



Tuesday, 13 June 2023

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

Councillors B Massey, L Brennan, R Eddy, P Goggin, R Hardie, P Hulme, P May, Y Mohamud, B Nutland, R Payne, M Riddle, O Saini, S Smith, J Stansfield, D Thomas, R Tucker, A Varney, K Walker, D Wilcox, M Williams 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 and Annual General meeting** to be held on **Wednesday, 21 June 2023** commencing at **14:00 hrs.**

The meeting will be held at **Avonmouth Fire Station, St Andrews Road, Bristol, BS11 9HQ.** 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](mailto: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](mailto:the.clerk@avonfire.gov.uk); or in person at Police and Fire HQ, Valley Road, Portishead, Bristol, BS20 8JJ (by appointment during normal office hours only).

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

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

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

**Public Access:** under Standing Order 21 and providing 2 clear working days' notice has been given to the Clerk ([the.clerk@avonfire.gov.uk](mailto:the.clerk@avonfire.gov.uk)) any resident or representative of a business or voluntary organisation operating in Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset or North Somerset Council may address the Fire Authority or one of its Committees (for no more than 5 minutes) by submitting a written petition 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.

<b><u>A G E N D A - Avon Fire Authority and Annual General Meeting</u></b>		<b>Pages</b>
<b><u>Wednesday, 21 June 2023 14:00</u></b>		
<b>1.</b>	<b>Election of Chair for the Municipal Year</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Election of Vice Chair for the Municipal Year</b>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Emergency Evacuation Procedures</b>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Declaration of Interests</b>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Public Access</b>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Chair's Business</b>	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Minutes of the Avon Fire Authority</b>	
8.1	Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Avon Fire Authority held on 29 March 2023	5 - 12
8.2	Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Avon Fire Authority held on 25 April 2023	13 - 18
<b>9.</b>	<b>Minutes of Committee Meetings</b>	
9.1	Ordinary Meeting of Audit, Governance & Ethics Committee held on 22 November 2022	19 - 26
9.2	Ordinary Meeting of People & Culture Committee held on 9 December 2022	27 - 38
9.3	Ordinary Meeting of Performance, Review & Scrutiny Committee held on 18 January 2023	39 - 48
<b>10.</b>	<b>Member Appointments for the Municipal Year</b>	49 - 54
<b>11.</b>	<b>2022/23 Revenue Final Outturn</b>	55 - 62
<b>12.</b>	<b>Fire Authority meeting dates and 2023/2024 Forward Plan</b>	63 - 68
<b>13.</b>	<b>2022/23 Capital Final Outturn</b>	69 - 74
<b>14.</b>	<b>Member Information 2022/23</b>	75 - 78
<b>15.</b>	<b>Reserves Strategy</b>	79 - 92

- 16. Annual Review of Remuneration of CFO/CE** 93 - 102
- 17. Date of next Meeting - 4 October 2023 at 14.00hrs**
- 18. 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.
- 19. Confidential Minutes of Committee Meetings**
- 19.1 Confidential Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Audit, Governance & Ethics Committee held on 22 November 2022 103 - 106



## **AVON FIRE AUTHORITY MINUTES**

**29 MARCH 2023**

**Present:** Councillors S Bromley, N Butters, D Davies, R Jacobs, B Massey, Y Mohamud, A Monk, R Payne, B Nutland, S Smith, R Tucker, A Varney and D Wilcox and P Butler (Substitute for M Shelford).

The Clerk welcomed Paul Butler who attended on behalf of Mark Shelford, Police & Crime Commissioner.

The meeting began at 14 45hrs.

### **88. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllrs A Ali, J Ashe, E Brown, R Eddy, P Goggin, B Hopkinson and Y Kumar and J Mason, Independent Person.

### **89. 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.

### **90. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The Clerk drew Members' attention to Item 10 – Members' Allowance Scheme. Members were asked to note that this introduced the second year of increases in Member Allowances as recommended by the Independent Review of Member allowances conducted by Bryony Houlden, Chief Executive of South West Councils in her report dated November 2021. She conducted benchmarking across Fire & Rescue Authorities (FRAs) and found that allowances at Avon Fire Authority were low and recommended increases over two financial years. Therefore, all Members had an interest in this paper.

### **91. PUBLIC ACCESS**

None received.

### **92. CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

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

1. The Chair confirmed that the meeting was taking place at Severn Park. The meeting was being 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 advised that following suggestions from Members, to save time at Fire Authority meetings, all committee minutes, including confidential, would be noted together in one block (as they had already been approved by their Committees). Therefore, Members should please raise any discrepancies at the beginning of this section as we would not be going through each set of committee minutes individually. However, if Members wished to discuss the committee confidential minutes further, they should advise the Chair and not raise the content of the exempt minutes until the confidential section was reached at the end of the meeting. Fire Authority minutes would still be considered separately.
5. The Chair advised Members that the Fire Authority had now published its pre-election guidance, which remained in place until the polls closed on 4 May 2023. Elections were taking place for the unitary authorities of Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. Members and Officers were encouraged to read the guidance emailed on Friday 17 March and to act in accordance with it. Fire Authority meetings would continue to deal with the ‘day-to-day’ business for the Fire Authority.
6. The Chair advised that the Fire Authority AGM would take place on 21 June which would allow the Unitary Authorities to nominate new Members to the Fire Authority. A new Members Induction event would take place on 14 June.
7. The Chair confirmed that this would be the last Fire Authority meeting for the following Members – Cllrs Don Davies, Shelley Bromley, Ruth Jacobs, John Ashe and Neil Butters. The Fire Authority thanked them for their service to the Authority and wished them well for the future. On behalf of the Fire Authority and the Service, the CFO presented them with Certificates. The Chair noted that there could also be a change of Members following the elections on 4 May. For any Members who did not return to the Fire Authority, the Chair thanked them and wished them well for the future. The Chair advised Members that if they were not returning to the Authority and had an ID badge for headquarters, to please return it to Emma Bowen today or as soon as possible.
8. The Clerk advised that following the earlier briefing on the Governance Review, she had arranged a cross-party Constitution Working group meeting on 5 April, to consider the Governance Review Report in detail. In addition, an Extraordinary Fire Authority had been arranged for Tuesday 25 April at 11.00hrs at Severn Park to consider recommendations of the Constitution Working Group concerning amendments to the Fire Authority’s governance arrangements and consequential amendments to the Constitution.

**93. MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF AVON FIRE AUTHORITY HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 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 14 DECEMBER 2022 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.**

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF AVON FIRE AUTHORITY HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2023**

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

**It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Avon Fire Authority held on 17 FEBRUARY 2023 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.**

The Confidential minutes (16.1/16.2/16.3) of Avon Fire Authority were also moved by Cllr Massey and seconded by Cllr Bromley.

**94. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

7.1 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Audit, Governance & Ethics Committee held on 22 September 2022.

7.2 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the People & Culture Committee held on 5 October 2022.

7.3 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Performance, Review & Scrutiny Committee held on 7 October 2022.

17.1 Confidential minutes of the People & Culture Committee Meeting held on 5 October 2022.

The Committee minutes already approved by the Committees, were noted by the Fire Authority, moved by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Monk.

**95. APPOINTMENT OF STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER**

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

Ms Lee must work notice with her current employer and was available to start her role as Statutory Finance Officer on 2 May 2023. In the meantime, the CFO had extended the appointment of Mr Kevin Woodward as interim Treasurer until

9 May 2023, to ensure that the Service was able to meet its statutory responsibilities. The CFO added that this would allow for a handover to take place. It was confirmed that the CFO had, through the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), arranged for a Finance Officer to become a mentor and provide support to Ms Lee.

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

**It was resolved that the Fire Authority:  
Appointed Ms Verity Lee as Avon Fire Authority's new Statutory Finance Officer from 2 May 2023.**

## **96. ANNUAL UPDATE OF SERVICE PLAN INCLUDING IRMP**

The AFA's four-week public consultation period on the Service Plan (SP) commenced on 3 January 2023 and ran until 31 January 2023. The results of which were 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 included updated narrative in relation to key challenges and community risk findings, updated performance metrics, financial information, and recent Service achievements.

The CFO introduced the refreshed plan to Members. He thanked colleagues who had worked together to produce the refreshed plans with a mention to Scott Ward, Darren French, Amber Foreman, Helen Dumbarton, and Natalie Mainstone who had all been instrumental in bringing the refreshed plan to Members.

The CFO added that the plan consisted of two documents – the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and our Service Plan. This was our response to who, why, what, where and when somebody is at risk (locally and nationally) and may need our service. This information came together to allow the Service to make assessments and resources to be able to respond to those risks. The plan also included the Service Mission, Vision and Values and our two key priorities: making our Communities safer and making our Organisation stronger. In addition, there was a third element through Transformation and digitising our Service to make it fit for the future.

The Head of Corporate Assurance, the Area Manager Risk Management and the Head of Corporate Communications then provided a detailed overview of the SP and the consultation process.

The CFO confirmed to Member's that following the feedback received, minor changes were made along with a review of the available risk information.

The Chair confirmed that the plan was an attractive and easy to read document.

A Member added that this was the first time that they had been through the process. It was felt that the SP was easy to read but was 'light' on some details.



It was assumed that other documents sat behind the plan, which was confirmed by the CFO who advised that these were mainly internal documents, but some were available on the Avon Fire & Rescue Service website.

The Member added that some actions appeared vague and not smart, it was felt that the SP would be difficult to understand if revisited in 2/3 years. The Head of Corporate Assurance agreed that the information which sat behind the plan could be more detailed. However, the team made sure that the objectives were strategic and high level. It was confirmed that the performance metrics which sat behind the SP are reported to the Performance, Review & Scrutiny Committee and were available for public scrutiny.

A Member asked about the national response to deal with Lithium battery fires. The t/Group Manager advised that there was a lot of work going on in the background with the NFCC to increase understanding. Some Services were taking steps to contain the fire including a large skip that the vehicle could be submersed into. However, there was no clear evidence that the water would immediately put the fire out. There was also the question of how to dispose of contaminated water.

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

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

- a) Considered the outcomes of the public consultation.**
- b) Approved the Service Plan 2023–2026 for publication.**

#### **97. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2023-24**

The AFA received a report from the Clerk who advised that in accordance with Local Government legislation, the Fire Authority updated its Members' Allowances Scheme each financial year. The Scheme updated the basic allowance paid to Elected Members, special responsibility allowances, the Independent Person's allowance and travelling and subsistence allowances.

Members were reminded that a Fire Authority Declaration of Interest had been made at the beginning of the meeting.

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. The next review was due in Autumn 2025.

The Clerk advised that the AFA were now entering Phase 2, which increased allowances for the upcoming financial year as set out in paragraph 4.2.

Member allowances also tracked 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 uprated by 4.04%, therefore the figures recommended in the Independent Review for 2023/24 needed to be adjusted to reflect that pay award.

A Member advised that there were proposals to reduce the number of committees from 3 to 2, and asked whether the allowance increase reflected the increase in work for the Committee chairs. The Clerk advised that the next planned review may be brought forward to take account of this.

The recommendations were moved by Cllr Bromley and seconded by Cllr Smith.

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

**a) Approved the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2023-24.**

## **98. ANNUAL REVIEW OF SERVICE CHARGES 2023-24**

The interim Treasurer presented the report to Members and outlined that the amount of the charges was to be set by the AFA for each financial year and must ensure that the Authority's income from charges did not exceed the cost to the Authority of taking the action for which the charges are imposed. The AFA was therefore not able to fix charges with the objective of making a profit. The charges had been increased by 7% from 2022/23 to 2023/24 in line with our inflation assumptions within the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Members were advised that it was rare that the Service levied a charge for our services, but we did have an ability to charge in some circumstances. This financial year the Service had charged around £2k but going forward we could use this more in view of possible budget restraints.

Members were asked to note that not all incident types provided within the Home Office IRS definition were chargeable, although they were classed as a Special Service Incidents.

A Member remarked that there was no reference to false alarms calls although the statistics were quite high. The CFO advised that the Service had a call challenge system in process but would still respond where life was at risk i.e., hospitals. If there were repeated incidents, we would make a fire protection intervention to work with the responsible person to reduce the number of events. The Service would rather tackle the root cause through protection and prevention.

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

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

**a) Approved 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.**

## **99. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023/24**

The AFA received a report from the Clerk who advised 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.

It was noted that within the Recommendations on p115 the date of the statement should be 2023/24 and not 2023/23. The Fire Authority was therefore asked to approve the Pay Policy Statement 2023/24 at **Appendix 1** for publication.

The AFA was 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 relationship in pay between senior staff and the lowest paid employees.

Members attention was drawn to p116 and were advised that the Service was required to publish the Statement before 31 March. It was noted that since the People & Culture Meeting on 3 March there had been a settlement in relation to Grey book pay. Therefore, the version of the statement approved by the People & Culture Committee did not include the agreed settlement. However, the settlement has now been added into the Pay Policy Statement at Appendix 1.

A Member questioned whether the statement included Interims and Consultants who would be on high pay levels. The CFO confirmed that that Service would only use Consultants for specific support or tasks which we would go out to tender for.

A Member enquired why under paragraph 6.2; the word 'competent' was used. The CFO advised that this was national terminology as we do have firefighters who were in development and on a different payrate.

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

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

**a) Approved the Pay Policy Statement 2023/24 for the financial year beginning 1 April 2023 for publication.**

#### **100. FORWARD PLAN 2023-24**

The Clerk presented a revised Forward Plan of Key Decisions, which set out the anticipated major decisions and key papers to be delivered in 2022/23.

It was noted that if the committee structure should change, the document would be re-drafted.

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

**Noted the revised Forward Plan 2023/24.**

#### **101. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**It was RESOLVED that Avon Fire Authority noted the date of the next meeting as being an extraordinary meeting on 25 April 2023 at 11.00hrs.**

The Fire Authority also noted that the Annual General Meeting would take place on Wednesday 21 June 2023 at 1400 hours.

**102. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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.

**103. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 22 NOVEMBER 2022**

Confidential minutes of the extraordinary meeting of Avon Fire Authority held on 22 November 2022.

It was **RESOLVED** that the confidential minutes of the extraordinary meeting of Avon Fire Authority held on 22 November 2022 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.

**104. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2022**

Confidential minutes of the ordinary meeting of Avon Fire Authority held on 22 14 December 2022.

It was **RESOLVED** that the confidential minutes of the ordinary meeting of Avon Fire Authority held on 14 December 2022 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.

**105 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2023**

Confidential minutes of the extraordinary meeting of Avon Fire Authority held on 17 February 2023.

It was **RESOLVED** that the confidential minutes of the extraordinary meeting of Avon Fire Authority held on 17 February 2023 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 15.55 hrs.

