



Local Government Act 1972

The Annual Meeting of the **Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington** will be held at **Darlington Fire Station** on **Thursday 10 June 2021** at **9.30 a.m.** to consider the following business:-

PART A

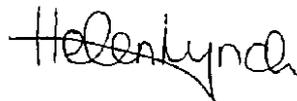
1. Commendations
2. Declarations of interest, if any
If Members are aware of a private or personal conflict of interest in relation to any items on the Agenda, this should be disclosed at this stage or when the conflict of interest arises during consideration of an item in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Members
3. Appointment of Chairs
4. Appointment of Minority Party Spokesperson
5. Review of the Constitution - Report of Chief Fire Officer and Clerk (Pages 3 - 138)
6. Chairs of Committees - Report of Clerk (Pages 139 - 142)
7. Representation on Other Bodies 2020/21 - Report of Clerk (Pages 143 - 144)
8. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2021 (Pages 145 - 150)
9. Current Correspondence - Report of Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Pages 151 - 258)
10. Member Champions - Report of Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Pages 259 - 270)
11. Community Risk Management Plan Consultation 2021 Results - Report of Policy Support Officer (Pages 271 - 278)
12. Outcome of the Review of the Role of Police and Crime Commissioners - Report of Chief Fire Officer (Pages 279 - 286)
13. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration
14. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information

Part B

Items during which it is considered the meeting will not be open to the public (consideration of exempt or confidential information)

15. Request from the Assistant Chief Fire Officer to be Vice Chair of a School Governing Body - Report of Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Pages 287 - 288)
16. National Fire Chiefs' Council, Industrial Relations Lead Role - Report of Chief Fire Officer (Pages 289 - 290)
17. Income Generation Opportunity - Report of Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Pages 291 - 294)
18. Fire fatality (Pages 295 - 302)
19. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

PURSUANT to the provisions of the above named Act, **I HEREBY SUMMON YOU** to attend the said meeting



H LYNCH

Clerk to the Combined Fire Authority
for County Durham and Darlington

County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UL

TO: The Members of the Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington

Durham County Councillors:

Councillors J Atkinson, B Avery, A Batey, R Bell, J Cairns, T Duffy, C Hampson, N Jones, B Kellett, L Kennedy, R Manchester, C Marshall, L Mavin, I McLean, M McGaun, J Quinn, S Quinn, G Richardson, K Rooney, J Shuttleworth, S Zair

Darlington Borough Councillors:

Councillors H Crumbie, B Jones, G Lee and A J Scott.

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

10 June 2021

Review of the Constitution

Report of the Chief Fire Officer and Clerk

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for proposed amendments to the Combined Fire Authority's (CFA) Constitution.

Background

2. County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority has agreed a Constitution which sets out how the Authority operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are required by law, while others are a matter for the Authority to choose. The Constitution is divided into separate sections, setting out the basic rules governing the running of the Fire and Rescue Service.
3. In preparation for the Authority's Annual General Meeting (AGM) a thorough review of the Constitution has taken place. The review has resulted in some proposed amendments being put forward. These amendments reflect some of the structural changes that have taken place in the Service since the last full review was undertaken in 2020 and also take account of some legislative changes that affect the publication of documents. A copy of the draft Constitution is attached as Appendix A.

Suggested Amendments

4. The substantive amendments are as follows:

4.1 Section 2 – Authority and Committee Structure

A new Committee Structure will be put in place as follows:

The new structure creates a Human Resources (HR) Committee to give a greater emphasis to HR matters which was previously under the remit of the Performance Committee.

The Finance Committee will be merged with the Audit and Risk Committee and membership will be expanded to include the addition of an Independent Person. Having an Independent Person as a member of the Committee is recommended best practice by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). A report on the appointment process for the Independent Person will be presented to a future meeting of the Authority.

The remit of the Performance Committee is largely unchanged except for the transfer of responsibility for monitoring sickness absence to the HR Committee.

The new structure has been created to improve accountability and reflects Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service's (HMICFRS) three pillars of inspection which focus on Effectiveness (Performance), Efficiency (Audit and Finance) and People.

References to the Committees have been updated throughout the document.

4.2 Section 7 – Scheme of Delegation to Officers

The Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) has been renamed the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) to reflect changes to Service documents which will align with the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) national Community Risk Programme.

4.3 Section 12 – Contract Procedure Rules

Point 7 has been extended to reflect all contracts that must comply with Contract Procedure Rules.

4.5 Section 20 – Code of Conduct for Employees

A reference to the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services has been added.

Recommendations

5. The Authority is requested to:

- i. **note** the contents of the report and the suggested amendments to the Constitution.
- ii. **approve** the amended Constitution as outlined at Appendix A.

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Combined Fire Authority Constitution



Safest People, Safest Places

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



June 2021

The Combined Fire Authority Constitution

Summary and Explanation

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority (hereby known as ‘the Authority’) has agreed a Constitution which sets out how the Authority operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are required by law, while others are a matter for the Authority to choose.

The Constitution is divided into separate sections, setting out the basic rules governing the running of the Fire and Rescue Service. The index below sets out the different sections of the Constitution:

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Section 1

Role of the Members

Members of a Fire Authority (hereby known as the 'Authority') have many roles which have their origins in statute, directions and guidance and may be amended from time to time. It is therefore not possible to produce a definitive list with a guaranteed lifetime. A list of current principal functions is set out below. It does not include responsibilities that members hold as elected members of their constituent authorities.

1. To take all necessary steps to comply with the statutory duties of the Authority, ensuring adequate arrangements for operational assurance;
2. To set the strategic direction of the Authority through in-depth consideration and approval of the Strategic Plan and Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) (formerly the Integrated Risk Management Plain (IRMP));
3. To agree priorities for action within the Strategic Plan and CRMP consistent with Authority's objectives, national priorities and available resources;
4. To give due regard to the professional advice of the Chief Fire Officer while developing the CRMP and when making decisions affecting the fire and rescue service;
5. To hold the Chief Fire Officer to account for the exercise of their functions and the functions of persons under their direction and control.
6. To ensure the views of the community, partners and constituent councils are taken into account in formulating the above and that they are kept fully informed of Authority plans. In particular, to act as champions for the Authority in their locality and with other bodies and to contribute to wider shared priorities in the area;
7. To support and promote appropriate partnership arrangements;
8. To consider and keep under review the Authority's register of corporate risks;
9. To consult on and set the Revenue and Capital Budgets and monitor their progress throughout the year;
10. To monitor Service performance and achievement of value for money of the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service through a regular examination of key performance outcomes, service costs and consideration of external inspection and audit reports;

11. To ensure that the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority establishes and maintains an effective role in any regional and national initiatives that confer benefit on the County Durham and Darlington community;
12. To perform the roles allocated to Members in Service procedures;
13. To keep under review the corporate identity of the Authority and its relations with the media;
14. To ensure effective liaison arrangements with Trade Unions are established and maintained;
15. To review annually the Authority's governance arrangements, to ensure their continued effectiveness;
16. The Chair in consultation with the Vice Chair will agree Member attendance at external events on behalf of the Authority;
17. To contribute to and receive recommendations from the Authority's committees and panels.

Section 2

Authority and Committee Structure

The Full Combined Fire Authority

This Committee structure is made by the Durham and Darlington Combined Fire and Rescue Authority. The Authority is a Combined Authority created by the Durham Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1996. Being a statutory body, its functions, powers and duties are set down in statutes and regulations.

The broad role and functions of the Authority include:

1. Determination of policy and strategy relating to the objectives of the Authority and its priorities.
2. Approving the Authority's revenue and capital budget strategy.
3. Approving the strategic plan and CRMP.
4. Approving the revenue and capital budgets and agreeing the precept level.
5. Considering the Authority's register of corporate risks.
6. Receiving reports and recommendations from Authority Committees and officers of the Fire and Rescue Service.
7. Obtaining the views of the community on the development of the corporate strategy of the Authority.
8. Being a custodian of the Authority's corporate identity and its role with the media.
9. Regularly reviewing the structure and remit of Committees, Forums and Working Groups.
10. Keeping under review the Authority's current financial position compared with approved budgets.
11. Receiving reports from regulatory bodies.
12. Ensuring that the Authority fulfils its statutory duties including those under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the National Framework.
13. Fostering continuous service improvement.
14. Appointing the Clerk and Monitoring Officer.

15. Appointing the Chief Fire Officer, other Principal Officers and Treasurer.
16. Monitoring and reviewing the performance of the Chief Fire Officer, Other Principal Officers and Treasurer.
17. Approve the salaries offered for any new appointments where the salary is in excess of £100,000.
18. Approve severance packages where the overall cost exceeds £100,000.

Section 3

Committee delegations and referrals

The Committees to which Functions are Delegated or Referred:

1. The Appeals Committee

The Committee shall meet when required. The Chair will be nominated by the Authority.

The Committee shall have the following functions:

Delegated:

1. Considering and deciding upon appeals on grievances referred to the Authority under the Grievance policy and procedure.
2. Considering and deciding upon appeals referred to the Authority under the Disciplinary policy and procedure.
3. Considering and deciding upon appeals referred to the Authority under Stage Two of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme: Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP).

2. The Audit and Finance Committee

Statement of Purpose

The Audit and Finance Committee is a key component of the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority's corporate governance. It provides an independent and high-level focus on audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.

The establishment of the Audit and Finance Committee takes consideration of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) position statement and practical guidance on the function and operation of audit committees.

Membership

The Committee will comprise of elected members of the Authority together with an independent person. The Chair will be nominated by the Fire Authority. If the Chair is unable to attend, the Committee shall appoint a Chair from amongst its members. The Committee shall have the following functions:

Delegated:

1. Reviewing and approving the Authority's Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and Statement of Assurance.

Referred:

1. Discussing the nature and scope of the forthcoming audit with the external auditor.
2. Receiving and commenting on the external auditor's Audit Strategy Memorandum, Audit Completion Report and Annual Audit letter.
3. Receiving regular progress reports from Internal Audit and considering the issues and action plans arriving from any audit.
4. Approving the Internal Audit Plan.
5. Approving the Internal Audit Charter.
6. Considering the report on the Annual Review of Internal Audit Effectiveness.
7. Ensuring all auditors have the full cooperation of staff.
8. Reviewing the Annual Governance Statement prior to its approval.
9. Reviewing and reporting on corporate governance arrangements.
10. Oversight of the risk management process and the Corporate Risk Register.
11. Considering update reports on existing and emerging corporate risks.
12. Considering reports from internal and external audits and inspections.
13. Promoting the value of the audit process.
14. Reviewing the counter fraud and corruption strategy to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and to gain assurance that the risk of fraud and any potential cases disclosed are effectively managed.
15. To review the governance and assurance arrangements for significant partnerships or collaborations.
16. Review and report on the quarterly and annual Financial Statements of the Authority.
17. Consider and make recommendations to the Authority for the proposed revenue and capital budgets and Medium-Term Financial Plan.
18. Consider any changes in the budget allocations arising from changes in the strategic policies and service plans.
19. Consider any proposals for growth or budget reductions.

20. Consider the revenue and capital budgets, Medium-Term Financial Plan, council tax levels and associated information prior to approval by the Authority.

21. Consider the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy and on-going performance.

Performance and Review

The Committee will carry out an annual assessment, including a review of these terms of reference, to evaluate its own performance and determine any action required to improve its effectiveness. The outcomes will be reported to the Fire Authority.

3.The Performance Committee

The Chair will be nominated by the Authority. If the Chair is unable to attend, the Committee shall appoint a Chair from amongst its Members. The Committee shall have the following functions:

Referred:

1. Reviewing and monitoring progress and performance in achieving strategic objectives (as set in the Authority's Strategic Plan and CRMP).
2. Monitoring and reviewing key performance indicators and targets.
3. Receiving reports and making recommendations to the Authority on Value for Money reviews.
4. Monitoring and reviewing Improvement Plans.
5. Scrutinising performance and challenging the Authority when carrying out the responsibilities referred to in 1 to 4 above.

4.The Human Resources Committee

The Chair will be nominated by the Fire Authority. If the Chair is unable to attend, the Committee shall appoint a Chair from amongst its members. The Committee shall have the following functions:

Delegated:

1. Supervision of the process of investigation and determination of complaints of breach of the Authority's code of conduct for Members.
2. Ensuring that Members of the Fire and Rescue Authority are adequately trained in their obligations under the code of conduct.

Referred:

1. Champion the development of staff conditions of service through the implementation and maintenance of People Strategies.
2. Consider equality and diversity issues as they affect the Authority including consideration of reports submitted by the Service on policy matters relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
3. Assist in maintaining good employment relations in the interest of providing the highest level of service to the residents of County Durham and Darlington and make recommendations to the Authority as to how employment relations could be improved.
4. Consider reports submitted by the Service on policy matters relating to terms and conditions of employees. (including early retirements, flexible retirements and redundancy).
5. Monitoring and reviewing key performance indicators and targets. (Sickness, Health and Safety, Training).
6. Oversight of the implementation of the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services.

5. The Appointments Panel

Delegated:

1. Selecting suitable individuals for Principal Officer or the Treasurer posts.

Referred:

The Committee shall meet when it is necessary to appoint a Principal Officer position or the Treasurer position. The panel will consist of:

- The Chair of the Authority;
- The Vice Chair of the Authority;
- At least one other Member from each constituent local authority;
- A Member representing the minority parties unless this is achieved through any of the above Members.

The Chair will be responsible for appointing the additional Members having considered any volunteers or nominations made. If the Chair is unable to attend, the Vice Chair will chair the Committee. It shall have the following functions:

1. Agree the final selection process for any relevant appointments for Principal Officer or the Treasurer posts;
2. Agree which officers they would like to act as advisers to the Committee;

3. Receive recommendations from officers and select individuals as part of the shortlisting process for final interviews;
4. Sit as the final interview panel for any relevant posts;
5. Select appropriate people for each relevant post.

6. The Salary Review Group

Delegated:

1. Agreeing the level, if any, of any local pay award for Principal Officers and the Treasurer position.
2. Monitoring and reviewing the performance of the Principal Officers.

Referred:

The Committee shall meet on an annual basis in order to undertake the Principal Officer Salary Review Process. The panel will consist of:

- The Chair of the Authority;
- The Vice Chair of the Authority;
- A Darlington Member;
- The Principal Officers;
- The Treasurer;
- Clerk to Authority

The Chair or Vice-Chair will chair the panel. It shall have the following functions:

1. Monitoring and reviewing the performance of the Chief Fire Officer, Principal Officers and the Treasurer;
2. Determine whether or not a full structural review of the relevant salaries is required or whether or not an annual review will suffice.
3. For annual reviews:
 - Determine if any substantive changes have taken place with the Principal Officers' or Treasurer's roles, or if there is any other reason why a pay award should be considered or not;
3. Make suitable recommendations to the Authority following this determination.
4. Make determinations on matters relating to terms and conditions of Principal Officers (including early retirements, flexible retirements and redundancy).
4. For full structural reviews:

- Oversee the appointment of a suitably qualified person or organisation to undertake job evaluation of the applicable roles;
- Consider the other relevant factors specified in the National Joint Council (NJC) for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services Scheme of Conditions of Service, fifth edition 2006 (the Gold Book);
- Make suitable recommendations to the Authority on any proposed pay levels following this consideration.

Section 4

Committee Governance

1. Limitation of delegated powers

- (1) Committees appointed by the Authority shall, within the limits of their delegated powers, be empowered to adopt new policies, extend or modify existing policies and determine proposals within which their day to day duties may be performed.
- (2) The powers and duties of any Committee appointed by the Authority shall be subject to the following provisos:
 - (a) no Committee shall be empowered to raise money by levy or loan
 - (b) a Committee shall report to the next convenient meeting of the Authority the action taken by them generally in pursuance of the powers and duties of the Committee except matters of routine or minor importance.
 - (c) the delegated powers and duties of a Committee shall not be exercised contrary to any general directions which may be given by the Authority.

2. Membership of Committees

Except where otherwise provided by statute or a scheme made under statutory authority or as determined by the Authority itself, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority shall be Ex-Officio members of every Committee appointed by the Authority.

3. Meetings of Committees

- (1) In the absence from a meeting of the Chair the Members present shall choose one of their number to preside.
- (2) The timing and frequency of meetings of any Committee shall be determined by the Committee itself provided that a special meeting of a Committee may be called at any time by the Chair of the Committee or of the Authority.

4. Quorum

Decisions shall not be taken at a meeting of any Committee unless at least three members of the Committee are present including a representative of each constituent Authority. Provided that, in no case shall the quorum of a Committee be less than three members.

Section 5

The Joint Consultative Committee

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority recognises the benefits of an established general framework for the provision of information to employees and promoting mutual trust through consultation. The Service's internal consultation and negotiation procedure invites staff participation by seeking views, feelings and ideas through the involvement of employee representatives.
- 1.2 Where there is no agreement following these procedures, either party may engage with Members of the Authority in order to seek to resolve any major outstanding employment issues.
- 1.3 The title of the Consultative Body shall be the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Joint Consultative Committee, herein referred to as the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC). The Committee shall have specific reference to the following.
 - i. Assisting in maintaining good employment relations in the interest of providing the highest level of service to residents of County Durham and Darlington,
 - ii. Making recommendations to the Authority as to how employment relations could be improved, and
 - iii. Considering written reports submitted by either the Service or by or on behalf of personnel relating to employment relations issues within the Service which have not been resolved by the normal consultation and negotiating procedures and which have not been the subject of formal grievance.
 - iv. The procedure described in this document is for where there is no agreement following normal consultation and negotiation during formulation of policies and procedures. Either party may engage with Members of the Authority in order to seek to resolve any major outstanding employment issues.
 - v. This procedure should not be used in the event of a dispute over the application of policies. The Service's agreed procedures should be used.

2. Representation

2.1 The Joint Consultative Committee shall comprise of elected Members, Principal Officers and representatives from the trade unions and staff associations. From the elected Members the representation will be: the Chair; Vice Chair; and five Councillors to be elected annually by the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority. The Committee will be chaired by the Chair of the Authority. The Principal Officers' representation on the committee will be up to five officers, at the discretion of the Chief Fire Officer, depending on the specific issue. The Employees' representatives for the meetings of the Committee shall be nominated by the Fire Brigades Union, the Fire Officers Association, GMB and UNISON on a 3-1-1-1 basis in accordance with the procedures adopted by the individual Trade Union for this purpose.

2.2 Any group (elected Members, Principal Officers or representative bodies) may arrange for substitutes to attend.

- If a member of the Joint Consultative Committee ceases to be a Member of the Authority, they will also cease to be a Member of the Joint Consultative Committee and as soon as practicable, a new Member shall be appointed to fill the resulting vacancy.

3. Secretariat

3.1 The Secretary of the Joint Consultative Committee shall be the Clerk to the Authority who will arrange for an officer to administer the meetings and take minutes.

4. Meetings

4.1 The vast majority of employment issues are dealt with by existing formal and informal procedures within the Service's normal consultation and negotiating procedures. It is not therefore proposed to schedule meetings of the Committee on a regular basis and either side will have the opportunity to give notice to call a meeting as and when required. The Clerk to the Authority will arrange meetings at the earliest opportunity having regard to the procedural arrangements set out in Section 5 below.

5. Objectives and Procedural Arrangements

5.1 The overall objective of the Joint Consultative Committee shall be to assist the Service in maintaining good employment relations in the interest of providing the highest level of service to the residents of County Durham and Darlington.

- 5.2 The Joint Consultative Committee shall consider any employment relations issue relating to the Service, although no item shall be referred to the Joint Consultative Committee unless it has first be considered through the Service's normal consultation and negotiating procedure with the relevant unions (except for issues agreed by the Chair of the Joint Consultative Committee to be urgent).
- 5.3 All issues submitted by either party for consideration by the Joint Consultative Committee must be supported by a written report to be supplied to the Clerk to the Authority by the party raising the issue.
- 5.4 The Clerk to the Authority will make a copy of the report available to the other parties and seek a written reply. The Clerk to the Authority shall subsequently circulate all papers to the Joint Consultative Committee and each of the party's concerns, at least three days before the date of the meeting.
- 5.5 The Joint Consultative Committee shall have no decision making powers: its aims will be to resolve issues through consensus but it has the power to make recommendations to the Authority.

Section 6

Local Pension Board

1. Statement of purpose

1.1 The purpose of the Board is to assist County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority (CDDFRA) in its role as the Scheme Manager for the Fire Fighters Pension Scheme. Such assistance is to:

- (a) Secure compliance with the Regulations, any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the Scheme, and requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator in relation to the Scheme; and
- (b) Ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Scheme.

2. Duties of the Board

2.1 The Board should at all times act in a reasonable manner in the conduct of its purpose. In support of this duty Board members will:

- (a) always act in the interests of the scheme and not seek to promote the interests of any stakeholder group above another; and
- (b) be subject to and abide by the relevant codes of conduct for members and employees.

3. Membership

3.1 The Board will comprise of an equal number of employer and member representatives with a minimum of no less than four in total.

3.2 At a meeting on 12 February 2015 the Authority in its role as the Scheme Manager agreed the establishment of the Pension Board and agreed the member and employer representation as outlined below. Membership of the Board will be reviewed annually at the annual general meeting of the Authority.

4. Scheme Member representatives

4.1 Three scheme member representatives shall be appointed to the Board.

4.2 Member representatives shall be members of the scheme administered by the Authority.

4.3 Two member representatives will be nominated by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and one by the Fire Officers Association (FOA).

- 4.4 Member representatives should be able to demonstrate their capacity to attend and complete the necessary preparation for meetings and participate in training as required.

5. Employer representatives

- 5.1 Three employer representatives shall be appointed to the Board.
- 5.2 Employer representatives shall be Authority Members and a senior manager employee of the Authority. Authority Members or the employee of the Authority with delegated responsibility for discharging the scheme manager function of the Authority may not serve as an employer representative.
- 5.3 Employer representatives should be able to demonstrate their capacity to attend and complete the necessary preparation for meetings and participate in training as required.
- 5.4 Employer representatives shall be appointed by the Authority in a manner which it considers best promotes the purpose of the Board.

6. Other members

- 6.1 At the meeting on 12 February 2015 the Authority in exercising its role as the Scheme Manager, took the decision not to appoint other members to the Board at this time.
- 6.2 This decision will be reviewed annually at the annual general meeting of the CFA.
- 6.3 Any appointments of other members shall have regard to the best interests of the purpose of the Board.

7. Appointment of chair

- 7.1 The appointment of the Chair will be a decision of the Authority. This will be reviewed annually or earlier if issues arise with the availability of the Chair to attend meetings.

8. Notification of appointments

- 8.1 On appointment to the Board, the Authority shall publish the name of the appointees, the process followed in the appointment together with the way in which the appointments support the effective delivery of the purpose of the Board.

9. Conflicts of interest

- 9.1 All members of the Board must declare to CDDFRA on appointment and at any such time as their circumstances change any potential conflict of interest arising as a result of their position on the Board.
- 9.2 On appointments to the Board and following any subsequent declaration of potential conflict CDDFRA shall ensure that any potential conflict is effectively managed in line with both the internal procedures of the Authority and the requirements of The Pensions Regulator's codes of practice on conflict of interest for Board members.

10. Knowledge and understanding (including Training)

- 10.1 Knowledge and understanding must be considered in light of the role of the Board to assist CDDFRA in line with the requirements outlined in section 1 above. The Board should establish and maintain a policy and framework to address the knowledge and understanding requirements that apply to Board members.
- 10.2 Board members shall attend and participate in training arranged in order to meet and maintain the requirements set out in the Board's knowledge and understanding policy and framework.
- 10.3 Board members shall participate in such personal training needs analysis or other processes that are put in place in order to ensure that they maintain the required level of knowledge and understanding to carry out their role on the Board.

11. Term of office

- 11.1 Term of Office should be in accordance with the committee cycle of CDDFRA which is currently annual. Where possible the term of office shall be longer than 12 months to allow sufficient development of knowledge and understanding.
- 11.2 Board membership may be terminated prior to the end of the term of office due to:
 - (a) A member representative appointed on the basis of their membership of the scheme no longer being a member of the scheme;
 - (b) A member representative no longer being a member of the body on which their appointment relied;
 - (c) An employer representative no longer holding the office or employment or being a member of the body on which their appointment relied;

- (d) The representative no longer being able to demonstrate their capacity to attend and prepare for meetings or to participate in required training.

12. Meetings

- 12.1 The Board shall as a minimum meet four times per year. The meetings will normally take place between the hours of 09:00 and 17:00.
- 12.2 The Chair of the Board with the consent of the Board membership may call additional meetings. Urgent business of the Board between meetings may, in exceptional circumstances, be conducted via communications between members of the Board including telephone conferencing and e-mails.

13. Quorum

- 13.1 The minimum number of members required to be present for a meeting to be quorate is one employer and one member representative plus the Chair.

14. Voting

- 14.1 The Chair shall determine when consensus has been reached.
- 14.2 Where consensus is not achieved this should be recorded by the Chair.
- 14.3 In support of its core functions the Board may make a request for information to the Audit and Finance Committee with regard to any aspect of the scheme manager function. Any such a request should be reasonably complied with in both scope and timing.
- 14.4 In support of its core functions the Board may make recommendations to the Audit and Finance Committee which should be considered and a response made to the Board on the outcome within a reasonable period of time.

15. Interpretation

- 15.1 In these terms 'the Scheme' means the Firefighters' Pension Scheme.
- 15.2 In these terms 'regulations' include the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992, as amended, the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2006, as amended, the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014 (2015 Firefighters Pension Scheme) as amended, The Pension Regulator's Codes of Practice as they apply to the Scheme Manager and Pension Board and any other relevant legislation applying to the Scheme.

Section 7

Scheme of Delegation to Officers

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Scheme is made under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, which applies to the Authority by virtue of the Durham Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1996.
- 1.2 For the purposes of this Scheme of Delegation the proper officers are the Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer and the Clerk.
- 1.3 The Authority, whilst retaining overall responsibility for the formulation of policy including the approval of the revenue and capital budgets, have delegated to the officers the powers set out in this Scheme.
- 1.4 The Scheme sets out the limits of authority of the Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer and Clerk. Additional delegations to the Clerk, the Chief Fire Officer and the Treasurer are described in the Standing Orders, Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations.
- 1.5 The Combined Fire and Rescue Authority is required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to appoint a Monitoring Officer. The Combination Order requires the appointment of a Treasurer to manage the Combined Fire Service Fund and the Local Government Act 1972, together with the Local Government Finance Act 1988, require the Authority to have a Chief Financial Officer and a Section 151 Officer. The two posts are combined in this Authority.
- 1.6 The powers of the Monitoring Officer derive entirely from Statute, and there is therefore, no need for them to be specifically included in the Scheme.
- 1.7 The Monitoring Officer also fulfils the duties of Clerk to the Authority.

2. General Conditions of Delegation and Definitions

- 2.1 The existence of a delegation shall not require the Chief Fire Officer to take a decision on that issue. The Chief Fire Officer needs to be aware of particularly controversial issues of concern to the Authority. In such circumstances they may refer the matter for guidance or decision by the Authority if they consider it appropriate to do so.
- 2.2 When a decision or action has been taken under the terms of this scheme and is significant to the work of the Authority or could be construed to be a matter of political sensitivity or controversy, Officers shall inform Members as soon as reasonably practicable, either in writing or some other suitable form of communication.

- 2.3 The Monitoring Officer to the Authority shall keep the operation of the Scheme under review and the Authority may amend its provisions from time to time. Financial limits should be reviewed annually by the Treasurer having regard to price fluctuations.
- 2.4 In exercising a delegated power, the Chief Fire Officer must act within the law, the Standing Orders and financial procedure rules and other procedures and policies and within budget.
- 2.5 In exercising delegated powers the Chief Fire Officer will:
- (a) consult the Chair and Vice Chair as appropriate;
 - (b) keep a formal record of the exercise of the delegated power;
 - (c) make the record available upon request to:
 - (i) the public, provided this does not mean the release of confidential or exempt information; and
 - (ii) any member of the Authority, provided this does not involve the release of confidential or exempt information to which the Member is not entitled;
 - (iii) the Monitoring Officer.
- 2.6 The Chief Fire Officer may authorise officers within the Service to exercise powers delegated to them. The Chief Fire Officer must maintain proper records of such authorisation. The Chief Fire Officer shall remain accountable for any actions or decisions taken under that authority.
- 2.7 In the event of the Chief Fire Officer's post being vacant or in the absence of the Chief Fire Officer, those delegated powers may be exercised by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer or an Assistant Chief Fire Officer so far as permitted by law.
- 2.8 Where it is impracticable to obtain authorisation from the Authority, and subject to the action being reported (for information) to the next convenient meeting of the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority, to take urgent action within legal powers, where this is necessary in the interests of the Authority, in respect of matters otherwise reserved to the Authority.

3. Chief Fire Officer

- 3.1 The Chief Fire Officer must, in exercising their functions, have regard to the Authority's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) formerly the Integrated Risk Management Plain (IRMP). The Chief Fire Officer shall, within the approved budgets and policies therefore, exercise all matters of day-to-day administration and operational management of the Service and functions. This delegation shall include taking and implementing decisions including, in particular, any decision which is concerned with maintaining the operational effectiveness of those services or with a matter incidental of the discharge of the Authority's functions or which falls within the scope of the Authority's policy framework.
- 3.2 The Chief Fire Officer is authorised to discharge the functions of the Authority in relation to the Service subject to the following requirements:
- (i) any decisions or actions shall comply with relevant resolutions, orders and directions of the Authority and of its appointed Committee(s);
 - (ii) where any matter involves professional or technical considerations within the sphere or competence of another officer, the Chief Fire Officer shall consult with that officer before authorising action. This shall not be limited to officers within the employ of the Authority, if circumstances require.
- 3.3 The Chief Fire Officer is authorised to exercise all the powers of the Authority as an enforcement authority under relevant legislation. Without prejudice to the generality of this provision they may in particular carry out the following:
- (i) institute, defend, withdraw or compromise legal proceedings, whether civil and/or criminal, pertaining to the Fire Authority's statutory functions in respect of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, and any regulations made thereunder after consultation with the Clerk to the Authority;
 - (ii) take appropriate action on behalf of the Authority under The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005;
 - (iii) designate persons as Inspectors under Article 26 of the Fire Safety Order;
 - (iv) authorise named members of staff in writing to exercise statutory powers conferred on the Authority;
 - (v) agree to the purchase of land to a value not exceeding £50,000;
 - (vi) agree to the sale of land up to a value not exceeding £50,000;
 - (vii) agree to the donation of redundant decommissioned assets for charitable purposes up to a value not exceeding £10,000;

- (viii) authorise named members of staff in writing to exercise the powers of inspectors under Article 27 of the Fire Safety Order, including entering any premises which an inspector has reason to believe it is necessary for him to enter for the purpose of carrying out the said Order and any regulations made under it into effect, and to inspect the whole or part of the premises and anything in them, where such entry and inspection may be effected without the use of force.
- (ix) To authorise severance packages up to a financial limit of £100,000 in consultation with the Treasurer to the Authority.

3.4 Delegation to the Chief Fire Officer does not include:

- (i) any matter reserved to the Authority;
- (ii) any matter which by law may not be delegated to an officer;
- (iii) any matter reserved to a Committee, Sub Committee or Panel;
- (iv) any power to make a formal response on behalf of the Authority to any White Paper, Green Paper, Government Consultation Paper or draft European Union Directive without reference first to the Chair of the Authority. However, when the time scale so requires, the Chief Fire Officer is authorised to respond without discussion with the Chair. The contents of such response shall be referred to the Chair as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter.

3.5 To complement the discharge of functions under these arrangements, the Chief Fire Officer shall:

- (i) maintain close liaison with the Chair in respect of controversial and sensitive issues;
- (ii) keep Members informed of significant developments relating to a specific matter where a Member has made known to the Chief Fire Officer, a legitimate interest or where the matter relates to or affects the Member's electoral division or ward.

3.6 The Chief Fire Officer may authorise in writing, an officer to exercise an authority in this scheme in their absence, or at other times.

3.7 The Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, shall determine any case in which there is uncertainty whether an officer is authorised to act under these arrangements.

3.8 Reference to these arrangements to the discharge of the functions of the Authority include references to the doing of anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of those functions and the Chief Fire Officer is authorised to act accordingly.

