

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	Avon Fire Authority
MEETING DATE:	Wednesday, 20 March 2024
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	2024-2028 Service Plan including CRMP

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. The Service Plan (SP) 2024-2028 sets out the Avon Fire Authority's (AFA) strategic aims and objectives, acting as a point of reference for our staff, partners, and local communities. It highlights our achievements and areas that we consider are important, enabling us to execute our core Service activities excellently while delivering continuous improvement. Our strategic objectives aim to set a realistic and achievable vision for Avon Fire & Rescue Service (AF&RS) while ensuring we retain and improve our service to the public.
- 1.2. **Appendix 1** includes content for the online SP 2024-2028, in PDF format, which has been developed and reviewed by Service Leads. The new web-based format for the SP is being designed and developed, with supporting video content, to make the plan more accessible and engaging. This website is on track for launch in April 2024.
- 1.3. The AFA's eight-week public consultation period on the SP commenced on 21 December 2023 and ran until 14 February 2024. The results of which are detailed in **Appendix 2** and presented to the AFA for consideration.
- 1.4. Based on key findings, analysis, and a consultation process, the SP for 2024-2028 includes updated narrative in relation to key challenges and community risk findings, updated performance metrics, financial information, and recent Service achievements. Efficiency and effectiveness are key themes for the Service which have been prioritised further due to the global financial landscape and cost of living. Expenditure in areas such as premises, transport, supplies, and employee costs, are considered to ensure alignment with our Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- 1.5. Approval is sought from the AFA to publish the SP (2024–2028).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Avon Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Consider the outcomes of the public consultation.
- b) Approve the Service Plan 2024-2028 content in **Appendix 1** for publication in April 2024, following design and development of the new web-based Service Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. Elected Members of the AFA, the Service Leadership Board (SLB) and Service Leadership Team (SLT) have been kept informed of progress on the review and refresh of the SP objectives, with opportunities for collective discussion, comment, and confirmation of the revised document in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2. During the 2023/24 planning cycle, AF&RS considered the approach to our SP including its objectives, duration, and format. It was agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee (PRC) at its meeting dated 29 September 2023 to develop a four-year, non-rolling and web-based plan, which focuses on six key objectives.
- 3.3. The results of the public consultation are summarised in **Appendix 2**. The survey set out multiple questions asking for views on the actions identified to address local risks under the Service's six overarching objectives, as well as on value for money and our budget. In total 453 questionnaire responses were received over eight weeks and, overall, respondents were supportive of our proposed approach.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. This report has no direct financial implications as our Service planning is integrated with our financial planning to ensure alignment with the MTFP.

5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1. As reported to the PRC at its meeting dated 29 September 2023, the SP 2024-2028 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 six key objectives: Prevention, Protection, Response, Resilience, Improving our Service, and Investing in our Staff. Delivery of our strategic objectives will be supported by annual action plans, which break down objectives into SMART actions.
- 5.2. The SP objectives have been developed and refined taking into consideration our community risk findings, horizon scanning, HMICFRS findings, and the ongoing Efficiencies and Savings programme. There is increased focus on

executing our core Service activities excellently, while delivering continuous improvement and ensuring alignment with our MTFP, to achieve a balanced budget. The plan is kept under annual review and will be republished on a four-year schedule.

- 5.3. Our proposed strategic objectives are set out below. These objectives are underpinned by actions, which were included in the consultation process and can be viewed in the SP 2024-2028 content in **Appendix 1**.

Prevention – Strategic Objectives

- We will continue to educate our communities with a focus on those at higher risk by reducing harm and enhancing safety and wellbeing.
- We will work collaboratively across the Service to engage with our communities, focusing on those most vulnerable to embed our key safety messages.
- We will continue to support local services to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.
- We will increase our home fire safety activity by maximising resources available for home fire safety visits, prioritising those most vulnerable.
- We will embed and improve the training and effectiveness of safeguarding across all areas of our Service.

Protection – Strategic Objectives

- We will continue to protect our communities and businesses, using data analysis to identify and protect high-risk premises, ensuring that specialist fire safety advice is available 24/7 to manage urgent risks.
- We will continue to develop an effective system to gather and record up-to-date risk information to help protect firefighters, the public and property during an emergency.
- We will engage with businesses to reduce the impact of false alarms, which will increase our ability to focus on more productive tasks.
- We will continue to meet our legislative duties by engaging with businesses, and creating an effective quality assurance process, to prevent or reduce the effects of fire.

Response – Strategic Objectives

- We will continue to deploy our emergency resources effectively, and make improvements to our control capabilities, to meet our response standards.
- We will be well prepared and able to respond quickly and safely to emergencies, keeping our equipment, expertise, and skills up to date.
- We will plan our response to changes in our communities, including large-scale building developments, to ensure our resources can deliver the best possible service.

Resilience – Strategic Objectives

- We will continue to ensure we have the plans and resources in place to provide the services you need, whatever challenges we face.
- We will create and maintain a comprehensive system for managing operational and community risk, so we can quickly access and share risk information.
- We will ensure all staff are continually trained in line with National Operational Guidance and best practice, to deliver the best possible service to our communities.

Improving our Service – Strategic Objectives

- We will prioritise and accelerate progress to address recommendations from HMICFRS and meet national standards.
- We will make the most of our premises and resources so we can continue to deliver and improve the services we provide, in line with our Medium-Term Financial Plan to ensure financial sustainability and affordability.
- We will demonstrate our commitment to our staff and communities by ensuring our culture and core values align with the NFCC Core Code of Ethics.

Investing in our Staff – Strategic Objectives

- We will support our people to be the best they can be by providing excellent training and development opportunities during their career, ensuring capacity and capability to meet our strategic priorities.
- We will deliver a comprehensive range of activities to ensure we have a high level of health and safety compliance to keep our staff safe.

- 5.4. The Service will regularly monitor and review progress against these actions. This includes the capture and review of evidence to provide assurance that objectives have been achieved. In April 2025, as part of the annual update on our SP to the AFA, an update of progress made in year one of our 2024-2028 plan will be provided to Members.

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 for Governance (CR14), which is monitored and regularly reported to the SLT. The Corporate Risk Register is presented in full to the Audit, Governance and Oversight Committee twice yearly for scrutiny and approval. The SP (including CRMP), and associated action plans, is one of the mitigating controls in place to ensure that AF&RS is matching our resources to identified risk, setting our strategic

direction and objectives which are monitored and regularly reported to the SLT.

7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. The requirement for a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 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.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Service Plan – draft objectives for consultation report presented to the PRC 3 December 2023. Available at [Modern.Gov](#)
- Performance Report – presented to the Audit, Governance and Oversight Committee 15 March 2024. Available at [Modern.Gov](#)

9. APPENDICES

1. Service Plan 2024-2028 Content Document
2. Service Plan 2024-2028 Consultation Report

10. REPORT CONTACTS

Chief Fire Office/Chief Executive – Simon Shilton

Head of Corporate Assurance, Planning & Continuous Improvement –
Caroline Taylor

Corporate Assurance and Planning Manager – Scott Ward

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