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Chair



## EXTRAORDINARY AVON FIRE AUTHORITY MINUTES (AFA)

**25 APRIL 2023**

**Present:** Councillors S Bromley (joined meeting at 11.30hrs), N Butters (joined meeting at 11.30hrs), D Davies, R Eddy, P Goggin, B Hopkinson, R Jacobs, B Massey, Y Mohamud, B Nutland, R Payne, S Smith, R Tucker, A Varney and D Wilcox and J Mason, Independent Person.

The meeting began at 11.10hrs.

### 106. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs J Ashe, E Brown, Y Kumar, A Monk and Mark Shelford, Police & Crime Commissioner. Cllr A Ali was absent.

### 107. 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.

### 108. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None advised.

### 109. PUBLIC ACCESS

None received.

### 110. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

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

1. The Chair confirmed that the meeting was taking place at Severn Park. The meeting was being recorded for the public to view.
2. Members and Officers introduced themselves.
3. The Clerk welcomed James Mason, the Independent Person to the meeting.
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 Chair mentioned those Members that were leaving Avon Fire Authority (AFA), thanked them for their service and wished them well for the future.

## 111. REVIEW OF AVON FIRE AUTHORITY'S GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Clerk thanked Members for making time in their diaries to attend this Extraordinary Fire Authority meeting which would review a report on Avon Fire Authority's Governance arrangements which would take effect hopefully by the start of the new municipal year.

Members were reminded that Vale Consultancy provided a report in March 2023 which outlined 12 recommendations. It was confirmed that Andy Fry was available to answer any questions that Members may have. After a briefing to Members on 29 March, the Clerk stood up a cross party Constitutional Working Group (CWG) which considered the recommendations in detail and went through the proposed changes to the constitution. The Group met twice, and the Clerk's report outlined the results of the CWG.

The Governance report made 12 recommendations. However, it was not felt feasible to implement them in one go and it had been recommended that they are completed in two phases.

With regards to the financial implications, the details were currently limited. However, if agreed, there may be some savings from holding less committee meetings but two of the recommendations suggested training which would involve costs. It was also identified that the Members' allowances scheme had been reviewed on the current workload so this would be revisited to take into account the new governance structure.

The Clerk ran through the phase 1 recommendations on pages 7-8 and drew Members attention to all 12 recommendations on pages 28-32. These included a recommendation to put the new committee structure in place and appointing one Independent Person onto the Audit, Governance and Oversight Committee (AGOC). The CWG had reviewed them in detail and recommended that the AFA adopted all twelve recommendations.

Phase 2 would implement the remaining recommendations throughout the municipal year and a review of progress would be presented at the AGM in June.

In respect of Risks, the review should reduce Corporate Risk CR14. Members could also be satisfied that the Governance Review had been conducted by independent governance experts with the relevant experience.

A Member mentioned that they were very happy with the recommendations but had a query regarding the new committee structure. It was asked whether the CWG recommendation to adopt the new committee structure was unanimous. The Clerk advised that all Members of the CWG were happy to adopt the recommendations following conversations around the proposed wording for the Fire Authority and committee terms of reference and amendments.

A Member had a query around the task and finish groups on page 69 Appendix 7. In respect of acting as a selection panel for CFO or Statutory Officer recruitment, it was asked if this included Assistant Chief Fire Officers (ACFO).

Vale Consultancy confirmed that ACFO's were not Statutory Officers and one of the changes made was that appointment decisions for ACFOs would be for the CFO in consultation with Members of the Fire Authority, who would be involved in the selection process. However, the final decision for the appointment would sit with the CFO as the Head of Paid Service, as responsible for staffing structures. It was asked that the wording for task and finish groups included that the selection panel would also be involved in ACFO recruitment as well.

The Clerk drew Members attention to page 43, paragraph O where new wording had been introduced in the Fire Authority Terms of Reference: *To establish a panel that will be engaged in selection processes for Assistant Chief Fire Officers and consulted with in advance of the Chief Fire Officer making associated appointment decisions.*

The Member felt there was an inconsistency with this wording compared to the wording for task and finish groups and ACFO recruitment should also be included within Appendix 7. They felt that the wording should be tightened for the future with cross party volunteers attending the panel.

A further point was made around contract values. A Member was concerned that there was a potential for staff to issue numerous contracts for £99,999 to avoid the need for higher sign off. What safeguards did the Service have around aggregation? The Clerk advised that the wording in the contract procedure rules included the full value of the contract throughout the contract term. The Member advised that they would like to see some safeguards to ensure that the financial limits were not abused. Another Member advised that there was wording in the contract procedure rules that included a safeguard stating that no invoices may be artificially split to avoid compliance with the rules – CPR 1.3 on page 77. It was therefore suggested that AGOC reviewed how this was working in practice during their first year of operation.

A Member advised that there were two CPR 1.3 within the papers – one on page 73 and the other on page 77. The Clerk noted and advised that the paragraph numbering in the contract procedure rules would be amended.

The Clerk advised Members that by the time of issue of the papers for this meeting she had not received feedback from all members of the Service Leadership Board, and it was accepted by the CWG that there could be some late changes to the documents appended to the paper. Members were advised that on their desk was a document comprising a table which set out the minor tracked changes to the appendices, together with printed copies showing the tracked changes. She ran through the proposed changes with Members.

Cllrs Bromley and Butters joined the meeting at 11.30hrs.

A Member referred to the amended wording at Appendix 4 PRC5 and that he was not clear what 'oversee' decisions meant. It was suggested that the word 'decision' was removed to make this clearer, so that PRC5 now read as 'To oversee member representation at conferences on behalf of the Authority'.

Members attention was drawn to Appendix 5, AGOC 13 – Andy Fry advised that he had had a conversation with the Interim Treasurer and believed that by removing the second sentence, beginning ‘The AGS to be signed by the Chair of AGOC’, over complicated the wording. It was suggested that the first sentence was sufficient to confirm that the approvals process needed to be dealt with in accordance with appropriate legislation and in line with CIPFA guidance.

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

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

- a) Noted the Governance Review Report dated March 2023 (Appendix 1).**
- b) Approved for implementation all 12 recommendations of the Governance Review Report.**
- c) Agreed a phased approach for implementing its recommendations:**

**Phase 1 implement recommendations:**

- 1 (new committee structure),**
- 2 (recruit an AGOC independent member),**
- 3 (new Scheme of Delegation),**
- 5 in part (re-write parts of the Constitution) and**
- 6 (new procurement process),**

**Phase 2: implement the remaining recommendations, when practicable, during the new municipal year.**

**d) Replaced sections of the existing Avon Fire Authority Constitution with rewritten key constitutional documents, so the new Committee Structure could be introduced in time for the Fire Authority AGM in June 2023, subject to the amendments made to those documents during the meeting and in supplemental papers presented to Members at the meeting namely:**

- Introduction to the Avon Fire Authority Constitution**
- Fire Authority Terms of Reference**
- Policy and Resources Committee (PRC) Terms of Reference**
- Audit, Governance and Oversight Committee (AGOC) Terms of Reference**
- Scheme of Delegation**
- Addition to Standing Orders to facilitate introduction of Task and Finish Groups**
- Contract Procedure Rules**
- Financial Regulations Appendix 9 (including an amendment on p155 FRA16 where the word ‘authority’ should be replaced with ‘Clerk’)**

The meeting closed at 11.40 hrs.

The Chair re-iterated her thanks to Members over the years. If re-standing in the local elections, she wished them the best, and anticipated seeing the Bristol colleagues next year.



A Member extended their thanks to Vale Consultancy and acknowledged that their work would improve future processes. He also thanked the Chair and Vice Chair for their guidance and also the CFO and Clerk.

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Chair

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

**22 NOVEMBER 2022**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs Ashe, Butters, Goggin (Chair), Payne, Tucker and Wilcox

The meeting started at 10.55 am due to a traffic incident which delayed attendees.

**29. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Brown and James Mason, Independent Person.

**30. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

Officers confirmed the emergency evacuation procedure for the venue.

**31. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

**32. PUBLIC ACCESS**

None received.

A Member raised whether the venue might be too remote for Members of the Public to get to and asked whether any feedback had been received. The Clerk mentioned that it was a challenge to find larger rooms suitable to hold Avon Fire Authority (AFA) meetings with availability for our meeting dates. Democratic Services do try to obtain rooms at HQ but there is a lack of availability. The Clerk requested that Members advise if there are any suitable meeting venues within their Unitary Authorities.

**33. CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

Members and Officers introduced themselves.

1. The Chair outlined that meetings were now taking place face-to-face. The meetings would however still be recorded and uploaded to the Avon Fire Authority (AFA) YouTube channel.
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.

#### **34. MINUTES OF THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE & ETHICS COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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

**It was RESOLVED -**

**That the minutes of 22 September 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

#### **35. EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update from Deloitte, the AFA's External Auditor (EA) and provided details of the progress made with the Statement of Accounts and the subsequent plans to complete the outstanding work.

It was advised that the EA had progressed with their audit of the Statement of Accounts and were around 70-80% complete. However, they had notified the Interim Treasurer that they were not in position to sign off the AFA's accounts by the deadline of 30 November. The key reasons stated were that there were areas requiring further testing, specifically in relation to property valuations and pensions, as well as resourcing issues and therefore they were not able to issue an audit opinion within the statutory deadline.

The EA confirmed that the AFA's 2021/22 Accounts audit had begun and was timetabled to be completed by February/March 2023. It was added that continuity was important and the lead individual had been off unwell but would return in January 2023 and re-start the audit in February.

It was pointed out there had been significant issues across the public sector in respect of signing off 2020/21 audits and around 40% were not yet signed off in other organisations.

A Member asked EA that there is a statutory requirement to publish the accounts by 30 November, and this had not been achieved, were there any consequences? The EA advised that there were none. The Clerk added that regulations state you have to provide an explanation for any delay and publish that on your website and then must complete the audit as soon as reasonably practicable.

The Committee then heard from the Interim Treasurer who advised that their report provided the Committee with the implications to the Fire Authority of the delay in the external audit, in particular, the requirement to publish a statutory

notice to state that the audited statement of accounts would not be published by 30 November 2022.

The Interim Treasurer reminded Members that this situation had occurred three years ago when he was working with the AFA. He added that he was not comfortable that the Accounts were not ready to present to the Committee on time, had raised this with External Audit and would continue to pursue completion and achieve assurances on their planning for the next audit.

The Interim Treasurer advised that in the circumstances, the AFA would publish a public notice on their website to advise that the statutory deadlines had not been met. He drew Members attention to Appendix 1. He raised that another issue was ideally he would like the audit completed as soon as possible as from an AFA point of view, the Accounts sign off starts the beginning of the financial planning cycle. Normally, he would review the report from the EA to establish whether there were any issues or errors and misstatements which can be addressed.

The EA advised that she was happy to have a discussion around any misstatements, but she was not aware of any emerging in the audit so far.

A Member advised that this was a concerning situation. The EA advised that Deloitte were working closely with each Authority to complete the audits as quickly as possible, but this is putting pressure on Deloitte and recruitment has been an additional problem. It was confirmed that the Financial Year 2022/23 looked to be on track and work would begin in July 23, and work would be completed alongside the Statutory Finance Officer.

It was asked whether the pandemic had contributed to the situation. The EA confirmed that there had been a significant impact including creating a backlog and issues relating to staff returning to work on a face-to-face basis.

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

**It was RESOLVED –**

**That the Committee:**

- a) Noted the delay with the External Audit process and explanation provided by external auditors Deloitte.**
- b) Approved the publication on the Fire Authority website of the draft Statutory Notice, included as an Appendix to the report, stating that Avon Fire Authority would not be able to publish the Statement of Accounts for 2021/22, as the audit had not been concluded.**

### **36. ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2021/22**

The Committee received a report from the Head of Corporate Assurance regarding the Annual Statement of Assurance for 2021/22, for approval and publication and to recommend that the AFA Chair sign the foreword on behalf of AFA.

Members were advised that scrutiny and approval of the statement was delegated to this Committee and that the report was in accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, which required that every Fire Authority publish an Annual Statement to give assurance to the community and to the Government on financial, governance and operational matters by 31 March for the previous year.

A Member suggested that a comment be added onto page 5, advising that the audited accounts have been delayed. It was noted that an explanation had been added to page 25, however, further details would be added onto page 5.

It was noted by a Member that there was a reduction in the figures relating to 'on-call' firefighters in 2021 and 2022 in the table on page 11 of the Statement of Assurance, and queried whether there was a reason for this. The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) advised that the overall number had reduced by 5, secondary contracts and On Call had also changed and Wholetime firefighters also took secondary On Call contracts. A Member asked for details of the minimum break required between shifts, it was confirmed that this was 9 hours minimum.

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

**It was resolved that the Committee -**

- a) Approved the annual Statement of Assurance 2021/22 for publication; subject to the additional comment being added on page 5 regarding the delayed accounts**
- b) Recommended that the Chair of the Fire Authority signs the foreword on behalf of the full Fire Authority.**

### **37. 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 –

#### Internal Progress Report

- This report provided the Audit, Governance & Ethics Committee (AGEC) with an update on delivery of the 2022/23 internal audit plan.
- One advisory audit assignment report (Business Cases & Benefits Realisation) had been finalised since the last AGEC meeting. This report was presented to this meeting for consideration.
- The audit plan remained on track to be delivered by year end.
- Currently the Pension audit is not taking place this year, with the Operational Assurance audit in its place from January 2023.
- Sector briefings are included in the report for information purposes.

The Key Financial Controls review took place a few weeks ago and would be brought to the next AGEK meeting.

#### Business Cases and Benefits Realisation

- This advisory audit was undertaken as part of the new three-year rolling internal audit strategy, to look at the change management processes across Avon Fire & Rescue Service (AF&RS).
- Whilst there is no formal assurance opinion, RSM had agreed seven medium actions with management to address current risks.
- The Service had identified gaps within the current control framework and are addressing these, in part, through the Transformation Programme. At the time of the audit, a change management framework was being developed. However, there had been delays in its development due to resourcing limitations and as a result the actions raised as part of this review reflected interim measures whilst development is being carried out.
- Interviews carried out during the audit with various teams across the Service, identified that a consistent approach is required for change management. At present there was a lack of consistent terminology and understanding of what constitutes a project/programme and what remained business as usual.

RSM advised that an Audit on the Transformation programme last year had been completed, and this report was the next step for looking at change management outside of and beyond, the Transformation programme. The Programme Management Officer was fully focused on the Transformation Programme and management were already aware of gaps in the wider Service in the interim. There were interim measures in place and a framework to deliver to budget and meet objectives and realise benefits.

A Member enquired about Control 5 on page 62 and the progress made following feedback from staff. The DoCS explained that this was an educational piece, i.e., when a user was required to complete a Business Case. The Service would be reissuing the project framework and guide. Training would take place alongside a refresher of management training. As there were no further updates available, it was agreed that an update would be provided offline when available.