4. Treasurer

4.1 The powers delegated to the Treasurer are described below and in the Financial Regulations.

4.2 The Treasurer has the authority to:

- (a) act as the suitably qualified officer responsible for the proper administration of financial affairs as required by Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972;
- (b) provide technical and professional advice to the Authority and its members and the Chief Fire Officer;
- (c) represent, as required, the Authority's interests at meetings with Government departments and agencies and other relevant national regional and local organisations;
- (d) be responsible for the Authority's corporate financial planning and financial management frameworks (both revenue and capital) ensuring that the frameworks are robust. This includes the co-ordination of the Authority's strategic financial plans in collaboration with other parts of the Authority and with elected Members. This also includes the coordination of corporate financial performance reports in conjunction with other parts of the Authority as necessary;
- (e) within Service budgets, accept tenders, place contracts and procure other resources within or outside the Authority subject to compliance with the Authority's Financial and Contract Procedure Rules;
- (f) terminate contractual and other commissioning arrangements;
- (g) deliver the finance functions and manage those related activities delivered under any Service Level Agreements or contracts;
- (h) interpret financial legislation as it relates to the Service and Authority;
- (i) provide appropriate training to Members and officers with regard to financial planning or management issues.

5. Clerk to the Authority

5.1 Powers delegated to the Clerk to the Authority are described below and in the Standing Orders.

5.2 The Clerk has the authority to:

- (a) approve applications for the supply of Authority and Committee agendas, papers and minutes;
- (b) circulate reports and agendas under the Local Government Act 1972;
- (c) exclude reports from public inspection prior to a meeting in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972;
- (d) supply to the press copies of any documents supplied to Members in connection with an agenda item;
- (e) ensure that all agendas are despatched within the legal deadlines required by the Local Government Act 1972 and meeting corporate standards. Make copies available to the press and for public inspection on the website and at Service Headquarters, Belmont Business Park, Durham DH1 1TW;
- (f) prepare and issue decision and action summaries;
- (g) exclude from disclosure to Members documents containing exempt information in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972;
- (i) implement new procedures and legislation that affects the conduct of meetings;
- (j) supply summaries of minutes under the Local Government Act 1972;
- (k) receive declarations of resignation of office;
- (l) sign summonses to Authority, Committee, Sub Committee and Panel meetings;
- (m) make or vary appointments to Committees, Sub Committees and Panels upon the nomination of the relevant group leaders subject to changes being reported to the body in question;
- (n) receive notices of interests of members and officers and keep a record of disclosures under the Localism Act 2011;
- (o) arrange for the inspection of background papers by the public under the Local Government Act 1972;

- (p) receive notices regarding addresses to which a summons to a meeting is to be sent under the Local Government Act 1972;
- (q)
 - (i) to prepare or arrange for the preparation of all contracts for the sale or purchase of Authority land and property and all leases, tenancy agreements or other agreements affecting Authority land or property including easements or any interest in land;
 - (ii) to draft or arrange the drafting of legal documents other than those mentioned above relating to or affecting the functions of the Authority;
 - (iii) to sign the documents referred to in sub-paragraph (i) above and all other formal documents intended to give effect to decisions of the Authority;
- (r) to sign any notice, demand or other document on behalf of the Authority in connection with any actual or contemplated legal or enforcement proceedings;
- (s)
 - (i) generally, to institute, defend and conduct any legal proceedings relating to the Authority's functions or affecting the property, rights, or interests of the Authority except those relating to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005;
 - (ii) to authorise named officers to appear on behalf of the Authority in legal proceedings in the Magistrates' Court pursuant to Section 223 Local Government Act 1972;
- (t) to settle any action in any court or tribunal in which the Authority is a party or where legal proceedings are indicated providing that any settlement exceeding £50,000 will be subject to prior consultation with the Chair or Vice Chair of the Authority except in cases of urgency where the settlement is made on the advice of Counsel;

5.3 To affix the common seal to all properly authenticated deeds and documents.

Section 8

Meetings of the Authority

1. Meetings of the Authority

- 1.1 The proceedings of the Authority shall be conducted subject to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, or any statutory modification thereof.
- 1.2 The Authority shall hold an Annual Meeting on a day and at a time to be fixed by the Authority in accordance with paragraph 1 of Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972. The first item of business shall be the appointment of the Chair for the ensuing year.
- 1.3 Meetings of the Authority for the transaction of general business shall be held at the Fire Service Headquarters unless otherwise determined by the Authority and at such date and time as determined at the Annual Meeting of the Authority unless otherwise determined by the Authority provided that any such date or venue may be varied by the Chair if in their opinion it is necessary to do so in the interests of the efficient discharge of the Authority's business.
- 1.4 The Chair of the Authority may call additional meetings of the Authority at any time.
- 1.5 In these Standing Orders "ordinary meeting" means a meeting described in paragraph (1.2) or (1.3) above other than a meeting convened by the Chair or by members of the Authority. The term "year" means the period from 1st April, in one calendar year to the 31st March, in the next following year.
- 1.6 Where reasonably possible and not otherwise provided these Standing Orders shall be applied to Committees as they apply to the Authority.

2. Powers of Chair

Any power or duty of the Chair in relation to the conduct of a meeting may be exercised by the person presiding at the meeting. For the purpose of this Standing Order, "meeting" means any meeting of the Authority or of a Committee or a Sub-Committee of the Authority.

3. Quorum

- 3.1 If during any meeting of the Authority the Chair, after counting the number of Members present, declares that there is not present a quorum consisting of at least one third of the whole number of Members of the Authority, including at least one representative from each constituent Local Authority, the meeting shall stand adjourned.
- 3.2 The consideration of any business not transacted shall then be adjourned to a time fixed by the Chair, or, if they do not fix a time, to the next ordinary meeting of the Authority.

4. Minutes of the Authority

- 4.1 At a meeting of the Authority at which minutes of a previous meeting are submitted for approval as a correct record, the Chair shall move that those minutes be so approved.
- 4.2 No motion or discussion shall take place upon the minutes, except upon their accuracy, and any matter concerning their accuracy shall be raised by amendment.
- 4.3 If no such matter is raised, or if it is raised then as soon as it has been disposed of, the Chair shall sign the minutes.

5. Notices of Motion

- 5.1 Notices of motion other than a motion which under Standing Order 6 may be moved without notice shall be given in writing, signed by the Member or Members of the Authority giving the notice and delivered not later than 5 o'clock in the afternoon of the seventh day preceding the next meeting of the Authority, at the office of the Clerk by whom it shall be dated, numbered in the order in which it is received and entered in a book which shall be open to the inspection of every Member of the Authority.
- 5.2 If it shall appear to the Clerk that a motion of which they have received notice is not in order, or is framed in improper or unbecoming language, they shall take the direction of the Chair as to whether and in what form it shall be placed on the agenda paper, and the decision of the Chair, after consultation, where practicable, with the giver of the notice, shall be final.
- 5.3 The Clerk shall set out in the summons for every meeting of the Authority all motions of which notice has been duly given in the order in which they have been received unless a Member giving such a notice intimated in writing, when giving it, that they proposed to move it at some later meeting or has since withdrawn it in writing.

- 5.4 If a motion thus set out in the summons be not moved either by a Member who gave notice thereof or by some other Member on their behalf, it shall unless postponed by consent of the Authority be treated as withdrawn and shall not be moved without fresh notice.
- 5.5 If the subject matter of any motion of which notice has been duly given comes within the province of any Committee or Committees it shall, upon being moved and seconded, stand referred without discussion to such Committee or Committees, or to such other Committee or Committees as the Authority may determine, for consideration and report unless the Authority forthwith reject the motion. The Chair, at their discretion, may allow such motion to be considered by the meeting at which it is moved and seconded.
- 5.6 Every motion shall be relevant to some matter in relation to which the Authority has powers or duties.

6. Motions and amendments which may be moved without notice

The following motions and amendments may be moved without notice:-

- 6.1 Appointment of a Chair of the meeting at which the motion is made.
- 6.2 Motions relating to the accuracy of the minutes.
- 6.3 To change the order of business in the agenda.
- 6.4 Reference back to a Committee.
- 6.5 Appointment of a Committee or Members thereof, occasioned by an item mentioned in the summons to the meeting.
- 6.6 To receive reports or adopt recommendations of committees or officers and any consequent resolutions.
- 6.7 That leave be given to withdraw a motion.
- 6.8 Amendments to motions.
- 6.9 Extending the time limit for speeches.
- 6.10 To proceed to next business.
- 6.11 That the question be now put.
- 6.12 To adjourn a debate.
- 6.13 To adjourn a meeting.
- 6.14 Suspending Standing Orders, in accordance with Section 11, Paragraphs 2 and 3.

- 6.15 Motion under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 to exclude the public.
- 6.16 That a Member named be not further heard.
- 6.17 Inviting a Member to remain under Standing Order 6.15.
- 6.18 Giving consent of the Authority where the consent of the Authority is required by these Standing Orders.

7. Rules of debate for Authority Meetings

- 7.1 The debate at meetings of the Authority shall be conducted by consensus unless any Member present indicates to the Chair that they require the following provisions of this Standing Order to be invoked.
- 7.2 A motion or amendment to a motion shall not be discussed unless it has been proposed and seconded and it shall if required by the Chair, be put into writing and handed to the Chair before it is further discussed or put to the meeting.
- 7.3 A Member may not propose or second a motion or amendment on which they are disqualified from voting.
- 7.4 A Member when seconding a motion or amendment may, if they then declares their intention, reserve their speech until later in the debate.
- 7.5 A Member when speaking shall address the Chair. If two or more Members indicate their intention to speak the Chair shall determine the order in which those members shall speak.
- 7.6 A Member shall direct their speech to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or to a point of order.
- 7.7 No speech shall exceed 5 minutes except by consent of the Authority.
- 7.8 A Member shall speak once only on any motion, except that they may:-
 - (a) speak once on an amendment moved by another Member;
 - (b) if the motion has been amended since they last spoke move a further amendment;
 - (c) if their first speech was on an amendment moved by another Member, speak on the main issue, whether or not the amendment on which they spoke was carried;
 - (d) speak in exercise of a right of reply given by paragraph 7.14 or 7.16 of this Standing Order;

(e) speak on a point of order or by way of personal explanation.

7.9 An amendment shall be relevant to the motion and shall be either -

(a) to refer a subject of debate to a Committee for consideration or reconsideration;

(b) to leave out words;

(c) to leave out words and insert or add others;

(d) to insert or add words;

but such omission, insertion or addition of words shall not have the effect of negating the motion before the Authority.

7.10 Only one amendment may be moved and discussed at a time. No further amendment shall be moved until the amendment under discussion has been disposed of.

(Provided that the Chair may permit two or more amendments to be discussed (but not voted on) together if circumstances suggest that this course would facilitate the effective conduct of the Authority's business).

7.11 If an amendment is lost, other amendments may be moved on the original motion. If an amendment is carried, it shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the motion upon which any further amendment may be moved.

7.12 A Member may, with the consent of the Authority signified without discussion, and with the further consent of their seconder, alter a motion which they have moved if the alteration is one which could be made as an amendment thereto.

7.13 A motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the mover with the consent of their seconder and of the Authority, which shall be signified without discussion, and no Member may speak upon it after the mover has asked permission for its withdrawal, unless permission is refused.

7.14 The mover of a motion has a right to reply at the close of the debate on the motion, immediately before it is put to the vote. If an amendment is moved, the mover of the original motion shall also have a right of reply at the close of the debate on the amendment and shall not otherwise speak on the amendment. The mover of the amendment shall have no right of reply to the debate on their amendment.

7.15 When a motion is under debate no other motion shall be moved except the following:-

- (a) to amend the motion;
- (b) to adjourn the meeting;
- (c) to adjourn the debate;
- (d) to proceed to the next business;
- (e) that the question be now put;
- (f) that a Member be not further heard;
- (g) a motion under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public.

7.16 A Member may move without comment at the conclusion of a speech of another Member, "That the Authority proceed to the next business", "That the question be now put", "That the debate be adjourned" or "That the Authority adjourns", on the seconding of which the Chair shall proceed as follows:-

- (a) on a motion to proceed to next business:

unless in their opinion the matter before the meeting has been insufficiently discussed they shall first give the mover of the original motion a right of reply, and then put to the vote the motion to proceed to next business;

- (b) on a motion that the question be now put:

unless in their opinion the matter before the meeting has been insufficiently discussed, they shall first put to the vote the motion that the question be now put, and if it is passed then give the mover of the original motion their right of reply under paragraph 7.14 of this Standing Order before putting their motion to the vote;

- (c) on a motion to adjourn the debate or the meeting:

If, in their opinion, the matter before the meeting has not been sufficiently discussed and cannot reasonably be sufficiently discussed on that occasion they shall put the adjournment motion to the vote without giving the mover of the original motion their right of reply on that occasion.

Unless the adjournment motion specifies an hour or occasion the motion shall be deemed to intend that the debate or the remaining business of the meeting be resumed at the next ordinary meeting of the Authority.

7.17 A Member may indicate to the Chair a wish to speak on a point of order or in personal explanation, and shall be entitled to be heard forthwith. A point of order shall relate only to an alleged breach of a Standing Order or statutory provision and the Member shall specify the Standing Order or statutory provision and the way in which they consider it has been broken. A personal explanation shall be confined to some material part of a former speech by them which may appear to have been misunderstood in the present debate.

7.18 The ruling of the Chair on a point of order or on the admissibility of a personal explanation shall not be open to discussion.

7.19 Whenever during a debate the Chair rises or announces to the meeting that this paragraph of this Standing Order is invoked all Members present shall immediately be silent.

8. Matters relating to persons employed by the Authority

If any matter arises at a meeting of the Authority as to the appointment, promotion, dismissal, salary, pension, or conditions of service of any person employed by the Authority, such question shall not be the subject of discussion until the Authority has decided whether or not the power of exclusion of the public under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 shall be exercised.

9. Order at Meetings

9.1 The Chair shall call the attention of the meeting to continued irrelevance, tedious repetition, unbecoming language or any breach of order on the part of a member. The Chair may, and shall if a motion under Standing Order 7.15(f) is carried, direct such a Member, if speaking, to discontinue their speech, or in the event of disregard of the authority of the Chair, to retire for the remainder of the meeting.

9.2 The Chair may at any time, if they think it desirable in the interest of order, adjourn a meeting or suspend a meeting of the Authority for a time to be named by them.

10. Rescission of Resolution

Any motion to rescind a resolution passed within the preceding six months and any motion or amendment to the same effect as one which has been rejected within the preceding six months shall be carried only if at least three-quarters of the Members present and voting vote in favour of the motion or amendment.

11. Voting

11.1 The mode of voting at meetings of the Authority shall be by show of hands: provided that where, immediately after a vote is taken at a meeting of the Authority, any Member so requires, there shall be recorded in the minutes of the proceedings of that meeting, whether that person cast his vote for the question or against the question or whether they have abstained from voting.

11.2 In the case of an equality of votes, the person presiding at the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

12. Voting on Appointments

Where there are more than two persons nominated for any position to be filled by the Authority, voting shall be by ballot; in such case if there is not a majority of votes given in favour of one person, the name of the person(s) having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote shall be taken, and so on until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person and for the purposes of this Standing Order the provisions of Standing Order 11.2 shall apply.

13. Record of Attendances

Every Member of the Authority attending a meeting of the Authority shall sign their name in the attendance book or sheet provided for that purpose. If apologies are not registered, Members will be logged as absent from the meeting.

14. Attendance of Substitutes

14.1 A Member of the Authority may nominate any Member of their constituent Local Authority to act as their substitute and, in the absence of the Member of the Authority from any meeting of the Authority the nominee shall be entitled to attend, speak and vote at the meeting (but not, in the case of a nominating Member being the Chair or Vice-Chair, to exercise the rights and functions of that office).

- 14.2 The nomination or revocation of nomination of a substitute shall be in writing (specifying the body to which it relates), signed by the nominating Member, and shall be sent forthwith to the Clerk to the Authority (notification thereof being given verbally by or on behalf of the nominating Member in a case of urgency). Upon the receipt of notification the Clerk to the Authority shall cause the register maintained for the purposes of Section 100G Local Government Act 1972 to be amended accordingly.
- 14.3 A Member attending as a substitute shall, at the commencement of the meeting, identify the Member on whose behalf they attend who shall thereupon be excluded from participation in that meeting.
- 14.4 A nomination (other than a nomination for the purpose only of a specific meeting) shall have effect until revoked by the nominating Member.

Section 9

Interest and Appointment of Officers

1. Members Code of Conduct

- 1.1 In performing their function, Members of the Authority shall comply at all times and in all respects with the Authority's Code of Conduct for Members.

2. Canvassing

- 2.1 Canvassing of Members of the Authority or any Committee of the Authority directly or indirectly for any appointment under the Authority is prohibited and shall disqualify the candidate concerned for that appointment. The purport of this paragraph of this Standing Order shall be included in every advertisement inviting applications for appointments and in any form of application.
- 2.2 A Member of the Authority shall not solicit for any person any appointment under the Authority and shall not provide, whether requested or not, any testimonial for a candidate for appointment.

3. Relationship of Candidate to Member or Officer

- 3.1 A candidate for any appointment by or under the Authority who knows that they are related to any Member or senior employee of the Authority (Area Manager or above) shall when making application disclose that relationship. A candidate who fails to disclose such a relationship shall be liable to be disqualified for the appointment and if appointed shall be liable to dismissal without notice. Every Member and senior employee of the Authority, as specified above, shall disclose to the Chief Fire Officer any relationship known to them to exist between themselves and any person whom they know is a candidate for an appointment under the Authority. The Chief Fire Officer shall inform the Clerk of any disclosure so received.
- 3.2 The requirements of this Standing Order shall be included in every advertisement inviting applications for appointment and in any form of application.
- 3.3 For the purpose of this Standing Order "senior employee" means any employee occupying a post so designated by the Authority and persons shall be deemed to be related if they are husband and wife or cohabitee or if either of them or the spouse or cohabitee of either of them is the son or daughter or grandson or granddaughter or brother or sister or nephew or niece of the applicant, or of the spouse or cohabitee of the applicant.

4. Interest of Officers

The Clerk of the Authority shall record in a book to be kept for the purpose particulars of any notice given by an officer of the Authority under section 117 of the Local Government Act, 1972, of a pecuniary interest in a contract, and the book shall be open during office hours to the inspection of any member of the Authority.

Section 10

Common Seal and Duties of the Clerk

1. Role of Clerk

- 1.1 The Clerk shall have responsibility for the administration of the Authority.
- 1.2 The Clerk shall be designated the monitoring officer of the Authority pursuant to Section 5 (1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and shall be responsible for ensuring the legality of the actions of the Authority and its officers and employees acting on its behalf.

2. Responsibilities of Clerk

The Clerk shall be the proper officer of the Authority for the purposes of the following provisions of the Local Government Act 1972:

- 2.1 To determine which items are likely to be discussed in private and whether to exclude the matter from circulation to the press and public;
- 2.2 To determine which background documents supplied to Members of the Authority should be supplied to the press;
- 2.3 To prepare a written summary of the proceedings which were dealt with in that part of the meeting from which the public were excluded;
- 2.4 To determine which documents contain exempt information and should not be disclosed to members of the public;
- 2.5 Calling of Meeting;
- 2.6 Certification of Copies;
- 2.7 Authentication of Documents.

3. Custody of the Seal

The Common Seal of the Authority shall be kept in a safe place in the custody of the Clerk.

4. Sealing of documents

- 4.1 The Common Seal of the Authority shall not be affixed to any document unless the sealing has been authorised by a resolution of the Authority or of a Committee to which the Authority has delegated its powers in this behalf, but a resolution of the Authority (or of a Committee where that Committee has the power) authorising the acceptance of any tender, the purchase, sale, letting, or taking of any property, the issue of any stock, the presentation of any petition, memorial, or address, the making of a contract, issuing a levy, or the doing of any other thing, shall be a sufficient authority for sealing any document necessary to give effect to the resolution.
- 4.2 The affixing of the Common Seal shall be attested by the Clerk or a senior member of their staff nominated by them and an entry of every sealing of a document shall be made and consecutively numbered in a book kept for the purpose and shall be signed by the person who has attested the seal.
- 4.3 The Common Seal of the Authority shall be affixed to those documents which in the opinion of the Clerk require to be sealed.

5. Preparation of Legal Documents

- 5.1 The Clerk of the Authority shall prepare or arrange for the preparation of all contracts, leases, agreements of tenancy or other agreements affecting land or property of whatsoever kind, including easements or any interest in land; and the Clerk shall prepare and be responsible for the preparation and proper execution of all contracts for the supply of goods and materials, the provision of services and the execution of any work to which the Authority is a contracting party.
- 5.2 Subject as aforesaid, agreements entered into by the Authority affecting matters of ordinary administration shall be dealt with by the Chief Fire Officer in cases where printed forms of agreement are applicable and suitable for the purpose and which forms as aforesaid have been previously settled or approved by the Clerk.
- 5.3 Every legal document, other than those hereinbefore mentioned, in any way relating to or affecting the functions of the Authority shall be settled in such manner as the Clerk may determine.
- 5.4 (a) The Clerk or a senior member of their staff nominated by them shall be authorised to sign on behalf of the Authority the several documents referred to in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.3 and all other documents which are intended to give effect to decisions of the Authority or of any committee and which are not required to be under seal.

- (b) The Chief Fire Officer or a senior member of their staff nominated by them shall be authorised to sign on behalf of the Authority the documents referred to in paragraph 5.2 which are not required to be under seal.

6. Legal Proceedings

- 6.1 Where any document will be a necessary step in legal proceedings on behalf of the Authority it shall be signed by the Clerk of the Authority unless any enactment otherwise requires or authorises, or the Authority give the necessary authority to some other person for the purpose of such proceedings.
- 6.2 In relation to the discharge of the Authority's functions the Clerk or a senior member of their staff nominated by them shall be authorised on behalf of the Authority:
 - (a) To give Notice to Quit and other Notices or formal demands which they may deem it requisite to serve in the interests of the Authority;
 - (b) To take legal proceedings for the recovery of any moneys due to the Authority and for possession of any property to which the Authority may be entitled;
 - (c) Generally to institute, defend and conduct any legal proceedings or to make representations affecting the property, rights or interests of the Authority for which the Authority may for the time being be entitled to authorise, institute or defend other than in the case of prosecutions brought about under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
 - (d) In consultation with the Treasurer and Chief Fire Officer, to settle uninsured claims for damages against the Authority where the amount does not exceed £50,000 other than in industrial relations cases.

Nothing in this Standing Order shall affect the operation of any resolutions of the Authority specifically enabling the Clerk on its behalf to give notices or demands or to institute, defend or conduct proceedings before courts of summary jurisdiction or to appear and be heard on behalf of the Authority at any Public Inquiry.

7. Inspection of Documents

Any document which is in the possession or under the control of the Authority and contains material relating to any business to be transacted at a meeting of the Authority or a Committee shall be open to inspection by any Member of the Authority, except that where it appears to the Clerk that a document discloses exempt information the document shall not be open to such inspection. For the purpose of this Standing Order "exempt information" means that falling within paragraphs 1 to 7, of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

Section 11

Application of Standing Orders

1. Mover of Motion may attend Committee

A Member of the Authority who has moved a motion which has been referred to any Committee shall have notice of the meeting of the Committee at which it is proposed to consider the motion. The Member shall have the right to attend the meeting and if they attend shall have an opportunity of explaining the motion.

2. Variation and Revocation of Standing Orders

Any motion to add to, vary or revoke these Standing Orders shall when proposed and seconded stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Authority.

3. Suspension of Standing Orders

Any one or more of these Standing Orders may be suspended at any meeting of the Authority so far as regards any business at such meeting, provided that at least three quarters of the members of the Authority present and voting shall so decide.

4. Interpretation

4.1 The ruling of the Chair as to the construction or application of any of these Standing Orders, or as to any proceedings of the Authority, shall not be challenged at any meeting of the Authority.

4.2 Throughout these Standing Orders if not inconsistent with the context the following terms shall have the meanings hereinafter assigned to them:-

"Authority" means the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority of the County of Durham and Darlington

"Chair" means the Chair of a meeting of the Authority or of a Committee thereof for the time being

"Clerk" means the Clerk and Monitoring Officer of the Authority

"Chief Fire Officer" means the Chief Fire Officer of the Combined Fire and Rescue Service.

"Committee" means a Committee appointed by the Authority

"Treasurer" means the Treasurer of the Authority

"Standing Orders" means the Standing Orders of the Authority

"Financial Regulations" means the Regulations made to control the finances of the Authority

"Members Code of Conduct" is the Code of Conduct appended to the standing orders and headed Appendix One.

- 4.3 The Interpretation Act 1978 shall, save where the context otherwise requires, apply to these Standing Orders as it applies to the interpretation of an Act of Parliament.

Section 12

Contract Procedure Rules

1. What are Contract Procedure Rules?

The Contract Procedure Rules (CPR) provide the framework for procurement activity, setting out how contracts for goods, works, services and utilities should be put in place and managed, and detailing the record keeping and reporting requirements relating to procurement activity.

The Contract Procedure Rules should not be seen in isolation, but rather as part of the overall regulatory framework as set out in this Constitution.

Any specific advice in relation to procurement matters that is not covered by these rules should be sought from the Treasurer.

2. Basic Principles

All procurement procedures must:

- Realise value for money by achieving the optimum combination of whole life costs and quality of outcome
- Be consistent with the highest standards of integrity
- Operate in a transparent manner
- Ensure fairness in allocating public contracts
- Comply with all legal requirements
- Support all relevant priorities and policies of the Authority, including the medium term financial plan
- Comply with the Authority's procurement strategy

3. Officer Responsibilities

Officers will comply with these CPRs, the Constitution and with all UK and EU legal requirements. Officers must ensure that any agents, consultants and contractual partners acting on their behalf also comply.

Officers will:

- Have regard to the Procurement Strategy
- Keep appropriate records of procurement processes and decisions
- Take all necessary procurement, legal, financial and professional advice, taking into account the requirements of these CPRs.
- Prior to letting a contract on behalf of the Authority, check whether:
 - An appropriate contract is already in place
 - An appropriate national, regional or other collaborative contract is already in place
 - Where the Authority already has an appropriate contract in place, then this must be used unless it can be established that the contract does not fully meet the Authority's specific requirements in this particular case, and this is agreed following consultation with the Treasurer.

- Where an appropriate national, regional or collaborative contract is available, consideration should be given to using this provided the contract offers value for money.
- Ensure that when any employee, either of the Authority or of a service provider, may be affected by any transfer arrangement, then any Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) issues are considered and legal and HR advice is obtained prior to proceeding with the procurement exercise.

Failure to comply with any of the provisions of these CPRs, the Constitution or UK or EU legal requirements may be brought to the attention of the Monitoring Officer or Treasurer as appropriate. Depending on the nature of non-compliance this may result in disciplinary action being taken.

4. Quotations, Tenders, Variations and Exemptions

In accordance with Public Contracts Regulations (2015) all procurement in excess of £25,000 will be advertised via Contracts Finder in addition to the notes below.

For service or call off contracts the estimated contract value is determined using a minimum of four years aggregate expenditure.

4.1 The following rules must be followed when seeking quotations:

- if the estimated contract value exceeds £50,000, no contract shall be made unless an invitation to tender has been issued via the e-procurement portal, to at least three persons, firms or companies.
- If the estimated contract value exceeds £25,000 but is less than £50,000 no contract shall be made unless at least 3 written quotations have been sought via the e-procurement portal.
- if the estimated contract value exceeds £5,000 but is less than £25,000, no contract shall be made unless at least 3 written quotations have been sought.
- if the estimated value exceeds £250 but is less than £5,000, no contract shall be made unless at least one written quotation has been sought.

4.2 All contracts which come within the limits of the European Procurement rules shall be advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union and the procedures for the award of such contracts shall be in accordance with the relevant EU Directive.

4.3 Subject to (2) above.

- (a) In the case of a contract for the supply of goods or materials of a specialised nature or the execution of work of a specialised nature the Chief Fire Officer may in consultation with the Chair of the Authority invite tenders or quotations from 2 or more persons, firms or companies usually engaged in the performance of contracts of a similar nature to that proposed.
- (b) If it appears to the Chief Fire Officer that there is only one possible contractor or supplier in respect of any contract they may in consultation with the Chair of the Authority invite and accept a tender or quotation from a single person, firm or company. Appropriate documentation recording and evidencing the decision must be completed and retained in these cases.

4.4 Any public notice or written invitation to tender shall describe the nature and purpose of the proposed contract, invite tenders for its execution, and either the public notice or written invitation or a subsequent written communication to tenderers shall state the last date when tenders will be received.

- (a) The tender limits referred to above should be regarded as the minimum requirement and in those instances where only one written quotation is received further evidence of alternative prices should be documented in order to demonstrate that value for money has been pursued.

5. Acceptance of Tender or Quotation

Acceptance of tenders and quotations is delegated to the Treasurer who may authorise budget holders or finance officers to accept tenders or quotations on their behalf.

6. Variations and Exemptions

Except where the Public Contracts Regulations (2015) apply, the Chief Fire Officer has the power to waive any requirements within these CPRs for specific projects.

Where proceeding under a Variation does not breach the Public Contract Regulations (2015), these rules may be waived or varied where the circumstances are certified by the Treasurer as meeting any of the following criteria:

- (a) With an organisation already engaged by the Authority for a similar and related procurement and where there is significant benefit to extending the contract to cover this additional requirement, without exposing the Authority to unacceptable risk;
- (b) Involving cases of genuine, unforeseen urgency, where it is not possible to comply with the CPRs;

- (c) In relation to time limited grant funding from an external body, where the time limitations will not allow a competitive procurement process to be completed and where the grant conditions allow this;
- (d) Where relevant UK or EU legislation not otherwise referred to in these CPRs prevents the usual procurement process from being followed.

A variation form must be completed by the appropriate officer and approved by the Treasurer. All variations will be held by the Procurement Officer and a summary of all variations will be maintained.

Where a variation is applied for by the Procurement Officer, it must be scrutinised by Internal Audit to ensure the robustness of the procedure.

These CPRs do not apply to contracts:

- which are procured on the Authority's behalf;
- Through collaboration with other fire authorities, local authorities or other public bodies, where a competitive process which complies with the CPRs of the leading organisation has been carried out;
- By a National, Sub National or Regional contracting authority where the process followed is in line with the Public Contracts Regulations (2015) (e.g. NEPO, a Pro 5 organisation or Government Procurement Service, although this list is not exhaustive);
- Under the terms of a Strategic Partnership approved by the Authority;
- to cover urgent operational needs, if in the opinion of the Chief Fire Officer it is considered to be in the Authority's interests or necessary to meet the Authority's obligations under relevant legislation. Use of this exemption must be followed up with a Procurement Acceptance Report available from the Procurement Officer.

7. Relevant Contracts

All Relevant Contracts must comply with these CPRs. A Relevant Contract is any arrangement made by, or on behalf of, the Authority for the carrying out of works, supplies or services.

The following contracts and/or payments are exempt from these CPRs:

- (a) Contracts for the execution of mandatory works by statutory undertakers, where the statutory undertaker is the only body which can perform the works. Such statutory undertakers include:
 - i. British Telecom – specifically for telecoms infrastructure works;
 - ii. Network Rail – specifically for works affecting the railway infrastructure;

- iii. Northern Gas Networks – specifically for gas supply infrastructure works;
- iv. Northern Powergrid – specifically for electricity infrastructure works;
- v. Northumbria Water – specifically for water and sewerage infrastructure works;
- vi. Highways England – specifically for works to the core road network under their management;

In addition, certain other organisations may be regarded as statutory undertakers in very specific circumstances, where works are required, involving disruption to, or re-siting of, existing infrastructure which they own and/or operate, particularly:

- vii. Any other telecoms provider for works to specifically licensed mobile telecoms infrastructure which they own;
- viii. Any independent Distribution Network Operator for works to electricity infrastructure they own.

Where fees are payable directly to a sub-contractor appointed by a statutory undertaker, and where the Authority does not have the option of appointing a contractor itself, and where the statutory undertaker's procurement process for selecting the named sub-contractor complies with any obligations under the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016, then the named sub-contractor shall be treated as a statutory undertaker for the purpose of this rule.

