



HEREFORD & WORCESTER Fire Authority

Full Authority

AGENDA

Monday, 13 February 2023

14:00

**Wyre Forest House Council Chamber
Wyre Forest District Council, Wyre Forest House,
Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY11 7WF**

Wyre Forest House Location Map

SAT NAV: DY11 7FB

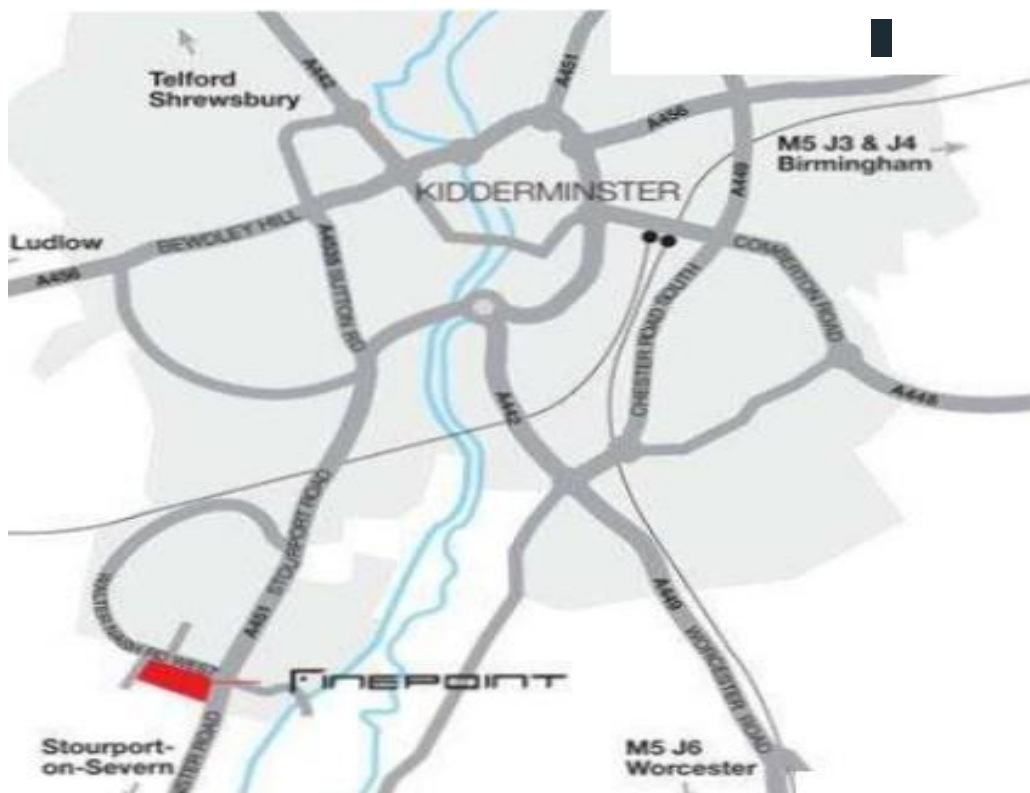
Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF
Reception at Wyre Forest House 01562 732101

From Stourport:

Head towards Kidderminster on the A451 Minster Road, passing Stourport High School and Stourport Sports Club on your left. When you reach the traffic lights at the crossroads, turn left into Walter Nash Road West (signposted Wyre Forest House). Then take your first left onto Finepoint Way. Follow the road around to your left and Wyre Forest House is at the end of the road on the left. Visitor parking is available and signposted from the mini roundabout.

From Kidderminster:

From Kidderminster, follow the signs for Stourport and head out of Kidderminster on the A451 Stourport Road, this road becomes a dual carriageway. You will pass 24/7 Fitness and Wyre Forest Community Housing on your left. At the crossroads with traffic lights turn right into Walter Nash Road West (there is a dedicated right hand-turn lane), signposted for Wyre Forest House. Then take your first left onto Finepoint Way. Follow the road around to your left and Wyre Forest House is at the end of the road on the left. Visitor parking is available and signposted from the mini roundabout.



ACCESS TO INFORMATION – YOUR RIGHTS. The press and public have the right to attend Local Authority meetings and to see certain documents. You have:

- the right to attend all Authority and Committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose “confidential information” or “exempt information”;
- the right to film, record or report electronically on any meeting to which the public are admitted provided you do not do so in a manner that is disruptive to the meeting. **If you are present at a meeting of the Authority you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed or recorded by anyone exercising their rights under this paragraph;**
- the right to inspect agenda and public reports at least five days before the date of the meeting (available on our website: <http://www.hwfire.org.uk>);
- the right to inspect minutes of the Authority and Committees for up to six years following the meeting (available on our website: <http://www.hwfire.org.uk>); and
- the right to inspect background papers on which reports are based for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting.

Please note that when taking part in public participation, your name and a summary of what you say at the meeting may be included in the minutes.

A reasonable number of copies of agenda and reports relating to items to be considered in public will be available at meetings of the Authority and Committees. If you have any queries regarding this agenda or any of the decisions taken or wish to exercise any of these rights of access to information please contact Committee & Members’ Services on 01905 368209 or by email at committeeservices@hwfire.org.uk.

WELCOME AND GUIDE TO TODAY’S MEETING. These notes are written to assist you to follow the meeting. Decisions at the meeting will be taken by the **Councillors** who are democratically elected representatives and they will be advised by **Officers** who are paid professionals. The Fire and Rescue Authority comprises 25 Councillors and appoints committees to undertake various functions on behalf of the Authority. There are 19 Worcestershire County Councillors on the Authority and 6 Herefordshire Council Councillors.

Agenda Papers - Attached is the Agenda which is a summary of the issues to be discussed and the related reports by Officers.

Chairman - The Chairman, who is responsible for the proper conduct of the meeting, sits at the head of the table.

Officers - Accompanying the Chairman is the Chief Fire Officer and other Officers of the Fire and Rescue Authority who will advise on legal and procedural matters and record the proceedings. These include the Clerk and the Treasurer to the Authority.

The Business - The Chairman will conduct the business of the meeting. The items listed on the agenda will be discussed.

Decisions - At the end of the discussion on each item the Chairman will put any amendments or motions to the meeting and then ask the Councillors to vote. The Officers do not have a vote.



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Full Authority

Monday, 13 February 2023, 14:00

Agenda

Councillors

Mr C B Taylor (Chairman), Mr R J Phillips (Vice Chairman), Mr A Amos, Mr D Boatright, Mr S Bowen, Mr B Brookes, Mr D Chambers, Mr B Clayton, Mr A Ditta, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mr J Hardwick, Mr M Hart, Mrs K Hey, Mrs E Marshall, Ms N McVey, Ms J Monk, Mr D Morehead, Mr R J Morris, Ms L Robinson, Mr L Stark, Mrs D Toynbee, Mr R M Udall, Mr T Wells

No.	Item	Pages
1	Apologies for Absence To receive any apologies for absence.	
2	Declarations of Interest (if any) This item allows the Chairman to invite any Councillor to declare an interest in any of the items on this Agenda.	
3	Chairman's Announcements To update Members on recent activities.	
4	Public Participation To allow a Member of the public to present a petition, ask a question or make a statement relating to any topic concerning the duties and powers of the Authority. Members of the public wishing to take part should notify the Head of Legal Services in writing or by email indicating both the nature and content of their proposed participation to be received no later than 2 clear working days before the meeting (in this case 8 February 2023). Further details about public participation are available on the website. Enquiries can also be made through the telephone numbers/email listed below.	

5	Confirmation of Minutes	1 - 5
	To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2022.	
6	Budget And Precept 2022/23 And Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine the Revenue and Capital Budgets and the Council Tax Requirement for 2023/24. 2. Approve the Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement for 2023/24. 3. Approve the Capital, Investment and Reserves Strategies. 4. Approve the level of Fees and Charges for chargeable services for 2023/24. 5. Identify potential future resources, their consequential impact on future year budgets and the future Council Tax Requirement (the Medium Term Financial Plan). <p>Report to follow.</p>	
7	Pay Policy Statement	6 - 17
	To present the Pay Policy Statement for 2023-2024 for approval and publication on the Authority's website.	
8	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Improvement Plan – Update Q3 2022 / 2023	18 - 44
	To update Members on the HMICFRS Improvement Plan following the inspection report dated 15 Dec 2021.	
9	Core Strategies	45 - 48
	This report summarises steps that have been taken to review the Core Strategies to ensure these strategies remain focused, effective and complies with relevant standards and developments.	
10	Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24	49 - 54
	To propose an increase in the allowances paid to Members for 2023/24 in accordance with the previous decision that increases be linked to the National Joint Council annual pay award for 'Green Book' staff.	
11	Fire Authority And Committee Dates 2023/24	55 - 57
	To approve the meeting dates for 2023/24.	

12 Minutes From A&S 18/01/23

58 - 73

To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 18th January and to approve the recommendations therein.

Exclusion of the Press and Public

In the opinion of the Clerk to the Authority the meeting will not be, or is not likely to be open to the public at the time when the appendix to Item 13 and Item 14 are considered for the following reason:

The appendix to item 13 and Item 14 are likely to disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

13 Urgent Decision - Redditch Fire Station

74 - 76

To advise Members of an urgent decision that has been taken since the last meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee in relation to the redevelopment of Redditch Fire Station.

14 Business Continuity Briefing Session

To brief Members on the current Business Continuity arrangements.



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Full Authority

Monday, 12 December 2022, 10:30

Chairman: Mr C B Taylor

Vice-Chairman: Mr R J Phillips

Minutes

Members Present: Mr A Amos, Mr D Boatright, Mr B Brookes, Mr D Chambers, Mr B Clayton, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mr J Hardwick, Mr M Hart, Mrs E Marshall, Ms N McVey, Mr D Morehead, Mr R J Phillips, Ms L Robinson, Mr L Stark, Mr C B Taylor, Mr R M Udall

Also in attendance: Mr Marc Bayliss, West Mercia Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner

0394 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr S Bowen, Cllr K Hey, Cllr J Monk, Cllr R Morris, Cllr D Toynbee and Cllr T Wells.

0395 Declarations of Interest (if any)

Cllr R Phillips declared that he was Vice Chair of the Firefighters Scheme Advisory Board (England and Wales), Chair of the Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board (England and Wales), and a member of the NJC for Fire Service (Grey Book and Green Book).

0396 Chairman's Announcements

Mr Marc Bayliss, the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and staff from the Performance and Information team were welcomed to the meeting.

The Chairman then informed Members of the following:

- Attended the recent Medal Ceremonies in Hereford and Worcester.
- Attended the Service Exercise at Worcester Cathedral along with other Fire Authority Members.
- The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) had taken the decision for a formal ballot regarding industrial action for the pay award, which was rejected earlier this year. The Chief Fire Officer explained to Members

that this could involve approximately 240 FBU Members out of 640 operational staff. It was estimated that the earliest time was probably early February for industrial action. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that there should be a reasonable number of operational staff working to respond to incidents, however rural areas could have longer waiting times for emergency service attendance.

0397 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

0398 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 12 October 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

0399 Attendance Performance Measure – proposed changes following public consultation

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented a proposal for the new Attendance Performance Measure for consideration and approval as recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 15 November 2022 when it had thoroughly examined the report in depth following a presentation from the external consultants, who had undertaken the consultation on our behalf.

Concern was expressed by one Member that the changes would make the Service's performance appear better than it actually was. However, the Chief Fire Officer explained that the national protocol did not include the call handling time and therefore the changes would actually show areas of real performance and be more transparent than the current arrangements. This would enable the Service to compare statistics with neighbouring Fire Services as it is a true comparator.