A Member asked about CR19 on page 55 regarding the findings and implications, as it read as if Business Cases had been signed off without suitable information being available to decision makers. The RSM Manager outlined that in their findings, there were a few Business cases where sections of information were missing on the form. In addition, in the meeting minutes, cases had been approved and discussed but further action was still required. However, RSM couldn't find any evidence of follow up on these required actions. The form would be updated to ensure that the proposer looks at other areas such as IT and Learning & Development before submitting their business cases. There was already a requirement to ensure other key departments such as finance and HR were consulted on the business case and its implications. The DoCs confirmed that on occasion Business Cases had been approved, because of an urgent business

need, subject to additional points that had been discussed verbally, being included within the paperwork. Therefore, there was a need to confirm that the amended business case were on record. In addition, the learnings from some Business Cases were that they were too narrow in some areas and had not considered a referral to all necessary areas of the Service. The template would be updated to confirm referral to all necessary departments along with a checklist on the front page.

The Member then asked if the Business Cases identified in March, April and May would they be revisited and checked. The RSM Manager advised that she would provide case details to the DoCS to carry out sample testing.

**It was resolved that the Committee –**

**a) Considered the internal audit progress report for 2022/23 to date**

**b) Considered the internal audit report, the findings and agreed management actions for the Business Cases and Benefits Realisation audit**

### **38. UPDATE ON INTERNAL AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee received a report from the Head of Corporate Assurance which updated Members on progress with the completion of the Internal Audit recommendations and management actions, as approved by the Service Leadership Team (SLT) on 27 October 2022.

A Member asked about the process of implementing devolved budgets and any feedback that can be given including learning. The DoCS advised that there were no updates available as the Service was currently running a 'shadow year' to set up processes and training with a go-live date of 5 April 2023. The feedback received so far is that the process was going well and that the training had been helpful.

The RSM Manager agreed and advised that they had just completed a review of financial controls which included two comments on devolved budgets which would be presented at the next meeting.

**It was resolved that the Committee –**

**Noted the progress made against the Internal Audit recommendations and management actions.**

### **39. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED – that the date of the next meeting be held on 22 March 2023 at 10.30am.**

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

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



**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.**

**41. EXTERNAL AUDITOR APPOINTMENT FROM 2023/24**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) which outlined that the Authority's current External Auditors (for the accounting periods 2018/19 to 2022/23 inclusive) were Deloitte LLP. They were appointed by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA), a national scheme which had the authority to appoint and allocate external auditors to opted in bodies following a procurement exercise.

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Chair

The meeting ended at 11.55 hrs.

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**AVON FIRE AUTHORITY  
PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE**

**9 DECEMBER 2022**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs Bromley, Davies, Hopkinson, Jacobs, Monk (arrived at 10.55hrs), Tucker and Wilcox (Chair).

The meeting started at 10.40am

**33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Massey and Varney.

**34. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

The emergency evacuation procedures were explained.

**35. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

**36. PUBLIC ACCESS**

None received.

**37. CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

Members and Officers introduced themselves.

1. 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.
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 for.

### **38. MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2022**

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

**It was RESOLVED -**

**That the ordinary minutes of the People & Culture Committee held on 5 October 2022 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.**

### **39. HR AND RECRUITMENT UPDATE**

The Committee received a report from the Head of HR who updated on recruitment, trends and significant issues since the last meeting.

#### **Wholetime recruitment**

The Wholetime recruitment campaign for 2022 was complete and pre-appointment checks were now concluded. The training school would commence on 6 February 2023 with 24 Trainee Firefighters. It is anticipated there would be 22 male and 2 female candidates and 5 new recruits from under-represented ethnicity groups, including Asian, Chinese, Cantonese and Eastern European backgrounds.

Planning is underway for the 2023 recruitment campaign which would launch in February/March (date to be confirmed). A review of the selection process was underway to assess any changes required. The Head of HR is working with HR and Corporate Communications to push back the next round of recruitment to allow sufficient time in January/February to carry out community activity with groups that the Service worked closely with.

#### **Industrial action (IA) planning**

Following the result of the consultation ballot, undertaken nationally by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), to unanimously reject the 5% pay offer, a formal ballot was launched on 5 December, closing on 30 January 2023. In preparation for the potential of industrial action the Service had instigated the recruitment, selection and training of Reserve Firefighters, Control Operators, Drivers and Team Leaders. These staff would be supported by existing trained staff to ensure the Service could meet the statutory obligations to protect the community and respond to emergency incidents. If IA takes place, it is anticipated that this would be in mid/end February.

The Head of HR confirmed that there was a duty to maintain a statutory response to members of the public, and the Service had been working on IA action planning over the last few months involving reserve staff, who were currently being trained and recruited. An update would be provided at the next meeting in March.

#### **Corporate staff recruitment**

There were 10 vacancies currently being advertised and HR were working with recruitment agencies and other organisations to fill them. A competitive salary

review is in progress to establish how the Service performed against other public sector organisations. However, this had to be balanced with budget and potential increased salaries. When advertising roles, HR also promoted the non-cash benefits of working at Avon Fire & Rescue Service (AF&RS) such as flexible working, cycle to work scheme, etc.

### **Staff welfare**

It was confirmed that, following a competitive tender process with other Southwest and Kent Fire & Rescue Services, the HR team had implemented a new occupational health contract with Health Partners from 1 November 2022. Benefits would include an increased provision of nurses and doctors along with a mobile unit on station. This would mean that if an on-call employee was attending a medical check, there would no longer be a need to book as 'unavailable'. The new provision would also enable a Line Manager to make referrals for their staff and allow them to provide further support when their staff were off sick.

The Head of HR also advised Members that the counselling contract would be provided by Work Out Solutions from 1 January 2023. Support would be available for staff 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, which would allow shift workers flexibility to make contact. Specialist counsellors would also be available.

It was advised that the Service Physiotherapy contract had now transferred to Rehab Plus, who have 22 clinics around Bristol. AF&RS would pay for an initial consultation and six treatment sessions as standard, to enable staff to get back to work sooner, manage injuries or physical health conditions or to provide preventative interventions as appropriate.

### **Cultural improvement**

The Dignity & Respect Policy will be launched shortly. This work was part of our cultural improvement plan and linked to the Service Values, Behaviour Framework and National Fire Chief Council Core Code of Ethics.

A zero-tolerance statement would also be issued this week following consultation with Trade Unions and staff groups. This complements the Discipline and Dignity & Respect Policies which would be launched before the end of December. The Statement linked to the Service Values and Behavioural Framework (which would be refreshed shortly). The statement also linked into the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Core Code of Ethics to ensure it was understood and embedded amongst the workforce. The Service Leadership Team (SLT) and the Service Leadership Board (SLB) would visit all Service locations in upcoming months to discuss and promote the launch.

Further work would be undertaken in January to revisit the Discipline and Grievance policies.

Cllr Monk arrived at 10.55hrs.

In response to Member's questions:

1. A Member was keen that there should be AF&RS Fire Cadets in the area. It was hoped that might help with recruitment and diversity in the future and also help develop young people. He had tried to get funding from his own council but also suggested other avenues to explore for funding such as the South Gloucestershire Youth Club. It was agreed that the ACFO and Head of HR would discuss with the CFO and would then discuss these potential funding opportunities with the Member offline.
2. A Member asked, in view of the difficulties recruiting into the Service to cover Industrial Action, how would our statutory obligations be met. The Head of HR confirmed that training was going well to provide defensive firefighters and that all control training was in place. However, there was a shortage of drivers and she was working with recruitment agencies to fill these roles. It was also difficult to recruit team leaders and adverts had been placed. The Service was also working with the Military and other organisation to fill these positions. Members would be kept informed.
3. The ACFO SDS confirmed that the Service would review the recent report on the London Fire Brigade and whether there were any lessons to be learnt at AF&RS. Members would be updated at their next meeting.
4. A Member requested that the Zero Tolerance statement be circulated to Members.

**It was RESOLVED –**

That the HR & Recruitment Update be noted.

#### **40. AF&RS ETHNICITY PAY GAP 2022**

The Committee received a report from the Culture & Inclusion Manager (CIM) in respect of the AF&RS Ethnicity Pay Gap 2022.

The 2018 'Ethnicity pay gaps in Great Britain' report by the Office for National Statistics presented analysis of ethnicity pay gaps for the first time using a new earnings weight on the Annual Population Survey, that allowed for more detailed analysis of ethnicity and pay than was previously possible.

The Ethnicity Pay Gap is calculated as the difference between the average hourly earnings of White British ethnicity group and other ethnic groups as a proportion of average hourly earnings of White British earnings.

In February, the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee (WEC) published a report calling on the Government to make ethnicity pay gap reporting mandatory by April 2023 as a first step to addressing pay disparities between employees from different ethnic backgrounds.

Our data analysis shows a negative pay gap of 5.65% between White British and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff compared to a negative pay gap 4.28% from 2021.

The CIM advised that there was a number of reasons for the increase. There were a very small number of minority staff in the Service and any changes especially, at senior levels, would cause a spike in figures. He advised that the Service continued to monitor the pay gap and work within communities to present AF&RS as an employer of choice and to promote and increase minority staff within the organisation. In addition, the numbers of staff were so small, an individual could easily be identified. The CIM advised that for future reports, factors such as age and gender would be considered.

A Member pointed out the paucity of national data (mentioned in paragraph 5.10 of the report) and the issues surrounding the sample size being so small, that there were concerns that individuals could be identified. They queried in the circumstances; how helpful these statistics are. The Clerk confirmed that this was a Service decision to print the data as this was likely to become a statutory requirement. The CIM added that it was more important to increase the number of BAME employees first and then the pay gap analysis would mean more.

The Head of HR reassured Elected Members that corporate employees who joined AF&RS, are placed within the Hay job evaluation system which reviewed factors such as relevant skills, qualifications and knowledge. It is a respected analytical system used internationally by employers. Impact assessments have been undertaken by Hay to ensure that any potential for bias are eliminated (including equal assessment of traditional male/female job roles, for example). On occasion, employees don't put themselves forward for promotion opportunities and AF&RS need to make sure that Line Managers are trained to actively encourage minority groups to compete for such processes and recognise the different skills and experiences they may bring.

A Member referred to low confidence when applying for promotion, adding that Line Managers should actively encourage staff to put themselves forward.

Another Member added that the Service needed to keep pace with the changing demographics within the country and also our own local data within Avon. They added that there was always a changing picture and we needed to make changes and show that we are doing this.

**It was RESOLVED –  
That the Committee noted the contents of this report.**

#### **41. QUARTERLY TRAINING UPDATE**

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

The key points highlighted were:

### **Training Delivery**

1. Breathing Apparatus (BA) - The previous qualification shortfalls and the remedial work to close the report presented at the last PCC meeting had been completed by 30 November. However, this was now on hold due to IA training. An agreed plan to clear the BA backlog by 1 March 2023, subject to changes relating to the impact of IA work, had been set.

- 7 Breathing apparatus courses had been cancelled.
- The total loss of delivery had affected 70-84 staff.
- It was projected that by 31 December, there would be 41 out of date BA wearers across the Service.
- By 28 February, it was projected that there would be 68 out of date BA wearers.

However, an additional 2 training courses had been planned which should limit the number of out-of-date BA wearers to 48 by the end of February.

2. Industrial Action/Reserve Firefighter Training - Training Delivery had developed and provided ongoing work to train and assure resilience staff and had stopped all planned business as usual training until 1 January 2023. This was to facilitate and release staff and to also provide capacity to deliver courses for Reserve Firefighters.

3. Tall Buildings Training - Phase 2 tall building training from Training Delivery was now completed.

4. Severn Park - The latest On-Call (OC) training school had completed, with five new staff now on the run at their respective stations. A second OC training school was underway which would complete in December and a further training school was planned to be delivered from November/January (seven delegates).

5. Hazardous Detection, Identification and Monitoring (HDIM) - The Driver Training Unit had been asked to prioritise driver conversions for the HDIM vehicle for operators, as due to promotions and retirements the Service currently had a limited number of drivers, although the shortfall gap was decreasing. A number of multi-agency exercises were planned for 2023 which would test the organisation's assets and skillset.

6. Joint Decontamination Exercises - A series of six Chemical, Biological Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) exercises were being planned for February/March 2023, which would test the Service's joint response to a hazardous material release scenario. This would involve fire appliances, Incident Response Unit, CBRN tactical advisors, National Interservice Liaison Officers (NILO) and Hazardous Materials Advisors, along with a multi-agency response.

7. Marauding Terrorist Action (MTA) and Malicious Threats - Priorities in this field revolved around training, competence and personal protective equipment (PPE). Most of the four watches at Hicks Gate had completed refresher training for MTA, along with members of station 17 Clevedon. There were some remaining staff who will require MTA training along with new NILO members. It was noted that the phase 2 findings from the Manchester bombings had been released.



8. Rescue Boat - Tidal rescue boat training commenced in mid-August and would ensure that AF&RS complied with the NFCC recent release of the Rescue Boat Code. As at 31 October, the Service had thirty-one trained Rescue Boat Operators (SFRBO) and it was projected that by the end of November this number would have risen to fifty-three. Training continued to bolster resilience with commencement of initial acquisition courses for new operators.
9. Technical Rope Rescue - Training would commence in January to upskill Station 11 Hicks Gate Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) personnel in Technical Rope Rescue. Training as 'team members' would enable them to set up and operate systems to back up Station 09 Temple providing resilience within the organisation by March 2023.
10. Apprenticeships – The Service currently had 47 Firefighter apprentices, all from the last 2 Wholetime Recruit Schools, who were now on station and had an assessor appointed from Weston College. The Service had begun to recruit more corporate apprentices into the service as it was increasingly difficult to fill vacancies with experienced/skilled staff.
11. Personal Development Reviews (PDR) – The Service was in the process of purchasing a new PDR system, which would enable us to centrally quality assure PDRs. Funding had been agreed by SLT, and the system would be from the same provider but with increased functionality.
12. Promotions - The promotion policy had been recently revised to include a process for Control Staff, which mirrored the process for operational staff.
13. Leadership Academy 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.
14. Members were advised that Operational Assurance (OA) was a new area of the report which was recently agreed by the SLB. A £300k one time investment (until April 2024) in Operational Assurance (OA) had been provided to enhance the team staffing by six staff to take the team to an establishment of sixteen. This would ensure that the following four responsibilities could be delivered:
  - Operational Guidance
  - Operational Learning
  - Incident Command Training
  - Fast Operational Learning.

