

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

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

1. **SUMMARY**

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

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Avon Fire Authority is asked to:

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

3. BACKGROUND

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

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report has no direct financial implications.

5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS

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

Prevention

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

Protection

- **Enhancing our business fire safety provisions**

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

Response

- **Enhancing medical response**

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

- **Extreme weather**

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

- **Standards of cover review**

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

Resilience

- **Community Risk Profile Software**

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

- **Workforce Planning**

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

Improving our Service

- **Optimising (Operational) Productivity**

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

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

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

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

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

Investing in our Staff

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

6. RISKS

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

7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

8. APPENDICES

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

9. REPORT CONTACT

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