- (b) Fees payable to the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency and/or Drive and Vehicle Standards Agency.
- (c) Fees payable to the Disclosure & Barring Service.
- (d) Fees for TV licences in Authority owned or operated premises.
- (e) Contracts for the purchase of broadcasting time, including for the placing of radio and television advertising.
- (f) Contracts to provide sponsorship to events, award schemes, or other promotional activity being organised by a third party.
- (g) Contracts of employment which make an individual a direct employee of the authority.
- (h) A staff secondment, where an employee of another organisation shall work on an Authority project, on a temporary basis, but they will not become an employee of the Authority.

NB: While the CPRs do not apply to staff secondments, authorisation to proceed must be obtained from People and Organisation Development, and the terms of the secondment appropriately documented.

- (i) Contracts for legal representation by a lawyer (advocate, barrister or solicitor) in arbitration or conciliation proceedings, judicial proceedings before the

courts, tribunals or public authorities of another country or before international courts, tribunals or institutions.

- (j) Payments for legal advice given by a lawyer in preparation for, or connected to, any of the proceedings mentioned in (i).
- (k) Payments for documents, document certification and authentication services, which may only be provided by notaries, or from the issuing authority, such as the General Registry Office, HM Passport Office, Valuation Office Agency (VOA).
- (l) Payments for legal services provided by trustees or appointed guardians or other legal services, the providers of which are designated by a court or tribunal.
- (m) Appointment of independent planning inspectors nominated by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors under the NPIERS scheme.
- (n) Examination fees payable to a qualification awarding body for the certification of exam results only, for a professional or vocational qualification in alignment with the Authority's professional bodies for exams and course fees.
- (o) Agreements regarding the acquisition, disposal or transfer of land (to which the Financial Procedure Rules apply)
- (p) The payment of grants to third parties.

NB. While grants are not covered by these CPRs, there are rules on the awarding of grants which do need to be observed. The Authority cannot simply choose to treat a procurement as a grant in order to avoid conducting a competitive process.

- (q) Contracts which have been procured on the Authority's behalf by a Central Purchasing Body, where the process followed is in line with the Public Contracts Regulations (2015), (e.g. the North East Procurement Organisation or Crown Commercial Services,)
- (r) To cover urgent operational needs, if in the opinion of the relevant head of section it is considered to be in the Authority's best interest or necessary to meet the Authority's obligations under legislation. Use of this exemption by the relevant section head must be followed up in writing.
- (s) Payments for third-party seller such as auctioneers, considered to be working in the Authority's best interest in achieving value for money on the sale of assets. Any third-party sellers who earn monies on commission and do not cost the Authority such as rates reviews or Cyclescheme.
- (t) Purchase of items of equipment that are of the same model and type as others in use in the Authority in order to avoid added costs such as training and spare parts.

8. Framework Agreements

Framework agreements are agreements between the Authority with one or more contracting authorities and suppliers for the provision of goods, works or services on agreed terms for a specific period, for estimated quantities against which orders may be placed if and when required during the contract period.

The term of a Framework Agreement must not exceed four years except in exceptional circumstances duly justified in particular by the subject matter of the framework agreement.

Where frameworks are awarded to several organisations, contracts based on Framework Agreements may be awarded in one of two ways, as follows:

9. Where the terms of the agreement are sufficiently precise to cover the particular call-off, by applying the terms laid down in the Framework Agreement without re-opening competition.

10. Where the terms laid down in the Framework Agreement are not precise or complete enough for the particular call-off, by holding a further competition in accordance with the following procedure:

10.1.1 Inviting organisations within the Framework Agreement, that are capable of executing the subject of the contract, to submit bids within an appropriate time

10.1.2 Awarding each contract to the bidding organisation which has submitted the best bid on the basis of the relevant Award Criteria set out in the Framework Agreement.

11. Competition Requirements

Officers must establish the total value of the procurement including whole life costs incorporating any potential extension periods which may be awarded. Based on this value, quotations or tenders must then be invited, and appropriately advertised, in line with the financial thresholds that are in place as per 4 above.

12. Negotiation with a Single Supplier (below OJEU)

In exceptional circumstances, a contract which will not exceed the relevant OJEU threshold may be awarded without a competitive procurement, via direct negotiation with a single supplier, following a process similar to the EU Negotiated Procedure. Such award may only be made in the following circumstances:

(a) For the purchase of goods which are patented or have special technical characteristics that they may be considered unique, and where these goods are only available from one supplier.

- (b) For the execution of works or services involving unique, highly specialist knowledge or skills and where it can be demonstrated that only one organisation possesses the required knowledge or skills.
- (c) For the execution of works or services, where there is considerable benefit to the Authority in negotiating with a particular proposed supplier and where this does not expose the Authority to unacceptable risk.

The use of this process may be invalidated by prior negotiation or discussion (of any kind) with a proposed supplier, without the involvement of the Procurement Officer, where such negotiation may distort or restrict the potential market or otherwise prejudice the Authority's position. The Treasurer reserves the right to refuse the award of a contract via this process where such unauthorised negotiation has taken place.

All awards under a negotiation with single supplier must be authorised in writing by the Treasurer.

13. Evaluation Criteria

In any procurement exercise the successful bid should:

- 13.1 Offer the lowest price, or
- 13.2 Offer the most economically advantageous balance between quality and price

In the latter case, the Authority will use criteria linked to the subject matter of the contract to determine that an offer is the most economically advantageous, for example, price, quality, technical merit, aesthetic and functional characteristics, environmental characteristics, running costs, cost effectiveness, after-sales service, technical assistance, delivery date, delivery period and period of completion.

Issues that are important to the Authority in terms of meeting its corporate objectives can be used to evaluate bids. The criteria can include, for example, sustainability considerations, support for the local economy or the use of sub-contractors. The bidding organisation's approaches to continuous improvement and setting targets for service improvement or future savings could also be included. All criteria must relate to the subject matter of the contract, be in line with the Authority's corporate objectives and must be objectively quantifiable and non-discriminatory.

These criteria should be assessed through either:

- 13.3 Essential Criteria – assessed on a pass/fail basis, or
- 13.4 Technical Questions – assessed on a scored basis

The procurement documentation should clearly explain the basis of the decision to bidding organisations, making clear how the evaluation criteria specified in the process will be applied, the overall weightings to be attached to each of the high level criteria, how the high level criteria are divided into any sub criteria and the weightings attached to each of those sub criteria.

14. Evaluation Panel

Officers should establish an evaluation panel for the assessment of any Technical Questions at shortlisting and/or Invitation to Tender stages. Each element of the evaluation may have its own panel, provided that all of the responses to each Technical Question are evaluated by the same panel members.

The panel should have at least two members of staff. The Procurement Officer should act as a moderator and may also take part in the evaluation.

15. Standards

Relevant British, EU and International standards which apply to the subject matter of the contract and which are necessary to properly describe the required quality must be included with the contract.

16. Invitation to Tender / Request for Quotation

Invitations to tender and quotation requests must be issued in accordance with the requirements of these CPRs. Officers must ensure they are familiar with and adhere to the minimum current threshold values. Above the single quotation threshold of £5,000, all invitations to tender, requests for quotation and quick quotes should wherever possible be issued via the Authority's e-procurement system.

17. Shortlisting

Any shortlisting (ie SQ) must have regard to the economic, financial and technical standards relevant to the contract and Evaluation Criteria. Specific rules apply to public sector contracts covered by the Public Contracts Regulations (2015). Officers should refer to any further guidance from the Procurement Officer.

18. Tenders

Bidding organisations must be given an adequate period in which to prepare and submit a proper quotation or tender, consistent with the complexity of the contract requirements. Where the Public Contract Regulations (2015) apply, Chapter 2 of the Regulations lays down specific minimum time periods for tenders.

Tenders submitted electronically will be opened by the Procurement Officer or their representative(s). Where tenders are submitted electronically they cannot be opened until the agreed tender opening date and time has been reached. The e-procurement system maintains a full audit trail of all tenders submitted.

19. Quotations

An audit trail of quotations will automatically be maintained within the e-procurement system, where written quotations have been sought an audit trail must be maintained by the officer seeking the quotations and all quotations provided to the Finance Team as part of the ordering process.

20. Clarification Procedures

The Authority can ask bidding organisations for clarification of any details submitted as part of their bid. However, any such clarification must not involve changes to the basic features of the bidding organisations submission. All clarification discussions must be fully documented as part of the procurement process.

21. Evaluation

The evaluation of bids must be conducted in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the procurement documents provided to bidding organisations, and in line with any guidance available from the Procurement Officer.

22. Award of Contract

The Authority is required to notify successful and unsuccessful bidders of the outcome of a procurement process, in writing, in as timely a fashion as possible.

Where procurement has been subject to the Public Contract Regulations (2015), the Alcatel Standstill (a 10 day standstill period before a contract can be awarded to allow unsuccessful bidding organisations an opportunity to challenge the proposed contract award) will need to be included in the procurement timetable before the contract can be awarded. Full information regarding the Alcatel Standstill can be obtained from the Procurement Officer.

23. Feedback

Feedback will be given to all organisations completing the process. Information will be relevant to the size of the contract and issued by the Procurement Officer.

24. Format of Contract Documents

The Procurement Officer will assist in supplying the Authority's procurement documents or conditions issued by a relevant professional body will be used. Where there is any deviation from these, the documents to be used must be reviewed by the Authority's legal advisor before being issued by the Procurement Officer.

25. Contract Signature

The Contract agreement must:

- (a) Where the contract is in the form of a deed, be made under the Authority's seal and attested as required by the Constitution, or:
- (b) Where the contract is in the form of an agreement there will be:
 - (i) the issue of a formal letter followed by
 - (ii) the issue of a contract signed by an appropriate senior officer/budget holder in conjunction with the Procurement Officer

26. Review of Tenders and Contracts

To ensure the integrity of the procurement process as determined by the Procurement Officer:

- All proposed invitations to tender or requests for quotation that are not in compliance with the contract documentation or standard terms and conditions issued by a relevant professional body, will be reviewed by the Authority's legal advisors;
- Any proposed Invitations to Tender which are subject to the Public Contract Regulations (2015), or which are deemed to be of high risk, must be reviewed by the Authority's legal advisors;
- Any proposed contract where there is any deviation from the contract terms in the Invitation to Tender must be reviewed by the Authority's legal advisors.

27. Records

The Public Contract Regulations (2015) require contracting authorities to maintain the following comprehensive records of procurement activities:

- Contract details including value
- Selection procedure
- Justification for use of the selected procedure
- Names of bidding organisations, both successful and unsuccessful
- Reasons for selection
- Reasons for abandoning a procedure

Prior to the contract being formally awarded, and prior to any bidding organisations(s) being notified, the result of any competitive procurement process must be recorded by the Procurement Officer.

The Procurement Officer will submit notifications and then formally award the contract.

Following the signature of the contract documents, the Procurement Officer will ensure a copy of the signed contract particulars is retained for future reference and audit purposes.

28. Prevention of Corruption

The rules and regulations pertaining to the prevention of corruption are outlined in the Authority's Financial Regulations (Section 13) and must be adhered to.

29. Declaration of Interests

The rules and regulations pertaining to the declaration of interests are outlined in the Code of Conduct for Employees (paragraphs 9 & 15) and must be adhered to.

30. Contract Management / Monitoring

All contracts must have an appointed contract manager for the duration of the contract. The Contract Manager is determined by the senior officer named at 23 (b) (ii).

Contract management, monitoring, evaluation and review must be undertaken in line with advice from the Procurement Officer.

31. External Body Grant Funding

Where a procurement process is funded, in whole or part, by grant funding which has been awarded to the Authority by an external funding body, officers must ensure that any rules or grant conditions imposed by the funding body are adhered to, in addition to the requirements of these CPRs.

Where there is any conflict between these CPRs and the rules or conditions imposed by the funding body, the stricter requirement should be followed. Where there is any doubt over which requirement should be followed, the guidance should be sought from the Treasurer in the first instance.

32. Review and Amendment of Contract Procedure Rules

These Contract Procedure Rules will be reviewed and updated as required to reflect changes to procedures or legislation.

33. Land and Buildings

The Chief Fire Officer has delegated powers to purchase and sell small parcels of land not exceeding £50,000. For purchase of land outside of the delegated powers, no contract for the purchase or sale of land and/or buildings shall be entered into until a report thereon has been considered by the Authority and the advice of the Authority's legal, financial, professional and technical advisers has been obtained.

Section 13

Code of Conduct for Members

In addition to the principles set out in this Section, Members are expected to undertake their duties in accordance with the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (England).

Members and co-opted Members of County Durham and Darlington Combined Fire Authority (“the Authority”) are expected to undertake their duties as follows:

1. Represent the community and work constructively with employees and partner organisations to ensure the area is a safer place to live, work and visit.
2. Behave in a manner that is consistent with the following principles to achieve best value for residents and maintain public confidence in the Authority:
 - a. **Selflessness:** act solely in terms of the public interest and not act in such a way as to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or friends.
 - b. **Integrity:** not placing themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
 - c. **Objectivity:** make choices on merit, in carrying out public business, including when making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits.
 - d. **Accountability:** be accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
 - e. **Openness:** be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they take, and give reasons for decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest or the law clearly demands.
 - f. **Honesty:** declare any private interests relating to their public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
 - g. **Leadership:** promote and support these principles by leadership and example.
3. Act in accordance with the principles in paragraph 2 and, in particular:
 - (a) Champion the needs of residents - the whole community and all constituents, including those who did not vote for them, and put the public interest first.

(b) Deal with representations or enquiries from residents, members of our communities and visitors fairly, appropriately and impartially.

(c) Not allow other pressures, including the financial interests of themselves or others connected to them, to deter them from pursuing the interests of the Authority or the good governance of the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service in a proper manner.

(d) Exercise independent judgement and not compromise their position by placing themselves under obligations to outside individuals or organisations who might seek to influence the way they perform their duties as a Member / Co-opted Member of the Authority.

(e) Listen to the interests of all parties, including relevant advice from statutory and other professional officers, take all relevant information into consideration, remain objective and make decisions on merit.

(f) Be accountable for decisions and co-operate when scrutinised internally and externally, including by local residents.

(g) Contribute to making the Authority's decision-making processes as open and transparent as possible to ensure residents understand the reasoning behind those decisions and are informed when holding the Authority to account but restricting access to information when the wider public interest or the law requires it.

(h) Behave in accordance with all legal obligations, alongside any requirements contained within the Authority's policies, protocols and procedures, including on the use of the Authority's resources.

(i) Value colleagues and staff and engage with them in an appropriate manner and one that underpins the mutual respect that is essential to good local government.

(j) Always treat people with respect, including the organisations and public they engage with and work alongside.

(k) Provide leadership through behaving in accordance with these principles when championing the interests of the community with other organisations as well as within this Authority.

(l) Not disclose information given to them in confidence by anyone or information acquired, which they believe, or ought reasonably to be

aware, is of a confidential nature, without express authority and/or unless the law requires it.

4. Gifts and Hospitality

- 4.1 Members must, within 28 days of receipt, notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of any gift, benefit or hospitality with a value in excess of £50 which they have been offered as a member from any person or body other than the Authority, whether the offer is accepted or declined.
- 4.2 The Monitoring Officer will place any notification received under paragraph 4.1 on a public register of gifts and hospitality.
- 4.3 The duty to notify the Monitoring Officer does not apply where the gift, benefit or hospitality has been approved by the Authority for this purpose.

5. Register of Interests

- 5.1 Members must:
 - (a) register and, where appropriate, disclose those disclosable pecuniary interests that they are obliged to declare under the Localism Act 2011 and associated regulations; and
 - (b) register details of their membership of any organisation or body whose rules or requirements of membership could be regarded as suggesting a degree of loyalty to that organisation or body. This could arise by reason of an organisation having an obligation of secrecy about its rules, its membership or conduct and/or a commitment of allegiance or support to that organisation or body. Such organisations or bodies may or may not be charitable concerns and they may also have a local, regional, national or international aspect; and
 - (c) register details of any membership of any trade union within the meaning of Section 1 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
- 5.2 Registration of interests shall be completed by provision of details upon a signed prescribed form which is submitted to the Monitoring Officer at Durham County Council. Members must ensure they keep the register updated and acknowledge that its contents will be published on the Authority's website and will be open to the public to inspect.

6. **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests Entered on the Register**

If Members are present at a meeting of the Authority and

(a) they are aware that they have a disclosable pecuniary interest under paragraph 5.1(a) above in any matter to be considered or being considered at the meeting; and

(b) the interest is entered in the Authority's register

they may not participate in any discussion or further discussion of an item of business or in any vote or further vote taken on that item which affects or relates to the subject matter in which they have such an interest; and they will leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion or voting takes place.

7. **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests NOT Entered on the Register**

If Members are present at a meeting of the Authority and are:

(a) aware that they have a disclosable pecuniary interest under paragraph 5.1(a) above in any matter to be considered or being considered at the meeting; **and**

(b) the interest is not entered in the Authority's register,

they must disclose the interest to the meeting. Furthermore, they may not participate or further participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting or

participate in any vote or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting and will leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion or voting takes place.

7.2 If an interest referred to in 7.1 above is not entered on the Authority's register and is not the subject of a pending registration, Members must notify the Authority's Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the date of the disclosure.

7.3 Members with the power to discharge an Authority function acting alone will have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter to be dealt with or being dealt with by them in the course of discharging that function:

(a) they may not take any steps, or any further steps, in relation to the matter (except for the purpose of enabling the matter to be dealt with otherwise than by them); **and**

(b) If the interest is not entered on the Council's register and is not the subject of a pending registration, they must notify the Authority's Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of becoming aware of the interest.

8. Other Relevant Interests

8.1 Members may have an Other Relevant Interest (which is not a disclosable pecuniary interest) in any matter to be considered or being considered at the meeting) where:

(a) a decision in relation to that matter might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing of them or a member of their family or a person with whom they have a close association, or an organisation or body under paragraph 5.1(b) or 5.1(c) above, to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which they have been elected or otherwise of the Authority's administrative area; **and**

(b) the interest is one that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice their judgement of the public interest.

8.2 Members with an Other Relevant Interest as described in 8.1. above:

(a) must make a verbal declaration of the existence and nature of that interest at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent; **and**

(b) must not participate in any discussion or further discussion of an item of business or in any vote or further vote taken on that item which affects or relates to the subject matter in which they have an Other Relevant Interest at any meeting at which they are present and will leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion or voting takes place.

Section 14

Financial Regulations

1. Background and Control Framework

- 1.1 Financial regulations form part of the financial control framework which governs the relationship between the Authority and its staff in relation to financial matters.
- 1.2 The financial control framework comprises the following documents:
 - Combined Fire Authority Standing Orders
 - Combined Fire Authority Financial Regulations
- 1.3 The Financial Regulations are a component part of the financial control framework, and as such should be referred to in conjunction with the Combined Fire Authority Standing Orders.
- 1.4 The Financial Regulations control the way in which the Authority manages and safeguards its assets and apply to all aspects of Authority business.
- 1.5 Various committees assist the work of the Authority.
 - The Appeals Committee
 - The Audit and Finance Committee
 - The Human Resources Committee
 - The Performance Committee

Responsibilities

- 1.6 It is the responsibility of each Principal Officer to ensure compliance with the Financial Regulations.
- 1.7 Failure to observe the Financial Regulations may result in action under the Authority's disciplinary procedure.

Interpretation

- 1.8 In these regulations, a 'Principal Officer' is defined as an officer responsible for the control of a specific Service area, including overall control of the Service. This includes:

Chief Fire Officer
Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Treasurer
Area Managers

Best Value

- 1.9 Nothing in these Financial Regulations shall hinder the progress of Best Value and the achievement of value for money. These Financial Regulations are designed to assist those with financial responsibilities to demonstrate best value through financial probity and sound financial controls.

Principal Officers

- 1.10 The Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer and the Treasurer are accountable to the Chief Fire Officer for the financial management of their respective departments.
- 1.11 Each Principal Officer is responsible for ensuring that appropriate consultation takes place before submitting policy options to the Service Leadership Team or recommendations to Members of the Authority.
- 1.12 The Treasurer to the Authority must be consulted prior to finalising any report for Members or the public which has budgetary implications or which contains financial implications on which policy decisions are to be based.
- 1.13 Each Principal Officer must ensure that the activities for which they are responsible are operated in an economic, efficient and effective manner, in accordance with all approved regulations.
- 1.14 Reports can only be submitted as joint reports of the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer if the Treasurer has agreed the financial aspects of the report. The Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer must agree the content of joint reports prior to their submission to the Authority.
- 1.15 Each Principal Officer is responsible to the Authority for ensuring that all aspects of the financial control framework are applied consistently and observed by departmental staff.

Treasurer

- 1.16 The Treasurer has responsibilities that must be discharged under the following Acts and Regulations
- Section 73 and 105(1) of the Local Government Act 1995
 - Section 112 and 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988
 - The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015
- 1.17 The Treasurer is responsible for maintaining supervision of all income and expenditure and shall be the principal financial advisor to the Authority.
- 1.18 The Treasurer shall ensure that all financial and accounting records, and associated control systems, are maintained in accordance with proper practices and are kept up to date.

1.19 The Treasurer shall approve the installation, operation and renewal of all financial systems in conjunction with the Chief Fire Officer.

2. Organisation of Responsibility and Accountability

2.1 Sound internal control and accountability for financial matters is best achieved by clear arrangements for delegation of powers and responsibilities and the separation of duties, with an effective system of monitoring, feedback and reporting.

2.2 The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that adequate and effective systems of internal control are operated to ensure the accuracy, legitimacy and proper processing of transactions, and management of activities.

2.3 Each Principal Officer should ensure that the duties, responsibilities and authorisations of each individual within their directorate are clearly defined in writing, and are understood by the appropriate members of staff.

2.4 In allocating responsibilities, the Treasurer should have regard to the desire to secure an adequate and effective level of internal control by allocating roles in a way that gives assurance that transactions will be properly processed and that errors will be detected promptly. Examples of such controls are:

- Internal Check (the checking of one person's work by another);
- Separation of Duties (assigning key tasks within a process to different members of staff);
- Systems Manuals (descriptions of how systems and individuals should operate);
- Authorisation (certification that a transaction or event is acceptable for further processing);
- Monitoring; scrutiny of exceptions and general supervision.

2.5 The arrangements for delegation must clearly specify the limit(s) upon the authority delegated to each individual, and the circumstances in which a decision must not be taken but must be referred back to a higher management level.

2.6 With regard to those individuals who are authorised to sign on behalf of any Principal Officer (e.g. for ordering and certification purposes), the Treasurer will identify these individuals as budget holders ensuring they are trained and have relevant access to the financial systems through which controls are maintained.

2.7 The process and levels of delegation will be monitored through the financial system itself and can be reviewed by the Treasurer at any time.

Internal Financial Controls

- 2.8 It is the responsibility of the Treasurer to ensure that an adequate and effective system of internal controls is operated.
- 2.9 Each Principal Officer shall ensure that financial control is maintained in the absence of key staff. Care should be taken when deploying staff to ensure that sensitive or valuable data or property is not vulnerable; especially when using casual or temporary staff.
- 2.10 A basic requirement is that all financial transactions must be traceable from the original documentation to the accounting records and vice versa.

Risk Management

- 2.11 It is essential that robust, integrated systems are developed and maintained for identifying, evaluating and managing all significant Strategic and Operational risks to the Authority. This should include the proactive participation of all those associated with planning and delivering services.
- 2.12 The Authority is responsible for approving the risk management policy statement and strategy and for reviewing the effectiveness of risk management.
- 2.13 The Treasurer is responsible for preparing the Authority's risk management policy statement and for promoting it throughout the Service and for advising the Authority on proper insurance cover for material risks where appropriate.
- 2.14 The Service Leadership Team is responsible for reviewing strategic risks and reporting progress on the management of strategic risk to the Authority.
- 2.15 It is the responsibility of the Principal Officers to ensure there are regular reviews of risk within their areas of responsibility having regard to advice from the Assets and Assurance Section and other specialist officers (e.g. crime prevention, fire prevention, health & safety)

3. Financial Management, Accounting and Financial Administration

- 3.1 Good financial management is necessary to secure best value, control spending, achieve objectives on time and to ensure that decision-making is informed by accurate accounting information. Secure and reliable records and systems are essential to process transactions and information and substantiate the use of public money.

General Principles

- 3.2 Sound financial management is crucial to efficient and effective service

delivery and decision making, and is achieved by addressing the following issues:

- a) service strategy and development
- b) budget formulation
- c) budgetary management and control
- d) cost and output analysis
- e) risk assessment and mitigation
- f) project evaluation
- g) income generation and collection
- h) value for money and quality through best value service delivery
- i) stock, debtor and other asset control.

3.3 The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that proper arrangements are made for financial management and administration, and for day-to-day budgetary control within the Service. The Treasurer is responsible for all financial matters relating to the Service, including the preparing of monitoring statements during the year and reporting on year-end out-turns.

3.4 The Authority has a number of policies in place to ensure the sound management of the organisation. These include the Anti-Fraud, Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Policies (Section 18 Constitution) and the Whistle-blowing Procedure (AD-2-43).

These policies will form part of the information issued to all employees and are to be read in conjunction with these financial regulations.

Financial Administration

- 3.5 The processing of data and provision of information shall be controlled using strict timetables, agreed with the Treasurer. These timetables provide a framework that must be strictly adhered to by Principal Officers. Activities subject to such deadlines will include:
- a) budget preparation
 - b) final accounts preparation
 - c) budget monitoring reports
 - d) preparation of interim / final accounts
 - e) grant claims
 - f) statistical data (including national performance indicators)
 - g) payment systems such as payroll and creditors.

Accounting Regulations

- 3.6 Accounting Regulations shall be subject to, and shall not in any way conflict with, the Financial Framework, including Financial Regulations.

Accounting Systems

- 3.7 Service expenditure and income is part of the overall accounts of the Authority, and all accounting procedures, systems, records and accounts will be determined by, or be subject to the approval of the Treasurer.
- 3.8 The Treasurer shall ensure that the financial data held within the computerised accounting and budgetary control systems is maintained accurately and reliably and updated in accordance with agreed timescales and deadlines. The Treasurer will also ensure that each Principal Officer and staff are provided with appropriate access to this information or with such computerised reports as may be agreed.
- 3.9 The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that any financial systems to be operated in a Service area interface reliably and satisfactorily with any central systems operated by the Authority.
- 3.10 The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that staff are properly trained to use local or central financial systems as necessary to perform their roles effectively. This includes ensuring that there are adequate and up-to-date written descriptions in place for all financial systems and procedures.
- 3.11 The Treasurer shall determine the timetable and process for achieving closure of the Authority's accounts for each financial year.

Retention of Financial Records and Documents

- 3.12 Financial records, vouchers and documents may only be disposed of in accordance with the Service's record management, retention and disposal guide, held by the Finance department. On disposing of items, appropriate arrangements should be made to ensure confidentiality.

4. Budgetary Processes

- 4.1 Budgetary control is a continuous process involving the review of spending and adjustment of financial targets during each year. Responsibility for budgetary control places accountability over budget holders.

Revenue Budget

- 4.2 The revenue budget is an estimate of the annual income and expenditure requirements of the Authority and thereby sets out the financial implications of the Authority's current policies. Once approved by the Authority it gives the Chief Fire Officer the power to incur expenditure and also provides a basis on which the financial performance of the Authority can be monitored. These Regulations provide a comprehensive framework for the preparation and monitoring of the revenue budget against these criteria.

Budget Preparation

- 4.3 The Chief Fire Officer is responsible for ensuring that a revenue budget is prepared on an annual basis.
- 4.4 The Chief Fire Officer shall prepare a draft revenue budget for the next financial year, in consultation with the Treasurer, for submission to the Authority in such time as to allow the council tax precept to be advised to collecting Authorities.
- 4.5 The Treasurer and Chief Fire Officer shall specify the format of the revenue budget and the timing of reports relating to it, subject to any overriding requirements of the Authority. In practice the overall revenue budget will comprise a number of specific functional budgets which the Authority and/or Chief Fire Officer have identified as appropriate to the financial management arrangements of the Authority.
- 4.6 Any draft revenue budget(s) presented to the Authority shall be accompanied by a joint report from the Chief Fire Officer and the Treasurer which shall specify any variations relative to existing budgets and policies together with any implications for future financial years.

- 4.7 The Chief Fire Officer shall define budgetary control policy and ensure it is enforced including identifying responsible budget holders and the limits of their budgetary authority in relation to the approved revenue budget.

Expenditure against the Budget

- 4.8 Expenditure may be incurred within the revenue budget approved by the Authority in pursuit of the aims for which the budget has been established.
- 4.9 If any proposed change in policy is likely to affect the budget, a report to the Authority shall be prepared setting out clearly the full financial implications of the proposal and seeking approval to a variation in the budget.

Monitoring the Revenue Budget

- 4.10 Throughout the financial year each budget holder shall monitor expenditure and income against those specific budgets for which they are responsible. Where an officer orders goods or services which are to be charged against the budget(s) managed by another officer they will be required to gain the consent of that other officer before committing any expenditure against that budget.
- 4.11 The Treasurer shall advise the Chief Fire Officer on measures to assist budget holders fulfil their financial responsibilities.
- 4.12 Budget holders shall supply the Chief Fire Officer with sufficient information as and when required to enable accurate budget profiling and/or financial projections to be undertaken. This information shall be available to the Treasurer.
- 4.13 Budget monitoring statements including a forecast for the full financial year shall be submitted as a joint report by the Chief Fire Officer and the Treasurer to the Audit and Finance Committee on a regular basis.
- 4.14 If it appears that net expenditure will be in excess of the approved revenue budget and that excess cannot be financed by virement the Chief Fire Officer shall, following consultation with the Treasurer report the matter to the Authority at the earliest convenience. If expenditure in excess of the approved budget is incurred due to an emergency, this expenditure must be reported to the Treasurer and the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee as soon as practicable and to the Authority as soon as possible thereafter.

Virement

4.15 Virement is the transfer of budget provision between individually defined budget headings. It is a necessary facility to assist the effective management of budgets. When the Authority sets its overall revenue budget for a given financial year it will effectively approve a series of specific functional budgets.

For the purpose of defining authorisation required for virement to take place budgets will be referred to as:

- Objective budgets, those that deal with a specific function
- Subjective budgets, those that deal with a certain type of expenditure/ income within a specific functional budget.

4.16 The Chief Fire Officer shall ensure that virement is undertaken as necessary to maintain the accuracy of the budget monitoring process and inform the Treasurer, in writing, as soon as possible that such virements have taken place.

4.17 The approval of the Authority shall be required if the proposed virement includes one or more of the following:

- a) a change in policy
- b) an addition to recurring commitments in future financial years
- c) where the resources to be transferred were originally capital financing related
- d) if required by the Treasurer.

4.18 The Treasurer may approve any virement where the additional expenditure is directly related to and is fully offset by fees, income or other contributions from another authority or separate organisation.

4.19 The approval of the Authority will be required for any virement proposed between the Revenue Budget and the Capital Programme.

4.20 The amounts approved by the Authority under the objective and subjective headings of the annual revenue budget shall not be diverted to any other purpose without the prior approval of the Authority except that:

- The Treasurer shall have delegated powers to vire amounts of up to £20,000; and the Executive (Principal Officers) and Treasurer acting jointly, shall have delegated powers to vire amounts of up to £250,000. These powers shall not apply if any of the criteria at 4.17 are met.

Outturn

- 4.21 The Treasurer in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer shall report to the Audit and Finance Committee on the outturn of expenditure and income as soon as possible after the end of the financial year.
- 4.22. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the completion and submission of any revenue claim forms to the relevant organisation and, if necessary, the External Auditor in accordance with any guidelines applicable to the claim in question.

Use of Reserves

- 4.23 The Treasurer is responsible for advising the Authority on the levels of reserves. The advice will be based upon an annual risk assessment of the prudent levels of reserves the Authority should maintain.
- 4.24 The Treasurer will manage the Authority's reserves in accordance with decisions taken by the Authority.

5. Capital Programme

- 5.1 Capital expenditure is an important element in the development of the Authority's services as it represents a major investment in new and improved assets. These Regulations provide a comprehensive framework for the preparation and appraisal of schemes proposed for inclusion in the Capital Programme to provide appropriate authorisations for individual schemes to proceed, and to allow the overall management of the Capital Programme within defined parameters.

