

The Service thanks Ms Gwynne for her Public Access Statement.

I as Statutory Finance Officer will respond to the financial aspects:

Ms Gwynne raises questions around a provision made in prior years for some interim work required at the Bedminster Fire Station. We have previously responded to similar queries by email on 8th August 2023, during the public inspection period for the 2022/23 financial statements. The £203k provision remains within the accounts at 31 March 2023 and has been audited as part of the external audit procedures completed on the 2022/23 financial statements. This provision will be released during the 2023/24 financial year, during the same financial year that the refurbishment works at the Bedminster Fire Station commenced.

At the March 2019 Fire Authority meeting preconstruction spends for both the Bath and Weston Fire Stations were approved, £500k and £420k respectively. The Service has currently spent just over half of the approved allowance for Bath on the work required to complete up to the end of RIBA stage 2 and also on exploring options for collaboration with other emergency services to avoid potential future costs. There will be further preconstruction works, and associated costs, as the Service progresses through RIBA stage 3 and 4. The Service has spent around £200k to date on pre-construction work for the Weston Station, covering exploration of site disposal and alternative locations, retaining land and the option of rebuilding or refurbishing the Station. There will be further preconstruction work and associated costs as the Service progresses through RIBA stages 2, 3 and 4 associated with the Weston refurbishment.

The costs allocated within the proposed capital programme represent the current expected costs of construction for the works at both the Bath and Weston stations and includes allowances for both construction and non-construction costs. The non construction costs can be attributed to design work, consultancy costs, surveys, and other professional fees. The Service continues to work through the design stages for both sites, so the split of total costs between construction and non-construction has not yet been finalised.

Detailed papers will be brought to the July meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee to request approval to proceed with each of these projects. Once 'approval to proceed' has been granted our procurement department and premises team will conduct a tender process to ensure value for money to the Authority.

I will now hand over to the Clerk to deal with the remaining aspects of the PAS:

Ms Gwynne has again raised capital expenditure of £765K relating to Temple Back – she is attempting to re-open a matter which has been fully investigated by two firms of auditors (the court found no evidence of fault or flaws in those two Independent Investigations and accepted the findings of the auditors). Her request for documents made in June 2020 has been reviewed by The Information Commissioner. She appealed the Information Commissioner's decision to the First Tier Tribunal (Information Rights) and that Tribunal heard detailed evidence and refused her appeal on 30 November 2022 citing that the Appellant's persistent contact with the AFA has the effect of causing harassment and distress (the judgment is available

online). The Service consider this matter closed and will not be responding to any further comments about the topics covered by that Judgment.

Ms Gwynne's comments about the Chief Fire Officer's NJC pay award are addressed by paper 13 in the Agenda today.