RESOLVED that a new Attendance Performance Measure be introduced with effect from 1st April 2023 as follows:

- 1. Attendance times for a broad range of emergency incidents will be measured across three time zones (10, 15 and 20 minutes from the fire station).;***
- 2. For attendance times that take longer than expected, the reasons why will be analysed and areas for improvement will be identified as appropriate, and quarterly performance for each area***

will be published on the internet; and

3. Attendance times will be measured from the time the fire station is alerted by Fire Control to the time the fire engine arrives at the incident scene.

0400 Community Risk Management Plan – Area-Wide Risk Review

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) to seek approval on the proposed methodology for undertaking a Risk Review Project.

[Cllr D Morehead left the meeting at 11.14am].

[Cllr M Hart left the meeting at 11.15am].

The proposal is to risk assess all 4,199 1km grid squares across the two counties, using historical incident data, prevention and protection activity over the last 10 years. A picture of risk will then be built up for each grid square.

[Cllr D Morehead returned to the meeting at 11.18am].

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that a project team with one year temporary staff funded from the existing budget would be established to ensure the work is completed within the proposed timescales, in preparation for work to start on the next CRMP. The Service already has the necessary software for the database and mapping requirements.

RESOLVED that a detailed risk assessment of each of the 4,199 1km grid squares across the Authority's area be undertaken to help inform the future review of the CRMP.

0401 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Improvement Plan – Update Q2 2022

The Assistant Director of Prevention updated Members on the HMICFRS Improvement Plan following the inspection report dated 15 December 2021.

Members were pleased to note that the action plans were progressing to address areas identified within the three themes: effectiveness, efficiency and people.

Members also noted the delays, caused by external technical issues, such as the Gartan upgrade and the implementation of the new

learning management system, that have impacted some anticipated timeframes.

The next full inspection is expected to be in June 2023, subject to confirmation.

RESOLVED that the actions agreed to address the HMICFRS Improvement Plan be noted.

0402 Statement of Assurance 2021/22

The Assistant Director of Prevention presented the draft Statement of Assurance 2021-22 for approval and publication.

Members were informed that the Statement of Assurance 2021-22 was designed to provide assurance on governance, financial and operational matters. Much of the information in the Statement is already publicly available elsewhere and links are provided in the document as advised in national guidance.

RESOLVED that the Statement of Assurance 2021-22 be approved for publication.

0403 Manchester Arena Inquiry – Volume 2 Report

The Chief Fire Officer provided assurance to Members that officers had undertaken an effective review of the outcomes of the Manchester Arena Inquiry and taken steps to address the issues raised by the Inquiry.

Members were reminded that at 22.30 hours on Monday 22 May 2017 a suicide bomber detonated an improvised device in an area known as the City Room, just outside the Manchester Arena following a concert.

In 2018, following the Kerslake Review, the Service undertook a full review of what the Fire and Rescue Service failed on. More recently in November 2022, the Volume 2 Report was published which focussed on the response of the emergency services to the attack. It was identified that due to command and control failings, the Fire Service failed to turn up at the scene at a time when they could have provided the greatest assistance.

Members were pleased to note the actions addressed by the Service to prevent any future failings and that the Service will continue to review their operations, planning and policy for all types of major incidents and prepare accordingly.

[Mr Marc Bayliss, the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, left the

meeting at 11.48am and returned at 11.52am].

RESOLVED that the measures taken within HWFRS to learn from and address the shortcomings in emergency response following the Manchester Arena bombing in 2017 be noted and approved.

0404 South District Exercise 2022

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members of the Service Exercise held on Sunday 6th November 2022 at Worcester Cathedral and the outcomes from the Exercise.

[Cllr D Boatright left the meeting at 11.54am].

Members who attended the exercise felt that there was opportunity for the Police to be more involved, not just the Traffic Police. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that this was an unfortunate admin error by the Service.

Members were pleased to note there would be a debrief in order to improve the Service's operational procedures when responding to major incidents that require a multi-agency resolution.

[Cllr D Boatright returned to the meeting at 12.00pm].

RESOLVED that the outcomes from the South District Exercise, the findings of which will be used to finalise the High Volume Pump (HVP) plan for the Cathedral and inform a review of the Cathedral's salvage plan, along with any other necessary operational points be noted.

0405 Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee

The Chairman of the Committee presented the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 15 November 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 15 November 2022 be received and noted.

The Meeting ended at: 12:08

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman

Report of the Assistant Director: Prevention

Pay Policy Statement 2023-2024

Purpose of report

1. To present the Pay Policy Statement for 2023-2024 for approval and publication on the Authority's website.
-

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Pay Policy Statement for 2023-2024 be approved and published on the Authority's website.

Introduction and Background

2. The Localism Act 2011 places a requirement on the Authority to approve and publish an annual Pay Policy Statement prior to the commencement of each financial year.
3. Pay Policy Statements must articulate an Authority's policy towards a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce, particularly its senior staff (or "Chief Officers") and its lowest paid employees. Pay Policy Statements must be prepared and approved by the Authority by 31 March in each year and be published as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter. Publication can be in such a manner as the Authority considers appropriate but must include publication on the Authority's website.

Pay Policy Statement 2023-2024

4. The Pay Policy Statement sets out the Authority's policies for the financial year 2023-2024 relating to:
 - The level and elements of remuneration of its Chief Officers;
 - The remuneration of its lowest paid employees; together with its definition of "lowest paid employees" and its reasons for adopting that definition;
 - The relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and other employees;
 - Other aspects of Chief Officers' remuneration namely:
 - Remuneration range for Chief Officers on recruitment;
 - Methodology for increases and additions to remuneration for each Chief Officer;
 - The use of performance-related pay for Chief Officers;
 - The use of bonuses for Chief Officers;
 - The approach to the payment of Chief Officers on their ceasing to hold office under, or be employed by, the Authority; and

- Transparency, that is, the publication of and access to information relating to the remuneration of Chief Officers.
5. It also includes the Authority's policies for the financial year relating to other terms and conditions applying to its Chief Officers.
 6. The definition of Chief Officers (as set out in section 43(2)) is not limited to Heads of Paid Service or statutory Chief Officers. It also includes those who report directly to them (non-statutory Chief Officers), and the people who report directly to them.
 7. The draft Pay Policy Statement for 2023-2024 is attached as Appendix 1 of this report.

Conclusion

8. The Localism Act requires the Authority to adopt, prior to the commencement of each financial year, a Pay Policy Statement to operate for the forthcoming financial year. This Statement sets out, amongst other items, the Authority's policy towards a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce and in particular the senior staff and the lowest paid employees.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial implications as a result of national pay awards. • Producing and publishing an annual Pay Policy Statement is a requirement of the Localism Act 2011.
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRMP • Core organisational strategies • People Strategy • Acts in line with the Core Code of Ethics
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to produce and publish an annual Pay Policy Statement by 31 March may attract public and political scrutiny and breach of section 38 of the Localism Act 2011.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	N/A

<p>Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)</p>	<p>No – the general principle supports a common and transparent approach by linking Executive pay rises to that of the lowest paid employees.</p>
<p>Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)</p>	<p>N/A. Data is published in line with the Local Government Transparency Code.</p>

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Pay Policy Statement 2023-2024

Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority Pay Policy Statement

Introduction

The Pay Policy Statement for Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority (the Authority) covers the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. The Statement sets out the Authority's approach to pay in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. It will be subject to review annually and in accordance with new legislation.

Pay Framework

Terms and conditions of employment for staff within the Authority pay framework are set nationally with any variations negotiated and agreed locally. Pay for all Authority staff is determined by:

- the Local Government Employers with the Employers' Sides of the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services;
- the Middle Managers' Negotiating Body;
- the NJC for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services;
- the Authority locally and Representative Bodies nationally.

Pay awards are considered annually for all staff.

Operational (Uniformed) – Salary and Remuneration

The pay structure for employees conditioned to the Scheme of Conditions of Service for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (Grey Book) provides a three point pay structure at Firefighter level and a two point pay structure for all other roles. Rates of pay are based on defined stages of development such as training, development and competent pay levels. After all the applicable functions have been assessed as having been achieved, competence is deemed to have been demonstrated and competent salary rate applied.

The Authority pay framework for operational staff was reviewed in 2003 and implemented in December 2003 following a rank-to-role exercise in line with national guidance, with the grade for each role being determined by a consistent job evaluation process.

For operational staff, any outcome of national consultations by the Local Government Employers in negotiation with the Representative Bodies is applied in July each year.

Support Roles (Non-Uniformed) – Salary and remuneration

The salary and remuneration levels for support staff are determined in accordance with the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service (Green Book).

The pay structure is aligned to the national spinal column point system. Spinal column points are configured into groups to provide incremental pay points. The incremental rises occur on 1 April, subject to national pay bargaining until the top of the spinal column is reached. Where an employee commences in post after 1 October and up to 31 March, they receive an increment six months later and then annually on 1 April.

The starting pay point for new employees (including internally appointed or promoted employees) should normally be the first point of the appropriate grade. There may be circumstances where it is necessary to make an offer that is at a higher point within the grade (e.g. level of relevant experience and knowledge, market forces).

The Authority pay framework for support staff was implemented in 2003 in line with national guidance, with the grade for each role being determined by the national Greater London Provincial Council (GLPC) Job Evaluation scheme. The Scheme was developed to support Local Authorities in carrying out their obligations under the national agreement on single status. The national agreement required all Local Authorities, and a number of other public sector employers, to review their pay and grading frameworks to ensure fair and consistent practice for different groups of workers with the same employer.

The grading structure was reviewed and implemented in 2012 for support Senior Management posts, PO3 and above.

For support staff, any outcome of national consultations by the Local Government Employers in negotiation with the Representative Bodies is applied in April each year.

Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive and Principal Officers – Salary and Remuneration

The National Joint Council (NJC) for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Authorities will publish annually recommended minimum levels of salary applicable to Chief Fire Officers/Chief Executives employed by local authority fire and rescue authorities.

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive's pay is considered by the Authority. Account is taken of relevant available information, including the salaries of Chief Officers in other comparable Fire and Rescue Services nationally. To support the pay review, information may be provided on inflation, earnings growth and any significant considerations from elsewhere in the public sector.

For Brigade Managers, any outcome of national consultations by the Local Government Employers in negotiation with the Trade Unions is applied in January each year.

The Authority has adopted the following pay levels for the Principal Officer team:

- Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) – 80.14% of Chief Fire Officer (CFO)
- Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) – 75.13% of CFO
- Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) – 80% of ACFO
- Director of Finance – 80% of ACFO

The Treasurer is part of the Director of Finance's role for which a specific honorarium is paid.

Market Forces

Where necessary the Authority may apply market supplements for specific roles in order to ensure that it can recruit the best staff. This approach will only be adopted where there is clear evidence of recruitment difficulty and any such payments will be time limited and reviewed. The Authority currently pays market supplements.

Pay Allowances, Expenses, Bonuses and Performance Related Pay

There are a number of allowances paid to employees where specific circumstances require this and where it can be justified, for example to cover additional responsibilities over and above pay grades. Allowances are negotiated nationally or locally through collective bargaining arrangements and/or as determined by Service policy.

Honorariums

These are additional payments for work carried out over and above the job role. These payments are made at the Chief Fire Officer's discretion.

When legitimately incurred in the performance of their duties, all employees are able to claim a restricted range of legitimate expenses. These are reimbursed in accordance with the relevant terms and conditions specified in the Gold, Grey or Green Book. All expenses have the usual audit requirements with the requirement to produce receipts, authorisation of all expenditure and the requirement to retain records.

The Authority does not award performance related pay nor bonuses in addition to base salary.

Latest National Pay Award

Annual pay awards normally take place as follows:

- Chief Officers' – January
- Non-uniformed Support staff – April
- Uniformed staff - July

The last annual pay award for these groups were as follows:

- Chief Officers – January 2021
- Non-uniformed Support staff - April 2022
- Uniformed staff - July 2021

Appendix 1 and 2 details the remuneration relating to the above groups.

