiates the level of any annual pay increases applicable to all 'Green Book' staff. The Hay Job Evaluation Scheme is used to determine the grading and pay for corporate staff. This approach was approved by the Fire Authority. It is recognised that an analytical job evaluation scheme such as Hay serves to ensure a fair and consistent grading structure which is free from bias.

The NJC announce an annual award from 1st April each year. Pay rates for 1 April 2021 were announced on 28 February 2022, backdated to 1 April 2021. The pay rates and allowances were increased by 1.75%.

In addition, the pay award for 1 April 2022 was announced on 1st November 2022 of £1,925 (pro-rata for part-time employees) on all pay points, equating to a 10.5% rise for the lowest paid staff and 4% for the highest paid, and the new rates for allowances were uprated by 4.04%.

Negotiations relating to the 1st of April 2023 pay award are ongoing.

The representative bodies recognised for negotiating purposes are UNISON and UNITE.

5. REMUNERATION OF THE LOWEST PAID EMPLOYEES

This statement must state the definition of “lowest-paid employees” adopted by the authority for the purposes of the statement, and the authority’s reasons for adopting that definition.

Avon Fire Authority is a ‘real living wage’ employer, which goes beyond the government’s national living wage. The national living wage is the minimum hourly rate which adult workers in the UK, aged over 23, must be paid. The current national living wage from 1 April 2022 is £9.50 an hour, increasing to £10.42 from 1 April 2023.

The real living wage is a voluntary scheme for employers and is calculated to reflect the real cost of living. The rate was last reviewed on 22 September 2022 and is £10.90 per hour (£11.95 in London).

6. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE REMUNERATION OF CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS AND THOSE EMPLOYEES WHO ARE NOT CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS

The Localism Act 2011 requires the Fire Authority to set out the relationship between the remuneration of Chief Officers and the remuneration of those who are not Chief Officers.

6.1 Establishing the Pay of the Chief Fire Officer

This statement must include the authority’s policies relating to:

- a) the level and elements of remuneration for each Chief Officer
- b) remuneration of Chief Officers on recruitment
- c) increases and additions to remuneration for each Chief Officer
- d) the use of performance-related pay for Chief Officers
- e) the use of bonuses for Chief Officers
- f) the approach to the payment of Chief Officers on their ceasing to hold office under or to be employed by the authority and
- g) the publication of and access to information relating to remuneration of Chief Officers.

The Fire Authority has established a policy that Principal Officer roles below that of CFO/CEO and the Statutory Officers would be paid as a proportion of the locally agreed CFO/CEO base pay rate. It was agreed at the Employment Committee on 1 March 2018 that any new appointments to the Service Leadership Board after that date would be at the new appointments rate, as follows:

Post	New Appointments
CFO/CEO	£148,238*
ACFO (75%)	£111,179

Directors & Statutory Officers (65%)	£96,355
*This figure includes the NJC pay award of 1.5% from 1st January 2021 (announced 24 June 2021). The pay awards for 1 st of January 2022 and 2023 have not yet been announced.	

6.1.1 Bonuses Payable/Performance Related Pay

The Fire Authority does not operate a bonus scheme or a Performance Related Pay Policy for Chief Officers.

6.1.2 Charges, Fees or Allowances Payable

Payment of charges, fees and allowances for Chief Officers, is in accordance with the provisions of the Gold Book and Section 4 of the Grey Book.

6.1.3 Vehicles

A taxable leasing contribution is provided to Chief Officers. Officers can claim reimbursement for business mileage in accordance with the conditions of that scheme. Officers who do not take advantage of the Fire Authority's car leasing scheme may claim reimbursement for the use of their private motor vehicle for business purposes, in accordance with the NJC Mileage rates and the provisions of the Essential User Scheme.

6.1.4 Travelling and Subsistence Expenses

In accordance with NJC Conditions of Service, Chief Officers who are absent from their usual place of duty, and who necessarily incur additional expenses in obtaining food, may claim subsistence allowances in accordance with the Fire Authority's published rates.

6.1.5 Expenses

Chief Officers may claim reimbursement for out of pocket expenses incurred in the course of carrying out their duties. The Fire Authority also permits Chief Officers to utilise corporate procurement/credit cards in accordance with the terms of the scheme.

6.1.6 Professional Memberships

Fire Authority will reimburse Chief Officers for the cost of joining or maintaining membership of professional bodies essential to the duties of their role.

6.1.7 Benefit in Kind

Chief Officers may elect to be provided with a lease vehicle under the car lease scheme which may produce a taxable benefit in kind. Chief Officers may use the Fire Authority's



medical intervention fund which could incur a taxable benefit in kind if the treatment is related to a non-work injury.

6.1.8 Re-engagement/Re-employment

Re-engagement (operational employee retires and returns to the same or similar role undertaken prior to retirement) will not be considered or approved for Area Managers and above unless it is exceptional in the interests of public safety. Any such appointment shall:

- a) be made only by the Fire Authority meeting and voting in public session;
- b) on presentation of a business case justifying the request; and,
- c) on a fixed term contract for a maximum period of 6 months with no extension.

