

APPENDIX 2

Introduction to the Avon Fire Authority Constitution



AVON
FIRE AUTHORITY

www.avonfire.gov.uk



Avon Fire Authority (“the Authority”) has, for many purposes, the status, rights and duties of a Local Authority under the Local Government Act 1972 and other local government legislation. It is funded from Government Grants and by precepting the constituent councils of Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire.

The Authority’s membership comprises 20 elected members who are councillors appointed by the constituent Councils. This is done on a proportional basis to reflect the relative number of local government electors in each council area. Members are accountable in their decisions to the Fire Authority rather than the individual councils from which they are appointed. In addition, the current Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset is a member of the Authority, making a total membership of 21.

The Authority’s primary statutory responsibilities are set out in:

- The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Policing and Crime Act 2017
- Fire Safety Act 2021

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England outlines Central Government’s priorities and objectives for Fire Authorities and the Authority must pay due regard to the framework in shaping its work.

The Authority delivers on its statutory responsibilities through the “Avon Fire & Rescue Service” (the Service). The Authority has overall responsibility for setting the strategic policy direction for the Service, agreeing the budget necessary to deliver the policy direction and subsequently ensuring the Service is performing to the required standard by undertaking performance oversight and scrutiny activity.

The Authority has decided that the most efficient, effective, and transparent way to discharge its governance responsibilities, and ensure it meets other requirements such as satisfying the expectations of His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), is through a two-committee structure. In practice, this means that the full Fire Authority retains decision making responsibility for all matters legally reserved to it but has delegated responsibility for some upstream work in policy development and resource allocation to a Policy and Resources Committee. It has also delegated responsibility for its audit functions and downstream scrutiny and performance oversight activity to an Audit, Governance and Oversight Committee.



Further details of how this division of governance responsibilities operates are set out in the Scheme of Delegation, and the Terms of Reference for the Authority and each of its two Committees.

Whilst the Authority and its committees retain decision making responsibility for strategic policy setting and political oversight, it has delegated responsibility for the day-to-day running of the Service to the Chief Fire Officer. This delegation of responsibilities confirms the Authority's commitment to the principle of "**Operational Independence**" for the Chief Fire Officer.

The Authority has 2 Statutory Officers who are assigned specific legal responsibilities:

- a. The Clerk to the Authority (Clerk) who is the Monitoring Officer under Section 5 of the Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
- b. The Statutory Finance Officer to the Authority who is the Chief Finance Officer under Section 112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

Details of their duties and responsibilities can be found in the above legislation and the Authority's Scheme of Delegation. In summary terms, their primary roles are to ensure the Authority and Service act in a legally compliant (Monitoring Officer) and financially responsible (Statutory Finance Officer) manner.

This Constitution sets out how the Authority operates, how decisions are made, and procedures and legislation are followed to ensure that an efficient, effective, transparent, and accountable service is delivered to communities and businesses across Avon. Some of these processes are required by law, whilst others are matters for the Authority to determine.

The Constitution is divided into sections which deal with different aspects of the Authority's governance arrangements and are presented as stand-alone documents for ease of reference.

The Authority also publishes a Service Plan, which includes its Integrated Risk Management Plan, to confirm the strategic priorities it has set in support of its stated Vision "to provide the highest standard and best value Service to the community."



Our Vision

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



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

Our mission

To improve public safety through prevention, protection, response and resilience.



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

Our values

Respect

Honest

Courageous

Ambitious

Inclusive

Transparent



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