Capital Programme Preparation

- 5.2 The Chief Fire Officer shall prepare a draft Capital Programme in consultation with the Treasurer for submission to the Authority.
- 5.3 The Treasurer and Chief Fire Officer shall determine the format of the Capital Programme and the timing or reports relating to it, subject to any overriding requirements of the Authority.
- 5.4 The Capital Programme shall identify actual expenditure on approved schemes in the current financial year (1) and proposed expenditure on schemes in the following three financial years.
- 5.5 Project appraisals shall be prepared by the Chief Fire Officer for all proposed schemes and shall be submitted to the Authority for approval before the inclusion of any schemes in the Capital Programme.

Expenditure against the Programme

- 5.6 Capital expenditure includes the following:
- a) the acquisition of lands, buildings, furniture, equipment, plant and vehicles
 - b) the construction of new buildings or improvements to existing buildings
 - c) internal or external professional fees on the above
 - d) grants and advances for a capital purpose
 - e) property leases for more than 10 years duration or which give rise to a capital charge
- 5.7 Other expenditure may be brought within the definition of capital expenditure by Central Government regulations. The Treasurer will advise the Chief Fire Officer whenever any such changes arise.
- 5.8 Approval of the Capital Programme by the Authority shall provide the Chief Fire Officer with:
- 1) Ratification for actual expenditure incurred on schemes contained in the approved Capital Programme for the current financial year.
 - 2) Authorisation to incur expenditure on each scheme listed providing that expenditure on a particular scheme does not exceed the sum contained in the approved Programme by more than 10%. This approval is subject to any additional expenditure on an individual scheme being met from within the Authority's overall Capital Programme expenditure limit for that year.
 - 3) Authorisation to make arrangements necessary for site purchase, to seek planning permissions, to incur professional fees and preliminary expenses as appropriate. This approval is subject to any expenditure being met from the Authority's predetermined capital expenditure limit for the year in which it is incurred.
- 5.9 Notwithstanding the authorisations detailed in Regulation 5.8. there may be circumstances in which a scheme requires expenditure to be committed well in advance of the year in which the actual costs will be incurred. In these circumstances the specific approval of the Authority will be required before any expenditure can be confirmed.

- 5.10 The approval of the Authority is required if:
- a) any increase/decrease in the Authority's previously approved Capital Expenditure Limit for that year is necessary as a result of either:
 - (i) the cost variation on an individual scheme exceeding the parameters defined in 5.8.
 - (ii) the inclusion, deletion or material modification of any scheme.
 - b) the committed expenditure in later years of the Authority's Capital Programme is increased for either of the reasons listed at (i) or (ii) above
 - c) the Treasurer determines it appropriate
 - d) in accordance with Regulation 4.19 there is a proposed virement between the Revenue Budget and the Capital Programme.
- 5.11 The Chief Fire Officer shall define budgetary control policy and ensure it is enforced including identifying responsible budget holders for each scheme and the limits of their budgetary responsibility in relation to the approved Capital Programme.

Leasing

- 5.12 All vehicle, plant, furniture and equipment leasing must be negotiated in conjunction with the Treasurer. Provision for the acquisition of leased items must be included in the Capital Programme.
- 5.13 All property leases must be notified to the Treasurer before commitment is entered into so that revenue implications and any statutory requirements can be considered.

Monitoring the Capital Programme

- 5.14 The Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Treasurer shall monitor expenditure, on a scheme by scheme basis, throughout the year against the approved Capital Programme.
- 5.15 The Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Treasurer shall report as appropriate to the Audit and Finance Committee on actual expenditure against the approved Capital Programme.

Outturn

- 5.16 The Treasurer in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer shall report on the outturn of expenditure on individual schemes within the Capital Programme as soon as possible after the end of the financial year.

6. Corporate Planning and Performance

6.1 The Strategic Planning and Performance Management Framework ensures that corporate processes are in place for planning services and managing risks and performance. In terms of Performance Management it ensures there is a thread which links strategy to delivery. It is integral to the way the Authority works and is a key part of our culture, evident at all levels of the organisation.

Strategic Planning

6.2. Strategic planning in simple terms should help the Authority to decide:

- where it wants to be in the future;
- how it is going to get there,
- relevant milestones along the way (objectives and targets in the medium and longer term); and
- how it will know when it has arrived.

Being strategic means developing a direction and scope for the organisation over the longer term using its resources in the changing environment to maximum advantage in line with the stakeholders' expectations.

The Authority has an integrated approach to financial and service planning through its approach to Service Transformation. The Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) is aligned to the Service Transformation process to ensure that financial resources are considered at all stages of the strategic planning process.

Corporate Planning

6.3 Each Principal Officer should endeavour to ensure that plans are aligned with the overall values, objectives and priorities of the Authority.

6.4 Plans should be consistent with and based upon the budget allocated by the Authority to the services involved, address any fundamental service review recommendations and comply with statutory requirements.

6.5 The Treasurer shall maintain ongoing reliable and accurate management information systems to enable the regular monitoring of actual activity, achievements and performance against the Corporate Plan, and will initiate any necessary corrective action.

Performance Management

6.6 Performance management is about culture (e.g. leadership and commitment) and the systems (e.g. processes to develop service plans) which an organisation puts in place to help it manage and continuously improve its performance. Performance management should be seen as

the detailed 'checks on progress' that sit within, or support, a formalised strategic planning framework.

- 6.7 Each Principal Officer shall ensure that there is a clear link between the financial aspects within the service's Corporate Plan, and the collective and personal targets and performance standards required of managers and staff.
- 6.8 Each Principal Officer shall submit monitoring information to the Chief Fire Officer as required.
- 6.9 Each Principal Officer shall maintain accurate and reliable systems to produce performance indicator data as required internally and by external auditors.
- 6.10 Each Principal Officer shall actively seek opportunities for improved performance and best value, and shall assist Internal and External Audit, and the various external Inspectorates to perform studies and reviews as required.

7. Employee Costs

- 7.1 Employee costs are the largest element of the Authority's expenditure. Reliable and timely information from managers is essential to ensure correct payment. Also, failure to apply taxation and National Insurance regulations correctly to all payments could result in significant financial penalties being incurred.
- 7.2 The Treasurer shall establish procedures for the management and administration of personnel and payroll matters.
- 7.3 The Treasurer is responsible for operating secure and reliable systems to process payroll and employee data and information provided by Principal Officers to make payment on the due date.
- 7.4. The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that adequate and effective systems and procedures are operated for personnel and payroll aspects, to ensure that:
 - a) payments are only authorised to bona fide employees;
 - b) payments are only made where there is a valid entitlement;
 - c) conditions and Contracts of Employment are correctly applied;
 - d) employee names listed on the payroll are checked at regular intervals to verify accuracy and completeness;
 - e) national insurance numbers are recorded for all employees and pensioners;
 - f) there is an effective system of checking and clarification of information submitted to the Treasurer for payment, whether in the form of amendments to computer records or written information.

7.5 With regard to staff claims for travel and subsistence (including those which must be paid through the payroll system for taxation and national insurance purposes) the Principal Officers are responsible for ensuring compliance of claims with the Authority's policy, and for arranging the most cost effective means of travel and subsistence.

8. Contracts, Agreements and Purchasing

8.1 This section of the Financial Regulations sets out the general rules governing the purchase of goods and services. More detailed procedures may be issued as appropriate.

8.2 Goods and services may only be procured if there is approved budgetary provision to cover the costs.

8.3 The Chief Fire Officer is responsible for:

- a) the procurement of all goods and services;
- b) ensuring that goods and services are received and are of the correct quality;
- c) the certification of invoices in accordance with the arrangements established by the Treasurer.

8.4 Financial procedures, limits and authorisation levels relating to purchasing, quotations and tenders can be found in the Contract Procedure Rules of this Constitution, Section 12.

8.5 The Treasurer shall ensure that the responsibilities of individuals for ordering, checking, certifying and recording transactions against budget are clearly defined.

8.6 All officers and Members are required to declare any links or personal interests which they may have with suppliers and/or contractors if they are engaged in contractual or purchasing decisions on behalf of the Authority. It is important for everyone involved in spending public funds to demonstrate that they do not benefit personally from decisions that they make, and to avoid any situation which might be regarded as compromising objectivity and impartiality.

8.7 Before entering in to a purchasing commitment, the Officer responsible for authorising the order should first be satisfied that the goods or services are appropriate and needed and that there is adequate budgetary provision. Quotations and/or tenders should then be obtained and Executive approval sought where required by the Authority's procedures.

8.8 Official orders should never be used by individuals to obtain goods and services for their private use.

Routine Purchasing of Goods and Services

- 8.9 Before making any purchase, each Principal Officer shall consider any steps required to demonstrate that best value is being obtained for the Authority.
- 8.10 Each Principal Officer shall be responsible for all orders or requisitions issued from his Service area which are generated via the Service's financial system.

Contracts

- 8.11 The Treasurer shall ensure that adequate and effective systems and procedures are operated for arranging and managing contracts and agreements.
- 8.12 Any contract or legal agreement involving a charge upon:
- assets - will be signed by a finance representative and the relevant budget holder
 - property and legal – will be forwarded to the Clerk of the Authority for signature and seal.
- 8.13 The Treasurer is the only officer who shall, enter into any agreement of contract involving the borrowing of funds or credit, or invest Authority monies or authorise any direct debit to be charged against the Authority's bank accounts. A finance representative via the treasury management process shall on behalf of the Treasurer enter into any agreement of contract involving the borrowing of funds or credit or invest Authority monies or authorise any direct debit to be charged against the Authority's bank accounts.
- 8.14 Except as agreed by the Treasurer, no officer may raise money by securing a legal charge or claim upon the buildings, property or any other asset or interest of the Authority.
- 8.15 Every contract, agreement, award or undertaking involving payment or by the Authority shall be sent to the Procurement Officer for inclusion in the Contracts Register as soon as possible after it's execution.
- 8.16 The Treasurer shall ensure that adequate and effective arrangements are operated to monitor performance by the contractor in relation to the contract specification, and that there is a formal procedure to control and authorise contract variations.

- 8.17 For all construction and alterations to buildings, the Estates Manager shall document and agree with the Treasurer, the systems and procedures to be adopted in relation to financial aspects, including certification of interim and final payments; the checking, recording and authorisation of payments; and the system for the monitoring and controlling of schemes.
- 8.18 The Estates Manager shall ensure that the Treasurer is notified of all contracts for building works for new premises and alterations or extensions to existing premises, so that insurance cover may be obtained or amended.

Payment of Accounts and Claims

- 8.19 Goods and services shall be checked upon receipt to ensure they are in accordance with the order. Notification of acceptance should be sent to the Finance Section or directly receipted into the financial system.
- 8.20 An authentic VAT invoice (not a statement), is required to process a payment. An electronic image of the invoice must be checked in terms of validity and arithmetic, coded and certified for payment by an authorised budget holder. Invoices should only be certified by individuals who are specifically authorised to perform this function. Consideration should be given to separation of duties e.g. more than one individual involved in the process. If such arrangements are not practicable, specific written advice should be sought from Internal Audit.
- 8.21 Where passing a copy invoice is unavoidable, and a thorough check reveals that payment has not already been made, the copy invoice should be clearly marked 'certified not previously paid' and this endorsement approved as part of the process at 8.20 above.
- 8.22 Each Principal Officer is responsible for ensuring that their staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the payment of invoices and associated VAT treatment.
- 8.23 Payments to contractors for building or constructional contracts shall be made in accordance with the construction industry scheme as appropriate if registered in the scheme.
- 8.24 Accounts on the completion of building and constructional works carried out by contractors shall be retained by the Estates Manager showing the contract or estimated price variations, total cost, amount paid to date and the balance remaining due.
- 8.25 The Treasurer holds overall responsibility for ensuring safe and efficient arrangements for all payments. The Treasurer is entitled to request any information or explanations that are deemed necessary to substantiate a transaction.

- 8.26 The Treasurer must also operate adequate and effective controls upon the ordering, checking and certification processes.
- 8.27 The Treasurer shall also keep under review possible methods of collecting data for payment purposes, and in this connection, may consider any improvement proposals made by Principal Officers.

Corporate Credit Cards

- 8.28 All applications for corporate credit cards must be approved by the Treasurer. The Treasurer will issue guidelines regarding the application process and for their controlled use. Card holders are personally responsible for the security of cards and for ensuring compliance with guidelines for their use.

Purchasing Cards

- 8.29 The Service does not currently issue purchasing cards. All applications for purchasing cards must be approved by the Treasurer who will issue guidelines regarding the application process and for their controlled use.

Taxation

- 8.30 The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that appropriate advice and guidance is available on all tax issues that affect the Authority, having regard to guidance issued by appropriate bodies and legislation.
- 8.31 The Treasurer is responsible for maintaining the Authority's tax records, making all payments, receiving tax credits and submitting tax returns by their due date as appropriate and complying with HMRC regulations.
- 8.32 Principal Officers are responsible for compliance with all guidance issued by the Treasurer.

9. Assets, Security and Risk Management

- 9.1 The Authority's assets have a significant value, which must be safeguarded.
- 9.2 Principal Officers shall be responsible for ensuring that adequate and effective arrangements are operated for the care and custody of all Authority assets and property within their remit, and that use is properly authorised and controlled (including adequate and effective security measures to prevent loss, and procedures to minimise damage and vulnerability). The assets of the Authority include buildings, vehicles, furniture and equipment, computer systems, stocks and materials, money and investments; but also less obvious things such as data and information.

- 9.3 Maximum limits for cash holdings will be agreed with Internal Audit, and shall not be exceeded without prior authorisation.
- 9.4 The Treasurer is the only person authorised to lend and invest Authority resources. No officer may place Authority resources in any fund or account other than through pre-arranged treasury management processes.
- 9.5 All goods received into Technical Services Centre must be checked as regards quantity and compliance with specification as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 9.6 The Treasurer shall ensure that procedures are operated for the safe custody, issue and disposal of assets such as vehicles, moveable plant and machinery; equipment, furniture, information and supplies.
- 9.7 At least annually, the Treasurer shall arrange physical stock checks of equipment, stores etc. against relevant records. Any significant surplus, deterioration or deficiency revealed as a result of such checks shall be investigated and reported promptly to Internal Audit.
- 9.8 Issues of all stores shall be supported by a requisition stating the quantity required and signed by a responsible officer.
- 9.9 The Treasurer shall arrange for the valuation of assets for accounting purposes.
- 9.10 The disposal of redundant items shall be recorded and should normally, subject to health & safety considerations, be by competitive tender or public auction. (Note the Chief Fire Officer has delegated authority to donate redundant decommissioned assets for charitable purposes up to a value not exceeding £10,000)
- 9.11 The Treasurer shall be notified of the intention to dispose of any item that might be regarded as capital or was obtained via a leasing agreement.
- 9.12 The Chief Fire Officer and other officers where appropriate, shall arrange for the safe custody of the original documents for all contracts, leases, deeds and agreements, and similar legal documents made under seal.
- 9.13 Assets purchased by the Authority shall be marked to identify them as property of the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, and shall not be removed or used except as required for the Authority's business and in accordance with specific procedures prescribed by the Chief Fire Officer.

Confidentiality, Security and Protection of Information

- 9.14 All employees of the Authority have a personal responsibility with regard to the protection and confidentiality of information, whether held in manual or computerised records. Information may be sensitive, or privileged, or may possess some intrinsic value, and its disclosure or loss could result in a cost to the Authority.
- 9.15 The Authority's Administration and General Directive No AD/2/12 outlines the current Service Internet and E-mail policy and procedures to ensure that the law is not broken; to minimise the risk; and to ensure safe and efficient use. Principal Officers shall ensure that appropriate employees are familiar with this document; and that adequate and effective controls and security routines are operated in accordance with the guidance.
- 9.16 The Treasurer shall ensure that all computerised systems are properly registered and operated in accordance with requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant data protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and Data Protection Act 2018.
- 9.17 It is the responsibility of Principal Officers to ensure that all computerised systems within their Service areas are operated in accordance with legal requirements and all appropriate staff are familiar with the guidance provided.
- 9.18 Financial records, both manual and computerised should be retained and disposed of in accordance with the Service's record management retention and disposal guide and held by Finance.

Insurances

- 9.19 The Treasurer shall effect all those insurances falling within the framework approved by the Authority, and shall deal with all claims in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer.
- 9.20 For some risks not covered by external insurance policies, the Treasurer may operate an internal insurance account and is authorised to charge various Authority Service budgets with the cost of contributions to this account.
- 9.21 Risk Management is the responsibility of the Principal Officers having regard to advice from risk management specialist officers (e.g. crime prevention, fire prevention, health & safety). In general, costs and losses not insured externally and not covered by the internal insurance account would fall as a charge upon the budget of the service to which the item relates. Also, claims for insured risks could result in increased levels of future premiums, and this emphasises the need for effective preventative measures against all risks.

- 9.22 Principal Officers shall promptly notify the Treasurer, in writing, of all new risks, properties, vehicles and other assets or liabilities for which insurance may be required; and of any changes affecting existing risks or insurance cover required.
- 9.23 Principal Officers shall notify the Treasurer, in writing, without delay, of any loss, liability or damage or any event likely to lead to a claim. The Treasurer shall make all claims arising out of insurance and Principal Officers shall provide such information and explanations required by the Treasurer or the Insurers.
- 9.24 Principal Officers shall consult with the Treasurer concerning the terms of any indemnity which they are requested to give on behalf of the Authority.
- 9.25 The Treasurer shall review, at least annually, all insurances in consultation with Principal Officers as appropriate.

10. Income, Banking and Treasury Management

- 10.1 The prompt, secure and efficient collection and banking of all income; the optimisation of cash flow and the careful management of the Authority's borrowing requirements are vital aspects of good financial management and administration. Cash, in particular can be very vulnerable unless adequately and effectively controlled.
- 10.2 All arrangements concerning the operation of the Authority's bank accounts (including local imprest accounts) shall be made solely by the Treasurer and they alone are authorised to open such subsidiary bank accounts as are necessary.

Income

- 10.3 All sums due to the Authority shall be collected, held securely and banked promptly. All income must be banked intact, and payments must not be made from receipts.
- 10.4 The Treasurer shall ensure that, where applicable, VAT is charged in calculating any income due. Where appropriate, advice should be sought from the Treasurer.
- 10.5 Every Officer paying money into a bank account shall enter on the paying in slip and on the counterfoil, the particulars of such payment, the account number, and other particulars of the debt to which it relates.
- 10.6 All receipt forms, tickets, and all other prime documents required for accounting for income, shall be ordered and controlled by the Treasurer.
- 10.7 Fees and charges within the control of the Fire Authority shall be subject to regular review by the Chief Fire Officer and the Treasurer.

Debt Collection

- 10.8 Proposals to write off individual debts shall be agreed with the Treasurer.
- 10.9 The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that all amounts due to the Authority are factually correct, recorded and collected promptly in the most efficient way.
- 10.10 As a general principle, income should be collected at the same time of the transaction whenever possible, to optimise cash flow and to minimise administrative costs. Where income cannot be collected immediately, the relevant Principal Officer must ensure that a debtor account is raised immediately the debt occurs.
- 10.11 The Treasurer is responsible for maintaining records of debts raised for collection. They are also responsible for the subsequent sending of reminders to debtors to obtain payment. Principal Officers are responsible for assisting the Treasurer to collect debts that they have originated, by providing any further information requested on the debtor.
- 10.12 The Treasurer shall take all necessary steps to recover debts, including the use of debt collection agencies, and/or legal proceedings as appropriate.
- 10.13 Once raised, no debt may be cancelled except by full payment or by its formal writing off by the Treasurer. A credit note to reduce a debt can only be issued to correct a factual inaccuracy or administrative error in the calculation and/or billing of the original debt.
- 10.14 The Treasurer shall prepare regular statements about the overall position on collection of the Authority's debts.

Petty Cash

- 10.15 To assist designated officers to purchase minor expenses the Treasurer may grant petty cash advances.
- 10.16 The Treasurer may make advances to designated officers to allow them to meet minor expenses subject to such conditions as are deemed necessary.
- 10.17 Petty cash purchases should not exceed £50 per item and will be supported in all circumstances with authenticated receipts.
- 10.18 No income received other than reimbursement of approved expenditure may be paid into a petty cash imprest account.

Treasury Management

- 10.19 The Fire Authority has formally adopted the key recommendations of the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services.
- 10.20 Accordingly, the Fire Authority has created and will maintain, as a cornerstone for effective Treasury Management:
- A Treasury Management Policy Statement, stating the policies and objectives of its treasury management activities;
 - Suitable Treasury Management Practices (TMPs), setting out the manner in which the Authority will seek to achieve those policies and objectives and prescribing how it will manage and control those activities.
 - A Treasury Management Strategy (year on year) which deals with the use of specified investments, non-specified investments and the liquidity of investments along with the Authority's approach to borrowing and the use of external managers.
- 10.21 Reports will be presented to members of the Authority on its Treasury Management Policies, practices and activities, including an annual strategy and plan in advance of the year end, and an annual report after its close, in the form prescribed in the TMPs.
- 10.22 The Authority delegates responsibility for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions to the Treasurer who will act in accordance with the Policy Statement, Treasury Management Practices and CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management.
- 10.23 The Treasurer is responsible for the management of the Authority's cash flow and associated temporary loans. The objective is to minimise risk to the Authority. Further details are set out within the Treasury Management section of the Budget Report.

External Funding

- 10.24 Principal Officers are responsible for ensuring that any bids for external funding are made in consultation with the Treasurer.
- 10.25 Principal Officers must ensure that any project to be funded by external funding does not commence until proper approval has been obtained and the source of external funding confirmed.
- 10.26 The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that all funding notified by external bodies is received and properly accounted for in the Authority's accounts. Principal Officers are responsible for providing all necessary information to enable this to be achieved.

11. Audit, Monitoring and Inspection

11.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations require the Authority's Responsible Financial Officer (the Treasurer) to maintain continuous, adequate and effective internal audit of the Authority's accounts. Impartial monitoring and inspection of activities is essential to a healthy organisation. All financial operations are subject to audit reviews and investigations that assist the Treasurer to meet statutory responsibilities. These reviews also assist managers by providing an objective view of the standard of financial management and administration and general performance.

Monitoring and Inspection

11.2 The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that sound financial procedures are operated throughout the Service area, including compliance with these Regulations. Aspects of particular interest will be:

- a) quality of financial management;
- b) soundness of financial decisions;
- c) efficiency and effectiveness of deployment of resources to achieve aims and objectives in line with priorities;
- d) effectiveness of financial control;
- e) action taken to evaluate the cost effectiveness of the operation.

External Audit

11.3 The Authority is subject to external audit and is also inspected by various other external auditors and inspectors (for example HM Revenue and Customs).

Internal Audit

11.4 The Treasurer is statutorily responsible for providing an adequate and effective ongoing internal audit of the financial affairs of the Authority, including best value aspects.

11.5 The Treasurer or their representative shall have the authority to enter at all times on any premises or land used by the Authority and to have access to all correspondence, documents, books or other records of any officer of the Authority and relating in any way to the activities of the Authority. The Treasurer shall have the authority to require any officer of the Authority to produce cash, stores, or other Authority property under their control for inspection.

11.6 The Treasurer shall have regard to any relevant professional guidelines and any audit standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board of the Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies (or equivalent successor body).

- 11.7 The Treasurer shall be notified immediately by the Chief Fire Officer of all financial irregularities or suspected irregularities, or any circumstances which may suggest the possibility of irregularities in the exercise of any of the Authority's functions. Such communications may be oral initially but must be confirmed promptly in writing.
- 11.8 The Treasurer shall determine the scope of any internal enquiries or investigations subject to consultation with the Legal Advisor to the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer.
- 11.9 The Treasurer and the Legal Advisor to the Authority in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer shall decide whether any matter under investigation should be referred for police investigation and take recovery action as appropriate on such matters.
- 11.10 The Treasurer or their representative shall at all times preserve the confidentiality of information received in discharging tasks under this section of the Financial Regulations.
- 11.11 A formal audit report will be produced by Internal Audit at the conclusion of each audit, which will identify the audit findings and recommendations, and this will be submitted to the Chief Fire Officer for consideration and reply.
- 11.12 The Treasurer shall ensure that the level and type of audit consideration has regard to the characteristics and relative risks of the activities involved. They shall maintain an ongoing liaison with the Chief Fire Officer about the audit strategy and the audit coverage which is considered to be appropriate. In doing this, the Treasurer will not only have regard to their statutory duty to operate an adequate and effective internal audit of the financial affairs of the Authority, but also the need to seek added value, effective use of resources, improved performance and cost effective controls.

Management Responsibilities

- 11.13 The Chief Fire Officer shall consider and respond promptly to recommendations in audit reports by Internal Audit or by the External Auditor, and shall clearly indicate what action they intend to take. They should also record action taken and the outcomes in operational and financial terms.
- 11.14 All Principal Officers have prime responsibility for the operation of adequate and effective systems of internal control. The Treasurer's role is to provide advice and guidance, and to monitor and inspect these arrangements as an aid to management. Such controls will assist in the prevention, detection, reporting and investigation of irregularity and/or fraud.

11.15 In this context, Principal Officers are responsible for operating adequate and effective systems for on-going monitoring and feedback of information about their activities, and initialising any necessary action to maintain standards and objectives required.

11.16 Each Principal Officer is responsible for securing best value for money in relation to their Service's activities, and for achieving performance targets.

11.17 Any proposed changes or developments to financial procedures, records, systems and accounts shall not be made without the express agreement of the Treasurer.

Reporting of Irregularities

11.18 Any individual becoming aware of (or suspecting) fraud, theft, irregularity, improper use or misappropriation of the Authority's property or resources (including systems and/or information) should report the matter immediately (preferably via their line manager) to the Durham County Council (DCC) Head of Internal Audit. This depends, however on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the wrongdoing. For example, if the individual suspects that their manager is involved, then the Treasurer should be informed in line with the Authority's broader guidance in its Whistle Blowing Policy (Administration and General Directive No AD/2/43) or failing that to the Chief Fire Officer, or Head of Internal Audit as preferred.

11.19 The DCC Head of Internal Audit will take whatever steps are considered necessary, on behalf of the Treasurer, to investigate and report upon the matter. The Chief Fire Officer shall meanwhile take any appropriate action to prevent further loss and to secure records and documentation against removal or alteration. If there is a possibility that an employee may have been involved, a report by management and/or Internal Audit shall be considered by the Chief Fire Officer before deciding what action is appropriate.

Preventing Fraud and Corruption

11.20 The Authority will not tolerate fraud and corruption in the administration of its responsibilities, whether from inside or outside the organisation.

11.21 The Treasurer is responsible for the development, maintenance and review of anti-fraud, anti-bribery and anti-corruption policy (section 18 of the Constitution).

11.22 It is the responsibility of Principal Officers to promote the anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy within their Service areas and to ensure that all suspected irregularities are reported to the DCC Head of Internal Audit.

11.23 The DCC Head of Internal Audit will take whatever steps are considered necessary, on behalf of the Treasurer, to investigate and report upon the matter. Principal Officers are responsible for taking any appropriate action to prevent further loss and to secure records and documentation against removal or alteration.

12. Partnerships

12.1 The Authority may form partnerships with other local, public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations. The Authority is responsible for approving any delegations of its powers to address local needs.

12.2 The Authority can delegate its functions, including those relating to partnerships to officers. Details are set out in the Scheme of Delegation that forms part of this Constitution.

12.3 The Chief Fire Officer or other appropriate officer may represent the Authority on partnership and external bodies, in accordance with the respective decisions of the Authority.

12.4 The Monitoring Officer is responsible for promoting and maintaining the same high standards of conduct in partnerships that apply throughout the Authority.

12.5 The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that the accounting arrangements to be adopted relating to partnerships are satisfactory. The Treasurer must also consider the overall corporate governance arrangements and legal issues when arranging contracts with external bodies and ensure that risks have been fully appraised.

13. Revision of Financial Regulations

13.1 These Regulations can only be altered by the agreement of the Authority or as a result of changes in statutory arrangements.

13.2 These Regulations were last updated May 2018 and will be reviewed annually.

Section 15

Access to Information Procedures and Rules

1. Scope

These rules apply to all meetings of the Authority and its Committees.

2. Additional Rights to Information

These rules do not affect any more specific rights to information contained elsewhere in this Constitution or the law.

3. Rights to attend meetings

Members of the public may attend all meetings of the Authority and any Committees which have been given delegated powers to make decisions on behalf of the Authority subject only to the exceptions in these Rules.

4. Notices of meeting

The Authority will give at least five clear days' notice of any meeting by posting details of the meeting on the website and at Service Headquarters.

5. Access to Agenda and Reports before the meeting

The Authority will make copies of the agenda and reports open to the public available for inspection via the website and at the designated office at least five clear days before the meeting. If an item is added to the agenda later, the revised agenda (where reports are prepared after the summons has been sent out, the Clerk shall make such report available to the public as soon as the report is complete and sent to Members) will be open to inspection for the time the item was added to the agenda.

6. Supply of copies

The Authority will supply copies of:

- (a) any agenda and reports which are open to public inspection;
- (b) any further statements or particulars necessary to indicate the nature of the items in the agenda; and
- (c) if the Clerk thinks fit, copies of any other documents supplied to Councillors in connection with an item

to any person on payment of a charge for postage and any other costs.

7. Access to Minutes etc. after the meeting

The Authority will make available copies of the following for six years after a meeting:

- (a) the minutes of the meeting [or records of decisions taken, together with reasons, for all meetings of the Authority] excluding any part of the minutes of proceedings when the meeting was not open to the public or which disclose exempt or confidential information;
- (b) a summary of any proceedings not open to the public where the minutes open to inspection would not provide a reasonably fair and coherent record;
- (c) the agenda for the meeting; and
- (d) reports relating to items when the meeting was open to the public.

8. Background Papers

8.1 List of background papers

The Officer preparing a report will set out in such report a list of those documents (called background papers) relating to the subject matter of the report which in his opinion:

- (a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and
- (b) which have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report

but does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information (as defined in Rule 10).

8.2 Public inspection of background papers

The Authority will make available for public inspection for four years after the date of the meeting one copy of each of the documents on the list of background papers.

9. Summary of Public's Rights

A written summary of the public's rights to attend meetings and to inspect and copy documents will be made available via the website and a copy made available at Service Headquarters; County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, Belmont Business Park, Durham, DH1 1TW.

10. Exclusion of Access by the Public to Meetings

10.1 Confidential information – requirement to exclude public

The public must be excluded from meetings whenever it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that confidential information would be disclosed.

10.2 Exempt information – discretion to exclude public

The public may be excluded from meetings whenever it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that exempt information would be disclosed.

Where the meeting will determine any person's civil rights or obligations, or adversely affect their possessions, Article 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 establishes a presumption that the meeting will be held in public unless a private hearing is necessary for one of the reasons specified in Article 6.

10.3 Meaning of confidential information

Confidential information means information given to the Authority by a Government Service or Agency on terms which forbid its public disclosure or information which cannot be publicly disclosed by Court Order.

10.4 Meaning of exempt information

Exempt information means information falling within the following categories (subject to any qualification)

Category	Qualification	Interpretation
1.Information relating to any individual	The exemption applies only if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information (see note on public interest at the end of the table).	
2.Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.	The Public Interest Test Qualification applies, as in 1 above.	
3.Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).	<p>The Public Interest Test Qualification applies, as in 1 above.</p> <p>"Financial or business affairs" includes contemplated, as well as past or current, activities. Information falling within paragraph 3 above is not exempt information by virtue of that paragraph if it is required to be registered under –</p> <p>(a) the Companies Act 1985;</p> <p>(b) the Friendly Societies Act 1974;</p> <p>(c) the Friendly Societies Act 1992;</p> <p>(d) the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965 to 1978;</p> <p>(e) the Building Societies Act 1986 ["registered" in relation to information required to be registered under the Building Societies Act 1986, means recorded in the public file of any building society (within the meaning of that Act).]; or</p> <p>(f) the Charities Act 1993.</p>	Any reference to "the Authority" is a reference to the Authority or, as the case may be, the Committee or Sub-Committee in relation to whose proceedings or documents the question whether information is exempt or not falls to be determined.
4.Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or	The Public Interest Test Qualification applies, as in 1 above.	Any reference to "the Authority" is a reference to the Authority or, as the case may be, the Committee

<p>contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the Authority.</p>		<p>or Sub-Committee in relation to whose proceedings or documents the question whether information is exempt or not falls to be determined.</p> <p>"labour relations matter" means—</p> <p>(a) any of the matters specified in paragraphs (a) to (g) of section 218(1) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (matters which may be the subject of a trade dispute, within the meaning of that Act); or</p> <p>(b) any dispute about a matter falling within paragraph (a) above; and for the purposes of this definition the enactments mentioned in paragraph (a) above, with the necessary modifications, shall apply in relation to office-holders under the Authority as they apply in relation to employees of the Authority;</p> <p>"employee" means a person employed under a contract of service;</p> <p>"office-holder", in relation to the Authority, means the holder of any paid office appointments to which are or may be made or confirmed by the Authority or by any joint board on which the Authority is represented or by any person who holds any such office or is an employee of the Authority;</p>
<p>5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.</p>	<p>The Public Interest Test Qualification applies, as in 1 above.</p>	
<p>6. Information which reveals that the Authority proposes—</p>		<p>Any reference to "the Authority" is a reference to the Authority or, as the case may be, the Committee</p>

(a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.	The Public Interest Test Qualification applies, as in 1 above.	or Sub-Committee in relation to whose proceedings or documents the question whether information is exempt or not falls to be determined.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.	The Public Interest Test Qualification applies, as in 1 above.	