The published minute of the decision shall set out why the re-engagement was necessary in the interests of public safety and alternative approaches were not deemed appropriate.

Re-employment (operational employee retires and returns to a substantially different role) is permissible via open external recruitment.

In both cases abatement of pension will apply.

The Fire Authority operates a Flexible Retirement Policy for employees in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) which allows staff to take their pension benefits and be re-employed on reduced hours or at a lower grade without abatement of pension. This complies with the provisions of the LGPS.

6.1.9 Redundancy

There is no provision within either the firefighters pension schemes to enable Fire and Rescue Authorities to provide enhanced redundancy payments above those payable by virtue of enactment.

Officers within the LGPS are entitled to enhanced redundancy payments in accordance with the provision of the scheme and the Fire Authority's policies.

6.1.10 Termination by mutual agreement

The Fire Authority reserves the right to negotiate a compensatory payment for termination of employment by mutual consent. Such payments may only be made if the Fire Authority is satisfied that it is in the best interests of both the Fire Authority and the public interest.

6.1.11 Payment in lieu of Notice

The Fire Authority reserves the right to make payment in lieu of notice in exceptional circumstances, where this is deemed to be in the best interests of both the Fire Authority and public interest.

6.1.12 Payment for untaken annual leave

The Fire Authority reserves the right to pay in lieu of untaken annual leave, where the employee has been unable to take their leave entitlement due to the contingencies of the Service.

6.1.13 Pension Arrangements

The pension schemes applied by the Fire Authority for the various staff groups are:

- The Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992
- The Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2006
- The Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015
- The Local Government Pension Scheme 2014

The Fire Authority implements guidance in relation to these schemes as amended from time to time by the responsible government department.

6.2 Internal Pay Comparators

The comparison with the median earnings of the whole workforce using the basic pay for full-time equivalents based on:

- The CFO/CEO's salary being £148,238.
- The lowest pay point being £21,029.
- The median basic pay of the Fire Authority's whole workforce FTE (excluding on-call staff, auxiliary staff and community safety & staff engagement casuals) being £32,244.

are as follows:

- The current ratio between the CFO/CEO and median basic pay is 4.6:1 (2021/22 – 4.6:1).
- The current ratio between the CFO/CEO and a competent fire-fighter is 4.6:1 (2021/22 - 4.6:1).
- The current ratio between the CFO/CEO and lowest paid employee is 7.8:1 (2021/22 – 7.8:1).

6.3 Gender Pay Gap Information

In accordance with the requirements set out in The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017, Avon Fire Authority publishes pay gap information after the 'Snapshot date' of 31 March each year (and within 12 months of that snapshot date). This information is presented separately to the People & Culture Committee and the Fire Authority and published on Avon Fire & Rescue Service website.

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Avon Fire Authority

Forward Plan 2023-24 Key Decisions

1. Fire Authority

Meeting Date	Item / issue requiring decision	Exempt Item? (Yes/No/Part)	Contact Officer for Further Details
21 June 23 AGM	Election of Fire Authority Chair for the Municipal Year	No	Clerk
	Election of Vice Chair for the Municipal Year and Member Appointments	No	Clerk
	Member Information 2022/2023	No	Clerk
	Fire Authority meeting dates and forward plan 2023/24	No	Clerk
	Reserves Strategy	No	Statutory Finance Officer
	2022/23 Capital Programme Final Outturn Position	No	Statutory Finance Officer
	2022/23 Revenue Budget Final Outturn Position	No	Statutory Finance Officer
	Re-engagement/re-employment and pension abatement policies.	No	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

2. Audit, Governance & Ethics Committee

The lead Director for this Committee is from May 23 ACFO Steve Imrie, 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
27 Jun 23	Election of AGECE Chair	No	Clerk
	2022/23 Draft Statement of Accounts and Narrative Report	No	Statutory Finance Officer
	Draft Annual Governance Statement	No	
	External Audit Plan 2023/24	No	External Auditor
	Internal Audit Reports and Annual Report (2022/23)	No	Internal Auditor
	Update on Internal Audit recommendations	No	Internal Auditor

3. People & Culture Committee

The lead Director for this committee is ACFO Richard Welch, 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
30 Jun 23	Election of P&CC Chair	No	
	HR & Recruitment update	No	
	Annual review of employment cases.	No	
	Injury settlements 2022/23	No	
	Gender Pay Gap and Ethnic Pay Gap Reporting ('snapshot date' 31 Mar 23)	No	
	Quarterly Training Report	No	

4. Performance, Review & Scrutiny Committee

The lead Director for this committee is currently ACFO Steve Imrie, but from May 23 onwards the lead Director will be Angie Feeny, Director of Corporate Services. ACFO Imrie is therefore the contact for reports to be presented to the Committee in Apr 23, unless stated in the final column below.

Meeting Date	Item / issue requiring decision	Exempt Item? (Yes/No/Part)	Contact Officer for Further Details
20 Apr 23	Performance Report	No	
	Transformation Programme Update	No	
	Round 2 HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan	No	
	2022/23 Capital Programme Update	No	Statutory Finance Officer
	2022/23 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report	No	Statutory Finance Officer
	Grenfell Tower Inquiry Progress Update	No	

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