**Operational Guidance** – The team were undertaking recruitment for two additional staff to deliver full alignment with the National Operational Guidance (NOG). There were 49 Operational Information Notes still awaiting review and publication, with eleven being processed this month. Prior to 31 December, the team would be reviewing all operational policies to ensure that they were fully aligned to NOG. For example, working with Learning & Development to focus and radically change our behaviour to incident contaminants, to create a better response and reduce impact of contaminants to our staff. In addition, the team would introduce a 'clean cab' policy, invest heavily to clean Breathing Apparatus sets post incident and updated our frontline appliances so that dirty equipment was not kept in cabs.

**Operational Learning** – Currently operating with no staff, with a recruitment process underway. However, the Service was still able to respond to key risks and provide operational debriefs.

15. Incident Command Training - Currently 11 AF&RS commanders were out of date for command competence. These would be re-assessed as part of ongoing 'business as usual'. The team had delivered a Station Managers 'Managing Incident' course and would run promotion assessments for the five candidates in this process.

A Member enquired about Heavy Rescue. The Group Manager advised that AF&RS were leaders in this sector, to rescue entrapment from casualties from vehicles larger than a domestic car. To rescue from this size of vehicle, technical and equipment knowledge was increased, and skillsets becomes more complex specially to ensure that conditions are safe. The Service had rescue pumps at four key stations. Avonmouth was a specialist heavy rescue station and had a dedicated standalone 'tender' which carried large equipment.

Dave Roberts, Regional Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Health & Safety Representative then spoke to Members and provided an update on contaminates and a working group that AF&RS had set up. He added that it was good to see a forward motion in this area.

He advised that for the last 3 years the FBU been working with the University of Central Lancashire to understand the link between fire contaminates and cancer, and how to protect firefighters and their families. In Canada and Australia, the link between contaminates and cancer had been researched and proven and firefighters were now offered a greater degree of protection.

The FBU had commissioned the University to carry out the first UK study into cancer and fire contaminates to ensure firefighters receive better protection. The study tried to understand long-term health effects and propose recommendations.

It was advised that when the research had been concluded, it was debated in the House of Commons who gave explicit direction that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was to monitor progress of the FBU's research and provide assistance in implementing the recommendations.

It was quoted that firefighters were 4 times more likely to get cancer, which has been linked directly to contaminates released during fires. Contaminates could be inhaled/absorbed through skin and risk is increased when body temperature increases. Helmets and dirty kit could be overlooked on station and can on occasion not be cleaned thoroughly. Evidence showed that skin, head and neck cancer was more common in firefighters.

In June 2022, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, finalised their evaluation of Carcinogenicity of Occupational Exposure as a firefighter, which was classed as Carcinogenic Group 1 based on sufficient evidence.

AF&RS were commended for their pro-active approach, which would contribute to a change in culture to a healthier workforce. The HSE are taking a keen eye on this through the NFCC.

In response to Member's questions, it was clarified that:

1. In respect of fire retardants used in the 1970s, any manmade coating applied to provide fire retardancy in its latent state is fine, but when its molecular structure was changed by fire, organic compounds could be released.
2. AF&RS could do more to improve the situation but are doing considerably more than some other Fire & Rescue Services (FRS). More could be done going forward, whilst the FBU appreciated the financial restraints, evidence seen from the working groups, showed the approach was moving in the right direction. The Head of HR added that firefighters had an occupational health provision and part of the process is 'health surveillance' which included looking at lung function and skin tests. This is undertaken every 3 years but for those that have a greater risk this would be undertaken annually.
3. In respect of testing retired employees', the Head of HR confirmed that this care would default to the NHS. Often firefighters who leave remain members of the Retired Firefighters Association and FBU.
4. The FBU added that the piece of research commissioned, looked to protect firefighters in the 'here and now' but were looking to get presumptive legislation within the sector. Therefore, if a firefighter contracted a cancer which is linked to firefighting, it would be presumed that there was a direct employment occupation link.
5. That the Service does not provide help for retired staff. It was asked given the potential link, whether the AFA should contact retired firefighters GPs to advise them of the potential link to cancer and provide NHS screening prior to the development of symptoms. The Clerk advised that this issue should be taken offline as the Service is considering more awareness work for retired firefighters.
6. That a lot of research has been done into the level of risk that a firefighter is exposed to. The FBU advised that research had shown that wearing of BA protected respiratory tracts, but many cancers are through dermal absorption. Laundering of PPE and stopping cross contamination is key and involved a huge cultural shift. Firefighters are now becoming more aware and increasing the frequency of laundering PPE.
7. Avon FRS were performing better than other FRSs. The FBU advised that there was limited recommendation or guidance received from NFCC. Many FRSs had financial constraints and in view of collaboration, would wait to see the action taken by neighbouring FRS, and then implement suitable actions themselves. The GM Learning and Development advised that Avon was willing to adopt tactics and procedures to protect ourselves. Culture was a major factor to ensure firefighters frequently washed equipment and showered. The Service had invested heavily in equipment and the way we operated on the fireground.

**It was RESOLVED –**

**That the Learning & Development Quarterly Report was noted.**

## 42. DICE STRATEGY (2022/2025) UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the CIM to provide a progress update on the Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality (DICE) strategy for 2019/22.

The key points highlighted included:

1. The DICE unit was in the process of recruiting new staff members to the team. The impact of being under-resourced over the past 11 months had significantly impacted on the ability for the CIM to consistently deliver against the existing DICE Strategy objectives and actions. However, the Service was now engaged with 40 key organisations and was continuing to network with others.
2. The DICE Strategy review was complete but had not been through a consultation process with key stakeholders.
3. DICE had worked proactively with the Transformation team and HR to review the Dignity and Respect Policy and Zero Tolerance statement, both which were now complete and ready for final approval and sign off. The Equality Policy was next in line for review in early 2023.
4. The CIM was working in partnership with Stand Against Racism and Inequality (SARI) to produce face to face DICE awareness training. This training was due to be rolled out in early 2023. This pilot DICE training package will also be used for the next phase of face-to-face DICE training for Watch Managers and Crew Managers.
5. The DICE e-learning would be launched shortly and would be mandatory.
6. The DICE strategy going forward would focus on the results of the Cultural Survey, Industrial Action and actions from the HMICFRS inspections. Bullying, harassment and prejudice were key issues which needed to be addressed and were not issues that could be quickly resolved. The CIM added that the Service needed to identify multiple behaviours and work on key interventions on station and to raise importance of embedding the DICE culture. The CIM had also completed training with new recruits including control and for those promoted from firefighter role to crew managers.

The Clerk clarified the recommendation and pointed out that the Strategy was still in draft form and Members were not being asked to approve it for publication today, as it had not yet gone through a consultation process.

The Chair advised that he had consulted with the Chair of the Fire Authority and Clerk and would like Members of AFA to also complete the e learning in 2023.

A Member asked about building links with organisations outside of Bristol. He appreciated that the CIM was building the team but asked about progress made. The CIM advised that he had created a Community Engagement DICE Officer role who will be based out in the community and the role would cover working with key community leaders over the 4 Unitary Areas. The role would also help drive improvements within stations and use census data to help identify key areas such as age, refugees etc.

Elected Members were keen that community engagement should include areas outside of Bristol (such as Bradley Stoke). The Head of HR explained that the Service had a register of approximately 70 community groups who we regularly engaged with. Members were asked to inform us of their local community groups so that we can be sure that they are included within the register.

**It was RESOLVED –**

**That the report and the draft DICE Strategy (2022/2025) were noted.**

#### **43. RECRUITMENT OF STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER**

The Committee received a report from the Clerk which outlined that the AFA needed to recruit and appoint a Statutory Finance Officer to be AFA's principal financial adviser and chief financial officer as required under Section 112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

The People and Culture Committee had considered a restricted paper at their meeting on 5 October 2022 regarding the appointment of an interim Treasurer support to cover sickness absence. The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (CFO/CE) had appointed an interim Treasurer under his Scheme of Delegation for a period of six months up to 21 March 2023. That appointment was ratified by the People & Culture Committee, who had also delegated authority to the CFO/CE to extend the 6-month arrangements beyond March 2023, should that be necessary.

At the same meeting, Committee Members were informed that the Treasurer had resigned with effect from 31 December 2022. In the light of this development, the Committee decided to recommend to the Extraordinary Fire Authority meeting taking place later that same day, that it should 'determine' under the Officer Employment Procedure Rules to undertake a recruitment process for a new Statutory Officer.

The Clerk drew Members attention to the selection process and timeline set out in paragraph 5.3.

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

**It was RESOLVED that the Committee–**

- a) Endorsed the advertisement and Job Description for the role of Statutory Finance Officer which, following approval of those documents by Members of this Committee by email, were publicised on 5 December 2022.
- b) Noted and approved the proposed recruitment process and timeline.

#### **44. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**It was RESOLVED – that the date of the next meeting be held on 3 March 2023 at 10.30am.**

**45. 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 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.”**

**46. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2022**

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

**It was RESOLVED -**

**That the confidential ordinary minutes of the People & Culture Meeting held on 5 October 2022 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.**

**47. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE PANEL HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 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 Panel held on 5 October 2022 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.**

-----  
Chair

The meeting ended at 12.50 pm.



## **PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**18 JANUARY 2023 at 10:30 am**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councillors Davies, Eddy, Monk, Nutland and Payne (Chair)

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Ali and Kumar.

#### **2. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

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

#### **3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **4. PUBLIC ACCESS**

None received for this meeting.

#### **5. CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

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) YouTube channel.
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.

#### **6. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2022.**

It was moved by Cllr Eddy and seconded by Cllr Nutland that the Minutes be approved as a correct record subject to the meeting title being changed from 'safety' to 'scrutiny'.

**It was RESOLVED -**

**That the Minutes of 7 October 2022 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the required amendment.**

## **7. 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 November 2022.

The key points summarised in the report were:

### **Prevention:**

1. Three of the four fire indicators were on target. The exceptionally dry weather in August had an impact upon all three Deliberate Fire Indicators. However, monthly numbers in October and November had been below target and below numbers recorded last year.
2. Sadly, there had been three fire fatalities and 35 injuries reported.
3. Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) were just off target but improving, however delivering of educational packages was ahead of target. Referrals received from partner agencies, which is where the majority of referrals are received from, had not returned to pre-pandemic levels. Additional contacts through engagement with Stand Against Racism & Inequality (SARI) and local communities.

A Member asked whether there was a reason for the higher urban arson attacks. The CPM answered that there could have been incidents which did not have malicious intent such as a disposable BBQ placed in a bin whilst still alight, which would still be classed as accidental.

### **Protection:**

1. The target for call challenging Malicious False Alarms had been met. The Service was just off target for reducing attendance at False Alarms in business premises.
2. The targets for processing Building Regulations and Licensing Applications had not been met and were just off target, however there was confidence that this would improve as the staffing issues are resolved. Further staff had been recruited but it would take some time for the training programme to become effective.

### **Response:**

1. All response indicators including answering 999 calls were on target. The number of 999 calls received and the number of incidents attended were both up compared to last year, 999 calls by 17% and attended by 14%.

### **Resilience:**

1. It was reported that the Service was off target for reducing shifts/days lost to sickness. High numbers of shifts/days had been lost to COVID-19 in the first few months of the year; however, this was steadily decreasing with 49 shifts/days lost in August. Long Term sickness (over 28 days) remained the main issue, accounting for 60.5% of the shifts/days lost.



2. Paragraph 5.10 was highlighted which showed Avon's benchmark against other services, which was gradually improving against other FRSs.

**Improve our Service:**

1. It was advised that the Service was on target for reducing Health & Safety incidents that had resulted in lost time.
2. The Service was just off target for reducing carbon emissions. It was reported that this was due to significant increases in appliance fuel consumption and the high number of incidents attended.
3. Revenue Budget variance was on target with zero variance against plan.

**Invest in our Staff:**

1. The Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs) for staff was on target with 96% in date. It is recognised that this is an area where there is a need to improve consistency of performance and the PDR system would be replaced, which would help to make management easier.

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

1. The number of Home Fire Safety visits had reduced, as the Service was still not receiving referrals from partner agencies at the same level prior to COVID-19, and further work was needed to increase numbers. It was agreed that the CPM would try to establish the reason for this and report back to Members.
2. Sickness levels after COVID-19 were now not too far off average. The CPM had analysed the number of shifts lost and the occurrences. There were now more occurrences of mental health which the Health, Safety and Welfare team were looking into. This subject was also on the agenda for next week's Service Leadership Team meeting. Further information would be fed back to the Committee.
3. With regards to comparative sickness, the CPM advised that due to confidentiality, he was unable to provide details of the highest rating Service. However, he confirmed that Avon did contact other Services, that were performing better or worse, to see if there were any improvements we could make.
4. With regards to the Service's approach to responding to valid fire alarm requests, the CPM advised that when crews had responded, it could still be a false alarm i.e., staff testing the alarm but not having advised Avon Fire and Rescue Service (AF&RS). Incidents were collated for premises who had high number of alarms and contact made and this information would be included within future reports.
5. It was pointed out that the reason stated for being off target for deliberate secondary fires was due to hot weather, which may continue over coming years. The CPM advised that there would be some actions that the Service could take such as identifying locations and sharing information with the police. In respect of target setting, our current process is to look at the last 6 years data, take the average but to remove the highest and lowest figures.
6. Deliberate fires – it was confirmed that there would be targeted activity to identify prevention measures in the worst areas. The CPM confirmed that the Service held good geographical information and that the new Service Plan covered prevention and protection in these areas.
7. It was asked that as the Service was off target for carbon emissions, were there any other proactive plans in place other than to change the targets? To

replace vehicles would be expensive, is there an opportunity to convert to i.e., biomass fuel? The CPM advised that our Fleet department were aware of these issues and that he was aware that they were looking into alternative fuels or the use of electric appliances.

8. It was confirmed that there would be a report brought to the Committee in July 2023 which would provide an update on the carbon reduction project.

**It was RESOLVED -**

**That the Performance Report for April to November 2022 be noted and approved.**

## **8. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the temporary Head of Service Transformation Team (HST).

The key points highlighted were -

1. The Area Manager, Head of the Service Transformation Programme had been seconded to the Industrial Action Planning Team until further notice. The Head of Transformation role was temporarily filled with effect from Thursday 8 December 2022.
2. The Transformation team were still struggling to fill three vacancies, these being a Microsoft 365 trainer, a Digital Developer, and a Business Change Officer. Interviews were taking place for the trainer role and an alternative approach was being considered for the developer role. Recruitment for the Business Change Officer had been halted and other members of the team were continuing to provide assistance. These difficulties were due to the move to Microsoft 365 and the increased demand in the marketplace.
3. The FireWatch upgrade project Manager joined the team on a full time basis from 1 October 2022 and good progress had been made in moving this project forward. This arrangement would be reviewed at three monthly intervals and the Manager would remain on the team on a three day a week basis. The new system would be launched from 7 February 2023.