Other Employment-Related Arrangements

Pension Schemes

The Service operates the following pension schemes:

- Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)
- 1992 Firefighter Pension Scheme (Closed to new members)
- 2006 Firefighter Pension Scheme (Closed to new members)
- Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2006 (Modified) (Closed to new members)
- The Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 (England)

In accordance with the Public Service Pensions Act 2013, the Authority has established a Pensions Board for the Firefighter's Pension Scheme.

New employees are automatically enrolled to the relevant occupational pension scheme as defined by their terms and conditions of employment on appointment and qualifying employees are automatically re-enrolled during their employment.

Employment Arrangements

Due to the nature and responsibilities of their role, Senior Managers are normally employed on full time, permanent employment contracts. The Service's policy and procedures with regards to recruitment of Chief Officers is set out within the Officer Employment Procedure Rules as set out in Part 4 of the Fire Authority Constitution.

When recruiting to all posts the Authority will take full and proper account of its own Equal Opportunities, Recruitment and Redeployment Policies. The determination of the remuneration to be offered to any newly appointed Chief Officer will be in accordance with the pay structure and the relevant policies in place at the time of recruitment.

Payments on Termination of Employment

The Authority's approach to statutory and discretionary payments on termination of employment for all staff prior to reaching normal retirement age are in accordance with the Service's Redundancy Policy and relevant terms and conditions as follows:

- Arrangements for Support and Control staff are set out within the Service's LGPS Discretions Policy Statement in accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment), (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006 [and if adopted] Regulations 12 and 13 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contribution) Regulations 2007.
- Arrangements for uniformed staff are set out within the relevant conditions of service i.e. NJC for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services and the NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services.

The Authority agreed on 18 February 2015 the discretion to pay voluntary redundancy to all employee groups based on the number of statutory weeks x actual weekly pay, enhanced by 75%. On the 8 October 2015, the Authority extended the Scheme of Delegation to permit the Chief Fire Officer to approve early retirements, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority and Treasurer, in the case of employees whose salary is less than £45,000 to include Officers at Station Commander role, subject to the pension costs still not exceeding £45,000. Where it is above £45,000 the decision will be taken by the Policy and Resources Committee.

Re-employment

The Authority operates a Flexible Retirement Policy for members of the Local Government Pension Scheme where the Authority has defined a specific need, and a business case shows there are clear benefits for the Authority to offer a re-employment opportunity. Part of the business case will include whether to offer the post out to open competition.

For members of the Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015, the Authority allows re-employment subject to the normal recruitment process. In order to protect public funds, Government policy requires public sector pension schemes to be abated when a public servant is re-employed following retirement.

Under Rule 4K of the 1992 Firefighters' Pension Scheme, the Authority can elect not to exercise the discretion to abate and would be responsible for paying an amount

equivalent to the amount that would be abated into the pension fund. When considering abatement, the Authority will take into account the following:

- Clear financial benefit to the Authority
- Staffing requirements of the Authority, in particular any shortage of specialisms

Mandatory Gender Pay Gap Reporting

The Authority is required to publish information regarding the Gender Pay Gap, as required under The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

The Equality and Gender Pay Gap Report has been considered by the Audit and Standards Committee in January 2022 and is published on the Service website.

Pay Grades 2023/24 Job	Remuneration		Pay Relationship to CFO (%)	Salary Range	
				Min	Max
1. Head of Paid Service					
Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive	£135,674		Recommended by Appointments Committee		
2. Statutory Chief Officer					
Treasurer (Part of Director of Finance role) receives an additional £3,000 honorarium for the extra responsibility of Treasurer Monitoring Officer (Part of Head of Legal Services role)					
3. Non-Statutory Chief Officer					
Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO)	£108,728		80.14		
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO)	£101,931		75.13		
Assistant Chief Officer (ACO)	£81,545		60.10		
Director of Finance (excluding Treasurer role)	£81,545		60.10		
Head of Legal Services *	£69,771		51.43	£65,856	£69,771
4. Deputy Chief Officer					
Assistant Director - Protection	£79,920	**	58.91	£72,861	£79,920
Assistant Director - Response	£79,920	**	58.91	£72,861	£79,920
Assistant Director - Assets	£79,920	**	58.91	£72,861	£79,920
Assistant Director - Prevention	£67,136		49.48	£65,856	£69,771
Head of Finance (Chief Accountant)	£67,136	***	49.48	£65,856	£69,771
5. Lowest Paid Employees ****					
Uniformed					
Firefighter (Control)	£22,981		16.94	£22,981	£30,632
Non-Uniformed					
Administrator	£21,575		15.90	£21,575	£21,968

Notes:

* Full time equivalent salary is shown. Current post holder is part time and paid a prorated amount.

** includes an additional 8% enhancement to provide a higher level of fire cover responsibility and includes a 20% allowance to provide out of hours fire cover on a continuous rota system.

*** includes a temporary uplift to Scale PO7

**** The lowest paid employees (Administrators) are employed on full time (37 hours) equivalent salaries in accordance with the minimum scale point in use within the Service grading structure. As at 1 April 2022, this is Scale 3, spinal column point 5.

The Head of Paid Service, Director of Finance, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer and uniformed Assistant Directors are provided with a motor vehicle for work purposes. Any private use is chargeable.

The Assistant Chief Officer, Head of Legal Services and the Assistant Director of Prevention receive an essential mileage car user allowance in accordance with the NJC provisions.

A number of staff members including the Head of Paid Service, all statutory and non-statutory Chief Officers and all Deputy Officers are provided with a mobile phone and laptop for work purposes. Any private use is chargeable.

Non-Uniformed Pay Grades from 1 st April 2022*	Pay Range Minimum	Pay Range Maximum	No of Staff In Post		
PO7	£65,856	£69,771	2		
PO6	£59,491	£62,921	0		
PO5	£53,527	£56,793	5		
PO4	£48,330	£51,971	1		
PO3	£42,503	£45,495	4		
PO2	£38,296	£41,496	5		
PO1	£34,723	£37,261	18		
SO2	£32,909	£34,723	6		
SO1	£30,151	£32,020	14		
Scale 6	£27,344	£29,439	11		
Scale 5	£24,496	£26,845	24		
Scale 4	£22,369	£24,054	17		
Scale 3	£21,575	£21,968	23		
Total			130		
Uniformed Pay Grades **			WT	RDS	Total
Area Commander	£56,220	£61,667	3	0	3
Group Commander	£47,887	£53,086	9	0	9
Station Commander	£41,578	£45,861	19	0	19
Station Commander Control	£39,499	£43,568	1	0	1
Watch Commander***	£36,521	£39,974	66	17	83
Watch Commander Control	£34,695	£37,975	3	0	3
Crew Commander ****	£34,269	£35,747	31	44	75
Crew Commander Control	£32,556	£33,960	9	0	9
Firefighter	£24,191	£32,244	108	298	406
Firefighter Control	£22,981	£30,632	14	0	14
Total			263	359	622

NOTES: Number of staff in post is as at 31 December 2022 and is based on people in their substantive roles. These figures are headcount not full time equivalent.

*Includes Fixed Term Contracts, six at Scale 3, two at scale 5, one at scale 6

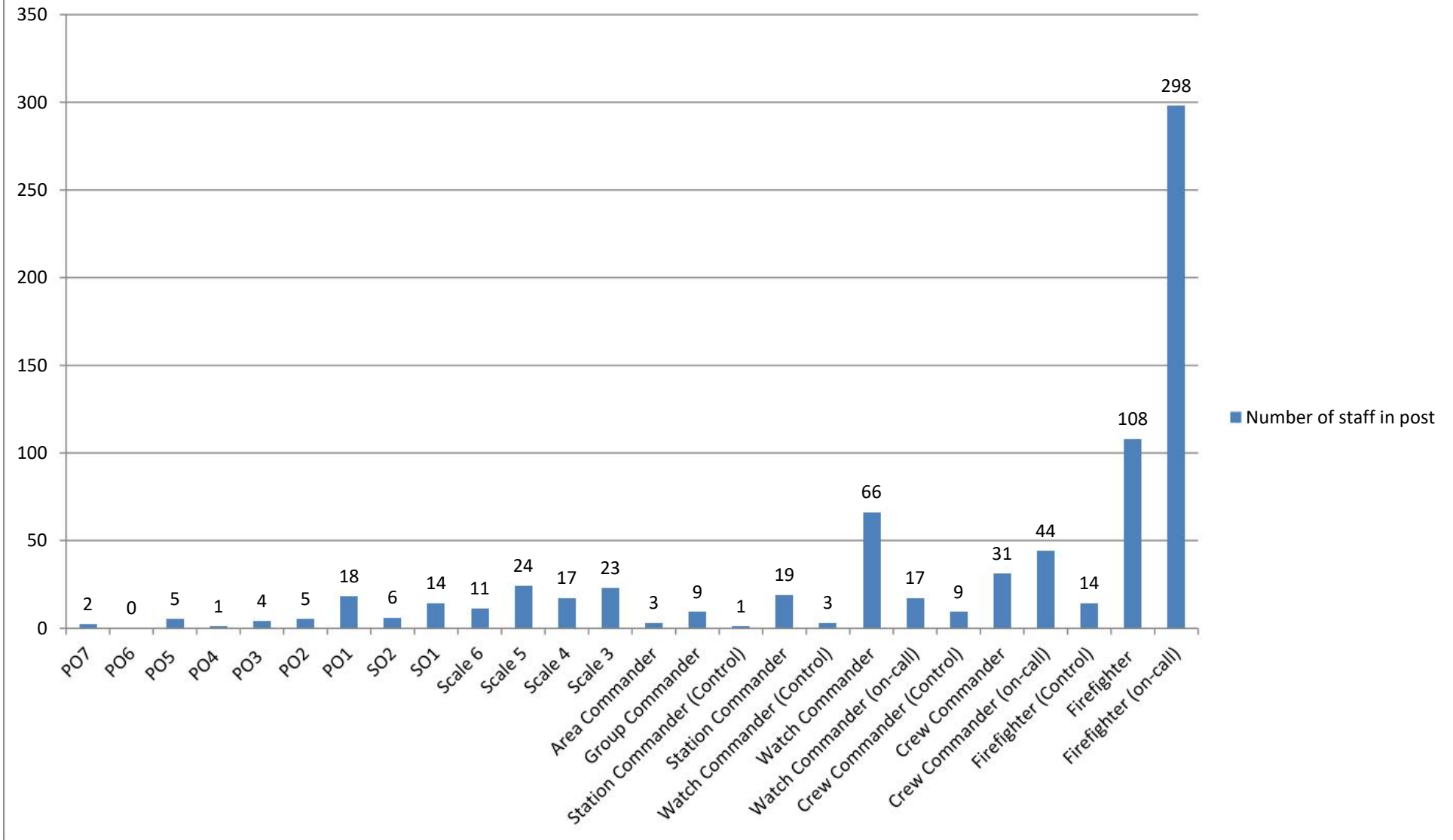
** On Call employees have a different pay structure to Wholetime –

a retaining fee of either 8%, 9.5%, 11%, 11.5% or 12% of the equivalent Wholetime rate, depending on cover, plus the same hourly rate as Wholetime.

*** Includes one fixed term Wholetime Watch Commander contract and one secondee

**** Includes three fixed term Wholetime Crew Commander contracts and one secondee

Grades and staff in post



Report of the Assistant Director: Prevention

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Improvement Plan – Update Q3 2022 / 2023

Purpose of report

1. To update Members on the HMICFRS Improvement Plan following the inspection report dated 15 Dec 2021.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Authority notes the actions agreed to address the HMICFRS Improvement Plan.