Exempt Information relating to the Audit and Finance Committee when dealing with Code of Conduct complaints only		
7A. Information which is the subject to any obligation of confidentiality.	The Public Interest Test Qualification applies, as in 1 above.	
7B. Information which relates in any way to matters concerning national security.	The Public Interest Test Qualification applies, as in 1 above.	

Note -The Public Interest Test

The Public Interest Test in the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 is specifically defined:

The Authority must release the information unless *“in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information”*.

The starting point is that there is a general public interest in release and the public authority has to decide whether in any particular case it would serve the interest of the public better to either disclose or withhold the information.

There is no legal definition of what the public interest is, but the following have been identified as some of the relevant considerations:

- (a) There is a distinction between the public interest and what merely interests the public.
- (b) Does it further the understanding of and participation in the public debate of issues of the day?

- (c) Does it promote accountability and transparency by public authorities for decisions taken by them or in the spending of public money?
- (d) Does it allow individuals and companies to understand decisions made by public authorities affecting their lives?
- (e) Does it bring to light information affecting public health and public safety?

11. Exclusion of Access by the Public to Reports

If the Clerk thinks fit, the Council may exclude access by the public to reports which in his opinion relate to items during which, in accordance with Rule 10, the meeting is likely not to be open to the public. Such reports will be marked "Not for publication" together with the category of information likely to be disclosed.

Section 16

Members Handbook and Allowances

Members will be issued with a handbook setting out the allowances payable for serving on the Authority.

The handbook provides a detailed guide to the rules governing the payment of allowances and the amounts payable, as well as the procedures to be followed when making claims.

Information in relation to Members Allowances is published on the website at:

www.ddfire.gov.uk

Section 17

Code of Corporate Governance

Introduction

1. Corporate Governance is a term used to describe how organisations direct and control what they do. As well as systems and processes this includes cultures and values. For local authorities this also includes how a Fire Authority relates to the communities that it serves. Good Corporate Governance requires local authorities to carry out their functions in a way that demonstrates accountability, transparency, effectiveness, integrity, impartiality and inclusivity. Corporate Governance is also the structure through which strategic objectives are set and performance monitored. Best practice principles in that regard flow from the three core components of the Turnbull report, namely; the assessment of corporate risk; effective management systems and the enabling of the organisational culture.
2. County Durham and Darlington Combined Fire Authority (the Authority) is committed to demonstrating that it has the necessary Corporate Governance arrangements in place to perform effectively.
3. This Code is a public statement that sets out the way the Authority will meet that commitment. As such it represents a key component of the Authority's governance arrangements. The Code has been developed in accordance with and is consistent with the CIPFA / SOLACE 2016 Framework: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government and is based upon the following seven principles of good governance:

Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimize the achievement of the intended outcomes;

Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

The Code also sets out the mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the Authority's Corporate Governance arrangements.

The Authority's Corporate Governance Principles

Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

4. The Authority will foster a culture of behaviour based on shared values, high ethical principles and good conduct. The Authority will do this by establishing and keeping under review:
 - The Authority's own values on leadership as enshrined in the Three Year Strategic Plan and evidenced in Codes of Conduct that set standards for behaviour;
 - A Member Code of Conduct;
 - An Employee Code of Conduct;
 - A Register of Interests and declarations of Gifts and Hospitality accepted;
 - Equality and Diversity arrangements;
 - A Confidential Reporting policy;
 - The roles of Members and Officers in decision-making;
 - Appropriate and timely advice, guidance and training for both Members and Officers;
 - Systems for reporting and dealing with any incidents of fraud and corruption.
5. Standards complaints will be considered by the Authority's Audit and Finance Committee.

Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

6. The Authority will seek and respond to the views of stakeholders and the community. The Authority will do this by:
 - Forming and maintaining relationships with the leaders of other organisations;
 - Ensuring partnership arrangements demonstrate clear and appropriate governance accountabilities;
 - Producing plans for service delivery within the community;
 - Having a Communications Strategy and providing access to a range of consultation methods, particularly to those groups which are harder to reach;
 - Using an approach that recognises that people are different and gives everyone the same or an equal opportunity to information, advice and support in ways that are suited to the needs or circumstances of the individual;
 - Encouraging and supporting the public in submitting requests for aspects of the Authority's Service to be scrutinised;
 - Providing and supporting ways for citizens to present community concerns to the Authority;
 - Providing for the public the opportunity to ask questions or make representations to the Authority;

- Publishing a Three Year Strategic Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) providing information in relation to the Authority;
 - Continually developing clear channels of communication;
 - Providing a modernised Information Communication and Technology Service that meets the needs and aspirations of the organisation and the communities we serve.
7. The Authority recognises the key role it has to play in supporting partnership working within County Durham and Darlington and also the role partners have to play in assisting the Authority to deliver on its objectives.

The Authority ensures good governance in respect of partnerships by:

- Reviewing and evaluating partnerships on a regular basis;
- Auditing partnership strategies and policies through the internal audit function;
- Ensuring partnerships offer value and contribute to the Authority's strategic objectives.

Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

8. The Authority will, in exercising Strategic Leadership, develop and communicate its purpose and vision and intended outcomes for citizens and service users. It will explain and report regularly on activities, performance and the Authority's financial position. Timely, objective and understandable information about the Authority's activities, achievements, performance and financial position will be provided. The Authority will do this by annually publishing:
- A Three Year Strategic Plan incorporating the Integrated Risk Management Plan;
 - A Medium Term Financial Plan;
 - An Efficiency Plan;
 - Externally audited accounts;
 - Detailed performance information.
9. The Authority will aim to deliver high quality services to the public in an efficient and effective way. The Authority will do this by:
- Delivering services to meet local needs through the Three Year Strategic Plan and the Integrated Risk Management Plan, and putting in place policies and processes to ensure that they operate effectively in practice;
 - Developing effective relationships and partnerships with other public sector agencies and the private and voluntary sectors;
 - Actively pursuing collaboration opportunities with the Police, Ambulance and other Fire Services;
 - Responding positively to the findings and recommendations of external auditors and statutory inspectors and putting in place arrangements for the implementation of agreed actions;
 - Comparing information about services with those provided by similar organisations, assessing why levels of efficiency, effectiveness and quality are

different and considering other alternative means of service provision and procurement to maximise opportunities and improve value for money where appropriate.

Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimize the achievement of the intended outcomes;

10. The Authority will achieve this by:

- publishing a detailed Medium Term Financial Plan which includes actions to ensure financial sustainability;
- producing a performance management framework, to ensure plans are met and remedial action taken;
- having processes in place to ensure data quality is high, so as to enable objective and rigorous decision making;
- ensuring regular monthly Service Leadership Team (SLT) meetings are held together with weekly SLT catch up meetings where issues are raised and actions agreed upon;
- having a risk management process to identify where interventions may be required;
- having a sound understanding of demand (current and future) which informs resource allocation decisions.

Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

11. The Authority will ensure that those charged with its governance have the skills, knowledge and experience they need to perform well. The Authority will do this by:

- Consistent application of the Workforce Strategy;
- Operating robust recruitment and selection processes;
- Implementing Member Development strategies;
- Cascading regular information to Members and staff;
- Investing in Member and Officer Leadership training;
- Providing resources that support Member and Officer development;
- Promoting schemes supporting ongoing professional development;
- Undertaking the annual appraisal of the Chief Fire Officer and setting objectives that contribute to the Authority's vision, strategy and plans and that incorporate key development needs.

12. The Authority will ensure that the necessary roles and responsibilities for the effective governance of the Authority are identified and allocated so that it is clear who is accountable for decisions that are made. The Authority will do this by:

- Electing a Chair, establishing Committees and nominating Member Champions with defined responsibilities;
- Agreeing a scheme of delegated responsibilities to the Senior Management;
- Undertaking a regular review of the operation of the Constitution;

- Having in place effective and comprehensive arrangements for the scrutiny of services;
- Making the Chief Fire Officer responsible and accountable for all aspects of operational management;
- Ensuring at all times arrangements are in place for the proper administration of its financial affairs (S151 Officer);
- Ensuring at all times arrangements are in place for ensuring actions are taken in accordance with Statute and Regulation (Monitoring Officer);
- Developing protocols that ensure effective communications between Members and Officers.

Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

13. The Constitution sets out how the Authority operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that decisions are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Areas of potential change are identified throughout the year and the Constitution is amended on an annual basis.
14. The Authority will operate a risk management approach that aids the achievement of its strategic priorities, supports its decision making processes, protects the Authority's reputation and other assets and is compliant with statutory and regulatory obligations. The Authority will ensure that the risk management approach:
 - Enables a culture of risk awareness;
 - Formally identifies and manages risks;
 - Involves elected Members in the risk management process;
 - Maps risks to financial and other key internal controls;
 - Documents and records details of risks in a risk management information system;
 - Monitors the progress in mitigating significant risks, and reports this to appropriate Members;
 - Reviews and, if necessary, updates its risk management processes at least annually;
 - Considers risk within major projects.
15. The Audit and Finance Committee has responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the risk, control and governance processes and associated assurance processes to ensure Internal Control systems are effective and that policies and practices are in compliance with statutory and other regulations and guidance. This includes considering the work of External Audit, Internal Audit and Risk Management and making recommendations concerning relevant governance aspects of the Constitution.

Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

16. The Authority will achieve this by:

- publishing relevant information relating to salaries, business interests and performance data on its website;
- having a Procurement Officer who provides advice and issues clear guidelines for procuring goods and services;
- having an Audit and Finance Committee that operates in accordance with guidance provided by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA);
- publishing information to the Authority and its Committees as part of established accountability mechanisms;
- acting upon the findings/recommendations of Internal Audit and External Audit Reports;
- preparing an Annual Governance Statement;
- preparing an annual Statement of Assurance;
- preparing an annual Efficiency Plan.

17. The Authority is committed to the publication of transparent performance information. This includes but is not limited to:

- Budget reports;
- Operational performance reports;
- Medium Term Financial Plan;
- Efficiency Plan;
- Statement of Accounts;
- Annual Governance Statement;
- Statement of Assurance;
- Information required under the Local Government Transparency Code.

Monitoring and Review

18. The Authority has a Committee that is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the various aspects of Corporate Governance arrangements.

19. The Audit and Finance Committee is responsible for arrangements relating to;

- Monitoring and reviewing the risk, control and governance processes and associated assurance processes to ensure Internal Control systems are effective and that policies and practices are in compliance with statutory and other regulations and guidance;
- Reviewing the Accounts prior to approval by the Authority;
- External audit;
- Internal audit;
- Risk Management;
- Making recommendations concerning relevant governance aspects of Standing Orders.

20. The Committee also has responsibility for promoting high ethical standards across the Authority, overview of the Member and officer codes and other relevant protocols.

21. This Committee will ensure that governance arrangements are kept under continual review through:

- Reports prepared by officers with responsibility for aspects of this Code;
- The work of Internal Audit;
- External Audit opinion;
- Other review agencies and Inspectorates;
- Opinion from Statutory Officers.

The Statement of Assurance

22. Each year the Authority will publish a Statement of Assurance. This process is managed by the Service Leadership Team and will provide an overall assessment of the Authority's Corporate Governance arrangements and an appraisal of the key controls in place to manage principal governance risks. The Statement will also provide details of where improvements need to be made in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

23. The Statement of Assurance will be published with the Authority's Statement of Accounts.

Section 18

Whistleblowing Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the Authority. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the Authority. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.
- 1.2 The Authority is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we encourage employees and others with serious concerns about any aspect of the Authority's work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis. This policy document makes it clear that employees can do so without fear of reprisals. This 'Whistle Blowing Policy' is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the Authority, rather than overlooking a problem or blowing the whistle outside.
- 1.3 This policy has been discussed with the relevant Trade Unions and professional organisations and has their support.

2. Aims and scope of this policy

- 2.1 This policy aims to:-
 - (a) provide avenues for you to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
 - (b) allow you to take the matter further if you are dissatisfied with the Authority's response; and
 - (c) reassure you that you will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistle blowing in good faith.
- 2.2 (a) There are existing procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to your own employment. This 'Whistle Blowing Policy' is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures.

- (b) That concern may be about something that:-
 - (i) is unlawful; or
 - (ii) contravenes the Authority's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations or policies; or
 - (iii) falls below established standards of practice; or
 - (iv) amounts to improper conduct or corrupt practice.

3. Safeguards

3.1 Harassment or Victimisation

- (a) The Authority recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. The Authority will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.
- (b) This does not mean that if you are already the subject of disciplinary or redundancy procedures, that those procedures will be halted as a result of your whistle blowing.

3.2 Confidentiality

The Authority will do its best to protect your identity when you raise a concern and do not want your name to be disclosed. It must be appreciated that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement by you may be required as part of the evidence.

3.3 Anonymous Allegations

- (a) This policy encourages you to put your name to your allegations. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful, but they will be considered at the discretion of the Authority.
- (b) In exercising the discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:-
 - (i) the seriousness of the issues raised;
 - (ii) the credibility of the concern; and
 - (iii) the likelihood of confirmation of the allegations from attributable sources.

3.4 Untrue Allegations

If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make malicious or vexatious allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

4. How to raise a concern

4.1 (a) As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your immediate Manager or their superior. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is thought to be involved in the malpractice. If you believe that management is involved and you cannot for that reason raise it with your immediate Manager, then you should approach the officer with overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy:-

- (i) The Treasurer
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
Belmont Business Park
Durham DH1 1TW

Telephone: 0191 3755558

E-mail: THope@ddfire.gov.uk

OR,

- (ii) The Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority,
County Hall,
Durham DH1 5UL

Telephone: 03000 269727

E-mail:helen.lynch@durham.gov.uk

4.2 Concerns are better raised in writing. You are invited to set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible and the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation. If you do not feel able to put your concern in writing, you can telephone or meet the appropriate officer.

4.3 The earlier you express the concern, the easier it is to take action.

- 4.4 Although you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for your concern.
- 4.5 (a) Advice and guidance on how matters of concern may be pursued can be obtained from:-
- (i) The Treasurer
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
Belmont Business Park
Durham DH1 1TW
- Telephone: 0191 3755558
- E-mail: THope@ddfire.gov.uk
- (b) You should note that matters of concern may be raised with either the Clerk to the Combined Fire Authority or the Treasurer. Usually, matters of concern about action which is believed to be unlawful and may contravene Authority Standing Orders (including Contract Standing Orders), conduct falling below established Standards of Practice, improper or corrupt practice should be raised with the Clerk to the Combined Fire Authority.
- (c) Communication with either officer may be by means of personal appointment, telephone, e-mail or ordinary mail. If requested, special envelopes can be provided in order to protect the confidentiality of any communication.
- 4.6 When any meeting is arranged, the whistle-blower may, if they so wish, be accompanied by a trade union representative or a workplace colleague who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates.

5. How the Authority will respond

- 5.1 (a) The action taken by the Authority will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may:-
- (i) be investigated internally;
- (ii) be referred to the Police;
- (iii) be referred to the external Auditor;
- (iv) form the subject of an independent inquiry.
- 5.2 In order to protect individuals and the Authority, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope

of specific procedures (for example, discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

5.3 Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.

5.4 Within ten working days of a concern being received, the Authority will write to you:-

- (a) acknowledging that the concern has been received;
- (b) indicating how it proposes to deal with the matter;
- (c) giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
- (d) telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made; and
- (e) telling you whether further investigations will take place and, if not, why not.

5.5 The Authority will take steps to minimise any difficulties which the whistle-blower may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, should they be required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the Authority will give advice about the procedure and provide any necessary support.

5.6 The Authority accepts the whistle-blower needs to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Subject to legal constraints, information about the outcomes of any investigate will be given.

6. Audit and review

6.1 The HR team will perform a review of this procedure every five years or earlier if a change in circumstances occurs in legislation or good practice. Any recommendations will be implemented into the existing procedure.

7. Further information

- AD/1/10 Dignity at work policy
- AD/2/54 Dignity at work procedure
- AD/1/7 Discipline policy
- AD/2/68 Discipline procedure
- AD/2/36 Grievance procedure

Revised June 2020

Section 19

Anti-Fraud, Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption

1. Introduction

County Durham and Darlington Combined Fire Authority is committed to sound corporate governance and has demonstrated this by adopting a Code of Corporate Governance based on the CIPFA/SOLACE framework.

In administering its responsibilities, the Authority is committed to the highest ethical standards. It expects all its Members and officers to lead by example in ensuring compliance with rules, procedures and recommended practices, whilst maintaining conduct of the highest standards, such that the public confidence in their integrity is maintained.

The Authority expects that individuals and organisations that it comes into contact with will act towards the Authority with integrity and without thought or actions involving fraud or corruption. This policy has been updated to reflect the introduction of the Bribery Act 2010. Bribery is the most common form of corruption and it is arguable that the definition of “bribery” will encompass all forms of corruption covered by the previous policy. The word “corruption” has been retained for the time being.

The Authority’s Anti-Fraud and Anti- Bribery and Corruption Policy is based on a series of comprehensive and inter-related procedures designed to frustrate any fraudulent or corrupt act. The Policy covers

- Culture
- Prevention
- Detection and Investigation
- Training

The Policy will be made available to all Members and officers of the Authority to ensure that they are aware of the Authority’s stance in relation to fraud, bribery and corruption.

2. Definitions

Fraud

‘The intentional distortion of financial statements or other records by persons internal or external to the organisation that is carried out to conceal the misappropriation of assets or otherwise for gain’

Bribery

'Offering, promising or giving a financial or other advantage to a person intending them to perform improperly a relevant function or activity or to reward them for the improper performance;

Requesting, agreeing to receive or accepting a financial or other advantage intending that in consequence a relevant function or activity should be performed improperly.'

Corruption

'The offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of an inducement or reward that may influence the action of any person'

Culture

2.1 The Audit Commission highlights the need for Members and senior officers to create an anti-fraud culture and environment within the organisation. The avoidance of fraud, bribery and corruption can only be truly effective where such acts are considered anti-social, unacceptable behaviour, and whistle blowing is perceived as a public spirited action.

2.2 The Authority has adopted a whistle blowing policy that gives officers a mechanism for reporting areas of concern, illegal acts and corruption. A copy of the policy will be issued to all officers and Members of the Authority and placed on the internet site.

2.3 Members of the public are also encouraged to report any concerns they may have about Authority officers or Members, through any of the routes outlined at 2.5 or those listed at Appendix 1 to this document.

2.4 The Authority's officers play a key role in the prevention and detection of fraud bribery and corruption. Officers are bound by the Confidential Reporting Code and are encouraged to raise any concerns that they may have on issues related to the Authority's activities.

2.5 Such concerns will be treated in the utmost confidence and be properly investigated. If necessary concerns can be raised via:

- Chief Fire Officer, Clerk or Treasurer
- Principal Officers
- External Agencies e.g. external auditor

Contact details for the main internal and external contacts are attached at the end of this document

2.6 Financial malpractice or corruption will not be tolerated by the Authority. Any suspicion of fraudulent or corrupt practices will be promptly investigated by Authority officers and a decision taken in conjunction with the Clerk, Internal audit and the designated Police Liaison Officer

within Durham Constabulary, where appropriate, as to whether to refer the matter to the police for criminal investigation. Referral for police investigation is normal practice where fraud or corruption is suspected. Following investigation and notwithstanding possible Police involvement, if appropriate, senior management will instigate the Authority's disciplinary procedures in respect of those who are suspected of defrauding the Authority or who are suspected of bribery or corruption. It should be understood that fraud will be regarded as gross misconduct and as such is likely to lead to summary dismissal.

- 2.7 Where either officers or Members are implicated, the Treasurer must be informed immediately. Any subsequent investigation into Members' conduct will be conducted under the procedures set out under the Local Government Act 2000 and in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.
- 2.8 The raising of unfounded or malicious allegations will be dealt with under the appropriate disciplinary process and codes of conduct.

3. Prevention

- 3.1 The Authority is committed to raising the profile of its anti-fraud and anti-bribery and corruption work and this policy, which underpins the whole framework, will be widely distributed and publicised.
- 3.2 There is an important role to be played in the prevention of fraud, bribery and corruption by all managers across the Service. This general role complements the anti-fraud and anti-bribery and corruption activities undertaken by the services provided from the County Council Audit and Risk Management division. It is therefore essential that all managers understand the importance of soundly designed systems which meet key control objectives and minimise opportunities for fraud, bribery and corruption. They are responsible for assessing the potential for fraud, bribery and corruption within their own Section's activities and for implementing appropriate strategies to reduce this risk.
- 3.3 There are five main strands to the measures taken by the Authority to minimise the opportunities for fraud and corruption.
 - Officer measures
 - Member measures
 - Internal control systems
 - Information and Communications Technology measures
 - Liaison with other Agencies

These measures are discussed in the following sections of the policy.

Officer Measures

- 3.4 The Authority is expected to maintain, and is entitled to expect a high standard of conduct from officers. The public are entitled to demand the

highest standards of conduct from officers and to have the utmost confidence that officers are working honestly and without bias in order to achieve the Authority's objectives.

The Authority has adopted a Code of Conduct for employees that sets out the conduct expected of all its employees in the performance of their jobs. A number of clauses in the Code specifically deal with fraud, bribery and corruption issues and offer guidance to officers on the correct procedures to follow. Failure to comply with the requirements of the Code is treated as a serious matter and can lead to action being taken against the officer under the Authority's Disciplinary Procedures, up to and including dismissal.

- 3.5 In order to ensure that all officers are fully aware of the Authority's stance towards fraud, bribery and corruption, and the responsibilities it places on its employees, information relating to the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy will be communicated at induction.
- 3.6 All professional officers employed by the Authority are also expected to comply with any relevant codes of practice that may have been issued by the professional institute to which that person belongs.
- 3.7 Officers are required to comply with the Authority's constitution. They must also operate within Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972, regarding the disclosure of pecuniary interests in contracts relating to the Authority or fees and rewards other than their remuneration as an employee.

Member Measures

- 3.8 Members of the Authority are expected to operate honestly and without bias within relevant advisory frameworks.

The Anti-Fraud and Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy will be issued to all Members as a reminder of the high ethical standards required by the Authority.

Internal Control Systems

- 3.9 Standing Orders and Financial Regulations set out a framework for financial control within the Authority. All officers are required to act in accordance with these rules and regulations when carrying out their duties.
- 3.10 The Treasurer, has a statutory responsibility under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to make arrangements for the proper administration of the Authority's affairs. The framework for delivery of this responsibility can be found in the Financial Regulations.
- 3.11 The Authority aims to have in place efficient and effective systems of control that as far as possible prevent potential fraudsters from

exploiting weaknesses in procedures. The prime responsibility for maintaining such systems lies with Senior Managers. An independent appraisal of the integrity of internal control systems is undertaken by Internal Audit on a priority risk basis.

Internal Audit Examination

- 3.12 The strategic audit plan, based on risk, provides for systemic reviews of all major financial and management systems, whether computerised or manual. The audit frequency is determined following a risk assessment with the aim of all major audits being reviewed over a three year period. Financial systems regarded as 'core' systems are audited on an annual basis.

Information and Communications Technology

- 3.13 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is integral to the delivery of the Authority's business. The internet and e-mail facilities bring opportunities for the perpetration of fraud. The Authority has in place procedures and systems that minimise these opportunities and improve the chances of fraudulent activity being detected.

- 3.14 There are three main strands to the Authority's attempts to combat fraud conducted via ICT. These are as follows

- Internet and e-mail policy
- Internal Audit examination of major computerised financial and management systems
- Liaison with other agencies

- 3.15 The most difficult ICT system fraud to detect, and potentially the most costly, is that which occurs when unauthorised amendments are made to the computer source code itself. The main control applied is the verification of system inputs and outputs using specialised computer audit techniques carried out by Internal Audit.

Internet and e-mail policy

- 3.16 Policies are in place for the use of the internet and email. Policies are posted on the Authority's intranet.

Liaison with Other Agencies

- 3.17 It is important that there is a high level of co-operation between the various agencies involved in the prevention and detection of fraud bribery and corruption in the public sector. In accordance with data protection and human rights regulations the Authority maintains links with, and shares information with many organisations including;

- National Audit Office
- Police

- Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) national and regional audit groups
- County Chief Auditors' Network
- Northern Counties Chief Internal Auditor Group
- National Anti-Fraud Network
- Government Agencies
- Other Public Sector Bodies

3.18 Ultimately, the best method of deterring fraudulent activity may be to ensure that fraudsters are left in no doubt about the consequences of their actions. This Authority will investigate fully all instances of suspected fraud and corruption brought to its attention and will normally refer such matters for criminal investigation.

4. Detection and Investigation

4.1 The internal control systems within the Authority have been designed to provide indicators of any fraudulent activity although generally the systems should be sufficient in themselves to deter fraud. It is also, on occasions, the alertness of officers, Members and the general public to signs of fraud, bribery and corruption that enables detection to occur and the appropriate action to be taken.

4.2 Internal Audit is also proactive in the use of proven methods for the detection of fraud, bribery and corruption e.g. computer assisted audit techniques and data matching (National Fraud Initiative).

4.3 Despite the best efforts of financial managers and auditors, many frauds are discovered by chance or by a 'tip-off' and the Authority has in place arrangements to enable such information to be properly dealt with via the mechanisms set out in the whistle blowing policy.

4.4 Prosecution is a prime deterrent to prospective fraudsters. The Authority has decided that where evidence of potential fraud, bribery or corruption is uncovered, the matter will normally be referred to the Police for further investigation with a view to criminal proceedings taking place.

4.5 It is recognised that, on occasions officers will feel unable to voice their suspicions for fear of reprisals or discrimination against themselves by other officers. To encourage officers to come forward and report their suspicions, and in compliance with the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, the Authority has introduced a whistle blowing policy. This ensures any suspicions that are reported are dealt with in a consistent and confidential manner and provides officers with an assurance that they will not be discriminated against.

5. Training

- 5.1 The Authority is committed to ensuring that all employees are properly trained to fulfil their responsibilities. It is recognised that the continuing success of its Anti-Fraud and Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy and its general credibility will depend largely on the effectiveness of programmed training and the responsiveness of officers throughout the organisation. To facilitate this, the Authority supports the concept of training for Members and officers.
- 5.2 Principal Officers should ensure that all officers likely to be involved in the conduct of investigations receive appropriate training and guidance to enable them to fulfil any obligations placed upon them by the operation of the Authority's disciplinary procedures.

Anti Fraud and Bribery and Anti Corruption Policy

Internal Contact List

Chief Fire Officer	0191 3755553
Treasurer	0191 3755558
Clerk and Monitoring Officer	03000 269727
Head of Internal Audit	03000 269645

External Contact List

National Audit Office dedicated whistle-blower's hotline	020 7798 7999
Durham Police (Aykley Heads)	0345 6060365

Revised June 2021

Section 20

Code of Conduct for Employees

In addition to the principles set out in this Section, staff are expected to undertake their duties in accordance with the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (England).

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Authority values the commitment and contribution of its people. It recognises that it is important to have systems and procedures in place which can identify areas where support and guidance may be required, to ensure that the community we serve can be confident that the affairs of the Authority are conducted in accordance with the highest standards of probity and accountability. The Authority will combat fraud and corruption wherever they may arise in relation to any of the activities or services involving any employee of the Authority.
- 1.2 A key factor is to demonstrate the highest standards of honesty and integrity throughout the organisation. You must therefore comply with:
 - (a) all appropriate legislation;
 - (b) all Authority Policies;
 - (c) Standing Orders of the Authority;
 - (d) Financial Regulations;
 - (e) Conditions of Service;
 - (f) Any other standard, guideline or instruction relevant to the particular service or activity.
- 1.3 This document is to clarify the conduct that the Authority and the public expect of you. It will also ensure that you do not find yourself, inadvertently or otherwise, in a situation where your conduct could create an impression of undue influence or corruption in the minds of the public.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This code of conduct applies to all employees of the Authority. It also applies to those employees of other Fire Authorities or Local Authorities who are seconded to this Authority for any period of time.

3. Standards

- 3.1 You, as an employee of the Authority must give the highest possible standard of service to the people of County Durham and Darlington, and where it is part of your duties, to provide appropriate advice to Elected Members and colleagues with total impartiality.

- 3.2 You must report to your Line Manager any impropriety, breach of procedure or any serious deficiency in the provision of service.
- 3.3 In all cases, it is not enough to avoid actual impropriety. You must, at all times avoid any occasion for suspicion and any appearance of improper conduct.

4. Equality and fairness

4.1 All members of the local community and our employees have a right to be treated fairly and equally. All staff are expected to promote the Service's Diversity Policy and Core Values, both within the Service and externally in order to demonstrate commitment to anti-discriminatory practice in all the Service's activities.

4.2 We value ...

(a) Service to the Community

We value service to the community by ...

- Working with all groups to reduce risk
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Being answerable to those we serve
- Striving for excellence in all we do

(b) People

We value all our employees by practising and promoting...

- Fairness and respect
- Recognition of merit
- Honesty integrity and mutual trust
- Personal Development
- Co-operative and inclusive working

(c) Diversity

We value diversity in the Service and the community by...

- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Providing varying solutions for different needs and expectations
- Promoting equal opportunities in employment and progression within the Service
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination

(d) **Improvement**

We value improvement at all levels of the Service by ...

- Accepting responsibility for our performance
- Being open-minded
- Considering criticism thoughtfully
- Learning from our experience
- Consulting others

5. Disclosure of information

- 5.1 The Authority deals continuously with sensitive and confidential information (including data) affecting its policies, transactions, personnel, relationships with other organisations and individual members of the public. Conflicts of interests can arise over the unauthorised use of information received by virtue of employment. The basic safeguards against such misuse of information are the existing contractual terms, which restrict the disclosure of confidential information by all employees.
- 5.2 Information is described as any data that has come into the possession or knowledge of an employee by virtue of their employment and in connection with their employment. Such information can be stored on a variety of media such as paper, floppy disks, CD-ROMs, computer systems, Internet etc.
- 5.3 The law requires that certain types of information must be available to Elected Members, Auditors, Government Departments, service users and the public. If you are in any doubt as to whether particular information can be released, you should refer to the Officer with responsibility for the Freedom of Information (Information Services Manager; Deputy Chief Executive) for clarification.
- 5.4 You are reminded however, that information relating to the affairs of the Authority should not be disclosed, used or permitted to be disclosed or used to an individual's advantage, nor should such information be knowingly passed on to others who might use it in such a way.
- 5.5 You must not communicate confidential information or documents to others that do not have a legitimate right to that information. In addition, employees involved or working with computer based information are reminded of the terms of the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Computer Misuse Act 1990, and must ensure confidentiality of information and guard against the possibility of a third party intentionally or inadvertently misusing the information.

- 5.6 Any particular information received by an individual from another individual, Elected Member or Officer of the Authority, which is personal to that individual and does not belong to the Authority should not be divulged to any person without the prior approval of the information owner, except where such disclosure is required or sanctioned by law.
- 5.7 You must not use any information you get in the course of your duties for personal gain or benefit. You must not pass information on to others who might use it for their own gain.
- 5.8 You should not make statements directly to the press or other media if it is not a requirement of your role without first getting approval from your manager. Principal Officers and Service Managers should speak to the Chief Fire Officer before making statements to the press or other media on major policy issues.