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

1. A suggestion was made that other public sector organisations were also experiencing recruitment problems. The Member asked whether the Service had considered joining up with another local Public Sector organisation to share an employee or to buy some of their time. The temporary HST agreed to consider this option and contact other suitable organisations.

**It was RESOLVED -**

**That the report be noted.**

## **9 ROUND 2 HIS 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 (HMI) Inspection Action Plan. The second 'round 2' HMI 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. The action plan was currently 30% completed with 48% of actions in progress and 22% not yet started, some of these were sequentially dependant on the completion of some of the actions that had 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 had been signed off as completed, therefore all legacy actions were now complete.
2. The routine biannual data request was completed, checked, signed off and submitted to HMI on 18 November 2022.
3. Following correspondence from HMI on 28 November 2022, preparations were under way for the Round 3 inspection. It would be based again around the three pillars of effectiveness, efficiency and people format. Grades would be awarded against the existing 11 diagnostic questions. There would be a move from four to five graded judgements (with the addition of 'adequate'). There would be a focus on service improvement. Inspections would be undertaken using a hybrid approach of physical on-site inspection and remote virtual interviews.
4. AF&RS had not been listed in the first batch of Round 3 inspections, and the inspection fieldwork was likely to start in late May 2023. This would include a request for documentation and an onsite inspection.

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

1. In respect of whether the Service was on target before the next visit, the HMI Officer confirmed that some actions had a planned completion date after the start of the Round 3 inspections. However, as with Round 3, any outstanding actions would be carried forward and nothing would be missed.
2. A Member mentioned that 22% of actions were not yet started and progress couldn't be made. The SLO advised that there were not any obstacles preventing the Service from making headway although staffing and monetary issues could delay progress.

**It was RESOLVED that the Committee –**

- a) Noted the progress made against the most recently approved version of AF&RS's HMICFRS inspection action plan (Appendix 1), discussed its contents and did not make any recommendations or suggestions;**
- b) noted the current HMICFRS inspection activity.**

## **10 2022/23 CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE**

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

During the financial year 2020/21 the Fire Authority Chair requested that reports on the Capital Programme be considered by this Committee, to enable further review on an ongoing basis.

The key points highlighted were –

1. The Capital Programme approved for 2022/23, included adjustments for the final 2021/22 carry over of £7.741m.

2. This latest report, based upon spending to the end of November 2022, forecasted that total capital spending will be £4.144m, resulting in an underspend of £3.597m. There had been a delay with the Bedminster project, where the original estimate of costs had increased due to delays in materials and supply chains. There also had been a delay in making the final Fleet payments which would move into the next financial year.
3. Control element may slip into the future year due to national issues in terms of change of supplier, and delays in supply.

Following questions from Members it was confirmed that -

1. There had been a pause in major projects including the rebuild projects at Bath and Weston Super Mare due to the increase in costs with the Bedminster project. It was confirmed that these projects would continue to be explored as part of the capital programme over the next 3 years.
2. The current payment issues with Fleet had been contributed to by supplier delays. The Head of Finance had advised that the Service was exploring the overall fleet strategy and the Capital Prioritisation and Steering Group met regularly to monitor progress. It was confirmed that a paper may be taken to the AFA in the future.
3. Costs had increased within the Bedminster major build largely due to inflation and specifically the price of steel and other construction costs, which could be increased by up to 50% on certain materials. The costs of Contractors had also increased, along with delays to supply chains.
4. The proceeds from the sale of the former HQ had been reserved to fund a number of re-build projects. The Clerk advised that the timelines would be included within the Finance papers at the Extraordinary AFA meeting in February.

**It was RESOLVED that the Committee –  
Reviewed key issues within the updates given to provide the required assurance on the approved Capital Programme.**

## **11 2022-23 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Head of Finance presented the report which provided an updated revenue monitoring report for the current financial year, based upon spending at the end of November 2022.

This was the first time the report had been submitted to the Performance, Review & Scrutiny Committee (PRSC), however, it has been decided by the Treasurer that this would now be submitted alongside the capital report at each meeting.

The key points highlighted were –

1. This latest report forecasted that spending against the next revenue budget would be £26k overspent. This was based on the November figures but the Head of Finance was expecting a break-even situation by the end of the year.
2. The pay awards presented an increase in costs.
3. There had been an underspend on a cleaning contract.
4. There had been a significant increase in the utilities budget.
5. Some prices had increased due to factors including the impact of inflation.
6. Some recent large contracts would result in savings going forward – i.e., HR.

Members passed on their congratulations to the Head of Finance especially in view of the current financial situation.

**It was RESOLVED that the Committee –  
Noted the forecast spending position against the 2022/23 Revenue Budget.**

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

The Committee received a 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. The cost of the project totalled £99,229, with £95,126 already allocated against specific grant funding.
2. Of the 29 internal actions 19 are complete and 10 are in progress. Since the previous update, eight internal actions had their target completion dates delayed. The primary reason for the delays, related to compatibility issues with our communications and controls with other emergency services systems, and external agencies procurement delays.
3. The third phase of the improved tall buildings training for operational crews had been completed. Work is now underway to develop further training and exercises for operational staff to embed the newly published Evacuation Operational Information Note (OIN).
4. Phase 2 of the Inquiry commenced on 27 January 2021 to examine the reasons why the fire at Grenfell happened. The inquiry hearing closed on the 21 July 2022. The panel were now preparing their final report which is expected to be published in 2023.
5. The high-rise residential building work with Bristol City Council (BCC) was almost complete with only two CAD plans outstanding. The Provision of Risk Information System (PORIS) team was liaising with other Unitary Authorities and Unite student accommodation.

Following questions from Members -

1. With regards to the capital still available, it was confirmed that this would be sufficient and there were plans to spend this within the next two months on evacuation packs for fire engines. A new team member was currently working on the evacuation packs including resources and costings.
2. With regards to high rise buildings in the other Unitary Authorities (UA) including three within North Somerset, a Member had witnessed a training evacuation of student accommodation and enquired about the level of risk. It was advised that student accommodations were equipped with plans and 'grab packs', we were replicating the same as BCC high-rise buildings so we had the information required to utilise for training. It was advised that legislation had changed, and from this month owners of buildings over 18 metres high must provide the plans by law to the UAs. PORIS were working on plans to interpret and design them in line with our other CAD drawings.

**It was RESOLVED that the Committee -  
Noted the report.**

### 13 COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING UPDATE

The Collaboration and Partnerships Manager (C&PM) provided the Committee with an update on Collaboration and Partnership working undertaken by the Service since their last submission (July 2022).

The key points highlighted in the report were:

#### **Collaboration Framework and Toolkit -**

1. Members were informed that work continued to update the Collaboration Framework and Toolkit, which underpinned the Collaboration Strategy 2021-2026. Completion of the Framework and Toolkit was originally expected in time for this report, however time taken to further consider best practice and our approach had prevented this.
2. A full report of the toolkit will be provided at the next Collaboration & Partnership Working update, scheduled for July 2023. The C&PM was working on an approach and learning.
3. Progress has been made updating the risk assessment and new scoping assessment to ensure that we are collaborating safely. The Service had 34 Collaboration Partnerships in place with 14 in date and 11 in progress.
4. The Service had a new collaboration with the Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI) which engaged in joint training and live water incidents using our drone.
5. The Service continued to work on a number of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support working at height and regional co-responding. Further detail would be provided once they had moved from planning to live stage.
6. Operation Braidwood - AF&RS continued to support South West Ambulance Service Foundation Trust (SWASFT) and had covered 3267 shifts and had brought 53 patients back to life. The project would finish in March 2023 with personnel returning back into Service.
7. Work with our partner SARI continued and they had attended our HFSV practitioner session. Our Vulnerable Adults team were also working with SARI to provide support for victims of hate crime.
8. Children and Young Persons – our collaboration is under review with Life Skills and the RNLI. This had been reshaped to provide wider opportunities for information and data sharing and ensures focus is directed on the most vulnerable.

Following questions from Members, the following points were made/clarified -

1. Members asked that their thanks were passed onto the employees who collaborated with SWASFT and congratulations given to those who received an award.
2. Had any discussions taken place to extend the partnership with SWASFT especially in view of the current pressures. The C&PM was not aware of this but would make enquiries.
3. It was appreciated that the report contained external partners collaboration and not UAs. The Member assumed that the C&PM had not yet communicated with the Mayor's Office at BCC. The Clerk was unable to advise but felt that any communication would be with a 'lower level' team. The Clerk agreed to look into this further.

**It was RESOLVED that the -  
Report was noted.**

**14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED -**

**That the next meeting of the PRSC will take place on 20 April 2023 at 10.30am.**

The meeting closed at 11.45hrs

Members asked for further information regarding Purdah and AFA meetings which would take place until May 2023 in UAs (excluding BCC). The Clerk advised that as the meetings were 'Business as Usual', AFA meetings were not affected. The Clerk agreed to circulate an email to Members for their understanding.

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**Chair**

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## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 21 June 2023</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>The Clerk</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Member Appointments for the Municipal Year</b>

### 1. **SUMMARY**

This report sets out the Membership of the Fire Authority as of June 2023.

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

### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Allocate Members to the Fire Authority Committees (with the Committees to appoint their Committee Vice Chairs at the first Committee meetings of the Municipal Year).
- b) Appoint its representative on the Local Government Association.
- c) Appoint its representative on South West Councils meetings and South West Councils' Employers' Panel.
- e) Appoint its Employer Representatives for the Local Pension Board.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 Every year the Fire Authority receives Member nominations from the Unitary Authorities (UAs). This year the nominations were received after local elections in three of the four UAs.

3.2 In addition to 20 Elected Members from the UAs, the Police & Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset (PCC) is also a Member of the Fire Authority. The PCC does not sit on the Fire Authority Committees.

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

4.1 This report has no financial implications, as Members Allowances have already been approved for the 2023/24 financial year by the Fire Authority on 29 March 2023 and are included in the baseline budget.

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

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

5.1 The current membership of the Fire Authority of 20 Members at **Appendix 1**.

##### **Allocation of Committee Places**

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

	Meetings	Membership	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Green/Ind
<b>Audit, Governance &amp; Oversight Committee</b>	4	9 (+ 2 Independent Members to be recruited)	Matthew Riddle (S Glos) Martin Williams (N Somerset)	Paul Goggin (AGOC Vice Chair) (Bristol) Richard Tucker (N Somerset)	Ben Nutland (AGOC Chair) (S Glos) Jayne Stansfield (S Glos) Andrew Varney (Bristol)	Mohamud Yassin (Bristol) David Wilcox (Bristol)
<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	4	11	Steve Smith PRC Vice Chair (Bristol) Liz Brennan (S Glos) Richard Eddy (Bristol)	Brenda Massey PRC Chair (Bristol) Ron Hardie (S Glos) Phillipa Hulme (Bristol)	Paul May (B&NES) Robert Payne (N Somerset) Saini Onkar (B&NES)	Dan Thomas (N Somerset) Karen Walker (B&NES)
<b>Local Pension Board</b>	2	2	Steve Smith (Bristol)		Andrew Varney (Bristol) Robert Payne (N Somerset) Substitute for LPB	
<b>Total numbers</b>			6 committee/LPB appointments for 5 Elected Members	5 committee appointments for 5 Elected Members	7 committee/LPB appointments for 6 Elected Members	4 committee appointments for 4 Elected Members

##### **Appointment of Committee Chairs/Vice Chairs**

5.3. The Chairs of the Policy and Resources Committee and the Audit, Governance and Oversight Committee are the Fire Authority Chair and Vice Chair respectively. The table above includes 'proposed' Committee Vice Chairs, which ensure that Chair posts are shared amongst the political parties. The appointment of Vice Chairs shall be a matter for each Committee

to decide at the first Committee meetings of the new municipal year (as per the Committee Terms of Reference).

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

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

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

- 5.5. The Fire Authority is invited to appoint one representative to South West Councils full meetings and the South West Councils Employers' Panel, both meet twice a year. Representatives are only requested to attend meetings in person if items on the agendas may have an impact on the Fire Authority. Cllr David Wilcox has offered to be the Fire Authority's representative to South West Councils.

### **Employer Representatives on the Local Pension Board**

- 5.6. The Fire Authority is required to have two representatives on the Local Pension Board. Existing Fire Authority Members, Cllr Steve Smith and Cllr Andrew Varney have agreed to continue fulfilling these roles as they have completed the required pensions training. The Board has a pension expert as an Independent Chair and advises the Fire Authority on matters connected with the Firefighter Pension Schemes.

### **Working Groups**

- 5.7 Members are invited to consider appointment to the following:
- Trustees of Gambia and Avon Fire Service in Partnership (GAFSIP)
  - Constitution Working Group (when stood-up nominations will be requested from Political Group Leaders).

## **6. RISKS**

None.

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

- 7.1 Members have been nominated to the Fire Authority by their Unitary Authorities (UAs) to reflect the political proportionality of their UAs. The Fire Authority Clerk and the Chair have worked together to ensure that committee composition and roles are shared appropriately between the political parties.

**8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

**9. APPENDICES**

1. 2023-2024 Avon Fire Authority Elected Members.

**10. REPORT CONTACT**

Amanda Brown, Clerk Avon Fire Authority, Ext. 347.

## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY APPOINTMENTS 2023-2024

	<b>Member</b>	<b>Appointing Authority</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Ward</b>
1.	<b>Brennan, Liz</b>	South Glos	Conservative	Frenchay and Downend
2.	<b>Eddy, Richard</b>	Bristol	Conservative	Bishopsworth
3.	<b>Goggin, Paul</b>	Bristol	Labour	Hartcliffe and Withywood
4.	<b>Hardie, Ron</b>	South Glos	Labour	Emersons Green
5.	<b>Hulme, Philippa</b>	Bristol	Labour	Horfield
6.	<b>Massey, Brenda</b>	Bristol	Labour	Southmead
7.	<b>May, Paul</b>	B&NES	Liberal Democrats	Publow with Whitchurch
8.	<b>Mohamud, Yassin</b>	Bristol	Green	Lawrence Hill
9.	<b>Nutland, Ben</b>	South Glos	Liberal Democrats	Yate North
10.	<b>Payne, Robert</b>	N Somerset	Liberal Democrat	Weston-Super-Mare Central
11.	<b>Riddle, Matthew</b>	South Glos	Conservative	Severn Vale
12.	<b>Saini, Onkar</b>	B&NES	Liberal Democrats	Combe Down
13.	<b>Smith, Steve</b>	Bristol	Conservative	Westbury-on-Trym and Henleaze
14.	<b>Stansfield, Jayne</b>	South Glos	Liberal Democrats	Thornbury
15.	<b>Thomas, Dan</b>	N Somerset	Green	Congresbury and Puxton
16.	<b>Tucker, Richard</b>	N Somerset	Labour	Weston-Super-Mare Milton
17.	<b>Varney, Andrew</b>	Bristol	Liberal Democrat	Brislington West
18.	<b>Walker, Karen</b>	B&NES	Independent	Peasedown
19.	<b>Wilcox, David</b>	Bristol	Green	Lockleaze
20.	<b>Williams, Martin</b>	N Somerset	Conservative	Kewstoke

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## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 21 June 2023</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Statutory Finance Officer</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>2022/23 Revenue Final Outturn</b>

### 1. **SUMMARY**

This report provides an updated revenue monitoring report for the current financial year, based upon spending at the end of March 2023.

### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Note the final Income and Expenditure position against the 2022/23 Revenue Budget.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The 2022/23 net revenue budget was approved at the Fire Authority meeting in February 2022. It is important that the Authority and the relevant committees receive regular budget monitoring reports which provide a forecast of spending against this budget.
- 3.2 This report provides actual spending against each agreed budget heading based upon the position at the end of March 2023.
- 3.3 The draft financial statements for the year ended March 2023 were due to be published for public inspection by 31 May 2023. Note that this deadline was not met due to the delays in the signing of the year ended March 2022 accounts and a public statement was published to this effect. Draft statements for the year ended March 2023 are expected to be presented at the AGOC meeting on 27 June 2023.

### 4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 This final outturn position spending against the net revenue budget is

£-417k underspent. This compares to the previously reported small overspend position which was based upon spending to the end of February 2023, as reported to the PRSC in April 2023.

- 4.2 The underspend represents a positive position for the Fire Authority given the additional pay and inflationary pressures placed upon the budget. The fact that these pressures have been mitigated by underspends elsewhere in the budget has avoided the need to utilise Reserve balances.
- 4.3 Actual spend against each of the agreed budget headings is shown within **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2**.

## 5. **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Explanations of Significant Variations**

#### **Income**

- 5.1 Income from Central Government and Unitary Authorities (UA) combined is over-recovered by £-674k. The £1,038k negative variance on UA income is as a result of incorrectly categorised NNDR (National Non-Domestic Rates) relief grants which are shown within actual Central Government income.

The additional over recovery relates to grants received at year end which were not within budget for ongoing Redmond review related costs (£-11k) and business rates reconciliation income (£-663k).

There has been additional investment income of £-314k as a result of the increased interest rates which was not budgeted and has therefore provided additional mitigation of increased costs.

Additional SWAST income received has resulted in an over-recovery of £-790k within other income which has been used to mitigate the impact of the pay awards meaning there has been no requirement to utilise capital reserves to fund this.

#### **Employee Costs**

- 5.2 Employee costs now include all backdated pay relating to the increase of 7% for Grey book staff (£1,275k additional cost over budget).

The pay award for Corporate Staff has been adjusted from contingency within the revised budget as this was confirmed during the year.

Adjustments to the Corporate Staff budget have also been made to reflect the approved structure changes made from the investment fund in HR, Corporate Assurance and RPU as well as the reserves funding for members of the Business Fire Safety Team in line with the submissions made to the Home Office for this funding.



### **Premises Costs**

- 5.3 The outturn position is that net spending against premises costs are underspent by £-120k, primarily as a result of savings against the utilities budget of £-113k.

### **Transport Costs**

- 5.4 A overspend of £115k on transport costs is primarily as a result of increased fuel and insurance costs which have been partially mitigated by reductions in travel costs with journeys not yet increasing to pre-COVID levels, as anticipated, and the resultant savings on car allowance payments to officers.

### **Supplies and Services**

- 5.5 Supplies and services costs have overspent by £189k primarily as a result of additional costs on IT and communications relating to the IT infrastructure project and updated contracts for communications in year (£78k) and an overspend on other supplies and services and fees and services relating to increases in prices across a number of items (£220k). These are mitigated by underspends on equipment and supplies and training costs (£-127k).

### **Other Costs**

- 5.6 Other costs relating to the collection fund deficit will show a slight overspend (£3k) and capital financing costs are slightly underspent (£-15k). The unused investment fund has now been released to mitigate the additional pay award and contingency will be fully utilised in year to support a breakeven position. Transfers to/from reserves reflect the transfer to budget of the Transformation team costs (£-488k) with transfers made to and from reserves relating to the Protection Grant Funding resulting in an increase of £190k and £417k being transferred to reserves relating to the in-year underspend.

## **6. RISKS**

- 6.1 This report primarily relates to Corporate Risk 20 (Funding and Resource Pressure Risk), within the Corporate Risk Register. This risk has been minimised due to the effective budget management of the revenue budgets throughout 2022/2023.

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

- 7.1 None.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- a. PRSC Paper – 20.4.2023 – Paper 11 – 2022/23 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report
- b. AFA Paper – 11.02.2022 – Paper 7 – 2022/23 Budget Setting & Precept

**9. APPENDICES**

1. Revenue Financial Summary – 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023
2. Detailed Revenue Financial Summary – 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

**10. REPORT CONTACT**

Verity Lee, Statutory Finance Officer  
Claire Bentley, Head of Finance

**AVON FIRE AUTHORITY****Revenue Financial Summary - 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023**

<b>Income and Expenditure</b>	<b>2022/23 Original Annual Budget £'000</b>	<b>2022/23 Revised Annual Budget £'000</b>	<b>Movement on Annual Budget £'000</b>	<b>2022/23 Forecast Expenditure £'000</b>	<b>2022/23 Forecast Variance £'000</b>
Income from Councils	-34,803	-34,803	0	-33,765	1,038
Income from Central Government	-17,215	-17,215	0	-18,927	-1,712
Investment Income	0	0	0	-314	-314
Other Income	-399	-399	0	-1,190	-790
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-52,418</b>	<b>-52,418</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-54,196</b>	<b>-1778</b>
Employees	38,770	39,838	1,068	41,470	1,632
Premises	2,735	2,685	-50	2,565	-120
Transport	1,464	1,384	-80	1,499	115
Supplies and Services	6,671	6,858	187	7,047	189
Investment Fund	1,000	402	-598	0	-402
Capital Financing Costs	741	741	0	726	-15
Collection Fund Deficit	765	765	0	768	3
Contingency	690	393	-297	0	-393
Reserve Transfers	-419	-649	-230	119	768
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>52,418</b>	<b>52,418</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>54,196</b>	<b>1,778</b>
<b>TOTAL UNDERSPEND/OVERSPEND</b>					<b>0</b>

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

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**AVON FIRE AUTHORITY****Detailed Revenue Financial Summary - 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023**

Income and Expenditure	2022/23 Original Annual Budget	2022/23 Revised Annual Budget	Movement on Annual Budget	2022/23 Actual Expenditure	2022/23 Variance
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s

**SECTION A: INCOME:**

Income from Councils	-34,803	-34,803	0	-33,765	1,038
Income from Central Government	-17,215	-17,215	0	-18,927	-1,712
Investment Income	0	0	0	-314	-314
Other Income	-399	-399	0	-1,190	-790
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>-52,418</b>	<b>-52,418</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-54,196</b>	<b>-1,778</b>

**SECTION B: EXPENDITURE:****1. EMPLOYEE COSTS**

Full-time Firefighters	25,425	25,425	0	26,569	1,144
Retained Firefighters	2,842	2,842	-0	2,859	17
Auxiliary Firefighters	39	39	-0	38	-1
Control Room Staff	1,922	1,922	-0	2,036	114
Corporate staff	5,318	6,342	1,024	6,350	8
Fire Authority and Chief Executive Office	1,162	1,182	20	1,171	-11
Transformation	419	443	25	443	0
Ill Health Retirement Pension Costs	1,607	1,607	0	1,806	199
Other employee costs - Inc Relocation, Medical Intervention, CRB Checks, Long Service Gratuities	35	35	-0	196	161
	<b>38,770</b>	<b>39,838</b>	<b>1,068</b>	<b>41,470</b>	<b>1,632</b>

**2. PREMISES COSTS**

Property Repairs, Fees and Security	804	804	0	781	-23
Rent and Rates	903	903	0	925	22
Cleaning and refuse	329	279	-50	258	-21
Utilities	654	654	0	541	-113
Property Insurance	45	45	0	61	16
	<b>2,735</b>	<b>2,685</b>	<b>-50</b>	<b>2,565</b>	<b>-120</b>

**3. TRANSPORT COSTS**

Vehicle maintenance, fuel, tyres and testing	995	995	0	1,068	73
Vehicle hire	16	16	0	5	-11
Travel costs, inc subsistence & public transport	25	25	0	27	2
Insurance - Vehicles	112	112	0	182	70
Car Allowances	316	236	-80	217	-19
	<b>1,464</b>	<b>1,384</b>	<b>-80</b>	<b>1,499</b>	<b>115</b>

**4. SUPPLIES AND SERVICES**

Equipment and supplies	1,093	1,220	127	1,155	-65
Fees and Services	1,410	1,410	0	1,574	164
Communications & ICT	2,732	2,732	0	2,810	78
Expenses and allowances	65	65	0	82	17
Scrap Cars & Extrication Challenge	50	50	0	51	0
Training Costs	691	691	0	629	-62
Other supplies and services	630	690	60	747	56
	<b>6,671</b>	<b>6,858</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>7,047</b>	<b>189</b>

**5. OTHER COSTS**

Investment Fund	1,000	402	-598	-	402
Capital Financing Costs	741	741	-	726	15
Collection Fund Deficit	765	765	-	768	3
Contingency	690	393	-297	-	393
Transfers to/from Reserves	-419	649	230	119	768
	<b>2,777</b>	<b>1,652</b>	<b>-1,125</b>	<b>1,613</b>	<b>-38</b>

<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>52,418</b>	<b>52,418</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>54,196</b>	<b>1,778</b>
<b>TOTAL UNDERSPEND / OVERSPEND</b>				<b>-0</b>	<b>-0</b>

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

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## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 21 June 2023</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>The Clerk</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Fire Authority meeting dates and 2023/34 Forward Plan</b>

### 1. **SUMMARY**

- The purpose of this report is to present for Fire Authority approval the proposed schedule of meetings for the Municipal Year 2023/24.
- In addition, the report presents a revised Forward Plan, which sets out the anticipated key decisions which will need to be taken by Members in the immediate future.

### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Approve the proposed schedule of meetings for the Municipal Year 2023/34.
- b) Note the revised Forward Plan 2023/24.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At the December 2022 meeting, the Fire Authority approved provisional meeting dates for the 2023/24 Municipal Year. Those dates have been amended to align to the new governance structure and to align with key financial and other deadlines.
- 3.2 Avon Fire Authority (AFA) approved the recommendations of an independent governance review at their meeting on 25 April 2023; this reduced the number of committees from three to two, with the new Committees being the Audit, Governance and Oversight Committee (AGOC) and Policy and Resources Committee (PRC). The Fire Authority also holds Local Pension Board (LPB) meetings – the LPB is not a committee, but an advisory board to assist the

Authority as pension scheme manager; the LPB has an Independent Chair with pensions expertise.

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

4.1 This report has no financial implications. The cost of community venues for meetings will be met from existing budgets.

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

5.1 The proposed dates for the Municipal Year 2023/24 are set out in the table below:

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Jun 23</b>	<b>Jul 23</b>	<b>Aug 23</b>	<b>Sep 23</b>	<b>Oct 23</b>	<b>Nov 23</b>	<b>Dec 23</b>	<b>Jan 24</b>	<b>Feb 24</b>	<b>Mar 24</b>	<b>Apr 24</b>	<b>May 24</b>
<b>AFA</b>	Wed 21 AGM				Wed 4				Fri 16	Wed 20		
<b>PRC</b>		Thu 27		Fri 29			Wed 13				Thu 18	
<b>AGOC</b>	Tue 27			Wed 20			Thu 7			Fri 15		
<b>LPB</b>		Mon 10						Thu 25				
<b>MEMBER BRIEFINGS</b>		Fri 7			Fri 27			Fri 19			Fri 12	

5.2 The dates proposed attempt to follow the previous arrangements with the Fire Authority meeting on a Wednesday, and committee meetings later in the week, where possible.

5.3. It is proposed that Member training (Member Briefings) will take place on separate dates to enable sufficient focus on key issues for individual and organisational development.

5.4. Meetings take place at the main conference room at the Police & Fire Headquarters in Portishead or, at the training facility in Severn Park, Avonmouth. Wherever possible, meetings will also be rotated at venues across the Fire Authority area to include Fire Stations at Weston-Super-Mare, Temple, Hicks Gate, Bath, Nailsea and a suitable community venue in South Gloucestershire.



- 5.5. The proposed dates will be checked against the key meetings of the Unitary Authorities when these are available to avoid any clashes, with any necessary adjustments reported to a future meeting of the Fire Authority.
- 5.6 The Forward Plan at **Appendix 1** highlights key decisions that need to be discussed in the immediate future to enable Members to have an overview of the issues that they will consider. This Forward Plan may be subject to change.

## **6. RISKS**

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

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

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

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- a) 'Fire Authority meeting dates 2023/24 and Forward Plan 2022/23' paper presented to Fire Authority meeting on 14 December 2022.

## **9. APPENDICES**

1. Forward Plan 2023/24.

## **10. REPORT CONTACT**

Amanda Brown, Clerk to Avon Fire Authority, Ext. 347.

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**Avon Fire Authority****Forward Plan 2023-24 Key Decisions****1. Fire Authority**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Item / issue requiring decision</b>	<b>Exempt Item? (Yes/No/Part)</b>	<b>Contact Officer for Further Details</b>
4 Oct 23	Approve adoption of LGA Cllr Model Code of Conduct (after consideration by AGOC)	No	Clerk
	Outcome of Government White Paper consultation on FRS reforms (if published)	No	Clerk/ Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive
	Efficiency Savings Options Paper	No	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

**2. Audit, Governance & Oversight Committee (AGOC)**

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

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Item / issue requiring decision</b>	<b>Exempt Item? (Yes/No/Part)</b>	<b>Contact Officer for Further Details</b>
27 Jun 23	Election of AGOC Vice Chair	No	Clerk
	2022/23 Draft Statement of Accounts and Narrative Report	No	Statutory Finance Officer
	External Audit update on 2022/23 audit timeline	No	Statutory Finance Officer
	Draft Annual Governance Statement	No	
	Corporate Risk Register Exception Report	No	
	Internal Audit Reports and Annual Report (2022/23)	No	
	Update on Internal Audit recommendations	No	

### 3. Policy and Resources Committee (PRC)

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

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Item / issue requiring decision</b>	<b>Exempt Item? (Yes/No/Part)</b>	<b>Contact Officer for Further Details</b>
27 Jul 23	Election of PRC Vice Chair	No	Clerk
	Round 2 HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan and update on Round 3 inspection	No	
	HMICFRS Spotlight report on values and culture in the fire and rescue services.	No	
	Approve/monitor Procurement Forward Plan, approval to proceed for business cases over £1M.	No	
	Transformation Programme Update	No	
	Annual Local Pension Board Report	No	
	Re-engagement/re-employment and pension abatement policies.	No	
	Independent Review of senior officer salaries (if review delegated by Fire Authority).	No.	

## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 21 June 2023</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Statutory Finance Officer</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>2022/23 Capital Final Outturn</b>

### 1. **SUMMARY**

This report provides an updated capital monitoring report for the current financial year, based upon spending at the end of March 2023.

### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Note the outturn spending position against the 2022/23 Capital Programme.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1. The Fire Authority review the final year end Capital position to ensure the correct figures are provided within the Annual Accounts. The actual position is slightly lower than the previous forecast provided to the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee in April as there was a slight delay to some of the Premises works, however, these have now commenced in 2023/24.
- 3.2. The Capital Programme approved for 2022/23, including adjustments for the final 2021/22 carry over is £7.741m. The Capital Finance Report and the updated values can be found in **Appendix 1**.

### 4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The table below shows a summary of the approved Capital Programme for 2022/23 to 2024/25 including the adjustment for carry over from 2021/22.

## Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25

Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25	2022/23 Approved Programme	2021/22 Brought Forward	Revised 2022/23 Programme	2023/24 Approved Programme	2024/25 Approved Programme
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Funding	7,331	410	7,741	6,331	3,437
Capital Expenditure	7,331	410	7,741	6,331	3,437

### 5. KEY OPERATIONAL UPDATES

5.1 The Fire Authority invested in the following material assets during the year:

#### **Premises - £1.47m**

- This expenditure includes costs related to the completion of the redevelopment of Avonmouth Fire Station (£807k) and further design work on the rectification works at Bedminster and redevelopment of Bath and Weston stations of £301k.
- The significant underspend against budget follows the pausing of the Bedminster, Bath and Weston projects - inflationary pressures and other uncertainties have necessitated a review of options with these projects.
- Other premises projects included the installation of further electric vehicle points, drainage works and several refurbishment scoping and design plans.

#### **Fleet - £2.56m**

- £2.06m has been spent on the appliance replacement programme and £401k on ancillary vehicles.

#### **Operational Equipment - £0.12m**

- Industrial PPE washing machines (to decontaminate protective wear - £42k) and other operational and safety equipment (£78k) such as training mannequins and rescue dry suits.

### 5.2 **Capital Budget underspend:**

The budgets for several capital items were not spent in the year primarily due to the impact of inflation and national and global issues impacting the labour market and supply chains, and some have been carried forward into 2023/2024 and beyond:

#### **Premises:**

- The underspend of £2.12m follows the pausing of the Bedminster, Bath and Weston projects - inflationary pressures and other uncertainties have necessitated a review of options with these projects.

**Fleet:**

- The majority of the underspend of £0.50m related to supply issues which have delayed completion of the appliances order until 2023/2034.

**Operational Equipment & Control:**

- The majority of the underspend of £0.44m related to delays to the Control systems upgrade, following national delays to Control projects and supply chain issues.

**Transformation Programme:**

- The 2022/2023 investment in new and improved IT systems and projects relating to the Transformation programme (originally budgeted at £0.29m), in particular the Provision of Operational Risk Information System (PORIS) has been deferred to 2023/2024.

**IT:**

- Lower than expected IT spend has resulted from delays to the IT infrastructure project and issues sourcing hardware in the current economic climate.

**6. RISKS**

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

**7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

None

**8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- a) AFA report: 05.10.2022 (paper 11 – 2022/23 Capital Programme Update)
- b) PRSC report: 20.04.2023 (paper 10 – 2022/ 23 Capital Programme Update)

**9. APPENDICES**

1. Capital Financial Summary 1 April 2022-31 March 2023

**10. REPORT CONTACT**

Verity Lee, Statutory Finance Officer, Claire Bentley, Head of Finance

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**AVON FIRE AUTHORITY**

**Capital Financial Summary - 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023**

Funding and Expenditure	Approved 2022/23 Programme	Actual Expenditure Apr 2022-Mar 2023	Actual Variance Apr 2022-Mar 2023	Director Lead
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Capital Reserve	3,702	101	-3,601	
Capital Receipts (from sale of HQ)	3,889	3,889	0	
Capital Receipt from house sale	125	0	-125	
Capital Receipt from disposals and contributions	25	72	47	
Public Decarbonisation Fund (final payment)	0	95	95	
Prudential borrowing	0	0	0	
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>7,741</b>	<b>4,157</b>	<b>-3,584</b>	<b>0</b>
Premises	3,588	1,465	-2,123	Angela Feeney
Fleet	3,056	2,560	-496	Richard Welch
Control	450	0	-450	Steve Imrie
ICT	250	13	-237	Angela Feeney
Transformation	285	0	-285	Simon Shilton
Operational Equipment	112	120	8	Richard Welch
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>7,741</b>	<b>4,157</b>	<b>-3,584</b>	<b>0</b>

NB: A minus denotes an underspend

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## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 21 June 2023</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>The Clerk</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Member Information 2022/23</b>

### 1. **SUMMARY**

This report provides details of Members' allowances and expenses paid during the 2022/23 municipal year. Members' attendance at meetings is already available on the Avon Fire Authority website.

### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to note the report and authorise publication of the figures at **Appendix 1** on the Avon Fire Authority website.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Robust and transparent governance arrangements are key to providing an effective service to the public. This includes transparency around the activities of Members and the allowances and expenses they have received during the municipal year.

### 4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

### 5. **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 This report provides figures for the payments made to Members under the Members' Allowances Scheme (**Appendix 1**).
- 5.2 Members' attendance at meetings during the 2022/23 municipal year is automatically recorded by Modern.gov and those statistics are published on

Avon Fire Authority's website at the following link (the date range can be changed):

[Members' attendance summary Modern.gov](#)

- 5.3 Following the Fire Authority meeting, **Appendix 1** will be published on Avon Fire Authority's website.

## 6. **RISKS**

- 6.1 None.

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

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

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

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

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

## 8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

## 9. **APPENDICES**

1. Members' Allowances Scheme Payments.

## 10. **REPORT CONTACT**

Amanda Brown, Clerk to Avon Fire Authority, Ext. 347.

2021/2022 £	Recipient	Basic Allowance £	Special Responsibility Allowance £	Travel & Subsistence Expenses £	2022/2023 £
1,380	Councillor A Ali	2,310	-	-	2,310
1,677	Councillor J Ashe	2,310	-	22	2,332
1,685	Councillor S Bromley	2,310	-	50	2,360
1,343	Councillor A Brown	385	-	-	385
1,435	Councillor E Brown	2,310	-	20	2,330
3,547	Councillor T Butters	2,310	541	92	2,943
5,633	Councillor D Davies	2,310	2,310	113	4,733
564	Councillor A Davis	-	-	-	-
1,612	Councillor R Eddy	2,310	-	-	2,310
2,717	Councillor P Goggin	2,310	2,323	-	4,633
1,612	Councillor H Hopkinson	2,310	-	108	2,418
1,612	Councillor R Jacobs	2,310	1,733	-	4,043
263	Councillor C Johnson	-	-	-	-
264	Councillor T Jones	-	-	-	-
264	Councillor S Khan	-	-	-	-
-	Councillor Y Kumar	1,074	-	86	1,160
566	Councillor C Lake	-	-	-	-
9,433	Councillor B Massey	2,310	10,382	35	12,727
1,312	Councillor P May	1,188	-	-	1,188
1,343	Councillor Y Mohamud	2,310	-	-	2,310
3,242	Councillor A Monk	2,310	2,310	-	4,620
264	Councillor P Myers	-	-	-	-
1,468	Councillor B Nutland	2,310	1,733	172	4,215
2,427	Councillor R Payne	2,310	2,323	-	4,633
158	Councillor C Phipps	-	-	-	-
-	Councillor S Smith	1,874	-	-	1,874
1,612	Councillor R Tucker	2,310	-	-	2,310
-	Councillor A Varney	1,874	-	75	1,949
2,158	Councillor D Wilcox	2,310	2,323	-	4,633
3,777	Councillor C Windows	385	385	-	770
1,000	Mr J Mason	-	1,033	-	1,033
<b>54,368</b>		<b>46,050</b>	<b>27,396</b>	<b>773</b>	<b>74,219</b>

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## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 21 June 2023</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Statutory Finance Officer</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>2023-2027 Reserves Strategy</b>

### 1. **SUMMARY**

This report provides the Fire Authority with the updated Reserves strategy for the period 2023-2027. This updated strategy is based on the previously approved 2022-2026 Reserves strategy and reflects the movements in reserves which have taken place to the end of May 2023.

### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Approve the 2023-2027 Reserves strategy, attached within **Appendix 1**.
- b) Agree for the approved 2023-2027 Reserves strategy to be published on the website.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

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

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

- 4.1 The financial impact of this Reserves strategy has been included within the approved 2023/24 Annual Budget and the 2023-2027 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and has been reviewed by the Service Leadership Board, working with the Statutory Finance Officer. The outcome of this work is included in the Reserves Summary included in **Appendix 2**.

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

- 5.1 In accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework, Fire Authorities are expected to provide for reserves to manage their financial position and risks. It is important for the Fire Authority's reserves to form an integral part of the longer-term financial planning process and to be incorporated into the MTFP. Fire Authorities should establish a policy on reserves in consultation with their Statutory Finance Officer and a copy of the proposed 2023-2027 Reserves strategy is attached in **Appendix 1** for Members' consideration and approval.
- 5.2 Reserves are required to provide sufficient resources to support approved priorities and strategies, such as the three-year Capital Strategy and the Transformation and IT Infrastructure Programmes. The Fire Authority's reserves should also provide sufficient cover to fund working balances and unexpected events and/or emergencies, to support the financial health of the organisation.
- 5.3 As approved within the 2023-2026 Capital Strategy and advised within the 2023-2026 Treasury Management Strategy, the Fire Authority needs to ensure capital expenditure and investment plans are affordable, prudent, sustainable and demonstrate value for money. As such, capital reserves have been prioritised to support the approved Capital Strategy which will reduce the costs of additional borrowing for the Fire Authority during this period.
- 5.4 Section 42A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires precepting authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the Fire Authority's budget requirements.
- 5.5 As part of the Annual Budget process and the Medium-Term Financial Planning and in accordance with section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Statutory Finance Officer has a duty to report to the Fire Authority on the robustness and adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.
- 5.6 The updated Reserve Summary at **Appendix 2** shows the detail of the current and future planned reserve levels over a four-year period, to align to the approved MTFP. The Reserves strategy should include details of the current



and future planned reserve levels, setting out the total amount of reserves and the amount and purpose for each reserve. This information is provided in **Appendix 2**.

## **6. RISKS**

- 6.1 The key risk to the Fire Authority is to provide for an appropriate level of reserves to enable the Service to meet its approved strategic priorities without disrupting service delivery, whilst maintaining financial viability.
- 6.2 The effective management of the Fire Authority's reserves links to Corporate Risk 20 – Funding and Resource Pressures. To mitigate risks to the Fire Authority, the Service has integrated the review of reserves into its Financial Planning processes through the MTFP and Annual Budget Setting. As part of management actions to mitigate risk, the Statutory Finance Officer reviews the level and adequacy of reserves with the Service Leadership Board.

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

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

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- a) 2022-2026 Reserves Strategy, AFA 22.06.2022 Paper 12

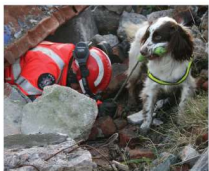
## **9. APPENDICES**

- 1. 2023-2027 Reserves Strategy
- 2. 2023-2027 Reserves Summary

## **10. REPORT CONTACT**

Verity Lee, Statutory Finance Officer  
Claire Bentley, Head of Finance

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## **2023-2027 Reserves Strategy**

### **a) Background**

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

There are several reasons the Fire Authority holds reserves which are explained within this strategy. It is important to note there is no statutory minimum or maximum level of reserves, but the Fire Authority, supported by the Statutory Finance Officer, must review to ensure reserves are set at a realistic level.

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

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

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

### **c) Statutory Requirement**

The following statutory requirements apply to Fire Authority reserves:

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

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

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

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

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

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

The latest framework was issued in May 2018 and can be viewed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england--2>

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

1. Fire and rescue authorities should establish a policy on reserves and provisions in consultation with their chief finance officer. General reserves should be held by the fire and rescue authority and managed to balance funding and spending priorities and to manage risks. This should be established as part of the medium-term financial planning process.
2. Each fire and rescue authority should publish their reserves strategy on their website, either as part of their medium-term financial plan or in a separate reserves strategy document. The reserves strategy should include details of current and future planned reserve levels, setting out a total amount of reserves and the amount

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of each specific reserve that is held for each year. The reserves strategy should cover resource and capital reserves and provide information for the period of the medium-term financial plan (and at least two years ahead).

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

#### **d) Professional Guidance**

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

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

As part of their role the external auditor is required to satisfy themselves that the Fire Authority has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and

effectiveness in the use of resources. They are also required to obtain sufficient and appropriate audit evidence about the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern assumption in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements and to conclude whether there is a material uncertainty about the Fire Authority's ability to continue as a going concern. It is not their responsibility to prescribe the optimum or minimum level of reserves for the Fire Authority.

#### **f) The Fire Authority's Strategy on reserves**

As part of the annual budget setting process and medium-term financial planning the Fire Authority will consider the establishment, maintenance and use of reserves. The nature and level of reserves will be agreed by the Fire Authority, informed by the judgement and advice of the Statutory Finance Officer. This will be based on an assessment of what is appropriate and necessary in the light of the risks and circumstances facing the Authority.

In accordance with the approved 2023-2026 Capital Programme Strategy, the Fire Authority will review the utilisation of all internal funds, including reserves to support its Capital Programme, prior to seeking additional external borrowings. This will ensure Value for Money is attained and reduce the pressure on the Revenue budget and the 4-year Financial Plan.

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

#### **g) Categories of reserves**

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

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



The Fire Authority maintains the following types of useable reserves:

- **general reserve (working balance):** to manage the impact of uneven cash flows and unexpected events or emergencies.
- **earmarked reserves**
  - **cash backed:** sums set aside to meet known or predicted specific requirements:
  - **non-cash backed:** sums set aside to meet known or predicted specific requirements where the sums are not held by the Fire Authority

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

The Statutory Finance Officer will advise the Authority on the adequacy of reserves as follows:

1. Reserves support delivery of approved Service Plan priorities.
2. Contingency reserve available for unforeseen events
3. Sufficient reserves in place to finance working balances to help finance uneven cash flow and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing.
4. Specific reserves are provided for approved projects.