Introduction and Background

2. At the Fire Authority meeting on 15 February 2022, Members received a paper advising that the Service were developing an Improvement Plan to address the findings of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection report dated 15 Dec 2021.
3. Progress against the Improvement Plan is reported on quarterly to address the 22 Areas for Improvement (AFI) identified during the inspection.

HMICFRS Improvement Plan – Progress Update

4. The delivery of the Improvement Plan is overseen by members of the Performance and Information (P&I) team, who meet regularly with senior managers responsible for each Area for Improvement to prepare updates on actions proposed and completed. The P&I team also ensure that actions carried out are fully evidenced and available for evaluation and audit. The fourth update, covering up to the end of December 2022 (Q3), is attached to this report (see Appendix 1).

5. The Strategic Leadership Board have oversight of the improvement plan and are provided with quarterly updates.
6. The update shows that action plans are progressing to address areas identified within the three themes covered in the HMICFRS report:
 - Effectiveness,
 - Efficiency and
 - People.
7. There have been some delays, caused by external technical issues, such as the Gartan upgrade and the implementation of the new learning management system. Also, other issues such as recruitment processes, and the cancellation of collaborative working arrangements have affected several of the areas for improvement.
8. The Cause of Concern related to Prevention is being reported on separately via the Audit and Standards Committee.
9. Quarterly updates will continue to be provided to the Strategic Leadership Board and also to the Fire Authority.
10. It is anticipated that the next full inspection will be late Spring / early Summer 2023.

Conclusion/Summary

10. Members are recommended to note progress to address the HMICFRS Improvement Plan. Further progress updates will be reported each quarter.
11. Subject to any matters arising following consideration by the Fire Authority, the update will be published on the Service website.

Corporate Considerations

<p>Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)</p>	<p>The Improvement Plan highlights areas for improvement relating to effectiveness, efficiency and people. Actions to address these areas are likely to have resource implications, which will be identified in the Improvement Plan.</p>
<p>Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).</p>	<p>Actions proposed in the Improvement Plan are likely to have an impact on both the CRMP and the MTFP. All proposals will be assessed to ensure they meet the Service's overall Core Purpose and Vision.</p>
<p>Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).</p>	<p>Any risks associated with proposals will be assessed through the Improvement Plan.</p>
<p>Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)</p>	<p>Proposals to deliver the Improvement Plan have the full participation of Senior Managers in relevant Service departments. The Improvement Plan is publicly available on the Service website.</p>
<p>Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) been completed? If not, why not?)</p>	<p>An EIA is not required for this report. EIAs will be completed as appropriate when preparing proposals through the Improvement Plan.</p>

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – FRA HMICFRS Improvement Plan 2021-22; Update Q3 2022



HMICFRS Improvement Plan 2021/22

Updated: Q3 2022





During April to May 2021, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) inspected Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS). The Service was selected as one of the first services to be inspected in round 2. This is the third inspection of HWFRS following the first inspection in July 2018 and the Covid-19 inspection during the autumn 2020.

The inspectors from HMICFRS carried out their in-depth review of our Service, focusing on how effective and efficient we are and how well we look after our people. Their report was published in December 2021, and this is [the link to the report](#).

The inspection considered three main questions for this cycle of inspections:

Effectiveness – *the operational service provided to the public (including prevention, protection, and response);*

Efficiency - *the efficiency of the service (how well it provides value for money, allocates resources to match risk, and collaborates with other emergency services);*

People – *how well the service looks after its people (how well it promotes its values and culture, trains its staff and ensures they have the necessary skills, ensures fairness and diversity for the workforce, and develops leadership and service capability).*

The Service was found to be 'requiring improvement' when considering effectiveness, efficiency and people. The inspection report highlighted 22 Areas for Improvement (AFI) and recommended that action be taken to address them. Therefore, the Service has prepared an Improvement Plan. This Improvement Plan is owned by senior managers and is updated on a quarterly basis and published as progress is made.

This report provides an update of progress in implementing the Improvement Plan up to the end of December 2022 against the identified AFI's noted in the HMICFRS report.

HMICFRS Inspection – Improvement Plan 2021-22 Update: Q3 2022

Effectiveness – ES1	
Area for Improvement	The service should ensure that the aims and objectives of prevention, protection and response activity are clearly defined in its Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
Publish Core Strategies for Protection, Prevention and Response linked to delivery of the CRMP, communicate across Service and develop understanding.	Complete
Business Planning cycle and process embedded across Service linked to delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan and three Core Strategies. Digital tracking process set up electronically to monitor progress.	Complete
CRMP Fire Standard to be analysed and a gap analysis produced and shared with the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB). Learning defined and mapped into clear recommendations for implementation into the new CRMP process for launch in 2025.	Complete
Develop an evidential based resource to risk assessment. Clearly identifying areas of risk, resource and people assets that can be utilised.	Q1 2023/24
Key Performance Indicators (KPI) identified and agreed specifically linked to delivery of the CRMP and Core Strategy. An approach to be mapped out to identify trends and exception reporting.	Complete
Strategic lead	<i>DCFO & ACFO</i>

Effectiveness – ES2	
Area for Improvement	The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date temporary risk information.
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
A risk management system procurement process to be initiated.	Complete
Data cleanse of data in preparation for transfer to a new system to be commenced.	Q2 2023/24
Upon procurement of a new system, a comprehensive training and communication programme to support embedding of a new system to commence.	Q2 2023/24
Explore development of an internal and external audit process of the information held within the Service.	Q2 2023/24
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Protection</i>

Effectiveness – ES3	
Area for Improvement	The service should evaluate its prevention work so that it understands what works.
HWFRS Action Proposed	
There will be a process to ensure targeting of prevention activity meets the needs of the community.	Complete
A clear reporting framework on the performance and evaluation of prevention activity will be developed.	Complete
A quality assurance process for Home Fire Safety Visits will be agreed.	Complete
Investigate a body to conduct a peer review or external assessment of delivery against the prevention Cause of Concern Action Plan.	Complete
The University of Worcester Evaluation of Safe and Well Visit Report will be reviewed and suggested improvements to delivery / recommendations mapped out into an action plan.	Complete
Working with the Corporate Communications department develop and publish a Prevention Communications Plan and introduce a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaigns to ensure continuous improvement.	Complete
The Service will undertake an annual process to evaluate the effectiveness of prevention activity utilising available appropriate methodologies.	Q1 2023/24
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Prevention</i>

Effectiveness – ES4

Area for Improvement	The service should ensure that it has an effective quality assurance process in place, so that staff carry out audits to an appropriate standard.	
HWFRS Action Proposed		Target Date
Performance appraisals with employees in the Technical Fire Safety team of the Protection Department are being booked in and a peer review of audits for the purposes of quality assurance to be scheduled aligned with these dates.		Complete
Technical Fire Safety quality assurance proforma finalised.		Complete
Agree an external peer review schedule with neighbouring Services in order to quality assure processes.		Complete
Experian data being merged with Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS) data to ensure Protection Services applied equitably.		Complete
Conduct external peer review quality assurance process, and consider recommendations.		2023/24
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Protection</i>	

Effectiveness – ES5	
Area for Improvement	The service should assure itself that its use of enforcement powers prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce the risk.
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
HWFRS to ensure its risk-based inspection programme prioritises the premises at the highest risk.	Complete
Fully complete alignment to the NFCC competency framework for Fire Safety Regulators.	Q4 2022/23
Arrange specialist legal training for L4 Diploma staff (to include prosecution case studies)	Completed
Finalise prosecution support agreement with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service and Telford and Wrekin Council legal services (We are no longer pursuing this agreement)	Completed
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Protection</i>

Effectiveness – ES6

Area for Improvement

The service should ensure it effectively addresses the burden of false alarms.

HWFRS Action Proposed

Target Date

Commence a review of how we respond to unwanted fire signals and act on report outcomes

Q4 2022/23

Strategic lead

Assistant Director: Protection

Effectiveness – ES7	
Area for Improvement	The service should ensure its Response Strategy provides the most appropriate response for the public in line with its Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).
HWFRS Action Proposed	
Response Strategy linked to the risks in the CRMP published.	Complete
Response annual and three-year Business Plan (linked to delivery of the Response Strategy) finalised.	Complete
Special appliances review report and evaluation finalised.	Complete
Commence the process to identify an external agency to provide risk data mapping.	Q4 2023/24
Review the previously used Fire Cover research methodology, ensuring it is adaptive enough to meet new and emerging risks.	Q1 2023/24
Review of White Paper implications on CRMP and Response Strategy.	Unknown
Prepare a report on the review of Water First Responders capability across the Service (Response)	Q4 2022/23
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Response</i>

Effectiveness – ES8	
Area for Improvement	The service should ensure it has an effective system for staff to use learning and debriefs to improve operational response and incident command.
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
Compare the number and types of incidents requiring a debrief against returns for the last 12 months and identify potential themes and target areas to improve organisational learning and adoption of debriefing.	Complete
Identify replacement AIM & Debrief system options.	Q4 2022/23
Review current practises and procedures for the triggering of and submitting debriefs.	Complete
Develop a communication proforma to improve organisational awareness of the Debrief process and its outcomes to improve organisational adoption.	Q1 2023/24
Develop robust sharing mechanisms to ensure learning is shared to multi agency and regional partners incorporating JOL & NOL systems.	Complete
Review current policy and identify potential options to improve on scene Active Incident Monitoring (AIM) & Debrief processes.	Q1 2023/24
Implement new AIM & Debrief systems	Q1 2023/24
Implement an update monitoring process to improve on scene monitoring.	Q1 2023/24
Introduce an assurance process to assure the adoption and use of the AIM & Debrief systems and processes.	Q2 2023/24
Publish a Debrief report service wide on a quarterly basis	Q1 2023/24
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Protection</i>

Effectiveness – ES9

Area for Improvement	The service should ensure it understands what it needs to do to adopt national operational guidance, including joint and national learning, and put in place a plan to do so.	
HWFRS Action Proposed		Target Date
Enrol Digital Training Project Team		Q4 2022/23
Integrate new Learning Management System (LMS)		Q2 2023/24
Integrate the National Operational Guidance’s Service Integration Tool (SIT) This project has been cancelled by the National Fire Chiefs Council due to external software issues.		Completed
Develop eLearning suite referenced to National Operational Learning (NOG)		Q3 2024/25
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Protection</i>	

Effectiveness – ES10

Area for Improvement

The service should ensure it is well-prepared to form part of a multi-agency response to a terrorist incident, and its procedures for responding are understood by all staff and are well tested.

HWFRS Action Proposed

Target Date

Develop presentation covering responsibilities of FRS' and specifically non-specialist responders when attending potential Marauding Terrorist Attacks (MTA) incidents. To include overview of statutory responsibilities
This has been delayed due to the impact of the Commonwealth Games on regional NILO working.