6. Political neutrality/politically restricted posts

- 6.1 Those posts identified as politically restricted under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (those posts with a salary equivalent to the National Joint Council for Local Government Services Spinal Column point 44 and above) must abide by the specific terms and conditions of employment associated with these regulations.
- 6.2 Whether you hold a politically restricted post or not, you must not allow your own personal or political opinions to interfere with your work.
- 6.3 You cannot display political posters

7. Relationships

7.1 Elected Members and Officers of the Authority

- (a) The Authority has built a culture where all employees are treated with dignity and respect, and the Authority will ensure that employees work in a safe, secure and productive environment, and are treated fairly in recruitment, employment, training and promotion. In addition, the Authority expects all employees to be treated fairly, consistently and with respect by other employees and to be treated fairly and courteously by the community served.
- (b) Mutual respect between employees and Elected Members/Officers of the Authority is essential. Some employees work closely with Elected Members/Officers of the Authority, and potential close personal familiarity between employees and individual Elected Members/Officers can damage the relationship and prove embarrassing to other employees and must therefore be avoided.

7.2 The Local Community

You must always remember your responsibilities to the community as a public servant and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within the community in all aspects of the service provided.

7.3 Purchasing and Contracting or related decisions

You should take no part in any direct or indirect involvement in purchasing, contracting or related decisions, where you have a personal interest in the transaction. Should you have a personal interest at any time in any purchasing, contracting or related decisions, you must indicate your interest to the Chief Fire Officer in writing. The Chief Fire Officer may remove you from the process.

7.4 The Corporate Procurement Officer is available to give further advice and guidance in terms of tendering and contracting procedures. Orders and contracts must be awarded in accordance with the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations of the Authority and no special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends and relatives or ex-employees.

7.5 Recruitment and Other Employment Matters

- (a) Employees involved in appointments must ensure that these are made on merit and in accordance with current policies and procedures.
- (b) In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, you must not be involved in any appointment where you are related to an applicant or have a close personal relationship.
- (c) You must not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any other employee who is a relative or with whom you have a close personal relationship, nor should you attempt to influence such decisions.

8. Secondary employment/outside commitments

8.1 All matters relating to secondary employment are fully set out in the Secondary Employment Policy and employees are reminded that they must refer to that procedure prior to undertaking any form of secondary employment whether it is paid, unpaid or voluntary.

8.2 Although it is accepted that your off-duty hours are your personal concern, you must avoid situations whereby your work and personal interests conflict. The Authority will consider applications from you to undertake secondary employment provided that it does not conflict with the Authority's interests or your role, weaken public confidence in the Service, affect the Service reputation and fully complies with your terms

and conditions of employment. The Personnel Section is available for advice in terms of secondary employment.

9. The use of equipment and materials

- 9.1 You must not use the Authority's telephone/fax facilities for private purposes unless under the arrangement for such facilities to be paid for. No other facilities or equipment provided by the Authority may be used for personal gain.
- 9.2 The Authority has provided an electronic mail system for use by authorised persons to assist in the business process. The system must be used in accordance with the Email and Internet Policy (AD/2/12).
- 9.3 The use of e-mail for Representative Bodies, Social or Charitable Activities is subject to approval from the relevant Principal Officer. There are no circumstances when the e-mail system can be used for other than legitimate business use. You are reminded that unauthorised or illegitimate use of the e-mail system may result in disciplinary procedures.
- 9.4 The Authority's vehicles may only be used for authorised purposes. If there is any doubt whether a particular use is authorised, advice should be sought from the relevant manager. You are reminded that the Authority's insurance policy does not apply to unauthorised journeys and an employee driving the vehicle could be liable for any loss if an accident should occur, and be guilty of driving a motor vehicle without insurance and taking without the owner's consent. You are further reminded that when using an Authority vehicle you are not exempt from the road traffic laws legislation and therefore subject to potential prosecution.

10. Consultancy work, lecturing, speaking at conferences, etc

- 10.1 During the course of your employment, you may be asked to undertake consultancy and other opportunities, which allow you to develop expertise beyond the boundaries of your normal role. Where offers of consultancy work, lecturing, speaking at seminars, etc. are received the following will apply:-
 - (a) If you wish or are invited to undertake consultancy, lecturing and other outside work including involvement in regional or national affairs, you must apply for permission to a Principal Officer. In the case of a Principal Officer, permission must be sought from the Chief Fire Officer (and the Clerk to the Authority in the case of the Chief Fire Officer). Any fees paid by virtue of this work will be treated as income for the Authority.

- (b) Where a request is received for a representative of the Authority to make a presentation and the employee is not named, the relevant Principal Officer will nominate a suitable person. This commission will then be undertaken, as part of that employee's employment and therefore any fee will be treated as income for the Authority.
 - (c) When an approach is made directly to an employee because of that employee's reputation, skills, knowledge or experience then there is potential for any fee to be treated as income for the employee. In these circumstances you may apply to your Principal Officer for leave, paid or unpaid, as appropriate. In the case of paid leave, all fees will be treated as income for the Authority. In the case of unpaid leave, you may retain the fee as applicable.
- 10.2 The above also applies in relation to an employee contributing to or writing a text book, chapter for a reference book or an article for a journal. When work is undertaken in your own time then you would normally wholly retain any fees or commission.
- 10.3 You are reminded that work as detailed above, undertaken in your own time, is subject to the terms of the Secondary Employment Policy.

11. Fraud and corruption

- 11.1 There is a large volume of legislation which regulates the Authority and which sets out the framework to ensure that the Authority adopts effective control and monitoring in relation to the conduct of business.
- 11.2 In addition to compliance with legislation, the Authority has established an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy along with other policies and procedures that are designed to ensure a high standard of probity when you are conducting the affairs of the Authority. You must adhere to:-
- (a) The Standing Orders of the Authority;
 - (b) The Financial Regulations of the Authority;
 - (c) Fire and Rescue Service Policies and Procedures.
- 11.3 You are also bound by your relevant terms and conditions of contract, which include references to standards of conduct and possible conflict of interest between private interests and the interests of the Authority. Every employee has a role to play in maintaining the standards, which the public is entitled to expect of the Fire Service.
- 11.4 The responsibility for maintaining effective monitoring systems, procedures and controls to prevent or detect fraud and corruption rests with managers responsible for particular service areas. However you are advised that the Authority must maintain the proper control of its

financial affairs and will not hesitate to use Auditors or the Police to investigate suspected cases of fraud and corruption should the need arise.

- 11.5 You must be aware that it is a serious criminal offence to corruptly receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing, or not doing, anything or showing favour, or disfavour, to any person in your official capacity. If an allegation is made, it is for you to demonstrate that any such rewards have not been corruptly obtained. The relevant statutory provisions appear at Appendix 'A'. However, if incidents of fraud and corruption nevertheless occur, the next objective is to ensure those management arrangements and systems of control are robust enough to identify when irregularities are occurring.
- 11.6 Incidents of potential fraud and corruption can arise in a variety of ways including:-
- (a) information provided by employees (sometimes anonymously);
 - (b) information provided by members of the public (again sometimes anonymously);
 - (c) information provided by other authorities or agencies;
 - (d) information highlighted by management processes and arrangements;
 - (e) information highlighted by system controls;
 - (f) Information highlighted by an audit or review process.

12. Reporting allegations of irregularities

- 12.1 Indications of suspected irregularities can arise in many different ways and it is possible that anybody may be the first to become alerted to a potential situation involving malpractice, fraud or corruption.
- 12.2 In order to ensure that a report or allegation is dealt with quickly and confidentially, you are reminded that:-
- (a) allegations will be handled discretely – any leaking of information may jeopardise the investigation, and could lead to disciplinary action being taken;
 - (b) as much information as possible must be recorded or collected in respect of the allegation – you should not delay the reporting process in order to achieve this;

- (c) records, including computer records must be secured so that there is no possibility of evidence being lost, destroyed, amended or otherwise tampered with.

12.3 If and when there is prima facie evidence that a criminal offence has been committed, the situation will be referred to the Police.

12.4 In the event of allegations or evidence indicating that financial irregularities have occurred, the Fire and Rescue Service will deal with all such issues in line with the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy.

13. Register of gifts and interests

13.1 Register of Financial and other Interests

(a) You must declare to the Chief Fire Officer any financial or non-financial interests that you consider could bring about a conflict with the interests of the Fire and Rescue Service. Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires you to make a formal declaration about contracts with the Authority in which you have a pecuniary interest. You are advised that appropriate record of interests will be maintained by the Service.

(b) The criterion for 'interests' is as follows:-

- (i) any external employment or business carried on by you (Note the contents of the Secondary Employment Policy);
- (ii) the name of the secondary employer, the name of any firm in which you are a Partner and the name of any company in which you are a Director;
- (iii) the name of any person who has made a payment to you, other than a relevant Authority, in carrying out your duties;
- (iv) the name of any corporate body which has a place of business or land in the Authority's area and in which you have a beneficial interest;
- (v) a description of any contract for goods, services or works made between the Authority and you or a firm in which you are a Partner or Director;
- (vi) the address (or other description sufficient to identify the location) of any land in which you have a beneficial interest and which is in the area of the Authority;
- (vii) the address (or other description sufficient to identify the location) of any land where the Landlord is the Authority and the tenant is the firm in which you are a partner or director;

- (vii) the address (or other description sufficient to identify the location) of any land in the Authority's area in which you have a licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy for 28 days or longer.
- 13.4 A Register of Interests Form (See Appendix 'B') has been provided on which you must record any interests as identified above.
- 13.5 You must ensure that you have completed the relevant documentation, for consideration. You must also ensure that the documentation is valid, accurate and updated regularly as necessary.
- 13.6 It is your responsibility to ensure that, should any details declared on the Record of Interests Form change, a new form is submitted.

14. Register of gifts

- 14.1 The official conduct of officers and other employees should never foster the suspicion of a conflict of interest. You must be careful not to show, by your behaviour, that you may be influenced by gifts whilst acting in an official capacity. This is important, not simply because the reputation of the Authority may be at stake, but also you are liable to criminal proceedings if you are shown to be influenced by inducements.
- 14.2 A potential source of conflict between private and public interests is the offer of gifts, hospitality or benefits in kind to you in connection with your official duties. For the purposes of this Code, a gift includes any item with a monetary value that you have not purchased and paid for yourself, or that has not been issued by the Authority during the normal course of your employment. This includes such things as hospitality, holidays, software, food and drink, clothes and electronic devices. You are reminded that this list is not exhaustive.
- 14.3 With the exception of unsolicited gratuities received in accordance with paragraph 14.4, you must not, under cover of your employment, accept any fee or reward whatsoever other than your proper remuneration. When a gift has to be refused, this should be done with tact and courtesy because the offering of gifts is more common in practice in the commercial world.
- 14.4 You may accept unsolicited gratuities offered by any person or organisation during the normal course of your employment provided that such gratuities are disposed of for charitable purposes to a charity to be determined by the Chief Fire Officer. If a gift or unsolicited gratuity is simply delivered to your place of work there may be a problem returning it. In which case, it must be reported to a Principal Officer immediately by e-mail, who in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer will determine a suitable charity.

14.5 In all cases, the Register of Gifts/Hospitality Form (See Appendix 'C') must be completed and forwarded to your Line Manager. Your Line Manager will check and then authorise the form and forward it to the Governance Section. A record of every gift/gratuity received by an employee will be recorded on a Register of Gifts, available within the Governance Section.

14.6 The only exceptions to the above are:-

- (a) Gifts of a promotional nature on the conclusion of any courtesy visit to a factory or firm of a sort normally given by that firm;
- (b) Gifts of a token value, often given at Christmas time such as diaries, calendars, pens, etc.

15. Hospitality

15.1 A reasonable amount of hospitality may be offered as a normal part of public life, but it is important not to create an appearance of improper influence thus undermining public confidence.

15.2 Where hospitality is offered to you, special caution is needed when the host is seeking to do business with the Authority or to obtain a decision from it. It is important to avoid any suggestion of improper influence, and therefore you should consider the following:-

- (a) Is the donor or event significant in the community?
- (b) Are you expected to attend because of your position in the community?
- (c) Will the event be attended by others of a similar standing in the community?
- (d) What is the motivation behind the invitation?
- (e) Would the invitation be, in any way inappropriate or place you under pressure in relation to any current or future issue involving the Authority?
- (f) Could you justify your decision to the Authority and the public?
 - (a) Is the extent of the hospitality reasonable and appropriate?
- (h) How will you respond to the hospitality?
- (i) Are you comfortable with the decision?

15.3 In general terms it will often be more acceptable to join in hospitality offered to a group than to accept something unique to you.

- 15.4 When a particular person or body has a matter currently in issue with the Authority, then offers of hospitality from that person or body should be refused even if, under normal circumstances, they would have been accepted.
- 15.5 Hospitality is sometimes offered to representatives of the Authority and is accepted as official, i.e. corporate level, because that is reasonable in the circumstances. In such cases, Fire Authority Members and Principal Officers, or individuals nominated by them, should attend.
- 15.6 All acceptance of hospitality, other than those indicated at 15.5 above, must be reported using the Register of Gifts/Hospitality Form (See Appendix 'C'), completed in accordance with paragraph 14.5 above.
- 15.7 All records appertaining to either your Record of Interests or Record of Gifts/Hospitality will be available for inspection by Officers who currently have access to your personal data as defined under the Data Protection Act, and those other persons authorised to have access, such as Auditors.

16. Malpractice occurring in the workplace (whistle-blowing)

- 16.1 The term whistle-blowing is used to describe arrangements, which allow you to express concerns about any types of malpractice, which may be occurring in the workplace. Such arrangements are closely linked to a culture which encourages you to express your concerns (sometimes anonymously) without the fear of intimidation or recrimination, and in the confident knowledge that any reported concerns will be treated seriously and confidentially in line with the Service Whistle-blowing Policy.
- 16.2 The Service has a Whistleblowing policy that is set out in the Constitution.

17. Monitoring and review

- 17.1 The Chief Fire Officer will review this Code of Conduct every two years.
- 17.2 All records appertaining to this code will be reviewed at the same frequency to the above.

Revised June 2020

Appendix A

This Appendix provides further guidance about the definitions of fraud and corruption and applicable legislation connected to this code of conduct.

1. Fraud

Fraud is defined as:

“The intentional distorting of financial statements or other records by persons internal or external to the organisation which is carried out to conceal the misappropriation of assets or otherwise for gain.”

Fraud is therefore, a deliberate act by an individual or group and is normally intentional and dishonest. It does not include misappropriation of assets not involving the distortion of financial statements or other records, e.g. fraud would not include theft of cash or property.

Within the Authority, fraud can occur in a number of ways including: .

- ❖ Falsification of records
- ❖ Over claiming of expenses
- ❖ Payment for goods and services which are not received
- ❖ Creation of fictitious issue records or goods received notes

This list is intended to be indicative only.

2. Corruption

Corruption can be defined as:

“The offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of an inducement or reward which may influence the action of any person.”

Within the Authority, corruption is only possible by collusion and would normally involve staff in conjunction with members of the public or other third parties. Corruption can therefore occur in a number of ways:

Tendering and award of contracts;
Contractors claims and final accounts;
Award of permissions, consents, licences etc;
Disposal of assets.
Again, this list is not exhaustive.

3. Bribery

Bribery is defined as:

“Offering, promising or giving a financial or other advantage to a person intending them to perform improperly a relevant function or activity or to reward them for the improper performance;

Requesting, agreeing to receive or accepting a financial or other advantage intending that in consequence a relevant function or activity should be performed improperly.”

Under the Bribery Act 2010 it is a criminal offence to accept a bribe to influence you not to do your job properly.

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service

Register of Interests

If it comes to your knowledge that a contract in which you have a pecuniary interest, whether direct or indirect (not being a contract to which you are a party), has been, or is proposed to be, entered into by the Authority, as soon as practicable you must give notice in writing to the Chief Fire Officer of your interest therein.

Using the criterion detailed with the Code of Conduct as a guide, complete the following short questionnaire and return it to the Personnel Section as soon as possible. The original will be held on your Personal Record File and a copy will be returned to you for information.

Name _____
(Please print clearly)

Role/Grade _____

Service Number _____ **Location** _____

Interests _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Received by the Governance Section:

Signed _____

Date _____

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service

Register of Gifts/Hospitality

This form should be completed in accordance with the Employee Code of Conduct Guidance.

Name:

Role/Grade:

Number:

Location:

Gift/Gratuity/Hospitality

Accepted/Offered:

Company/Individual Offering Gift/Gratuity/Hospitality:

Employee:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Line Manager:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Donated to:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Received by the Governance Section

On: _____

Signed: _____

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

10 June 2021

Appointment of Chairs and Committees

Report of the Clerk to the Authority

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to approve the Chairs of the Committees for the Authority for 2021/22.

Background

2. The political membership of the Committees is determined by the overall political balance of the Authority which is agreed in consultation with Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council as shown at Appendix 1.
3. The Authority is required to appoint a Chair to the following:
 - a. Appeals Committee
 - b. Audit and Finance Committee
 - c. Human Resources Committee
 - d. Joint Consultative Committee
 - e. Pension Board
 - f. Performance Committee
4. The Chair of the Appointments Panel and Salary Review Group is the Chair to the Authority as set out in the Constitution Section 3, Paragraphs 5 and 6 respectively.

Recommendation

5. Members are requested to:

- i. **Appoint** the Chairs for 2021/22 for:
 - a. Appeals Committee
 - b. Audit and Finance Committee
 - c. Human Resources Committee
 - d. Joint Consultative Committee
 - e. Pension Board
 - f. Performance Committee
- ii. **Agree** the appointment of the Chair of the Authority as Chair to the Appointments Panel and Salary Review Group in accordance with the Constitution Section 3, Paragraphs 5 and 6 respectively.
- iii. **Agree** that the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority and the appropriate Group Leader be authorised to make any changes to the Committees that may arise during 2021/22.

Appendix 1

Committee	Labour Group Representation	Conservative Group Representation	Liberal Democrat Group Representation	Durham Independent Group Representation	Darlington Group Representation
Appointments Panel (4 Members)					
Appeals (6 Members)					
Audit and Finance (6 Members)					
Human Resources (6 Members)					
Performance (6 members)					
Joint Consultative Committee (7 Members)					
Pension Board (2 Members)					
Salary Review Group (3 Members)					

Notes to Appendix 1

All Committees must have a Member from Darlington and a Member from Durham.

The political balance for each Committee is as follows:

Appointments Panel	Under the Authority's Constitution the Panel consists of The Chair of the Authority; the Vice-Chair of the Authority; At least one member from each constituent local authority; and a member representing the minority parties unless this is achieved through any of the above Members;
Appeals	6 seats: 3 Lab; 1 Cons; 1 Lib Dem; 1 Durham Group;
Audit & Finance	6 seats: 3 Lab; 1 Cons; 1 Lib Dem; 1 Durham Group;
Human Resources	6 seats: 3 Lab; 1 Cons; 1 Lib Dem; 1 Durham Group;
Performance	6 seats: 3 Lab; 1 Cons; 1 Lib Dem; 1 Durham Group;
JCC	7 seats: 3 Lab; 2 Cons; 1 Lib Dem; 1 Durham Group;
Pension Board	2 seats: 1 Lab; 1 Cons
Salary Review Group	3 Seats – under the Authority's Constitution the Panel consists of the Chair of the Authority; the Vice Chair of the Authority; A Darlington Member

A committee member who is Darlington Conservative would fulfil the requirement for both Conservative Group and Darlington Group representative.

A committee member who is Darlington Labour would fulfil the requirement for both Labour Group and Darlington Group representative.

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

10 June 2021

Representation on Other Bodies

Report of the Clerk to the Authority

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to agree the appointments process of Members of the Combined Fire Authority's to the Other Bodies for 2021/22.

Background

2. The Authority is required to agree at its annual meeting the appointments to the Other Bodies where the Authority is represented. Those Other Bodies are detailed in the table below together with the membership in the second column.

Other Bodies	Membership
Appointment of Representatives to the Local Government Association.	3
Appointment of a Representative to the Local Government Association Fire Commission	1
Appointment of Directors to the Community Interest Company	3
Appointment of Directors to Vital Fire Solutions Ltd	3

3. As the Other Bodies are not local to a particular electoral division, the appointment shall be in accordance with the overall political proportionality of the Authority.

Recommendation

4. Members are requested to:
 - i. **Authorise** the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Vice and appropriate Group Leader(s), to make appointments to the Other Bodies which the Authority are invited to nominate in accordance with the criteria that the appointment shall be in accordance with the overall political proportionality of the Authority.
 - ii. **Authorise** the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair and appropriate Group Leader(s), to make any changes to membership of the Other Bodies that may arise during 2021/22.

At a **meeting** of the **Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington** held **remotely**, on **Tuesday 16 March 2021** at 10.00 am.

Present:

Durham County Councillors:

Councillors B Avery, A Batey, D Bell, J Bell, R Bell, M Clarke, L Maddison, R Manchester, L Marshall, C Potts, G Richardson, J Robinson, E Scott, J Shuttleworth, D Stoker, and J Turnbull.

Darlington Borough Councillors:

Councillor H Crumbie, B Jones, G Lee and A Scott

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Carr, D Freeman, D Hicks, A Laing, J Maitland, and F Tinsley

Independent Person:

N Johnson

Cllr John Robinson announced to those who did not already know the Service has been awarded Ambassador Status as part of the North East Better Health at Work award. The service was nominated for the additional recognition in light of the longstanding commitment to, and outstanding delivery of, workplace health and wellbeing.

Cllr John Robinson had been asked by the Labour members to pass on thanks to CFO Stuart Errington and all the service for the commitment they have done throughout the Covid pandemic and are continuing to do so. Cllr J Shuttleworth agreed on behalf of the other members.

A1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

A2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 February 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair (for copy see file of minutes).

A3 Current Correspondence

The Authority received an update from the Assistant Chief Fire Officer in relation to current correspondence received from government and other bodies relevant to the Authority and the status of each (for copy see file of minutes).

A4 Notes of the Audit and Risk Committee

The Authority considered a report of the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee which provided members with an update on the discussion and recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 25 February 2021.

Cllr John Turnbull thanked Tony Hope and his team for all their hard work they have done over this last year from the rest of the Committee.

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

A5 Notes of the Performance Committee

The Authority considered a report of the Chair of the Performance Committee which provided members with an update on the discussion and recommendations of the Performance Committee held on 1 March 2021.

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

A6 Performance Report Quarter Three 202/2021

The Authority considered a report of the Area Manager, Community Risk Management which provided members a summary of organisational performance at the end of the third quarter of the 2020/21 financial year.

Cllr John Robinson commented on PI 34 where 99.1% of invoices were paid within 30 days. Congratulations to Tony Hope and to Keith and everybody else for an excellent report.

Resolved:

- a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- b) Comment on the reported performance

A7 Localism Act – Pay Policy Statement 2021/22

The Authority considered a report of the Treasurer and Clerk to seek approval of the pay policy statement for 2021/22 in accordance with the Localism Act 2011

Resolved:

- a) Approve the 2021/22 pay policy as set out at Appendix A
- b) Note that the statement will be published on the Authority's website

A8 Local Government (LGA) Subscription

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer which provided members with details of the LGA subscription for 2021/22 and to seek a decision about continued membership.

Resolved:

To renew the LGA subscription for 2021/22.

A9 COVID-19 Additional Activities Stats

The Authority considered a report of the Area Manager Assets and Assurance which provided members with an update on the COVID-19 additional activities being complete by County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS)

The Area Manager Assets and Assurance advised the members of the most updated numbers, since the report was produced.

The Chair thanked the Area Manager Assets and Assurance for everything he has undertaken and for being at the fore front of this work. It was noted that this was a brilliant report with a lot of commitment from our staff and the Fire Authority does appreciate it.

Resolved:

- a) to note the contents of the report.
- b) To receive further reports as appropriate.

A10 Community Safety Update

The Authority considered a report of Cllr Richard Manchester, Member Champion for Community Safety, to provide members an update on how Community Safety (CS) has been delivered or adapted in response to the Covid-18 pandemic and to encourage members to continue to promote and support prevention activities to keep our communities safe.

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

A11 Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Consultation 2021-2021 Interim Results

The Authority considered a report of the Policy Support Officer which gave members information regarding the results of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Consultation which ends on 23 March 2021.

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

A12 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Group Update

The Authority considered a report of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Member Champion to provide members with an overview of the work carried out by the Service's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group (EDIG).

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

A13 Any other business

There was no other business.

The Chair thanked members, those who are not standing for re-election, wishing them well and stated he was proud of the way the Fire Authority and the Service have worked together collectively as one. This was reinforced by Cllr Shuttleworth and Cllr Avery also stating how proud the Fire Authority is of the new Darlington fire station which is a magnificent structure. Members offered further congratulations to CFO Stuart Errington and his team.

A14 Exclusion of the public

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the said Act.

PART B

B 15 Long Service and Good Conduct Medal

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer which informed members of those staff who have satisfactorily completed twenty years' service.

Resolved:

To approve that the names are submitted to the relevant Government Department for the award of the Fire Brigade Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

B 16 Fire Fatality

The Authority were shown a presentation from the Area Manager Community Risk Management on the Fire Fatality which occurred on 18 February 2021, 133 Bethune Avenue, Seaham.

Cllr J Bell thanked and praised those who were involved with this incident and it was agreed the Service had done everything possible to help.

Cllr Lee asked for an update regarding the Fire which happened recently in Heighington. It was agreed that the Deputy Chief Fire Officer will speak with Cllr Lee outside this meeting

B17 Any Other Business

There was no other business

CLOSE OF MEETING

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Current Correspondence: March 2021 – June 2021

No	Release Date	Subject	Summary	Action CFA Report	Action CFA Response	Action Info
1	11/3/2021	Letter from Patricia Hayes, Director General – Crime, Policing and Fire Group	Letter outlining the One Home Office Transformation Programme, new structure and introduces Rachel Atkinson as the new Fire and Resilience Director. Appendix 1			√
2	16/03/2021	Letter from Lord Greenhalgh, Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities	Review into the role of Police and Crime Commissioners: Part One Recommendations and Next Steps. Appendix 2			√
3	16/03/2021	Letter from Lord Greenhalgh, Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities	Fire Covid-19 Contingency Fund (Round Two): Grant Application Outcomes and allocation of funding. Appendix 3			√
4	16/03/2021	Letter from Lord Greenhalgh, Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities	Announcement of Covid-19 Contingency Funding to be allocated to all Fire and Rescue Authorities in England. Appendix 4			√

5	09/04/2021	Letter from Emma Lawrence, Head of Fire Funding and Police Resilience	Confirmation of Pension Administration Grant to be awarded to Fire and Rescue Services in respect of pension admin costs incurred in 20/21. Appendix 5			√
6	26/5/2021	NJC Circular NJC/1/21	Independent Chairs Annual Report for the National Joint Council (NJC) and Middle Managers Negotiating Body 2020. Appendix 6			√
7	26/5/2021	NJC Circular NJC/2/21	Inclusive Fire Service Group Report. Appendix 7			√



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FAO.

Fire Chairs
 Fire Chief Officers

One Home Office transformation programme - changes to Fire and Resilience Director and wider structure

I wanted to take this opportunity to firstly share with you details of The *One Home Office (OHO)* transformation programme. This programme is designed to ensure that we are best placed to deliver the Government's priorities as we respond to the C-19 pandemic, seize the opportunities created by the UK's withdrawal from the EU and implement the important recommendations from the Windrush Lessons Learned Review.

An early priority on the OHO journey has been to ensure the Home Office has the right Director General and Director level structure to support outcome delivery – our 'blueprint' for effective change. From 1 April we will move to a missions and capabilities structure.

Our new structure has three vertical DG led "Missions" **Homeland Security, Public Safety, and Migration and Borders** set up to deliver end-to-end services; and five horizontal "Capabilities", centres of excellence delivering high-quality and efficient services, both to the Department and directly to customers. I attach the structure at the Annex.

Accountability for fire will sit within Public Safety under my leadership. This brings together our work to keep the public safe by cutting crime (including by disrupting the highest harm criminals), protecting the vulnerable and reforming police, fire and rescue services, so they are as efficient and effective as they can be in delivering front-line public services. Lord Greenhalgh will remain as the responsible Minister for fire within the Home Office.

We will continue to work closely with the new Homeland Security mission around issues such as national resilience and development of the New Dimensions 2 programme. Similarly, there will need to continue to be close and ongoing work with the STARS function (Science, technology, Analysis, Research and Strategy).

The creation of the new Public Safety Group does offer new opportunities and I am determined to seize the chance these changes give us to support:

- A new emphasis on fire reform and be in a strong position to implement the recommendations from the Grenfell Inquiry;
- A more integrated approach to preventing exploitation, abuse and supporting victims;
- A more joined up approach to online work, as well as international cooperation on law enforcement, criminal justice and serious organised crime;
- Levelling up our focus on state threats and cyber, creating greater parity with CT;

- A cross-system view on policing and an end-to-end approach on crime;
- Strengthening how we approach Crime Strategy;
- A clearer sense of the contributions major programmes can and should make to the realisation of outcomes; and
- A stronger commissioning relationship on major programme delivery, within the department, and with key partners.

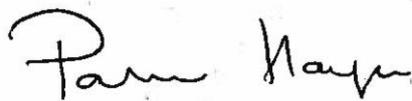
The transformation programme will create more transparent, stable and sustainable links between the law enforcement, national security, fire and rescue services and this will ensure we are delivering the right strategies and capabilities across the board.

I would also like to take this opportunity to update on an immediate change in senior leadership on fire and resilience and also a wider transformation programme across the Home Office.

As you are aware Luke Edwards has been covering Covid response as well as his fire and resilience role for the last 12 months. He has done an excellent job on two hugely important agendas. We anticipate that Covid 19 will still be a focus in the coming months. Looking ahead, the White Paper and the wider reform agenda will likely accelerate; focus on Grenfell reform will intensify; and there is a series of major events planned over the summer. On this basis Luke and I have agreed that he will step back from the fire and resilience director role and focus on Covid 19 over the next few months. I have asked Rachel Atkinson (currently Director, Serious and Organised Crime System) to move over with immediate effect to lead Fire and Resilience Directorate. The role will be advertised later as part of the wider structural changes within the One Home Office transformation programme. I'm sure you'll want to join me in thanking Luke for all he has done and extending a warm welcome to Rachel, who will be in touch cover the coming weeks.

In large part, I expect your teams will continue to engage with their existing Home Office contacts and I know Rachel Atkinson is looking forward to meeting many of you.

Yours sincerely,



Patricia Hayes
Director General – Crime, Policing & Fire Group (Public Safety Group)

ANNEX – One Home Office – new structure as of 1 April 2021



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Home Office

Lord Greenhalgh
Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire
and Communities

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

To: Chief Fire Officers
Fire Authority Chairs
Fire Partners
By Email Only

16 March 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Review into the role of Police and Crime Commissioners: Part One Recommendations and Next Steps

As you may be aware, we have today laid a Written Ministerial Statement in Parliament setting out the findings from part one of the Review of the role of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). I have attached a copy of our statement to this letter.

Last year, in line with the manifesto commitment, this Government committed to consider the model and how we could strengthen PCC accountability and expand their role. Part One of the Review commenced on 22 July 2020 and sought to identify areas where the model can be improved, drawing upon wide-ranging consultation with stakeholders across policing, fire, local government, and the views of the public. The first stage of the Review, which concluded last October, made recommendations to the Home Secretary on how to improve the accountability, scrutiny and transparency of the current PCC model. It also considered how we set out our long-term ambitions on fire governance reform, and the links of the PCC model to mayoral devolution.

I am confident that once implemented, these recommendations will ensure that the public have a greater say over policing and can better hold PCCs to account for bringing crime down – making their streets and neighbourhoods safer, and restoring confidence in the criminal justice system.

We also used the Review to map out our longer-term reform ambitions in order to respond to the significant recommendations arising from Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, the Manchester Arena attack, and to build on the findings from HMICFRS inspections and Sir Thomas Winsor's State of Fire and Rescue Report 2019. The response to the Covid-19 pandemic has also demonstrated the wider support and skill that fire services can provide for their emergency service partners and in keeping the public safe. I am keen to build on this learning to create and embed services which are fit for the challenges of the 21st century, supporting both their people and the public.