**General Reserve (working balance)** – In considering the General Reserve the Statutory Finance Officer will have regard to:

- the strategic, legislative, operational and financial risk contexts within which the Authority will be operating through the medium-term.
- the overall effectiveness of governance arrangements and the system of internal control.
- the robustness of the financial planning and budget-setting process.
- the effectiveness of the budget monitoring and management process

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

**Earmarked Reserves** - In considering earmarked reserves the Statutory Finance Officer will have regard to matters relevant in respect of each reserve and will advise the Authority accordingly.

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

Reserves are an integral part of the financial risk assessment for the Fire Authority over the medium-term. The Fire Authority needs a General Reserve (working balance) to



provide protection against unforeseen events that impact on resources, without disrupting service delivery.

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

As part of the annual budget setting and medium-term financial planning process and in accordance with section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Statutory Finance Officer will report to the Fire Authority on the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. The Fire Authority is required to have regard to this report when making decisions about the necessary calculations.

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

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

#### **Determination and use of earmarked reserves:**

The process for the determination of earmarked reserves will be based upon the principles of effective operational and financial risk management.

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

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

A full review of existing earmarked reserves will be undertaken annually to ensure continuing relevance and adequacy. This review will be undertaken by the Service Leadership Board in conjunction with the Statutory Finance Officer as part of the Final Accounts process.

Any movement in earmarked reserves will be required to be endorsed annually by Members on the advice of the Statutory Finance Officer.

The details of earmarked reserves held at 31 May 2023 are shown in Appendix 2.

## Provisions

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

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

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

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

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

**AVON FIRE AUTHORITY**

**Summary of Reserves as at June 2023**

Reserve	Purpose	Utilisation	30 June 2022 £'000	Movement in year £'000	Balance as at March 2023 £'000	Reserves Strategy Movement £'000	Balance as at June 2023 £'000	Balance projected at 31 March 2027 £'000
<b>a) Cash backed Earmarked Revenue Reserves:</b>								
Ill health Pension Reserve	To fund fluctuations in ill health retirements	As required	230		230		230	230
Immediate Detriment Pension Reserve	To mitigate the impact of immediate detriment payments	As required	347		347	-197	150	0
Legal Fees Reserve	Finance unexpected Legal Costs	As required	30		30	150	180	100
Document Management and Retention System Reserve	To fund development of a Corporate wide document system to improve administration and information security requirements including GDPR.	Next 2 years	60		60		60	0
ESMCP Reserve	Government grant received to fund ESMCP project.	As required	611		611		611	611
Medical Intervention	To fund medical interventions and prevention initiatives	As required	31		31	-31	0	0
Invest to Save (former Austerity) Reserve	To support implementation of new procedures / ways of working	Next 4-5 years	0	417	417	3	420	200
Cultural Improvement Reserve	To support ongoing cultural improvement work, particularly with regard to the HMICFRS spotlight report	Next 2 years				100		0
Transformation Reserve	This reserve has been created to undertake digitalisation and corporate level projects of the Authority. Digitalisation includes the introduction of Office 365, incident resource management and business process re-engineering. Corporate level projects include collaboration, cultural reviews and Firewatch enhancement.	Next 2 years	1,355	-488	867		867	0
Community Fire Safety Reserve	To support update of Community Fire Safety systems and processes	Next 2 years	25		25		25	0
Communications - Infrastructure upgrades	To enable the upgrade comms infrastructure	Next 2 years	30		30		30	0
Control and Communications - Welfare/Site	To enable the welfare and rest areas for Control and Communications to be built and updated	Next 2 years	25		25	-25	0	0
National Operational Guidance Reserve	To implement the new National Operational Guidance (NatOG)	Next 2 years	300		300		300	0
Technical Fire Safety Reserve	Created to continue to support increased activity in Fire Safety as a result of additional grant funding received from the Government, in 2020, following the Grenfell Tower fire.	Next 2 years	167	190	357		357	100
Investment Fund Reserve	Investment fund allocated to specific projects which will be released once projects have progressed	Over next year	98		98		98	0
IT Comms and Digital Infrastructure Reserve	To address problems identified with the existing IT, Comms and Digital structure	Next 3 years	253		253		253	200
<b>Cash backed Earmarked Revenue Reserves</b>			<b>3,563</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>3,682</b>		<b>3,682</b>	<b>1,441</b>
<b>b) Non Cash backed - Earmarked Reserves:</b>								
PFI Equalisation Fund	Grant from the Government for the PFI project, along with contributions from partners is paid into an Equalisation Fund. This fund is administered by Gloucestershire County Council, on behalf of the partners.	2029/30 - End of PFI contract	1,240	-166	1,074		1,074	410
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>			<b>4,803</b>		<b>4,756</b>		<b>4,756</b>	<b>1,851</b>
General Reserve (Working Balance)		For unexpected events or emergencies	1,500		1,500		1,500	1,500
<b>Total Earmarked Revenue Reserves</b>			<b>6,303</b>		<b>6,256</b>		<b>6,256</b>	<b>3,351</b>
<b>c) Cash Backed Capital Reserves:</b>								
Unapplied Capital Receipts Reserve	This reserve is to fund the capital programme	Over the next 3 to 5 years	3,889	-3,889	0		0	0
General Capital Reserve	This reserve is to fund the capital programme		9,530	-101	9,429		9,429	0
<b>Total Reserves</b>			<b>19,721</b>	<b>-4,037</b>	<b>15,684</b>		<b>15,684</b>	<b>3,351</b>

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## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 21 June 2023</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>The Clerk</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Annual Review of Remuneration of CFO/CE</b>

### 1. **SUMMARY**

This paper outlines the National Joint Council's pay award for Brigade Managers for 2022 and 2023, which was belatedly announced on 31 May 2023.

### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Note the National Joint Council (NJC) pay award for Brigade Managers for 2022 and 2023, which was announced on 31 May 2023.
- b) Note that the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (CFO/CE) does not seek at this stage to engage the two-track approach, which allows for a local pay award.
- c) Refer senior officers pay (Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Fire Officers, Director of Corporate Services and Statutory Officers) to the Policy and Resources Committee for an independent review to ensure that senior officer salaries are aligned to national averages for the relevant population band and ensure that salary percentages reflect the responsibilities of senior officers.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The CFO/CEO is engaged subject to the 'National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services, Constitution and Scheme of Conditions of Service (5th Edition)', otherwise known as the 'Gold Book'.
- 3.2 In respect of salaries, the Gold Book section on 'Scheme of Conditions of Service' provides:

9. *The NJC will publish annually recommended minimum levels of salary applicable to chief fire officers/chief executives employed by local authority fire and rescue authorities.*
  10. *There is a two-track approach for determining levels of pay for Brigade Manager roles. At national level, the NJC shall review annually the level of pay increase applicable to all those covered by this agreement. In doing so, the NJC will consider affordability, other relevant pay deals and the rate of inflation at the appropriate date. Any increase agreed by the NJC will be communicated to fire authorities by circular.*
  11. *All other decisions about the level of pay and remuneration to be awarded to individual Brigade Manager roles will be taken by the local Fire and Rescue Authority, who will annually review these salary levels.*
  12. *Advice on implementation of a local salary structure is contained in Guidance at Appendix A.*
- 3.3 The Appendix referred to in paragraph 12 above is entitled '*Implementation of a Local Salary Structure Guidance*' and lists factors which should be considered in determining salary levels. It is recommended that this Guidance is considered as part of a formal review of senior officer salaries. Furthermore, the LGA is due to publish a Brigade Managers Salaries Survey with figures for 2022, which would inform a benchmarking review.
- 3.4 The Gold Book also includes a section on the application of other terms and conditions and at paragraph 26 states:
26. *In relation to matters not covered herein, a Brigade Manager shall be entitled to terms and conditions of service no less favourable than those relevant terms and conditions applying to an Area Manager under the Scheme of Conditions of Service of the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services as set out in Appendix C*
- 3.5 The NJC announced a pay award for Grey Book pay (operational staff up to the rank of Area Manager) of 7% effective from 1 July 2022 and 5% effective from 1 July 2023. The recent pay award to Brigade Managers could be considered to be less favourable than that awarded to operational staff.

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

- 4.1 Funding for staffing costs is contained within existing budgets. Any increase agreed nationally will also be met from existing budgets.

## 5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 In 2017 Avon Fire & Rescue Service re-structured its senior management team and removed the role of Deputy Chief Fire Officer. Since then, there have been several changes in officer responsibilities, however, the formula for calculating salaries as a percentage of the Chief Fire Officer's salary has not been reviewed since 2017. It is therefore assessed that a review is overdue and should be considered as part of wider sector benchmarking of senior officer salaries.

### National Joint Council (NJC)

- 5.2 Annually the NJC publish minimum rates of pay applicable to CFO/CEO by reference to Population Bands. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) publishes key facts for Avon Fire & Rescue Services, including a population of 1.16 million. This equates to NJC Population Band 3 (1,000,001 to 1,500,000); the NJC updated the minimum salary for new appointments effective from 1 January 2022 as £123,189 and from 1 January 2023 as £127,501, see **Appendix 1**. Prior to the current pay award for 2022 and 2023 being calculated the average basic pay for a CFO in Population Band 3 from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 was £152,038 and from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 was £154,922.
- 5.3 On 31 May 2023, the NJC announced the pay awards for brigade managers of a 4% increase on basic pay with effect from 1 January 2022, and a 3.5% increase on basic pay with effect from 1 January 2023 (also at **Appendix 1**). Both awards will be backdated.
- 5.4 As explained in paragraph 3.2 above, the second part of the two-track approach to the CFO/CE's pay, is determined locally by the Fire Authority, which option was highlighted by National Employers during pay negotiations:
- '...it is also incumbent upon us to remind you that the Gold Book does allow for a twin track approach to pay – this means, that a further increase could be applied following a **local review** should an individual FRA choose to do so... [emphasis added]*
- 5.5 As in previous years, the CFO/CE recommends that at this stage there is no local pay award but recommends that senior officer salaries are locally reviewed independently to ensure alignment with the sector.
- 5.6 All Members of the Service Leadership Board (SLB) and the Statutory Officers are currently paid a set percentage of the CFO/CE salary and therefore the pay rates for SLB and Statutory Officers, including both backdated awards, as from 31 May 2023 will be:

<b>Post</b>	<b>New Appointments</b>	<b>01 Jan 22</b>	<b>01 Jan 23</b>
CFO	£148,238	£154,168	£159,564
ACFO (75%)	£111,179	£115,626	£119,673
Directors & Statutory Officers (65%)	£96,355	£100,209	£103,717

NB the Statutory officers earn pro-rata salaries to reflect their part-time roles.

## **6. RISKS**

- 6.1 The Fire Authority is required to be transparent about its pay to the CFO/CE. Salary levels can impact upon recruitment and retention, particularly when considering pay differentials with Area Managers employed under the Grey Book. It is important that the Fire Authority has quality and talented individuals holding senior roles, to drive its priorities.

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

- 7.1 Under the Localism Act 2011 the Fire Authority is required to publish a Pay Policy Statement by 31 March each year, which includes the pay of the CFO/CE and a comparison of that pay to other members of staff. The Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23 was presented to the Fire Authority meeting on 30 March 2022. Unfortunately, at that time there were no announcements regarding Gold Book pay awards for 2022 and 2023, so the figures only included the CFO/CE pay award from 1 January 2021 (announced 24 June 2021).

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- a) National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services 'Constitution and Scheme of Conditions of Service', known as the 'Gold Book'.
- b) Paper 13, 'Approval of Pay Policy Statement 2022/23' to Avon Fire Authority meeting on 30 March 2022, at the following link:

[Avon Fire Authority meeting documents 30 March 2022](#)



**9. APPENDICES**

1. NJC letter entitled 'Pay Awards – 2022 & 2023' dated 31 May 2023.

**10. REPORT CONTACT**

Amanda Brown, Clerk to the Fire Authority, extension 231.

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Employers' Secretary, Naomi Cooke  
18 Smith Square,  
London, SW1P 3HZ  
Telephone 020 7664 3000  
e-mail: [firequeries@local.gov.uk](mailto:firequeries@local.gov.uk)

Staff Side Secretary, Simon Shilton  
Fire Leaders Association  
Email: [Simon.Shilton@avonfire.gov.uk](mailto:Simon.Shilton@avonfire.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.prospect.org.uk/fla](http://www.prospect.org.uk/fla)

**NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL  
FOR BRIGADE MANAGERS OF  
LOCAL AUTHORITY  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES**

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**To: Chairs of Fire Authorities  
Chief Fire Officers  
Clerks to Fire Authorities  
Directors of Human Resources  
Members of the National Joint Council**

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31 May 2023

**PAY AWARDS - 2022 & 2023**

1. We write to inform you that the NJC has agreed the following pay awards:
  - 4 % increase on basic pay with effect from 1 January 2022
  - 3.5 % increase on basic pay with effect from 1 January 2023
2. The pay of all brigade managers covered by the NJC's agreement should therefore be increased and backdated accordingly.
3. Revised minimum annual rates of pay for chief fire officers effective from 1 January 2022 & 1 January 2023 are **attached**.
4. In each case the minimum salary arrangements for new appointments in population bands 1 and 2 remain as defined in the 2006/2007 pay settlement (issued by circular on 7 December 2006) and will be subject to review in due course.

Yours faithfully,

**NAOMI COOKE  
SIMON SHILTON**  
Joint Secretaries

**ANNUAL RATES OF PAY FOR CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS  
FROM 1 JANUARY 2022**

<b>Population band 1</b>	Up to 500,000
<b>Minimum rate of pay</b>	£109,630*
<b>Population band 2</b>	500,001 to 1,000,000
<b>Minimum rate of pay</b>	£109,630*
<b>Population band 3</b>	1,000,001 to 1,500,000
<b>Minimum rate of pay</b>	£123,189
<b>Population band 4</b>	1,500,000 and above (except London)
<b>Minimum rate of pay</b>	£135,394
<b>Population band 5</b>	London
<b>Minimum rate of pay</b>	£148,819

\*New appointments in accordance with paragraph 4 above

**ANNUAL RATES OF PAY FOR CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS  
FROM 1 JANUARY 2023**

<b>Population band 1</b>	Up to 500,000
<b>Minimum rate of pay</b>	£117,305*
<b>Population band 2</b>	500,001 to 1,000,000
<b>Minimum rate of pay</b>	£117,305*
<b>Population band 3</b>	1,000,001 to 1,500,000
<b>Minimum rate of pay</b>	£127,501
<b>Population band 4</b>	1,500,000 and above (except London)
<b>Minimum rate of pay</b>	£140,133
<b>Population band 5</b>	London
<b>Minimum rate of pay</b>	£154,028

\*New appointments in accordance with paragraph 4 above

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