Q4 2022/23

Review of Pre-Determined Attendances (PDA's) for MTAs and other like incidents

Complete

National Inter-Agency Liaison Officer (NILO) Cadre to deliver presentation to all operational staff including Fire Control and Officer Groups

Q4 2022/23

As part of Regional Group establish exercising programme with other Fire & Rescue Services' and responding agencies (Police/Ambulance)

Q4 2022/23

Test knowledge and understanding through District exercising and assurance programme

Q2 2023/24

Strategic lead

Assistant Director: Response

Efficiency- EY1	
Area for Improvement	The service needs to show a clear rationale for the resources allocated between prevention, protection, and response activities. This should reflect, and be consistent with, the risk and priorities set out in its CRMP.
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
Identify good/outstanding practice and conduct a gap analysis	Complete
Identify how we currently allocate resources to Prevention, Protection and Response	Complete
Apply the outcomes as part of the upcoming fire cover review	Complete
Identify organisational leads/key stakeholders for workforce resources across the three core strategies.	Complete
Conduct a supply analysis to understand current workforce headcount, skills and budget.	Complete
Conduct a demand analysis to project resources needed (headcount, skills, budget).	Complete
Conduct a gap analysis and identify top priority gaps based on skills, staffing levels and budget.	Q4 2022/23
Identify interventions to close priority gaps by developing a workforce plan up to 2025.	Q4 2022/23
Develop mechanism to monitor and evaluate workforce plan to include regular supply/demand analysis and positioning of appropriate interventions as required.	Q4 2022/23
Strategic lead	<i>Finance Director and Assistant Director: Prevention</i>

Efficiency- EY2	
Area for Improvement	The service should ensure there is a testing programme for its business continuity plans, particularly in high-risk areas of service.
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
Testing of fall-back arrangements for Fire Control involving all watches.	Complete
Incorporate business continuity questions into the station assurance process for 2022/23.	Complete
Develop an exercise program for station and department fall-back plans.	Complete
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Protection</i>

Efficiency- EY3	
Area for Improvement	The service should ensure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any future collaboration.
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
Work with National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) implementation officer to investigate what national good practice looks like. Ongoing.	Completed
Review and define collaboration with other Fire & Rescue Services' and other emergency services	Q1 2023/24
Evaluate benefits of Fire Control Project – to procure a system with Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service	Q4 2022/23
Establish a process within areas of business planning to ensure collaboration is a key factor in planning and projects	Q1 2023/24
Establish an evaluation process/tool for reviewing the effectiveness of collaboration on business planning, programmes and projects.	Q1 2023/24
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Prevention</i>

Efficiency- EY4	
Area for Improvement	The service should ensure that its fleet and estate strategies are regularly reviewed and evaluated to maximise potential efficiencies.
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
Provide draft / re-format existing Fleet Strategy to new format, and seek approval of SLB / P&R to publish.	P&R Committee Feb 23
Provide updated draft / re-format of existing Property Strategy dated 2018-23, and seek approval of SLB / P&R to publish	P&R Committee Feb 23
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Assets</i>

People – P1

Area for Improvement	The service should assure itself that senior managers are visible and demonstrate service values through their behaviours.
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
Strategic Leadership Board visits for the year have been programmed with every watch and department	Complete
The Service will commission an external organisation to undertake a review of internal communications and provide recommendations for improvement.	Complete
Whole leadership meetings scheduled for the year every quarter.	Complete
The Service will commission a service wide inclusion training programme to further embed understanding of inclusion as a core element linked to values.	Complete
The Service will carry out a full staff survey and review the feedback received and implement changes as required.	Q4 2022/23
The Service will fully implement the FRS Core Code of Ethics (CCoE).	Q4 2022/23
The Service will develop a more regular method of surveying staff opinion and gathering feedback.	Q4 2022/23
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Prevention</i>

People – P2**Area for Improvement**

The service should monitor secondary contracts to make sure working hours are not exceeded.

HWFRS Action Proposed		Target Date
Review Appraisal template to include discussion prompt on secondary contracts and/or additional roles within the Service.		Q4 2022/23
Set out a process to monitor compliance with the Secondary Employment policy.		Q4 2022/23
Establish a method to monitor total working hours of those with secondary contracts and/or additional roles, to highlight when working hours are excessive.		Q4 2022/23
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Prevention</i>	

People – P3

Area for Improvement	The service should make sure it has a robust system in place to update and review its operational incident (analytical) risk assessments.
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HWFRS Action Proposed	Target Date
Review current guidance for the completion of Analytical Risk Assessments (ARA).	Q1 2023/24
Review training levels and provided training to crews to carry out ARA and the associated reviews.	Q1 2023/24
Develop and introduce an assurance process to assure the completion of ARA's.	Q2 2023/24

Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Protection</i>
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People – P4

Area for Improvement	The service should ensure itself that records for risk critical competencies, such as breathing apparatus, driving fire engines and incident command are accurate and up to date.	
HWFRS Action Proposed		Target Date
Complete audit of assurance processes.		Q4 2022/23
Review fire control training to ensure recording of training is up to date.		Q1 2023/24
Integrate a new learning management system to improve recording and monitoring of skills.		Q2 2023/24
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Protection</i>	

People – P5**Area for Improvement**

The service should ensure its workforce plan takes full account of the necessary skills and capabilities to carry out the Community Risk Management Plan.

HWFRS Action Proposed**Target Date**

Develop a Workforce Planning Policy.

Q4 2022/23

Review and evaluate workforce planning process to strengthen links with business planning cycle.

Q4 2022/23

Develop Workforce Planning Toolkit for managers to support workforce planning at a departmental level.

Q1 2022/23

Strategic lead

Assistant Director: Prevention

People – P6	
Area for Improvement	The service should make sure it has appropriate ways to engage with and seek feedback from all staff, including those from under-represented groups.
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
Refer to P1 actions.	
Ensure staff survey collates equality data to inform which groups are engaging and identify the best methods to do this in the future.	Q4 2022/23
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Prevention</i>

People – P7**Area for Improvement**

The service should improve all staff understanding and application of the appraisal review process.

HWFRS Action Proposed		Target Date
Review current appraisal process (link with Training).		Completed
Establish completion rate reporting mechanism to monitor appraisal completion rates.		Q4 2022/23
Implement identified amendments to appraisals process.		Q4 2022/23
Publish refreshed appraisal toolkit for managers.		Q4 2022/23
Develop appraisal training for managers.		Q4 2022/23
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Prevention</i>	

People – P8

Area for Improvement

The service should make sure it has mechanisms in place to manage and develop talent within the organisation.

HWFRS Action Proposed	Target Date
Establish clear links to appraisal process (career conversations) – links to P7.	Q4 2022/23
Develop a talent management strategy.	Q2 2023/24
Develop a framework for managers to use to identify and develop high-performing staff (appraisal) in line with NFCC talent management toolkit.	Q2 2023/24
Review Promotion process.	Q4 2022/23
Develop and implement temporary promotion toolkit for managers.	Q4 2022/23
Complete interim review of Aspiring Executive Leaders programme.	Q2 2023/24
Scope out “Aspiring Leaders” programme for Middle Managers.	Completed

Strategic lead

Assistant Director: Prevention

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Core Strategies

Purpose of report

1. This report summarises steps that have been taken to review the Core Strategies to ensure these strategies remain focused, effective and complies with relevant standards and developments.
-

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Fire Authority note that steps have been taken to review the three Core Strategies.

Introduction and Background

2. The Community Risk Management Plan 2021-2025 (CRMP) and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) guide and direct the overall strategic aims of the Service. These drive everything we do, and underpin our mission of delivering high quality and sustainable services to our communities.
3. To complement and focus our strategic aims the Service launched three Core Strategies in July 2021:
 - Prevention Strategy 2021-2025
 - Protection Strategy 2021-2025
 - Response Strategy 2021-2025
4. The Service reports progress against our strategic aims annually in the [Annual Service Review](#).
5. In September 2022 the Core Strategies were reviewed, as they had been in place for 12 months. The purpose of the review was to ensure these strategies remain focused, effective and complies with relevant standards and developments.

Findings and Actions from the Review

6. Relevant members of the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) took time with their teams to review whether amendments to the core strategy for their area of work required updating.
7. The strategic planning review process explored the following questions:

- What has worked and what hasn't worked in the past 12 months?
 - What has changed in our environment?
 - What do we take out and what new things do we put into the strategic plan?
8. Generally, the core content of the Strategies was found have provided a clear strategic direction and to be still relevant to guide priorities across the Service. However, there were some notable areas of development nationally that required acknowledgment and commitment.
 9. The Fire Standards Board (FSB), set up to oversee the identification, organisation, development and maintenance of professional Standards for fire and rescue services in England has released a variety of National professional Standards which are a key component of continuous improvement in any sector. They form a point of focus, against which performance can be measured and further improvement or new requirements be identified. It is important that these are reflected in our Core Strategies so reference to these have now been included.
 10. Since initial inception of the Core Strategies a national [Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services in England](#) has been developed in partnership with the National Fire Chiefs Council, Local Government Association, and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners to support a consistent approach to ethics, including behaviours, by fire and rescue services in England.
 11. Having a national Core Code of Ethics will help to improve the organisational culture and workforce diversity ensuring that communities are supported in the best way. It is important that this is recognised as a core strategic aim so it is now reflected in all three Core Strategies.
 12. To ensure progress against the Strategies and supporting delivery plans can be measured, a review of the reporting framework and key performance indicators has also been undertaken. Each strategy indicates headline measures to be achieved and confirms that progress is reported at regular intervals.
 13. The Strategic Leadership Board will continue to keep the Core Strategies under regular review and receive performance reports and oversight of progress. This will ensure that strategies and day-to-day operations are all directed toward achieving set priorities.
 14. To reflect the need for agile delivery to reflect the changing needs of our local communities and workforce, a sentence has been added to all Strategies to explain we are flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances as needed.
 15. The Policy and Resources Committee receive a quarterly performance report. The Full Authority will continue to receive an annual summary in the form of the Annual Service Review.

16. Similarly, core aims for the following year will be reported to the Fire Authority in the form of the Annual Service Plan – providing a golden thread through to the overarching aims as outlined in the CRMP which provides an overview of the fire and rescue-related risks faced by the communities we serve, and sets out our high-level plans for tackling those risks through our prevention, protection and emergency response services.

Conclusion

17. The Strategic Leadership Board will continue to keep the Core Strategies under regular review and make relevant adjustments as necessary.

Corporate Considerations

<p>Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)</p>	<p>None at present.</p>
<p>Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)</p>	<p>The areas included link with the Annual Service Review and Annual Service Plan and the strategic objectives of the Service as outlined in the CRMP, the three Core Strategies and the People Strategy. The Core Strategies promote and bring life to the five ethical principles.</p>
<p>Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).</p>	<p>Relevant data is fed into the Health & Safety Committee as appropriate.</p>
<p>Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)</p>	<p>No, the report concerns overarching strategic aims. Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out as required for projects, policies and initiatives linked to delivering the relevant strategy.</p>
<p>Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)</p>	<p>Not required – no personal data is identified.</p>

Report of the Head of Legal Services

Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24

Purpose of report

1. To propose an increase in the allowances paid to Members for 2023/24 in accordance with the previous decision that increases be linked to the National Joint Council annual pay award for 'Green Book' staff.

Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) *the existing basic and special responsibility allowances paid to members be increased by 4.04% for 2023/24, in line with the increase to additional allowances agreed as part of the NJC pay award for 'Green Book' Staff for 2022;*
- (ii) *the Dependent Carers' allowance be increased each year in line with the national living wage; and*
- (ii) *the revised Members' Allowances Scheme for 2023/24 be approved.*

Introduction and Background

2. The Authority is required to make a scheme each year for its Members to be paid a basic annual allowance, under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. Authorities may also make provision for other allowances, for example for those Members with special responsibilities or for travel and subsistence. The proposed 2023/24 budget for members' allowances is £52,000.

Annual Increase

3. The Regulations allow for authorities to refer to an index for the purpose of any annual adjustments to the levels of allowances and in the past, the Fire Authority had nominally linked its allowances to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). In reality however, against the backdrop of austerity and restrictions on public sector pay awards, prior to 2022/23 Members had not taken any uplift for several years.
4. At the Authority's meeting in February 2022, it was recognised that it was neither sustainable nor fair on Members to continue freezing the rate of Members' allowances year on year. However, it would be equally

inappropriate for Members to award themselves a larger increase than has been offered to staff. For that reason, it was resolved (minute 356 – 15/2/22) that in subsequent years, allowances would be increased by the same percentage as the preceding year's pay award for National Joint Council 'Green Book' staff (if any).