We have identified a number of options and recommendations to this effect and I am keen we explore these with you in more detail, to gather further evidence and garner wider input from both stakeholders and the public. As a result, the Home Office will be launching a White Paper on fire reform.

The White Paper - centred around improvements in **Professionalism, People, and Governance** - will set out a clear vision and roadmap for reform. Taken alongside our comprehensive legislative programme on fire and building safety, it will build on the progress we have already made to ensure that fire and rescue services are outward looking, professionally led and governed, and fully support the communities and public that they serve.

On **Professionalism**, I want to see professional, well led services with credible operational standards at their heart. This will include a strengthened model of sector leadership and greater assurance through inspection. We will also consult on the development of a mandatory 21st century command course for progression to senior roles, minimum entry requirements for anyone joining services, and look to develop schemes to consistently identify and nurture talent.

On **People**, it is vital that we get the best out of our people and ensure the fire service is fit for the future. We will work to unlock talent and diversity within services and develop clear skills pathways with clear competency frameworks. We will also take action to ensure we are supporting the creation of a positive culture in services.

In addition, and as highlighted most recently in HMICFRS' Covid-19 report, the role of fire and rescue services and the firefighter needs urgent clarification. Local flexibility to determine roles would enable firefighters to do more to support their communities, other emergency services (including providing significant support to ambulance services) and other local partners, as demonstrated in the response to Covid-19.

On **Governance**, the majority of our focus will be on implementing the recommendations arising from the PCC Review. We know that the variation of 45 fire and rescue authorities across England operating under a range of different governance models has led to a lack of consistency which has led to challenges of accountability and transparency. As a result, we will be considering the following recommendations within the White Paper:

- Consulting on whether to mandate the transfer of fire and rescue functions to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner model across England where boundaries are coterminous, unless there is an option to transfer fire governance directly to an elected Mayor.
- Consulting on how to address coterminosity challenges, including in the South West.
- Legislating to create operational independence for Chief Fire Officers and to clearly separate and delineate strategic and operational planning for fire and rescue.
- Considering options to clarify the legal entities within the PFCC model.

Regardless of any changes which may be made, we are committed to preserving and utilising the expertise developed in local authorities with regard to the oversight and scrutiny of fire and rescue services.

We will now focus on implementing the agreed reforms and launching the White Paper consultation. I would like to reiterate my thanks to you all for your ongoing engagement and contributions to developing this reform agenda and would welcome your continued engagement as we progress this work. I look forward to communicating more about these plans in due course.

Yours Ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lord Greenhalgh', written in a cursive style.

Lord Greenhalgh
Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities at
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and Home Office

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Home Office

Lord Greenhalgh
Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire
and Communities

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

Stuart Errington
Chief Fire Officer
County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service
Via email: serrington@ddfire.gov.uk

16 March 2021

Dear Stuart,

FIRE COVID-19 CONTINGENCY FUND (ROUND TWO): APPLICATION OUTCOME

I am writing to you with regards to the application of County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service to the Fire Covid-19 Contingency Fund (Round Two).

The second round of applications attracted a total of 19 applications. All the applications have been carefully assessed against the grant criteria that was outlined in the Fire Covid-19 Contingency Fund guidance. I am pleased to inform you that your application has been successful, and that County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service will be awarded with £476,854 to fully cover the costs included in the claim. This means, I have also decided to waive the 0.2% threshold criteria, so that none of the additional costs included in your application need to be met from your reserves.

As you will be aware, the Fire Covid-19 Contingency Fund budget was initially set at £6m, in order to support Fire and Rescue Services that had incurred additional costs as a result of supporting other public sector organisations with their Covid-19 duties. I have subsequently made the decision to increase this funding by a further £10m. This decision was made with the expectation that more Fire and Rescue Services would become eligible to apply to the fund, reflecting an increase in services taking up additional Covid-19 related work as well as widening of the eligibility criteria for the second round, to include other additional Covid-19 related costs, such as PPE items and station cleaning.

Following payments to successful applicants from the fund, I have decided to distribute the money that remains in the fund between the 45 Fire and Rescue Authorities in England to support further Covid-19 related costs. I know from reviewing the second round Contingency Fund applications that several Fire and Rescue Services have agreed to continue assisting other organisations in the fight against the pandemic well into the next financial year, and certainty of funding is needed to keep up this good work. I am therefore anticipating that by distributing the remainder of the funding in this way, Fire and Rescue Services will have the assurance they need to continue with existing Covid-19 related activities, or to even expand the range of activities currently undertaken.

Distribution of the remaining funds will be applied according to the fire formula funding shares. You can see the allocation of funding for your Fire and Rescue Authority in Annex A.

The Home Office will make payments to successful applicants to the Contingency Fund in April. Likewise, Section 31 grant payments by formula shares will also be made in April.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Lord Greenhalgh', written in a cursive style.

Lord Greenhalgh
Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities at
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and Home Office

Annex A: Summary of Section 31 payments by funding formula shares

Source of SFA figures* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-information-for-local-authorities-final-local-government-finance-settlement-2020-to-2021>

*Does not include Isles of Scilly

FRA	2020/21 Fire SFA (£m)	% share	Funding allocation	Rounded
Avon Fire	16.0	1.8%	£149,605.1369	£149,605.14
Bedfordshire Fire	8.3	0.9%	£77,142.6177	£77,142.62
Berkshire Fire	10.4	1.2%	£97,093.5322	£97,093.53
Buckinghamshire Fire	7.5	0.9%	£69,735.6827	£69,735.68
Cambridgeshire Fire	8.9	1.0%	£83,197.1984	£83,197.20
Cheshire Fire	13.5	1.5%	£125,676.4107	£125,676.41
Cleveland Fire	14.7	1.7%	£137,149.5293	£137,149.53
Cornwall	11.5	1.3%	£107,225.1107	£107,225.11
Cumbria	8.4	1.0%	£78,212.3749	£78,212.37
Derbyshire Fire	13.2	1.5%	£123,456.0442	£123,456.04
Devon and Somerset Fire	22.3	2.6%	£208,384.9561	£208,384.96
Dorset and Wiltshire Fire	14.3	1.6%	£133,619.0227	£133,619.02
Durham Fire	10.6	1.2%	£98,995.4211	£98,995.42
East Sussex Fire	11.0	1.3%	£102,438.6918	£102,438.69
Essex Fire	25.0	2.9%	£233,344.9574	£233,344.96
Gloucestershire	5.8	0.7%	£54,040.8792	£54,040.88
Greater London Authority	210.8	24.2%	£1,968,444.9533	£1,968,444.95
Greater Manchester Combined Authority	50.6	5.8%	£472,331.9046	£472,331.90
Hampshire Fire	21.9	2.5%	£204,473.3161	£204,473.32
Hereford and Worcester Fire	7.8	0.9%	£72,420.8796	£72,420.88
Hertfordshire	12.4	1.4%	£115,759.0083	£115,759.01
Humberside Fire	20.1	2.3%	£187,865.9290	£187,865.93
Isle of Wight	2.7	0.3%	£25,645.3543	£25,645.35
Kent Fire	21.3	2.4%	£199,106.4412	£199,106.44
Lancashire Fire	24.2	2.8%	£225,988.5095	£225,988.51
Leicestershire Fire	13.3	1.5%	£124,421.1531	£124,421.15
Lincolnshire	9.8	1.1%	£91,184.7112	£91,184.71
Merseyside Fire	31.3	3.6%	£292,380.9053	£292,380.91
Norfolk	12.0	1.4%	£111,750.6873	£111,750.69
North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner	8.7	1.0%	£81,177.4676	£81,177.47
Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner	7.7	0.9%	£71,577.9596	£71,577.96
Northumberland	5.5	0.6%	£51,007.0641	£51,007.06
Nottinghamshire Fire	16.3	1.9%	£151,896.0735	£151,896.07
Oxfordshire	5.2	0.6%	£48,567.7416	£48,567.74
Shropshire Fire	5.2	0.6%	£48,889.1565	£48,889.16
South Yorkshire Fire	24.1	2.8%	£224,881.1689	£224,881.17
Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner	14.4	1.6%	£134,163.8616	£134,163.86
Suffolk	8.1	0.9%	£75,693.6443	£75,693.64
Surrey	11.7	1.3%	£108,980.9267	£108,980.93
Tyne and Wear Fire	24.5	2.8%	£228,607.8988	£228,607.90
Warwickshire	4.2	0.5%	£39,524.0766	£39,524.08
West Midlands Fire	52.9	6.1%	£493,875.9426	£493,875.94
West Sussex	5.5	0.6%	£51,712.4910	£51,712.49
West Yorkshire Fire	38.3	4.4%	£357,524.2076	£357,524.21
	871.7	100.0%	£8,139,171.0000	£8,139,170.99
Isles of Scilly	0.0		2400	2400
			£8,141,571.0000	£8,141,570.99

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Home Office

Lord Greenhalgh
Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire
and Communities

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

To: CFOs
By Email Only

16 March 2021

Dear CFOs

ANNOUNCEMENT OF COVID-19 CONTINGENCY FUNDING TO ALL FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND

As you will be aware, the Home Office set up the Fire Covid-19 Contingency Fund for the duration of 2020-21 in order to support Fire and Rescue Services that had incurred additional costs as a result of taking on Covid-19 related duties.

The Fire Covid-19 Contingency Fund budget was initially set at £6m, in order to support Fire and Rescue Services that had incurred additional costs as a result of supporting other public sector organisations with their Covid-19 duties. I have subsequently made the decision to increase this funding by a further £10m. This decision was made with the expectation that more Fire and Rescue Services would become eligible to apply to the fund, reflecting an increase in services taking up additional Covid-19 related work as well as widening of the eligibility criteria for the second round, to include other additional Covid-19 related costs, such as PPE items and station cleaning.

The second round of applications to the Contingency Fund closed in February and attracted a total of 19 applications. Following payments to successful applicants, I have decided to distribute the money that remains in the fund between the 45 Fire and Rescue Authorities in England to support further Covid-19 related costs.

I know from reviewing the second round Contingency Fund applications that several Fire and Rescue Services have agreed to continue assisting other organisations in the fight against the pandemic well into the next financial year, and certainty of funding is needed to keep up this good work. I am therefore anticipating that by distributing the remainder of the funding in this way, Fire and Rescue Services will have the assurance they need to continue with existing Covid-19 related activities, or to even expand the range of activities currently undertaken.

Distribution of the remaining funds will be applied according to the fire formula funding shares. You can see the allocation of funding for your Fire and Rescue Authority in **Annex A**. Section 31 grant payments by formula shares will be made in April.

Yours Ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lord Greenhalgh', written in a cursive style.

Lord Greenhalgh
Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities at
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and Home Office

Annex A: Summary of Section 31 payments by funding formula shares

Source of SFA figures* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-information-for-local-authorities-final-local-government-finance-settlement-2020-to-2021>

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Isles of Scilly	0.0		2400	2400
			£8,141,571.0000	£8,141,570.99

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PUBLIC SAFETY GROUP
2 Marsham Street, Fry Building, 6th Floor, London SW1P 4DF

FRA Finance Directors
Via e-mail

Date 9 April 2021

Dear All

PENSION ADMIN GRANT

I am writing to inform you that the Fire Minister, Lord Greenhalgh has agreed to provide a £3m grant to Fire and Rescue services in respect of their pension admin costs incurred in 20/21. This funding will be paid to each of the FRAs in England in line with the 'Firefighters Pension Scheme Advisory Board Levy' shares. Annex A sets out the allocation to each FRA. This grant funding will be paid in May 2021.

I am copying this letter to Clair Alcock of the LGA and HO pensions colleagues.

Yours sincerely

Emma Lawrence
Head of Fire Funding & Police Resilience

Annex A

<i>FRA</i>	<i>Number of active members at 1 April 2020</i>	<i>Share</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Avon	649	1.92%	57,591.62
Bedfordshire	399	1.18%	35,406.87
Bucks and Milton Keynes	364	1.08%	32,301.00
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	506	1.50%	44,901.94
Cheshire	690	2.04%	61,229.92
Cleveland	409	1.21%	36,294.26
Cornwall	641	1.90%	56,881.71
Cumbria	584	1.73%	51,823.59
Derbyshire	619	1.83%	54,929.45
Devon & Somerset	1332	3.94%	118,200.37
Dorset & Wiltshire	1007	2.98%	89,360.19
Durham and Darlington	498	1.47%	44,192.03
East Sussex	526	1.56%	46,676.72
Essex	1141	3.38%	101,251.22
Gloucestershire	387	1.14%	34,342.00
Greater Manchester	1273	3.77%	112,964.77
Hampshire	1564	4.63%	138,787.83
Hereford & Worcester	607	1.80%	53,864.58
Hertfordshire	621	1.84%	55,106.93
Humberside	733	2.17%	65,045.70
Isle of Wight (added to Hampshire)		0.00%	0.00
Isles of Scilly (added to Cornwall)		0.00%	0.00
Kent	1093	3.23%	96,991.75
Leicestershire	425	1.26%	37,714.08
Lincolnshire	561	1.66%	49,782.59
Lancashire	1060	3.14%	94,063.36
London	4,789	14.17%	424,971.16
Merseyside	618	1.83%	54,840.71
Norfolk	632	1.87%	56,083.06
North Yorkshire	669	1.98%	59,366.40
Northamptonshire	386	1.14%	34,253.26
Northumberland	367	1.09%	32,567.22
Nottinghamshire	707	2.09%	62,738.49
Oxfordshire	584	1.73%	51,823.59
Royal Berkshire	457	1.35%	40,553.73
Shropshire & Wrekin	507	1.50%	44,990.68
South Yorkshire	571	1.69%	50,669.98
Suffolk	619	1.83%	54,929.45
Surrey	568	1.68%	50,403.76
Staffordshire	640	1.89%	56,792.97
Tyne & Wear	555	1.64%	49,250.16
Warwickshire	379	1.12%	33,632.09
West Midlands	1,396	4.13%	123,879.67
West Sussex	620	1.83%	55,018.19
West Yorks	1054	3.12%	93,530.93
Total English FRS	33807	100.00%	£3,000,000

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Employers' Secretary, Naomi Cooke
18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ
Telephone 020 7187 7335
e-mail: firequeries@local.gov.uk

Employees' Secretary, Matt Wrack
Bradley House, 68 Coombe Rd
Kingston upon Thames KT2 7AE
Telephone 020 8541 1765

**NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL
FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES**

**To: Chief Fire Officers
Chief Executives/Clerks to Fire Authorities
Chairs of Fire Authorities
Directors of HR (Fire Authorities)**

Members of the National Joint Council

26 May 2021

NJC/1/21

INDEPENDENT CHAIRS ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Please find attached the Independent Chair Professor Lynette Harris's annual report for the National Joint Council and Middle Managers Negotiating Body for 2020.

Yours faithfully,

**NAOMI COOKE
MATT WRACK**

Joint Secretaries

**NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES**

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT CHAIR
2019 - 2020**

Professor Lynette Harris

Background

The National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (NJC), including the Middle Managers Negotiating Body (MMNB), is the body responsible for the supervision, from a national point of view, of all questions affecting the conditions of service of employees (other than those in Brigade Management roles) of fire and rescue services established under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (for England and Wales), Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

The NJC handles issues that affect all employees from firefighter to area manager. The MMNB has plenary powers to deal with issues which affect employees solely in the roles of station manager to area manager.

The principal purpose is to reach agreement on a national framework of pay and conditions for local application throughout the fire and rescue service in the United Kingdom. The NJC and MMNB are committed to the local democratic control of fire and rescue services to the community.

The parties to the negotiation are the Employers' Side comprising representatives of the Local Government Association, Welsh Local Government Association, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service Board. The Employees' Side comprises representatives of the Fire Brigades Union and, for the MMNB, the Fire Brigades Union and the Fire Officers Association.

An Independent Chair oversees the work of the National Joint Council and the Middle Managers Negotiating Body and is supported by two Vice-Chairs. Vice-Chair appointments alternate between the Sides on an annual basis.

For this year Cllr Nick Chard serves as Vice Chair of the NJC and Ian Murray as Vice Chair of the Middle Managers Negotiating Body.

The Independent Chair works closely with the Joint Secretariat, which is currently provided by the Local Government Association and the Fire Brigades Union.

The membership of the National Joint Council and the Middle Managers Negotiating Body during 2019/20 is attached to this report.

Introduction

In my second year as the Independent Chair of the NJC a considerable amount of work has been carried out by Members and Joint Secretaries. The main issues are outlined in this Annual Report, which covers the period from 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2020.

What do we do?

1. The National Joint Council provides:
 - The national negotiating machinery for the pay and conditions of service of uniformed fire service employees in the United Kingdom.
 - The services of the respective side Secretariats in assisting parties at local level to resolve areas of disagreement.
 - The services of the respective side Secretariats in assisting parties at local level in the interpretation of the national scheme of conditions of employment and the flexibilities contained therein.

Meeting dates in 2019 - 2020

2. The National Joint Council met on three occasions: 10 October 2019; 26 February and 5 June 2020. The Middle Managers Negotiating Body also met on those dates. A number of issues were considered and reports from the Independent Chair were approved. The Treasurer's Report for the year to 31 March 2019 was approved at the AGM meeting of 10 October 2019.

Issues under consideration during 2019 – 2020

3. Issues under consideration by the National Joint Council and, as appropriate, the Middle Managers Negotiating Body, on which there were written and oral reports from the Joint Secretaries, included:

COVID-19 & Tripartite Agreement

4. The Tripartite Agreement – National Employers, FBU and NFCC - secured national agreement on firefighters' activities in order to support the COVID-19 response by assisting the NHS, Ambulance Services and other partners with the fire services' skills and workforce resource following requests from Local Resilience Forums.
5. Significant work also identified a number of nationally agreed best practice risk assessments and statements related to the additional activities.

Pay

6. The National Employers wrote to the employees' side in August formally setting out an offer of a 2% uplift in pay as the most that could be afforded for the settlement year 2020/21. Both sides agreed in September, following a period of employee consultation,

to implement that uplift of 2.0% on basic salaries and continual professional development payments with effect from 1 July 2020.

Inclusive Fire Service Group

7. The NJC has a continuing commitment to improvement of equality, diversity, and cultural issues in the fire service.
8. The membership of this NJC-led group involves a number of other interested parties within the fire service including the National Fire Chiefs Council, Fire and Rescue Services Association and Fire Officers Association. It has also engaged with wider special interest groups.
9. The group identified a number of practical strategies designed to lead to improvements at local level. The strategies were very well received. Responses from FRAs stating support and current and future actions were analysed and an [overview report](#) was provided to all interested parties. These improvement strategies should now have had sufficient time to become embedded in services and should now be delivering improvement. Accordingly, a monitoring exercise is underway.
10. The purpose of the exercise is to determine the extent to which the improvement strategies have become embedded and whether or not they have begun to deliver improvement. The exercise involved:
 - A survey of FRSs
 - Gathering data on the demographics of the workforce
 - Independently run employee focus groups
 - Workshops with FRS Equality & Diversity Officers/Leads and local and national union representatives.

Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations: progress regarding implementation of the Employment Tribunal settlement agreement

11. Settlement payments have all been actioned and where linked to Employment Tribunal cases such cases have been withdrawn.
12. In cases where an individual could not be found or has not responded to any communication, the Tribunal is in the process of being advised that the union has withdrawn its support. Once that has concluded, the respective FRA will apply for the affected employment tribunal case/s to be struck out.
13. This long-running legal case has evidenced the ability of the National Joint Council to secure agreement and effectively administer the outcome including in a legal context.

General Joint Secretariat Activity

14. Issues under negotiation within the NJC are in the main progressed through the Joint Secretariat acting within the remit of its respective Sides.

15. On occasion lead members from each Side of the NJC/MMNB may meet outside of the usual round of larger meetings.
16. The Joint Secretariat normally meets formally every four to six weeks to exchange information and to progress negotiations. These meetings are also an opportunity for either side to identify potential local industrial relations flashpoints and subsequently to raise those concerns with the local management or union side as appropriate.
17. The Joint Secretariat leads discussion in National Joint Council working parties which informs negotiations and respective Side positions, as appropriate.
18. The Joint Secretariat also leads discussion in the sub-Committee on changes to rolemaps and national occupational standards and the joint Scoping Group in connection with the negotiation on broadening the role.
19. When jointly requested to do so, the Joint Secretariat also works with parties at local level who wish to explore their current industrial relations relationship with a view to seeking improvement. This involves a full day session working with key local management and union representatives. Unfortunately, the opportunity to carry out such training this year has been restricted by the COVID-19 situation.
20. The Joint Secretariat has handled a considerable number of requests from local parties seeking interpretation or clarification of Scheme of Conditions of Service issues or early informal assistance where a matter is likely to prove difficult to resolve at local level.
21. In addition to the above, the Joint Secretariat has a formal conciliation role when requested by both parties at local level to assist in resolution of local disagreements.

Joint Secretariat - Local Conciliation

22. In circumstances where discussion has been exhausted without agreement on an issue, or issues, at local level the Joint Secretariat when requested by both parties to do so can provide a confidential conciliation process in order to assist the parties in identifying a mutually agreeable outcome.
23. The Joint Secretariat has a very good record of assisting the parties to either reach agreement at the time of conciliation or to develop the basis of an agreement which leads to a resolution following further discussion shortly afterwards at local level.
24. Over the past year conciliations have taken place with 3 services.

Resolution Advisory Panel (RAP)

25. The Scheme of Conditions of Service Negotiation Procedure contains a number of options that local parties can explore to facilitate resolution to local issues where negotiation at local level has been exhausted. One of those options is the NJC's Resolution Advisory Panel whose remit is to endeavour to facilitate an agreement between the parties but where that is not possible the Independent Chair will make a recommendation based upon the positions presented and discussed during the

course of the meeting and which he believes can form the basis of an agreement.

26. Following the sad death of the RAP Independent Chair Professor William Brown, a recruitment exercise will be held for a new Independent Chair of the body.

Technical Advisory Panel (TAP)

27. The NJC also operates a Technical Advisory Panel which can consider whether or not a new duty system proposed at local level reflects the principles contained in Section 4 of the Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book) where it has not been possible to reach an agreement on its introduction. As with RAP, the Technical Advisory Panel endeavours to facilitate an agreement between the parties, but where that is not possible the Independent Chair can, in addition to commenting on the extent of compliance with the principles, recommend a proposal that he believes may form the basis of an agreement.
28. The NJC's Technical Advisory Panel, which is comprised of an Independent Chair and the Joint Secretaries, did not receive any requests for assistance during 2019/20 and therefore did not meet.
29. The current Independent Chair of the TAP is Mr Steve Hodder.

Circulars

35. A number of circulars have been issued since the last report of the Independent Chair:

NJC/6/19	Independent Chairs Report 2018/19
NJC/1/20	Novel Coronavirus: COVID-19
NJC/2/20	Annual Leave – Retained Duty System
NJC/3/20	Leave during Coronavirus outbreak
NJC/4/20	Employees' side pay claim
NJC/5/20	Pay Award 2020
NJC/6/20	CPD Uplift 2020

Conclusion

36. There are several aspects to the role of Independent Chair. This year it has involved:
- chairing of NJC and MMNB meetings
 - consideration, with the Joint Secretaries, of items due for discussion through the NJC and/or MMNB at those meetings
 - ensuring the NJC and MMNB are each aware of the work of the other and that an opportunity for comment is provided.
 - raising issues relating to how the formal business of NJC/MMNB meetings is handled with Joint Secretaries as appropriate
 - provision of this annual report

37. Over the past year, the unprecedented challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic has dominated the agenda for all UK emergency services and the parties are to be commended for the Tripartite agreement between the National Employers, National Fire Chiefs Council and Fire Brigades Union which provided the framework for the Service's COVID-19 response.
38. As identified in my last report, it is recognised that the Joint Secretaries, other colleagues and members of joint working groups undertake a great deal of work that is not visible, much of which underpins those matters formally reported at NJC and MMNB meetings.
39. I am very aware that extensive communications between the parties have continued to take place behind the scenes, despite it not being possible to have face to face interactions for much of this year. Whilst communications processes have been maintained virtually, it is acknowledged that this has been at times challenging, particularly in circumstances when it would have been of value to have been able to meet in person. I should, therefore, particularly like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved for their contributions in difficult times.
40. Part of the role of the Joint Secretariat is to support parties with differences to reach agreement and it provides a confidential conciliation process at local level. It is noted that the Joint Secretariat have, as last year, assisted three services to reach agreement.
41. It is with sadness that a vacancy is reported for a new independent chair of the Resolution Advisory Panel due to the unexpected death of Professor William Brown who contributed so much to employment relations in the Fire Service.
42. The pandemic has meant that meetings of the NJC and MMNB have had to take place virtually since June 2020. It is hoped that it will be possible to meet again next year once COVID-19 restrictions no longer apply.

Professor Lynette Harris
Independent Chair

MEMBERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL

1 OCTOBER 2019 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2020

Employers' Side	Employees' Side
<i>Local Government Association</i>	<i>Fire Brigades Union</i>
Cllr K Aspden	Mr M Wrack
Cllr G Brackenridge	Mr I Murray
Cllr N Chard	Mr A Dark
Cllr M Healey	Mr A Noble
Cllr R Knox	Mr C McGlone
Cllr M Payne	Mr J Quinn
Cllr R Phillips	Mr C Griffiths
Cllr I Stephens	Mr P McDonald
Cllr S Timoney	Ms L Rowan-O'Neill
AM F Twycross	Mr P Preston
	Mr L Skarratts
<i>Scottish Fire and Rescue Service</i>	Mr D Shek
Dr K Darwent	Mr R Jones
Mr W McQueen	Mr P Smith
<i>Welsh Local Government Association</i>	
Cllr P Marsden	
<i>Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service</i>	
Ms C McKinney	

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE MIDDLE MANAGERS NEGOTIATING BODY
1 OCTOBER 2019 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2020**

Employers' Side	Employees' Side
<i>Local Government Association</i>	<i>Fire Brigades Union</i>
Cllr K Aspden	Mr M Wrack
Cllr G Brackenridge	Mr I Murray
Cllr N Chard	Mr A Dark
Cllr M Healey	Mr A Noble
Cllr R Knox	Mr C McGlone
Cllr M Payne	Mr J Quinn
Cllr R Phillips	Mr C Griffiths
Cllr I Stephens	Ms L Rowan-O'Neill
Cllr S Timoney	Mr T French
AM F Twycross	Mr P McDonald
	Mr G Cook
	Mr P Trayner
<i>Scottish Fire and Rescue Service</i>	Mr G Ashman
Dr K Darwent	
Mr W McQueen	<i>Fire Officers Association</i>
	Mr A Robinson
<i>Welsh Local Government Association</i>	
Cllr P Marsden	
<i>Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service</i>	
Ms C McKinney	

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Employees' Secretary, Matt Wrack
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Telephone 020 8541 1765

**NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL
FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES**

**To: Chief Fire Officers
Chief Executives/Clerks to Fire Authorities
Chairs of Fire Authorities
Directors of HR (Fire Authorities)**

Members of the National Joint Council

26 May 2021

NJC/2/21

INCLUSIVE FIRE SERVICE GROUP REPORT

1. Please find attached the latest report from the Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG).
2. The IFSG undertook a monitoring exercise in 2020 to determine the extent to which the group's improvement strategies had become embedded and whether or not they had begun to deliver improvement.
3. The IFSG remained keen to capture a range of views comparing original and current perceptions. Therefore, the exercise involved:
 - A survey of all FRSs
 - Independently run focus groups covering BAME, LGBTQI and female employees.
 - Workshops with FRS Equality & Diversity Officers/leads and local trade union representatives.
4. This report provides feedback on each aspect of the monitoring exercise.
5. In common with much work across the sector, the issuing of the report has been affected by resources needing to be focused on the response to the COVID-19 situation.
6. The IFSG will now consider its next steps.

Yours faithfully,

**NAOMI COOKE
MATT WRACK**

Joint Secretaries

Foreword

1. The Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG) was established by the National Joint Council (NJC) to enhance its continuing commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.
2. The IFSG is unique in the fire service in that in addition to national employer and employee representatives from the NJC, it includes broader senior management and trade union representation. The following organisations also have two seats each – National Fire Chiefs Council, Fire Officers Association and the Fire and Rescue Services Association. The group has sought to be collaborative - complementing and enhancing, rather than competing with other initiatives.
3. You will be aware of the substantial work undertaken by the IFSG initially to research the position and to develop evidence-based improvement strategies, These were very well received by the sector, which committed to their adoption and, as requested, provided timescales within which it was expected each service would begin to see improvement as a consequence.
4. Based on these timescales the IFSG undertook a monitoring exercise in December 2019.
5. The purpose of this exercise was to determine the extent to which the improvement strategies had become embedded and whether or not they had begun to deliver improvement.
6. The IFSG remained keen to capture a range of views comparing original and current perceptions. Therefore, the exercise involved:
 - A survey of all FRSs
 - Independently run focus groups covering BAME, LGBTQI and female employees.
 - Workshops with FRS Equality & Diversity Officers/leads and local trade union representatives.
7. This report provides feedback on each aspect.
8. In common with much work across the sector, the issuing of the report has been affected by resources needing to be focused on the response to the COVID-19 situation. However, I am pleased to now be able to present this report to you on behalf of the IFSG.
9. IFSG members have contributed their considerable expertise and experience, time, and energy to fulfil its remit and I wish to record my thanks to them and to the NJC Secretariat.
10. Furthermore, the work of the group has been informed by a range of activities and assisted by various individuals and bodies to whom thanks are also due. These include LGA Research which was commissioned by the group to undertake the two research reports and independently conduct the employee focus groups.

11. The IFSG would like to thank all those FRS employees who gave their time to attend the employee focus groups and helped to provide valuable insight into working in the sector.
12. We would also like to extend thanks to those who attended the Equality & Diversity officer and local trade union representative workshops, which were well received and provided an excellent level of debate and often consensus.
13. The Inclusive Fire Service Group looks forward to continuing to work with all of you to deliver further improvement in equality and diversity.

Professor Linda Dickens

Independent Chair - Inclusive Fire Service Group

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Inclusive Fire Service Group survey

Research report
Winter 2019/20



To view more research from the Local Government Association's Research and Information team please visit: <http://www.local.gov.uk/local-government-intelligence>

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Introduction

The Local Government Association's (LGA) Research and Information Team was commissioned by the National Joint Council (NJC) led Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG) to conduct a survey of fire and rescue services to understand the extent to which the improvement strategies had helped fire and rescue services improve their situation in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Methodology

The survey was conducted by the LGA's Research and Information team using an online form. An email containing a unique link was sent to all 49 fire and rescue services in the United Kingdom¹. The survey was available to complete online during winter 2019/20.

The final response rate from the survey was 100 per cent.

Where tables and figures report the base, the description refers to the group of people who were asked the question and the number in brackets refers to the number of respondents who answered each question. Please note that bases vary throughout the survey.

Where the response base on specific questions is less than 50, care should be taken when interpreting percentages, as small differences can seem magnified. Therefore, where this is the case in this report, the non-percentage values are reported, in brackets, alongside the percentage values.

Throughout the report percentages in figures and tables may add to more than 100 per cent due to rounding.

¹ Whilst there are 49 recognised UK Fire and Rescue Services, the Isles of Scilly (whilst usually combined with Cornwall for NJC purposes) completed a separate submission for this section of the survey. Hence there are a maximum of 50 responses for this section.

IFSG improvement strategies survey

This section contains analysis of the full set of results.

Inclusivity should be embedded in every aspect of the fire and rescue service

The improvement strategies state that “there is a need for visible senior ownership and leadership - to lead by example and to ensure that local strategies and initiatives become reality on the ground, thereby embedding inclusion as the norm. Within a service this should be at chief officer level. Within a fire authority a specific member of the authority should hold the portfolio.”

Almost three quarters of fire and rescue authorities (74 per cent/35 respondents) said their senior lead for equality and diversity was a senior officer, i.e. the chief fire officer (CFO), an assistant chief fire officer (ACFO) or a deputy chief fire officer (DCFO). Just over a fifth (21 per cent/10 respondents) said this was another officer or manager.

Where services said the senior lead for equality and diversity was another officer or manager, they were asked to specify who this was. Six of the 10 specified that this was an area manager, one said this was a member of the strategic leadership team, one said this was a head of service, and one specified an Inclusion and Diversity Manager (who was managed by a member of the executive group).