NCJ Annual Awards

5. The NCJ Green Book pay settlement for April 2022, agreed in November 2022, was for a flat rate increase of £1,925 plus an additional day's annual leave at all pay grades. The equated to an increase of 9.8% for staff on the lowest grades and just over 2% for staff on the highest grades. Various additional allowances were uprated by 4.04%
6. It is difficult to translate a flat rate increase of £1,925 for staff into a percentage increase to members' allowances. It is therefore proposed to use the 4.04% increase to staff allowances instead as the most appropriate measure.
7. The table below shows a comparison of the current allowances and the proposed 4.04% increase.

	Current 2022/23	Proposed 2023/24 4.04%	Increase
Basic Allowance	£ 1,187.19	£ 1,235.15	£ 47.96
FRA Chairman	£ 9,215.71	£ 9,487.68	£ 271.97
FRA Vice-Chair	£ 5,529.38	£ 5,692.56	£ 163.18
Group Leaders	£ 1,382.34	£ 1,423.14	£ 40.80
Chair - A+S Cttee	£ 1,382.34	£ 1,423.14	£ 40.80
Chair P+R Cttee	£ 1,382.34	£ 1,423.14	£ 40.80

8. Members may only receive one special responsibility allowance. Based on the current Member appointments, the total allowances payable are/will be as follows:

	Current 2022/23	Proposed 2023/24	Increase
Total allowances payable	£ 49,954	£ 51,752	£ 1,797

Dependent Carer's Allowance

9. The present scheme of allowances includes an additional allowance that can be claimed to cover expenditure incurred for the care of dependents whilst Members' are attending Authority meetings. Due to an oversight, this amount

was not reviewed last year and is currently set at £6.09 per hour, which is below the national living wage. In practice, no claims have been made under this heading.

10. It is proposed that the Dependent Carers' allowance should increase each year in line with the national living wage, which will be £10.42 per hour with effect from 1st April 2023

Conclusion/Summary

11. The proposed increase of members' allowances by 4.04% gives effect to the decision taken in February 2022 linking future increases to the annual pay awards for the Authority's non-operational, NJC 'Green Book' staff.
12. It is proposed that the dependent carers' allowance would be increased in line with the national living wage
13. The proposed increase would equate to an additional cost overall of £1,800, which has been allowed for within the current draft budget.
14. The revised amounts have been included in a draft Members' Allowances Scheme for 2023/23 at appendix 1. Any Member who does not wish to receive the allowance either in full or who chooses to decline the proposed increase may do so.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	The proposed increase of 4.04%% across all allowances would equate to an additional cost of £1,800, bringing the total budget for Members' allowances to £52,000 .
Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	None directly.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	None directly.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	None.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	The current Members' Allowances Scheme includes a Dependents' Carers' Allowance to assist those members with caring responsibilities

	in carrying out their approved duties.
Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Draft Members’ Allowances Scheme 2023/24

Background papers:

Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003
 NJC pay agreement for 2022

DRAFT Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24

Fire Authority Members receive certain allowances in recognition of their various duties and to recognise the time they give to undertake Authority work. Allowances are also intended to cover incidental costs that may be incurred by Members.

Allowances will be adjusted annually in line with the preceding year's pay award to the Authority's non-operational NJC 'Green Book' staff.

Basic Allowance

The annual basic allowance of £1,235.15 is paid to all Members.

Special Responsibility Allowances

The following additional allowances are paid to Members with special responsibilities:

Chair of the Authority	£9,487.68
Vice Chair of the Authority	£5,692.56
Political Group Leaders	£1,423.14
Chairman of Audit & Standards Committee	£1,423.14
Chairman of Policy & Resources Committee	£1,423.14

Members with more than one special responsibility will only receive one special responsibility allowance at the higher appropriate level.

The Members' Allowances Scheme also includes the following travel and subsistence allowances:

Travel Allowance

Allowances for travel expenses incurred by Members undertaking their approved duties can be claimed.

Mileage can be claimed for travel by car motorbike or cycle in line with the rate used by HM Revenue & Customs. Car park costs incurred by a Member whilst undertaking an approved duty may also be claimed back although evidence of the payment will need to be submitted.

For those Members who car share, a passenger allowance can be claimed by the driver in respect of one or more passengers who are fellow Authority Members carried on Authority business.

Members may claim for use of public transport up to the amount of the ordinary standard class fare (or any available cheap fare as incurred). Evidence of the payment will need to be submitted. Taxi fares may be claimed where bus/train travel is not practical. Receipts will be required.

Approved Duties

Members may submit a claim for travel allowances for:

- a) meetings of the Authority, its committees, sub-committees, panels or working parties;
- b) meetings of outside bodies to which a Member is appointed by the Authority, if that organisation does not pay Members' expenses;
- c) Authority Member training seminars, events and workshops;
- d) Chairman's briefing meetings;
- e) meetings with Officers in connection with the functions of the Authority which have been convened by the Chief Fire Officer or a member of the Senior Management Board; or
- f) any meeting or event as approved by the Authority or its Committees.

Subsistence Allowances

Members can claim subsistence allowance payments as a reimbursement of actual expenditure, on the basis that reasonable expenses evidenced by receipts will be paid. Similarly, overnight accommodation expenses will be paid where this is necessary and is evidenced by receipts.

Dependent Carers' Allowance

Members may claim an additional allowance to cover expenditure incurred for the care of dependents as follows:

- i) £10.42 per hour (this amount will increase each year in line with the national living wage);
- ii) Payable in respect of attendance at meetings of the Authority, its committees and Member training events; and
- iii) Claims to be made only in respect of care provided by persons other than family members resident in the house and all claims to be evidenced by receipts.

Report of Head of Legal Services

Fire Authority and Committee Dates 2023/24

Purpose of report

1. To approve the meeting dates for 2023/24.
-

Recommendation

It is recommended that the meeting dates for 2023/24 be agreed.

Meeting Dates 2023/24

2. Attached at Appendix 1 are the proposed Authority meeting dates for 2023/24. These meeting dates have been checked with Worcestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council in a bid to avoid any clashes in Members' diaries so far as possible.
3. As 2024 meeting dates have not been scheduled for either Council, we have requested that our dates be taken into account when setting the dates of their meetings.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	None
Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	None
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	None
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Consultation with Senior Management Board Members and constituent authorities.

Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	Not applicable
Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority 2022/23 Meeting Dates.

Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority 2023/24 Meeting Dates

Meeting	Date	Time	Location
Fire Authority	Wed 21 June 2023	10.30	Wyre Forest Council Chamber
Audit & Standards	Wed 19 July 2023	10.30	Wyre Forest Council Chamber
Policy & Resources	Tues 12 Sept 2023	10.30	Wyre Forest Council Chamber
Audit & Standards	Thurs 28 Sept 2023	10.30	Wyre Forest Council Chamber
Fire Authority	Wed 18 Oct 2023	10.30	Wyre Forest Council Chamber
Policy & Resources	Tues 14 Nov 2023	10.30	Wyre Forest Council Chamber
Fire Authority	Tues 12 Dec 2023	10.30	Wyre Forest Council Chamber
Audit & Standards	Wed 17 Jan 2024	10.30	Wyre Forest Council Chamber
Special Policy & Resources (if required)	Tues 30 Jan 2024	10.30	Wyre Forest Council Chamber
Fire Authority	Tues 13 Feb 2024	10.30	County Hall, Worcester
Policy & Resources	Wed 6 Mar 2024	10.30	Wyre Forest Council Chamber
Audit & Standards	Wed 17 April 2024	10.30	Wyre Forest Council Chamber
Policy & Resources	Wed 8 May 2024	10.30	Wyre Forest Council Chamber



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

Wednesday, 18 January 2023, 10:30

Minutes

Members Present: Mr A Amos, Mr D Boatright, Mr S Bowen, Mr B Brookes, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mr M Hart, Mrs E Marshall, Ms N McVey

0256 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr B Clayton, Cllr R Morris and Cllr D Toynbee.

0257 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes.

0258 Declarations of Interest (if any)

There were no interests declared.

0259 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

0260 External Audit Findings Report 2021/22

The External Auditor, Grant Thornton UK LLP, presented the Audit Findings Report for consideration and the Letter of Representation for approval.

Members were disappointed that the Audit had not been completed, which was mostly due to the incompleteness of audit work on land and building valuations currently being undertaken.

The External Auditor advised that the Accounting entries for the valuations used were all correct, but there were additional questions about the valuations themselves.

[Cllr A Hardman entered the room at 10.40am].

Members therefore were not able to approve the Letter of Representation and the Audit Findings Report could only be noted.

RESOLVED:

***i) that the Audit Findings Report be noted; and
ii) that representations be made to CIPFA and the National Audit Office regarding the treatment of property valuations within the accounts.***

0261 Statement Of Accounts 2021/22

The Treasurer presented the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts.

Unfortunately, due to the incompleteness of the Audit, Members were unable to approve the Statement of Accounts. Members noted that it was hoped the final Accounts would be presented at the Authority meeting on 13 February 2023, subject to the completion of the valuations. If this was not possible, the next convenient meeting would be the Audit and Standards Committee meeting on 19 April 2023.

[Cllr D Boatright entered the meeting at 10.51am].

RESOLVED that the approval of the Statement of Accounts be deferred pending completion of the external audit.

0262 External Auditors' Annual Report 2021/22

The External Auditors, Grant Thornton UK LLP presented the Auditors Annual Report 2021/22.

Members noted the financial pressures that will be faced over the coming years and that further savings plans would be required to address the structural budget gap and future budgetary pressures in particular with pay costs and inflation.

RESOLVED that the Auditors Annual Report 2021/22 from the External Auditors, Grant Thornton UK LLP, be noted.

0263 Internal Audit Draft Audit Plan 2023/24

The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service presented the Draft Audit Plan for 2023/24.

Members were pleased to note that operational progress against the internal Audit Plan for 2023/24 will be closely monitored and the Head of

Internal Audit Shared Service will report the position to the Committee along with any exceptions identified during follow up work.

There was discussion relating to building maintenance and construction programmes. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that a full survey looking at the carbon footprint at all locations would be built into the property schedule which would look at the energy usage. Members were also pleased to note that the build programme was accelerating despite a challenging financial background.

RESOLVED that the 2023/24 Draft Internal Audit Plan be approved.

0264 Internal Audit Progress Report

The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service presented an update in regard to the delivery of the Internal Audit plan 2022/23.

Members were pleased to note that there were no high priority recommendations reported and robust management action plans had been agreed and were in place to address the findings from the review. Follow ups completed to date had not identified any material exceptions to report.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

0265 Contract Standing Orders

The Head of Legal Services presented amended Contract Standing Orders for approval.

It had been recommended that the threshold at which competitive quotes would be required be increased to £15,000 instead of £5,000. Members instead decided that this figure be increased to £20,000 as it would help facilitate the continued use of local suppliers wherever possible and create less work for the Service.

RESOLVED that the Fire Authority be recommended to approve the amended Contract Standing Orders set out in Appendix A.

0266 Equality & Gender Pay Gap Report 2021-2022 and Equality Objectives Progress Update

The Assistant Director of Prevention presented the Equality & Gender Pay Gap Report – 2021-2022 and a summary of progress against the Service’s Equality Objectives 2021-2025 for Q1-Q2 2022-2023.

Although it was disappointing to note that there was a decrease of 1%

from last year of the number of operational female staff, it was positive to learn that an action plan for 2023-2025 was being developed to support recruitment and career progression to the most under-represented groups, most notably women into operational roles and also into more senior level positions. The new Inclusion & Organisational Development Manager would be supporting the delivery of these priorities.

Members were pleased with the continued support available to staff with with dyslexia and other types of neurodiversity and noted the fantastic outcomes where support and guidance had resulted in staff thriving in the workplace.

Members approved the Equality and Gender Pay Gap Report 2021-2022 for publication on the Service's website.

RESOLVED that:

i) the Equality & Gender Pay Gap Report 2021-2022 be approved for publication; and

ii) progress made against the Equality Objectives 2021-2025 for Q1–Q2 2022-2023 be noted.

0267 Update on the Prevention Cause of Concern

The Assistant Director of Prevention presented an update on the Service's progress against the Cause of Concern issued by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in relation to Prevention Activity.

Members were informed that the Inspectorate revisited the Service between 22 and 24 November 2022 to talk with relevant people, assist with triangulating evidence and review the systems and processes in place following the issuing of the Cause of Concern. Following that there was a hot debrief on 2 December 2022 with the Chief Fire Officer and Inspectorate and although there was no clear indication that the Cause of Concern had been discharged, the Chief Fire Officer felt confident that this would be the case due to investing heavily in prevention activity.

It was hoped that the Service would receive the outcome of the revisit on Friday 20 January 2023 and Members would be informed as soon as possible.

RESOLVED that the update on the Service's progress against the Cause of Concern in relation to Prevention activity be noted.

0268 Update On Activities Of Women @HWfire group

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented an update on the work of Women@HWFire.

Members were pleased to note the work delivered by Woman@HWFire which demonstrated the organisation's commitment to supporting under-represented groups within HWFRS.

RESOLVED that the activities of the Women@HWFire group since it was set up in 2019 be noted.

0269 Health and Safety Committee Update: April to June 2022 (Quarter 1)

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the Health and Safety update for Quarter 1 on activities and items of significance.

Following a query, Members were pleased to note that the sickness levels within the Service were low in comparison with other authorities, despite the increase in respiratory conditions during the quarter.

RESOLVED that the following issues, in particular, be noted:

- i) The involvement of the Service in Health and Safety initiatives;***
- ii) Health and Safety performance information recorded during April to June 2022 (Quarter 1); and***
- iii) Workforce Health & Wellbeing performance (Quarter 1).***

0270 Health and Safety Committee Update: July to September 2022 (Quarter 2)

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the Health & Safety update for Quarter 2 on activities and items of significance.

Members were pleased to note that following the resignation of the Health and Safety Advisor, a new Advisor had been recruited and would be starting later this month.

RESOLVED that the following issues, in particular, be noted:

- i) The involvement of the Service in Health and Safety initiatives.***
- ii) Health and Safety performance information recorded during July to September 2022 (Quarter 2); and***
- iii) Workforce Health & Wellbeing performance.***

The Meeting ended at: 12:17

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman

Contract Standing Orders

1. Scope & Purpose / Introduction

- 1.1. These Contract Standing Orders (CSOs) are part of the Fire Authority's Constitution and must be applied in the procurement and disposal of goods, materials and services and in the execution of works.
- 1.2. The objective of these CSOs is to ensure that contracts are obtained on the most favourable terms, having due regard to quality, service and fitness for purpose. All procurement and disposal procedures must:
 - Achieve best value for money
 - Be consistent with the highest standards of integrity
 - Ensure fairness and transparency
 - Comply with all legal requirements
 - Support the Fire Authority's corporate aims and policies.

2. Value of Contracts

- 2.1. The value of the contract will determine the route to procurement. The Responsible Manager for the proposed contract must agree a procurement plan and process with the Procurement & Contracts Manager (and Head of Legal Services where the contract value exceeds £25,000).
- 2.2. The value of the contract is the total estimated value of the goods/services to be procured during the life of the contract. This must take into consideration the acquisition price (net of VAT) plus any other costs we will incur as part of the same contract e.g. on-going maintenance if this is included in the contract.
- 2.3. Where the duration of the contract is indeterminate the value should be taken to be the estimated value of the contract over a period of four years.
- 2.4. In some cases a contract may be legitimately divided into separate lots, e.g. goods and services offered as two separate contracts or contracts split geographically where this will aid service delivery or facilitate tendering by local contractors. However, contracts must not be artificially split to avoid the relevant threshold and in assessing the value of a contract all lots should be aggregated.
- 2.5. Where the total value for a purchase or disposal is within the values in the first column below, the award procedure in the second column must be followed as a minimum. Regard should always be had as to whether the chosen procurement route is likely to secure best value for the Authority proportionate to the sums involved.

Total Contract Value Exceeding	Award Procedure	Minimum Advertising Requirements
<p>Above Public Contract Regulations 2015 threshold*</p> <p>*Currently £177,897 (exc.VAT)</p>	<p>Either:</p> <p>(a) Full Public Contract Regulation compliant tender process</p> <p>or</p> <p>(b) Public Contract compliant Framework</p>	<p>Publish on UK e-notification service AND Publish on Authority website as required by the Transparency Code but not prior to publication UK r-notification service;</p>
<p>£50,000 to Public Contract Regulations threshold</p>	<p>Either:</p> <p>(a) formal <u>open</u> tenders, or</p> <p>(b) invite tenders from a minimum 3 <u>select</u> tenderers where the CFO is satisfied, having regard to the nature of the contract, that restricting the number of tenderers will not disadvantage the Authority</p>	<p>Open tenders over £25,000 must be published on Contracts Finder and on Authority website as required by the Transparency Code</p>
<p>£20,000 to £49,999</p>	<p>Either:</p> <p>(a) Minimum 3 written quotations; or</p> <p>(b) tender (as above)</p>	
<p>Below £20,000</p>	<p>One or more written quotations to be obtained.</p>	

2.6. **The terms and conditions of all contracts over £25,000 must first be approved by Legal Services). It will therefore be necessary for the documentation to be**

approved by Legal Services before the invitation to tender or request for quotes is sent out.

3. Exceptions to the Award Procedures

- 3.1. A contract that is below the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 threshold may be entered into on behalf of the Authority other than in accordance with Standing Order 2 (above) in the following circumstances and only with the prior approval of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive or nominated responsible officer:
- (a) Where the works, supplies or services can be supplied only by a particular supplier for any of the following reasons:—
 - (i) goods, materials or services are of a unique or specialised nature;
 - (ii) competition is absent for technical reasons;
 - (iii) the protection of exclusive rights, including intellectual property rights;

but only, where no reasonable alternative or substitute exists and the absence of competition is not the result of an artificial narrowing down of the parameters of the procurement;
 - (b) Where the supply of goods, materials or services are similar to or compatible with an existing provision so as to render only one source of supply appropriate. Special care must be taken and the Head of Legal Services must be consulted where the aggregate of the original contract value and any subsequent contracts exceeds the Public Contract Regulations threshold.
 - (c) Where the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive is satisfied that for reasons of extreme urgency brought about by events unforeseeable by the authority, the time limits for the relevant procurement procedures cannot be complied with. The circumstances invoked to justify extreme urgency must not in any event be attributable to the contracting authority
 - (d) For the supply of used or second-hand goods or materials where the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive is satisfied that the market for such goods or materials demonstrate good value and is such that it would be unreasonable to tender or where the time required to tender would lead to loss of opportunity to purchase a used or second-hand item.
 - (e) For the supply of goods, materials or services in any other circumstances where the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive is satisfied that there are proper service reasons for not tendering and that there would be no financial disadvantage to the Fire Authority as a result.
 - (g) Where the Fire Authority considers that there are special circumstances justifying the waiving of Standing Orders and authorises such waiver by resolution.
 - (h) Where procurement is undertaken through a Framework Agreement negotiated by another organisation and approved by the Head of Legal Services
 - (i) For purchase or sale of goods by public auction.
 - (j) Where, despite observing the procurement process as laid out in this document, due to market or other conditions, no tenders or no suitable tenders have been

submitted and provided that the initial conditions of the contract are not substantially altered. [Where the contract is above the threshold in the Public Contract Regulations additional restrictions apply]

- (k) Where procurement is carried out in collaboration with another organisation and the procurement rules of that other organisation have been followed, subject to approval of the Head of Legal Services
- (l) Where the Police & Crime Commissioner procures property related services or works on behalf of the Authority and has complied with procurement procedures approved by the Head of Legal Services

3.2. The responsible officer shall complete an 'Officer Delegated Decision' record with reasons and explanations in respect of all contracts made in accordance with Standing Order No. 3. This shall be recorded in the Contracts Register and published on the Authority's website.

4. Framework Agreements

- 4.1. A Framework Agreement is an arrangement whereby the Fire Authority can enter into a contract known as a "call-off contract" direct with a supplier but under the auspices of an agreement that has been entered into by another organisation and which has already complied with the EU procurement requirements.
- 4.2. The specification of the contract must be determined prior to identification of a framework or supplier(s) who are part of a framework agreement.
- 4.3. A call-off contract from a framework agreement can be obtained either by direct award or mini-competition depending on the terms of the Framework Agreement. In order to use a direct award under a framework the ordering officer must be able to justify how this gives the best outcome for the Fire Authority. Where a mini-competition is conducted in accordance with the tender procedure it will be subject to the terms of the Framework.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1. Before seeking any quotes, tenders or awarding a contract, the Responsible Manager must:
 - ensure they have all appropriate authorisations and approvals on file (see Scheme of Delegations);
 - ensure there is sufficient budgetary provision;
 - seek all necessary legal, procurement, financial, risk management and technical advice;
 - provide a full specification before entering any procurement process;
 - agree a procurement plan and process with the Procurement & Contracts Manager (and Head of Legal Services where the contract value exceeds £25,000);
 - ensure that appropriate maintenance regimes for equipment purchased are put in place. When evaluating tenders or bids received, consideration must be given the

whole life costs of the contract e.g. maintenance arrangements and any residual valuations;

- complete any investigations and/or risk assessments necessary to discharge the Service's duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and subsequent regulations or approved codes of practice;
- Complete all appropriate data impact assessments and/or equalities impact assessments in respect of the services to be provided or works to be procured.
- confirm the appropriateness of the suppliers asked to quote or to tender. Responsible Managers should take reasonable care in supplier selection and should ask for reasonable supporting information commensurate with the value/risk of the procurement. Appendix A contains a list of example information that the ordering officer may consider in assessing suppliers. Where potential suppliers are picked from a select list or register, the ordering officer should confirm with the compiler that suppliers have submitted satisfactory supporting information commensurate with the value/risk of the procurement;
- ensure written records are kept in relation to any pre-tender or quotation enquiries, including notes of telephone conversations and/or meetings with potential suppliers to be filed in the central repository /contract file (SharePoint);
- avoid any suggestion of impropriety and ensure any offers of gifts or hospitality from potential suppliers are declined and any personal interests have been declared in accordance with as in SO 13 (Compliance/Probity). The Contract Manager should also ensure that they comply with SO13
- provide details of all contracts valued over £5,000 to the Procurement and Contracts Manager for inclusion in the Contracts Register
- where the contract value exceeds £25,000 ensure that an Officer Delegated Decision record is completed and sent to Committee Services for publication on the Authority's website
- monitor and review the performance of the contract following award.

6. Contracts Register

6.1. The Contracts Register shall be maintained by the Procurement & Contracts Manager or other nominated officer and shall contain a record of:

- All contracts entered into by the Authority valued over £20,000
- any action, statements of reasons and exceptions made under Sections 3 (Exceptions), 7 (Pre-tender / quotation enquiries), 9 (Submission, Receipt and Opening Tenders), 10 (Post Tender Negotiation), and 11 (Evaluation/Award of Contract) of these standing orders;
- any contracting decision and the reason for it;
- any information supplemental to the contract; and
- any conversations and meetings at any stage of the procurement process.

6.2. All contracts and relevant correspondence and records shall be retained in the Contracts Register for at least 6 years after the contract comes to an end. If made as a deed / under seal they must be kept for at least 12 years after the contract comes to an end.

7. Pre tender/quotation enquiries

7.1. Enquiries of potential contractors in advance of a procurement exercise may be undertaken to prepare the marketplace for a tender and/or to assist the Authority to better understand what the market is able to provide to meet the outcome the Authority is trying to achieve. Such consultation with potential suppliers may be made in general terms and:

- no information shall be disclosed to one contractor which is not then disclosed to all those of whom enquiries are made
- no contractor shall be led to believe that the information they offer will necessarily lead to them being invited to tender, submit a quotation or to be awarded the contract
- technical advice on the preparation of an invitation to tender or quotation must not be sought or accepted from anyone who may have a commercial interest in bidding for the contract as this may prejudice the equal treatment of all potential tenderers and distort competition
- a written record, including notes of telephone conversations and/or meetings held with potential suppliers and the responses and names of all individuals spoken to or present shall be kept in a central file maintained by the Procurement & Contracts Manager

8. Invitations to Tender

8.1. Contracts above the Public Contract Regulations threshold require specific information to be included with invitations to tender and such requirements must be followed.

When inviting tenders for below threshold contracts, the Contract Manager/Ordering Officer shall, as a minimum, supply the Tenderers with:

- An accurate specification or other description of the goods, materials works or services including copies of any relevant drawings or maps.
- All tenderers invited to tender or quote must be issued with the same information at the same time and subject to the same conditions. Any supplementary information must be given on the same basis
- The invitation to tender or to submit a quotation must state that the Authority is not bound to accept any quote or tender.
- Instructions as to the manner in which any tender or quotation is to be submitted, including dates and times by which the tender must be returned.
- All invitations to tender shall state that any tender received after the date and time stipulated in the invitation to tender may be rejected and not considered.
- An outline of how any arithmetical errors discovered in the submitted tenders are to be dealt with. In particular, whether the overall price prevails over the rates of the tender or vice versa.
- Details of the Authority's the terms and conditions of the contract that have been approved by the Head of Legal Services.
- The invitation to tender must include a form of tender and instructions to tenderers including the requirement to complete a certificate relating to non-collusion
- Details of any additional or supporting documents that are required such as those listed in Appendix A of this document (include Whistleblowing, Ethical Framework, etc.).

9. Submission, Receipt and Opening of Tenders

9.1. Potential tenderers must be given an adequate period to prepare depending on complexity / urgency. The Public Contract Regulations lay down specific time periods which must be followed in the case of procurements above the relevant threshold. For below threshold contracts the period should normally be a minimum of 4 weeks.

- 9.2. All tenders should normally be returned through the electronic tendering portal approved by the Head of Legal Services and which is designed to ensure the integrity and secrecy of tenders received. Emails and/or faxes cannot be accepted and must be rejected.
- 9.3. Once the deadline has passed the Procurement & Contracts Manager shall ensure there is a record of all tenders received and the amounts thereof and then provide the tender documents to the ordering officer / contract manager for assessment.
- 9.4. The Head of Legal Services may at his or her absolute discretion permit consideration of a tender submitted after the deadline has passed, provided:
 - (a) it is in the best financial interests of the Fire Authority to do so;
 - (b) they are satisfied that the tenderer has not secured an advantage over other tenderers; and
 - (c) the decision to admit the tender is taken before the remaining tenders are opened. A record of these tenders and the discretion exercised under this Standing Order must be kept in the Contracts Register.
- 9.5. If for technical reasons tenders are required to be returned by hard copy these— should be returned to the Head of Legal Services

10. Post Tender Negotiations

- 10.1. The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive or nominated officer (ordering officer/contract manager) shall be empowered to accept the most economically advantageous/favourable tender received.
- 10.2. Where no tender meets the Authority's exact requirements, whether because the value of the tender exceeds the approved budget, the goods are not as required or for any other reason,
- 10.3. the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive or nominated officer may negotiate with the tenderer submitting the most economically advantageous/favourable tender to obtain improvements in terms of price, delivery or content unless the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive considers in all the circumstances that all those persons who originally submitted a tender for the contract should all be given an opportunity to re-tender.. However, such negotiation is the exception rather than the rule and the Head of Legal Services must be consulted prior to any negotiation. Where post tender negotiation results in fundamental change to specification or contract terms the contract must not be awarded but re-tendered,
- 10.4. A written record shall be kept of all negotiations including notes of meetings and names of those present and file in the central contract file.

11. Evaluation /Award of Contract

- 11.1. Quotations and tenders must be evaluated and awarded in accordance with objective award criteria. The result must award the contract to the tender that achieves the highest score in the objective assessment.
- 11.2. Ordering officers / contract managers must ensure that:
 - submitted tender prices are compared with any pre-tender estimates and any discrepancies are examined and resolved;
 - arithmetic in compliant tenders is checked; and
 - a record is retained of the evaluation undertaken (for 6 years after expiration of contract)
- 11.3. All contracts must be in writing, either in terms of a formal legal agreement over £25,000 and/or a purchase order clearly indicating the nature and quantity of the work or service required, the price and any terms or conditions as to payment. Details of all orders must be entered and authorised on the Finance system.
- 11.4. The Head of Legal Services must sign all contracts over £25,000. Contracts below £25,000 may be signed by an Area Commander or Head of Service.

12. Following Award of Contract

- 12.1. The details of any contract awarded over £25,000 must be published on Contracts Finder no later than 90 calendar days after the contract award date. All contracts over £20,000 must be published on the Authority's website on a quarterly basis.
- 12.2. Any decision to award a contract over the value of £100,000 must also be published on the Authority's website under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, which requires the decision maker to set out the reasons for their decision and any alternative options that were considered but rejected. A record of Officer delegated decisions should be completed for this purpose.
- 12.3. Contracts above Public Contract Regulation thresholds cannot be awarded until after the mandatory standstill period. In these cases a standstill notice must be sent to all tenderers and any candidates.
- 12.4. Should an award of a contract be challenged, the contract must not be awarded and the Head of Legal Services must be notified.

13. Compliance / Probity

- 13.1. The CSOs aim to protect staff against allegations of impropriety and therefore, all staff and any agents or consultants acting on their behalf must fully comply with these CSOs. All staff must also comply with any guidance and instructions regarding contractual arrangements as issued by the Head of Legal Services, the Director of Finance or the Procurement & Contracts Manager. A failure to comply may result in disciplinary action being taken.

13.2. Staff must be transparent, objective and non-discriminatory in all procurement activities and must not deliberately mislead suppliers. Commercial information obtained from suppliers, particularly pricing must be kept confidential and cannot be released to third parties without the prior approval of the supplier. However, there are various exceptions including requests under FOIA and publication of award notices.

13.3. The values and behaviours described in the Employee Code of Conduct and the Fire and Rescue Service Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy shall apply to all staff entering into and developing contracts. In addition, all staff must comply with the Register of Staff Interests Policy and register any interest they have in a contract or proposed contract with the Fire Authority, whether or not it is something they are dealing with personally. Staff must not invite any gift or reward in respect of the award or performance of a contract and must ensure that any offers of gifts and/or hospitality that are made by suppliers or potential suppliers are declined and registered in accordance with the Employee Code of Conduct and the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy.

14. Consultants

14.1. The appointment of external consultants or architects must itself comply with Contract Procedure Rules. Subject to SO. 3.1(k) and (l) above, where external consultants or architects procure tenders on the Authority's behalf they must comply with Contract Procedure Rules as though it were being done in-house.

15. Fire Authority as a Supplier

15.1. The Director of Finance and Head of Legal Services must be consulted prior to contemplation of any contracts for the Authority to undertake work or provide services to other organisations.

16. Disposal of Assets

16.1. Any assets to be disposed of by the Authority shall be disposed of by whatever means is most likely to secure the best value for the Authority having regard to the nature and value of the assets concerned and shall first be approved by the Director of Finance and Head of Legal Services

Report of the Monitoring Officer

Urgent Decision - Redditch Fire Station

Purpose of report

1. To advise Members of an urgent decision that has been taken since the last meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee in relation to the redevelopment of Redditch Fire Station.
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Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the decision taken under the Urgent Decisions Procedure to further increase the budget allocation for the redevelopment of Redditch Fire Station, be noted.

Introduction and Background

2. The Urgent Decisions Procedure has been adopted for occasions when it would be impractical to call a meeting of the Authority. The procedure is set out under Article 9.6 of the Authority's Constitution. Where the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chairman, agrees the matter is urgent, the Chief Fire Officer will consult on the matter with Group Leaders and is then authorised to make a decision having regard to the outcome of the consultation. Finally, the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is then reported back to the next meeting of the actual decision-making committee or to the Authority.

Urgent Decision

3. Members will be aware that recent Property Update reports have referenced the UK construction tender price index, and the associated inflationary pressures being seen across the building sector. This has had an impact on the projected costs for the redevelopment of Redditch Fire Station.
4. Due to tender cost variations and fixed tendering timescales for the project, and in accordance with the Urgent Decisions Procedure the Chief Fire Officer consulted the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority, together with Group Leaders to agree the revised project costs.
5. The replacement of Redditch Fire Station has been part of the Authority's approved capital programme for at least 13 years. The current fire station building is outdated, suffers from a number of structural difficulties and is beyond its useable lifespan. Plans for a new combined Police/Fire facility have been in development and approved at

numerous stages with Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS), and West Mercia Police (WMP).

6. A final tender was submitted for the construction of the new facility in September 2022. This proposal was reviewed from a technical perspective and from a commercial perspective by Walker Cotter (cost consultants). Following a period of negotiation and agreement on a number of technical matters, a report was prepared by Walker Cotter, recommending that HWFA and the PCC accept the proposal as a commercially acceptable sum for the works.
7. A capital budget of £5m was approved by the Policy & Resources Committee on the 16 September 2020. It should be noted that the paper emphasised however that the estimated costs, at that time, were subject to detailed design and tender prices being developed. Furthermore, it was noted in para 9 that all project costs would be shared pro-rata to the respective areas of the building. This proportion has been calculated and agreed as HWFRS 35.95% and WMP 64.05%.
8. This capital budget was not sufficient to cover the agreed scheme costs, and it was therefore proposed that the capital allocation be increased. Following a review of capital financing costs as part of the annual budget process the Treasurer confirmed that this cost was expected and could be contained within the current budget allocation. Following consultation with Group Leaders, an urgent decision was taken to approve the increase. Details of the revised costs are included in a confidential appendix.

Ownership

9. It was originally envisaged that the Fire Authority would hold the freehold of the new building and lease to the PCC for West Mercia, similar to (but the reverse of) the arrangements at Bromsgrove joint Police/Fire Station. However, due to the total project costs and proportions allocated between HWFRS and WMP, it is now agreed for the PCC to finance the project and have full ownership of the building. This was also due to the significant taxation implications of the original proposal and this new proposal provides the most cost-efficient solution to tax-payers.
10. The PCC will therefore fund all of the capital costs and recoup these by means of a fixed annual rent/charge to the Fire Authority. The Treasurer is satisfied that the proposed rent/charge has the same revenue cost as the currently budgeted capital financing provision, and demonstrates value for money and does not put the Authority at risk. The Monitoring Officer will ensure a detailed lease agreement will be put in place to ensure longevity of the fire service tenancy.

Conclusion/Summary

11. Following consultation with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Group Leaders, a decision has been taken in accordance with the urgent business procedure to further increase the budget allocation for the redevelopment of Redditch Fire Station in order that the scheme can proceed as quickly as possible.

Corporate Considerations

<p>Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues).</p>	<p>Note reference to the UK construction tender price index, and the associated inflationary pressures being seen across the building sector.</p>
<p>Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).</p>	<p>Details underpin a number of key property priorities for the Authority.</p>
<p>Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter).</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?).</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling).</p>	<p>None.</p>