Please see Table 1.

Table 1: Senior lead for equality, diversity and inclusion at service level		
Response	Per cent	Count
Senior officer (CFO/ACFO/DCFO)	74%	35
Other officer/manager	21%	10
There is no specific senior lead at service level	2%	1
Don't know	2%	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>47</i>

Base: all respondents (47)

At authority level, 19 per cent of services (eight respondents) said the senior lead for equality, diversity and inclusion was the Chair of the fire and rescue authority, but around three fifths (56 per cent/28 respondents) said this was another elected member. Another fifth (19 per cent/nine respondents) said there was no specific lead at authority level.

Services specified which other elected member was the senior lead for equality, diversity and inclusion. In most cases this was another senior elected member, including portfolio holders, deputy Chairs, and in two cases, the police, fire and crime commissioner for the area. In most other cases there was a separate named lead or champion.

Please see Table 2.

Table 2: Senior lead for equality, diversity and inclusion at authority level		
Response	Per cent	Count
Chair of fire and rescue authority	19%	8
Other elected member	56%	28
There is no specific individual lead at authority level	19%	9
Don't know	6%	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>48</i>

Base: all respondents (48)

The improvement strategies state that “union involvement should be recognised as an important factor in delivering improvement, particularly in respect of peer to peer involvement.” Respondents were asked whether a number of aspects of trade union involvement were already in place in June 2017, before the IFSG improvement strategies were issued, and then whether they were now in place.

There had been increases in all six of the aspects of trade union involvement since June 2017.

- Almost all fire services (98 per cent/47 respondents) said trade unions were involved in meetings and decisions on inclusions issues, up from 85 per cent in June 2017.
- More than nine out of 10 (92 per cent/44 respondents) said unions were actively consulted/involved in focus groups, up from 85 per cent in June 2017).
- Just over two-thirds (67 per cent/32 respondents) said trade unions were involved in the feedback process in relation to training, up from 52 per cent in June 2017).
- Just over three-fifths (63 per cent/30 respondents) said learning from bullying and/or harassment cases was addressed together with union involvement, up from 48 per cent in June 2017.
- Three-fifths (60 per cent/29 respondents) said special interest bodies,

for example AFSA, Women in the Fire Service and Stonewall, were actively consulted and/or involved in focus groups, up from 38 per cent in June 2017.

- Finally, over half (54 per cent/26 respondents) said union representatives were involved in the development of training, up from 42 per cent in June 2017.

Please see Table 3

Table 3: Which of the following aspects of trade union involvement have been implemented in your service? (June 2018 and now)				
Response	June 2017		Now	
	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count
Trade unions are involved in meetings and decisions on inclusion issues	85%	41	98%	47
Unions are actively consulted/involved in focus groups	85%	41	92%	44
Trade unions are involved in the feedback process in relation to training	52%	25	67%	32
Learning from bullying/harassment cases is addressed together with union involvement	48%	23	63%	30
Special interest bodies, for example AFSA, Women in the Fire Service and Stonewall, are actively consulted/involved in focus groups	38%	18	60%	29
Union representatives are involved in the development of training	42%	20	54%	26

Base: all respondents (48)

The improvement strategies state that “Fire and Rescue Services should ensure the workplace is fit for purpose for all groups of employees including correct Personal Protective Equipment and gender specific station and fireground facilities”.

Nine out of 10 (90 per cent/44 respondents) strongly agreed or tended to agree that their fire service provided a range of tailored and gender-specific personal protective equipment suitable for all firefighters.

Please see Table 4.

Table 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

"Our fire service provides a range of tailored and gender-specific personal protective equipment suitable for all firefighters"

Response	Per cent	Count
Strongly agree	47%	23
Tend to agree	43%	21
Neither agree nor disagree	4%	2
Tend to disagree	4%	2
Strongly disagree	2%	1
Don't know	0%	0

Base: all respondents (49)

Nearly three-fifths (57 per cent/28 respondents) said that provision of tailored and gender-specific personal protective equipment had improved since the IFSG improvement strategies were issued in June 2017. A further two-fifths (39 per cent/19 respondents) said provision had stayed about the same.

Please see Table 5.

Table 5: How, if at all, has the provision of tailored and gender-specific personal protective equipment changed since June 2017, when the IFSG improvement strategies were issued?

Response	Per cent	Count
Provision has improved	57%	28
Provision has stayed about the same	39%	19
Provision has worsened	0%	0
Don't know	4%	2

Base: all respondents (49)

Fire services were asked what proportion of workplace facilities across their service currently offer gender-specific toilet, shower and changing facilities. Just over a third (35 per cent/17 respondents) said all places offered these facilities. Under half (45 per cent/22 respondents) said most had these facilities. A fifth (20 per cent/10 respondents) said some had these facilities.

Please see Table 6.

Table 6: What proportion of workplace facilities across your service currently offer gender-specific toilet, shower and changing facilities?

Response	Per cent	Count
None of them	0%	0
Some of them	20%	10
Most of them	45%	22
All of them	35%	17
Don't know	0%	0

Base: all respondents (49)

Fire services were asked what proportion of fireground facilities mobilised by their service offered gender-specific toilet and welfare facilities. The largest number of fire services (45 per cent/22 respondents) said no firegrounds had these facilities. One-fifth (20 per cent/10 respondents) said all firegrounds had these facilities.

Please see Table 7.

Table 7: What proportion of fireground facilities mobilised by your service currently offer gender-specific toilet and welfare facilities?

Response	Per cent	Count
None of them	45%	22
Some of them	14%	7
Most of them	12%	6
All of them	20%	10
Don't know	8%	4

Base: all respondents (49)

Promoting an inclusive culture

The improvement strategies state that “Fire and Rescue Services should ensure that all managers are trained in people management including skills such as how to have difficult conversations and that all managers recognise their responsibilities in promoting an inclusive culture”.

Fire services were asked whether all managers receive appropriate management training specifically in several areas. Four-fifths of fire services (80 per cent/39 respondents) said managers received training about addressing disciplinary and grievance matters at an informal stage. Seven out of ten (70 per cent/35 respondents) said managers had training about how to have difficult conversations. Seven out of ten (70 per cent/35 respondents) said all managers had unconscious bias training. Nearly two-thirds (64 per cent/32 respondents) said managers had training on how to spot and challenge bullying and harassment. Three-fifths (60 per cent/30 respondents) said managers had training on the benefits of an inclusive workforce. Nearly half (48 per cent/24 respondents) said they had cultural awareness training. Finally, just over two-fifths (42 per cent/21 respondents) said they had training in change management.

Please see Table 8.

Table 8: Do all managers receive appropriate management training specifically including the following?		
Response	Per cent	Count
Addressing disciplinary and grievance matters at an informal stage	80%	39
How to have difficult conversations	70%	35
Unconscious bias training	70%	35
How to spot and challenge bullying and harassment	64%	32
Training on the benefits of an inclusive workforce	60%	30
Cultural awareness training	48%	24
Change management training	42%	21
Other	63%	12

Base: all respondents (all questions: 50; except addressing disciplinary and grievance matters at an informal stage: 49; and other: 19)

Fire services were also asked whether the lead on equality, diversity and inclusion at authority level received appropriate training specifically in three areas. Two-fifths (40 per cent/14 respondents) said the lead received unconscious bias training. Two-fifths (40 per cent/14 respondents) said they had cultural awareness training. Two-thirds (66 per cent/23 respondents) said they had training on the benefits of an inclusive workforce.

For all areas of training, a sizable percentage did not know whether the equality, diversity and inclusion lead received that type of training (23 per cent, 26 per cent and 20 per cent, respectively).

Please see Table 9.

Table 9: Does the lead on equality, diversity and inclusion at authority level receive appropriate training specifically including the following?

Response	Per cent	Count
Unconscious bias training	40%	14
Cultural awareness training	40%	14
Training on the benefits of an inclusive workforce	66%	23
Other	43%	6

Base: all respondents (all questions: 35; except other: 14)

The improvement strategies state that “Senior managers should lead by positive example. They should challenge bullying and harassment behaviours at every level, ensuring where necessary that management styles change in order to drive a different and improved culture”.

Respondents were asked to what extent a list of activities were characteristic of their fire and rescue service. More than nine out of 10 fire services (92 per cent/46 respondents) said senior managers challenged bullying and harassment behaviours at every level to a great or moderate extent. More than nine out of 10 fire services (92 per cent/46 respondents) said managers ensured, where necessary, that management styles changed in order to drive a different and improved culture to a great or moderate extent.

The improvement strategies guidance also states that “Fire and Rescue Services should promote a culture where challenge is accepted and welcomed as a positive contribution. This should be in both directions”.

Nine out of 10 (90 per cent/45 respondents) said the Fire and Rescue Service promoted a culture where challenge, by and within all levels of the organisation, was accepted and welcomed as a positive contribution to a great or moderate extent.

Please see Table 10.

Table 10: To what extent are the following activities characteristic of your fire and rescue service?					
Response	Great extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	Not at all	Don't know
Senior managers challenge bullying and harassment behaviours at every level	68%	24%	4%	0%	4%
Senior managers ensure, where necessary, that management styles change in order to drive a different and improved culture	62%	30%	4%	0%	4%
The fire and rescue service promotes a culture where challenge, by and within all levels of the organisation, is accepted and welcomed as a positive contribution	54%	36%	8%	0%	2%

Base: all respondents (50)

The improvement strategies state that “Fire and Rescue Services should ensure that all employees are aware of, and understand, the relevant (HR) policies. Where an incident is reported and found to be accurate it is important that action is taken and is seen to be taken as a result. Everyone needs to be confident in the process”.

Respondents were asked to what extent two statements in relation to equality, diversity, culture, discipline and grievance policies were true of their fire service. More than nine out of 10 fire services (94 per cent/47 respondents) said it was true of their service that employees were aware of where to find the relevant HR policies to a great or moderate extent. More than nine out of 10 (94 per cent/47 respondents) said it was true that any changes to HR policies were communicated to all employees regularly to a great or moderate extent.

Please see Table 11.

Table 11: To what extent are the following statements in relation to equality, diversity, culture, discipline and grievance policies true of your fire service?					
Response	Great extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	Not at all	Don't know
Employees are aware of where to find the relevant HR policies.	74%	20%	6%	0%	0%
Any changes to HR policies are communicated to all employees regularly.	58%	36%	6%	0%	0%

Base: all respondents (50)

The improvement strategies state that “Fire and Rescue Services should monitor the use of discipline and grievance procedures in order to identify and correct any problematic trends. This should also include an element of monitoring at the informal level in order to pick up issues at an early stage”.

Almost all respondents (98 per cent/49 respondents) said their fire and rescue service recorded the numbers of disciplinary and grievance procedures. The remaining one respondent did not know whether or not this was the case.

Please see Table 12.

Table 12: Does your fire and rescue service record the numbers of disciplinary and grievance procedures?		
Response	Per cent	Count
Yes	98%	49
No	0%	0
Don't know	2%	1

Base: all respondents (50)

Just over three-quarters (76 per cent/37 respondents) said this data was analysed in order to identify trends in equality, diversity and cultural issues.

Please see Table 13.

Table 13: Is this data analysed in order to identify trends in equality, diversity and cultural issues?		
Response	Per cent	Count
Yes	76%	37
No	22%	11
Don't know	2%	1

Base: respondents who said their service recorded the numbers of disciplinary and grievance procedures (49)

Where this data on disciplinary and grievance procedures was analysed, services were asked to what extent this had led to a reduction in formal procedures since June 2017, when the IFSG improvement strategies were issued. Half (50 per cent/18 respondents) said this had happened at least to a small extent.

Overall this means that 36 per cent of all fire services (18 respondents) indicated that they had recorded and analysed data on grievance and disciplinary procedures, which led to improvements since June 2017 at least to a small extent.

Please see Table 14.

Table 14: To what extent has this led to a reduction in formal disciplinary and grievance procedures since June 2017, when the IFSG improvement strategies were issued?		
Response	Per cent	Count
To a great extent	6%	2
To a moderate extent	25%	9
To a small extent	19%	7
Not at all	44%	16
Don't know	6%	2

Base: respondents indicating that data was analysed in order to identify trends in equality, diversity and cultural issues (36)

The improvement strategies state that “Fire and Rescue Services should consider the creation of trained Equality and Diversity champions”. Just over four-fifths of respondents (82 per cent/41 respondents) indicated that their fire and rescue service had equality and diversity champions and/or allies.

Please see Table 15.

Table 15: Does your fire and rescue service have equality and diversity champions and/or allies?		
Response	Per cent	Count
Yes	82%	41
No	18%	9
Don't know	0%	0

Base: all respondents (50)

Where respondents had indicated that their service had equality and diversity champions and/or allies, over three-quarters (77 per cent/30 respondents) said that they had training that was appropriate to that role.

Please see Table 16.

Table 16: Do equality and diversity champions/allies have training that is appropriate to that role?

Response	Per cent	Count
Yes	77%	30
No	18%	7
Don't know	5%	2

Base: respondents who said the fire and rescue service had equality and diversity champions and/or allies (39)

The improvement strategies state that “Fire and Rescue Services should also consider the creation of mediators (and may wish to consider whether they should be provided externally as well as internally)”. Only four per cent of fire services (two respondents) said they did not currently use mediators, while nearly half (46 per cent/23 respondents) used both internal and external mediators.

Please see Table 17.

Table 17: Does your fire and rescue service have equality and diversity champions and/or allies?

Response	Per cent	Count
We currently use internal mediators	24%	12
We currently use external mediators	24%	12
We currently use both internal and external mediators	46%	23
We do not currently use mediators	4%	2
Don't know	2%	1

Base: all respondents (50)

Just over three-fifths of respondents (63 per cent/31 respondents) said the use of mediators has stayed about the same since the IFSG improvement strategies were issued.

Please see Table 19.

Table 18: How has the use of mediators, whether based internally or externally, changed since June 2017, when the IFSG improvement strategies were issued?

Response	Per cent	Count
Use of mediators has increased	22%	11
Use of mediators has stayed about the same	63%	31
Use of mediators has decreased	6%	3
Don't know	8%	4

Base: all respondents (49)

Recruitment

The improvement strategies state that “Fire and Rescue Services should explore, and where appropriate utilise, recruitment opportunities such as apprenticeships and cadets in order to increase diversity in the workforce”. Just over three-quarters of fire services (76 per cent/37 respondents) had implemented an apprentice programme and nearly three-quarters (74 per cent/37 respondents) had implemented a cadet programme.

Please see Table 20.

Table 19: Have you implemented an apprentice or cadets programme?		
Response	Apprentice programme	Cadet programme
No, we currently have no plans to implement this	12%	16%
No, we have not implemented this, but we plan to in 3 or more years	6%	8%
No, we have not implemented this, but we plan to within the next 2 years	6%	2%
Yes, we have implemented this	76%	74%

Base: all respondents (apprentice programme: 49; cadet programme: 50)

The improvement strategies state that “Fire and Rescue Services should undertake greater and early engagement with specific communities/schools/colleges and not just when recruitment is on the horizon. This would further reinforce understanding of the role as it is today. This should utilise employee role models whilst being careful to maintain a balance with their core work”.

Almost nine out of 10 fire services (88 per cent/44 respondents) had routinely undertaken greater engagement work with specific communities in the last two years, outside of recruitment rounds.

Please see Table 21.

Table 20: Has your service routinely undertaken greater engagement work with specific communities in the last two years, outside of recruitment rounds?		
Response	Per cent	Count
Yes	88%	44
No	12%	6
Don't know	0%	0

Base: all respondents (50)

The improvement strategies state that “Fire and Rescue Services should ensure they have visible family friendly working policies supported by a greater use of flexible working arrangements”.

In both the 2017/18 and 2018/19 financial years, more than nine out of 10 fire services (94 per cent/46 respondents and 94 per cent/45 respondents, respectively) offered flexible working arrangements.

Please see Table 22.

Table 21: Please indicate whether your fire and rescue service offered flexible working arrangements in each of the previous two financial years?		
Response	Per cent	Count
2017/18	94%	46
2018/19	94%	45

Base: all respondents (2017/18: 49; 2018/19: 48)

Fire services who had indicated that they offered flexible working arrangements were asked to quantify the number of requests received and the number granted. Between the 2017/18 and 2018/19 financial years both requests for flexible working arrangements and requests that were granted increased. On average there were 4.5 requests for flexible working arrangements in 2018/19, up from 3.7 in 2017/18. Of requests granted, there were 4.0 in 2018/19, compared to 3.1 in 2017/18.

Please see Table 23.

Table 22: How many requests for flexible working arrangements did you receive, and how many were granted during 2017/18 and 2019/20?					
Financial year		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Count
2017/18	Requests	0	29	3.7	44
	Requests granted	0	23	3.1	44
2018/19	Requests	0	39	4.5	43
	Requests granted	0	29	4.0	43

Base: respondents who said they offered flexible working arrangements (2017/18: 44; 2018/19: 43)

The improvement strategies state that “Fire and Rescue Services should develop an internal communications strategy to explain the difference between positive action and positive discrimination in order to counteract the view of some that an individual has only been employed/promoted because they are female/BME/LGBT. This would be supportive to such individuals and also be helpful in terms of encouraging progression”.

Nearly seven out of 10 fire services (69 per cent/34 respondents) had developed an internal communications strategy to explain the difference between positive action and positive discrimination.

Please see Table 24

Table 23: Have you developed an internal communications strategy to explain the difference between positive action and positive discrimination?		
Response	Per cent	Count
Yes	69%	34
No	29%	14
Don't know	2%	1

Base: all respondents (49)

The improvement strategies state that “Fire and Rescue Services should consider commissioning work in their own areas to identify any obstacles that local communities feel there are to applying to work with the service”.

Over half of fire services (55 per cent/27 respondents) said work had been undertaken to identify any obstacles that local communities may feel in applying to work in their service. A further 37 per cent (18 respondents) said they planned to carry out this work in the next 12 months.

Please see Table 25.

Table 24: Has work been undertaken to identify any obstacles that local communities may feel in applying to work in your service?		
Response	Per cent	Count
No, this has not been undertaken yet	6%	3
No, this has not been undertaken, but we plan to in the next 12 months	37%	18
Yes, this work has been undertaken	55%	27
Don't know	2%	1

Base: all respondents (49)

Progression

The improvement strategies state that “Fire and Rescue Services should ensure that promotion processes which are fair and transparent are applied consistently and clearly explained to all employees”. Almost seven out of 10 fire services (68 per cent/34 respondents) said promotion processes were equality impact assessed to identify any barriers to under-represented groups. Just over three-quarters (76 per cent/38 respondents) said unions/representative groups are involved in reviews of promotion processes. Just over seven out of 10 (72 per cent/36 respondents) said internal interviewers/assessors are given unconscious bias training.

Please see Table 26.

Table 25: Please indicate whether or not each of the following things happen in relation to promotion processes in your fire and rescue service.		
Response	Per cent	Count
Promotion processes are equality impact assessed to identify any barriers to under-represented groups	68%	34
Unions/representative groups are involved in reviews of promotion processes	76%	38
Internal interviewers/assessors are given unconscious bias training	72%	36
Promotion processes are equality impact assessed to identify any barriers to under-represented groups	68%	34

Base: all respondents (50)

The improvement strategies state that “Fire and Rescue Services should develop support networks and meaningful mentor/coaching programmes”. Almost nine out of 10 fire services (86 per cent/42 respondents) said they offered internal support networks and just over three-quarters (76 per cent/38 respondents) said they offered mentors and/or coaches.

Please see Table 27.

Table 26: Does your fire and rescue service currently offer internal support networks or mentoring/coaching programmes?		
Response	Per cent	Count
Internal support networks	86%	42
Mentors/coaches	76%	38
Other	54%	7

Base: all respondents (internal support networks: 49; mentors/coaches: 50; other: 13)

The improvement strategies state that “Fire and Rescue Services should encourage interest in promotion in general and through talent spotting by

including leadership training, opportunities for development such as job swaps, taster weeks and acting-up/temporary promotion (so that an individual can experience the different role). This should be underpinned by a fair and transparent policy which sets out clearly the criteria by which such opportunities will be offered”.

Almost nine out of 10 fire services (88 per cent/43 respondents) offered leadership training to aspiring non-managerial personnel and all 50 fire services offered acting-up and/or temporary promotions. Only just over one in ten (13 per cent/ 6 respondents) offered job swaps and/or taster weeks.

Please see Table 28.

Table 27: Which of the following opportunities, if any, does your fire and rescue service offer to staff in order to encourage promotion?		
Response	Per cent	Count
Leadership training (to aspiring non-managerial personnel)	88%	43
Job swaps/taster weeks	13%	6
Acting up/temporary promotions	100%	50
Other	67%	6

Base: all respondents (leadership training: 49; job swaps/taster weeks: 45; acting-up/temporary promotions: 50; other: 9)

Retention

The improvement strategies state that “Fire and Rescue Services should ensure that expectations around fitness levels are clearly explained, and support provided, including the potential impact of female only issues such as maternity or the menopause”. All but one fire service (98 per cent/48 respondents) said that all employees were aware of the expectations around fitness levels.

Please see Table 29.

Table 28: Are all employees aware of the expectations around fitness levels?		
Response	Per cent	Count
Yes	98%	48
No	2%	1

Base: all respondents (49)

Almost all fire services (96 per cent/44 respondents) said they offered individual and/or bespoke support for personnel in achieving fitness standards.

Please see Table 30.

Table 30: Do you currently offer individual/bespoke support for personnel in achieving fitness standards?		
Response	Per cent	Count
Yes	96%	45
No	2%	1
Don't know	2%	1

Base: all respondents (47)

More than nine out of 10 fire services who offered individual/bespoke support for personnel in achieving fitness standards (94 per cent/34 respondents) said they offered support specifically related to maternity. Just over four-fifths (81 per cent/25 respondents) offered support specifically related to menopause. Just under four-fifths (78 per cent/29 respondents) offered support specifically for age-related issues.

Please see Table 31.

Table 31: Do you currently offer bespoke support for the following potential fitness issues?		
Response	Per cent	Count
Maternity	94%	34
Menopause	81%	25
Age-related	78%	29
Other	67%	6

Base: respondents indicating that they offered individual/bespoke support for personnel in achieving fitness standards (maternity: 36; menopause: 31; age-related: 37; other: 9)

The improvement strategies state that “where Fire and Rescue Services do not already conduct exit interviews they should now do so. The outcomes from such interviews should be recorded and monitored to ensure early identification of any themes which can then be resolved for the future”.

Just under a third (30 per cent/15 respondents) said exit interviews sometimes take place, half (50 per cent/25 respondents) said exit interviews take place most of the time and just under a fifth (18 per cent/9 respondents) said exit interviews always take place. Only one fire and rescue service (two per cent) said that exit interviews never take place.

Please see Table 32.

Table 32: Are all employees aware of the expectations around fitness levels?

Response	Per cent	Count
An exit interview always takes place	18%	9
An exit interview takes place most of the time	50%	25
An exit interview sometimes takes place	30%	15
An exit interview never takes place	2%	1
Don't know	0%	0

Base: all respondents (50)

Two-thirds of fire and rescue services who conduct exit interviews (67 per cent/33 respondents) said the outcomes of exit interviews are monitored to identify potential themes/trends.

Please see Table 33.

Table 33: Are the outcomes of exit interviews monitored to identify potential themes/trends

Response	Per cent	Count
Yes	67%	33
No	29%	14
Don't know	4%	2

Base: respondents indicating an exit interview takes place at least sometimes (49)



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Inclusive Fire Service Group Workforce survey 2019

March 2020



Summary

Key findings

- The survey relating to employees within the scope of the NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue services recorded a total of 30,209 non-retained staff, of whom 95 per cent were whole-time. A total of 18,183 retained duty system staff (RDS) were also recorded. In both cases, about a half, 52 per cent, were in a firefighter (competent) role.
- 90 per cent of non-retained staff and 94 per cent of RDS staff were male.
- 100 per cent of non-retained and RDS staff had the same gender as their sex registered at birth.
- 95 per cent of non-retained and RDS staff were white.
- 97 per cent of non-retained staff and 98 per cent of RDS staff were heterosexual.
- The overall turnover rate of non-retained staff was 6.9 per cent, slightly higher than the recruitment rate of 6.2 per cent. Trainee firefighters accounted for more than 60 per cent of all recruits.
- The overall turnover rate of RDS staff was 11.1 per cent, slightly lower than the recruitment rate of 11.5 per cent.
- Turnover of non-retained staff was higher among males (7.2 per cent) than females (4.5 per cent) while recruitment was higher among females (9.4 per cent) than males (5.8 per cent).
- Turnover of RDS staff was also higher among males (11.1 per cent) than females (10.1 per cent) and recruitment was again higher among females (21.3 per cent) than males (10.9 per cent).
- Turnover of non-retained staff was higher among black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) staff (9.5 per cent) than white staff (6.8 per cent), and the same was true of the recruitment rate (8.8 per cent compared with 6.0 per cent).
- Turnover of RDS staff was higher among white staff (11.2 per cent) than BAME staff (7.9 per cent), as was the recruitment rate (11.8 per cent compared with 7.1 per cent).
- Turnover of non-retained staff was slightly higher among bisexual, gay and lesbian staff (7.8 per cent) than heterosexual staff (6.9 per cent), and the same was true of the recruitment rate (10.0 per cent compared with 6.0 per cent).
- Turnover of RDS staff was higher among heterosexual staff (11.4 per cent) than bisexual, gay and lesbian staff (4.4 per cent), and the same was true of the recruitment rate (11.7 per cent compared with 7.5 per cent).
- There was a 2.1 per cent increase in the numbers of non-retained staff between 2018 and 2019, and a 4.2 per cent increase in the numbers of RDS staff.
- The proportion of non-retained staff who were male fell slightly from 91.0 per cent to 90.3 per cent between 2018 and 2019, while for RDS staff it fell from 95.4 per cent to 93.6 per cent.
- There was no change between 2018 and 2019 in the ethnic minority profile of non-retained staff (95 per cent remaining white) while the proportion of RDS staff who were white fell slightly from 99 per cent to 95 per cent.

Introduction

Background

In December 2019 the Local Government Association's Research and Information Team conducted a survey of all UK Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) on behalf of the Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG). To gather a full picture, services were also asked to provide information about the size and composition of the workforce, and monitor changes since a similar National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire & Rescue Services (NJC) survey conducted in 2018.

Response

The survey was sent to the Human Resources Director and Chief Fire Officer in all 49 FRSs in the United Kingdom in December 2019. By early February, all 49 had responded.

Although all FRSs responded to the survey, not all could provide all the requested items of information¹. The data should therefore be treated with caution, particularly that covering gender identity, for which information was not available for about 80 per cent of staff, and that on sexual orientation, for which the proportion was about half. Because of the partial nature of many responses, and to facilitate comparisons with the 2018 survey, data shown in the main body of the report have been recalculated to exclude 'not knowns'. Details of 'not knowns' are shown in the annex. Detailed tables showing data of each duty system are available on request.

Where the response base is less than 50, figures can be skewed due to the small sample size and care should be taken when interpreting percentages, as small differences can seem magnified. Throughout the report, percentages in figures and tables may add to more than 100 per cent due to rounding.

Information collected

For each role² and duty system³, the survey collected information on the numbers of staff broken down by:

- sex
- gender identity
- ethnicity
- sexual orientation

Information was also collected on the numbers of personnel leaving FRSs in 2018/19 and the numbers recruited from outside.

¹ In addition: (1) One service did not provide any information on Control staff as they were not covered by the Grey Book (2) Two services did not provide a breakdown of firefighters, so this was estimated using proportions observed in other respondents.

² Roles – area manager, group manager, station manager, watch manager, crew manager, firefighter (competent), firefighter (development), firefighter (trainee).

³ Duty system – whole-time, part-time, control, retained duty system.

All information was requested on a headcount, not full-time equivalent, basis.

Scope

The survey covered all personnel directly employed by FRSs at 31st March 2019 who were covered by the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (Grey Book). This included temporary/fixed-term contract personnel who had been employed for over a year at 31st March 2019, and secondees whose salary was being paid by the FRS.

The survey excluded support staff, and any personnel covered by the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (Gold Book), agency/casual personnel who had been employed for less than a year at 31st March 2019, personnel employed by outside contractors, and secondees whose salary was not being paid by the FRS.

Survey Findings

Non-retained workforce

This section covers three contract types, whole-time staff, part-time staff⁴ and control staff. The tables here show combined figures, but the annex has full breakdowns of each type of duty system.

A total of 30,209 staff were recorded, of whom 28,667 were whole-time (95 per cent), 1,310 control (4 per cent) and 232 part-time (1 per cent). By role, firefighters (competent) made up 52 per cent of the total workforce, followed by watch managers (16 per cent) and crew managers (15 per cent).

Sex

Overall, 90.3 per cent of non-retained staff were male, a proportion that varied between 95.3 per cent of group managers and 80.0 per cent of trainee firefighters. Among the largest group, firefighters (competent), 90.7 per cent were male and 9.3 per cent female. (Table 1)

	Female		Male		Total	
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%
Area Manager	17	7.9%	198	92.1%	215	100.0%
Group Manager	31	4.7%	636	95.3%	667	100.0%
Station Manager	130	7.9%	1,519	92.1%	1,649	100.0%
Watch Manager	439	8.8%	4,536	91.2%	4,975	100.0%
Crew Manager	403	8.7%	4,209	91.3%	4,612	100.0%
Firefighter (Competent)	1,459	9.3%	14,164	90.7%	15,623	100.0%
Firefighter (Development)	340	17.1%	1,648	82.9%	1,988	100.0%
Firefighter (Trainee)	96	20.0%	384	80.0%	480	100.0%
Total	2,916	9.7%	27,293	90.3%	30,209	100.0%

⁴ Part-time personnel are those who are contracted to work less than the full 42 average hour week (but are not RDS employees).

Gender identity

Almost all non-retained staff had the same gender as their sex registered at birth (99.7 per cent), with only 80 (0.3 per cent) recorded as having a gender different to their sex registered at birth. There was little variation by role. (Table 2)

	Gender same as sex registered at birth		Gender different to sex registered at birth		Total	
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%
Area Manager	215	100.0%	0	0.0%	215	100.0%
Group Manager	667	100.0%	0	0.0%	667	100.0%
Station Manager	1,649	100.0%	0	0.0%	1,649	100.0%
Watch Manager	4,957	99.6%	18	0.4%	4,975	100.0%
Crew Manager	4,598	99.7%	14	0.3%	4,612	100.0%
Firefighter (Competent)	15,575	99.7%	48	0.3%	15,623	100.0%
Firefighter (Development)	1,988	100.0%	0	0.0%	1,988	100.0%
Firefighter (Trainee)	480	100.0%	0	0.0%	480	100.0%
Total	30,129	99.7%	80	0.3%	30,209	100.0%

Ethnicity

Overall, 94.6 per cent of non-retained staff were white, 2.1 per cent were mixed, 1.6 per cent black, 0.9 per cent Asian, and 0.9 per cent of another ethnic origin. The proportion of staff who were white was lowest among firefighters (development) (90.1 per cent) and highest among group managers (98.8 per cent). (Table 3)

	White		Mixed		Asian		Black		Other		Total	
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%
Area Manager	207	96.4%	4	2.1%	1	0.5%	2	1.0%	0	0.0%	215	100.0%
Group Manager	659	98.8%	5	0.7%	2	0.3%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	667	100.0%
Station Manager	1,596	96.8%	17	1.0%	6	0.3%	19	1.2%	11	0.7%	1,649	100.0%
Watch Manager	4,788	96.2%	87	1.7%	25	0.5%	39	0.8%	36	0.7%	4,975	100.0%
Crew Manager	4,416	95.7%	61	1.3%	36	0.8%	55	1.2%	44	1.0%	4,612	100.0%
Firefighter (C)	14,671	93.9%	339	2.2%	152	1.0%	309	2.0%	152	1.0%	15,623	100.0%
Firefighter (D)	1,791	90.1%	95	4.8%	35	1.7%	48	2.4%	20	1.0%	1,988	100.0%
Firefighter (T)	440	91.6%	26	5.3%	8	1.7%	4	0.8%	3	0.6%	480	100.0%
Total	28,567	94.6%	633	2.1%	265	0.9%	476	1.6%	268	0.9%	30,209	100.0%

Sexual orientation

A slightly higher proportion, 96.5 per cent, were recorded as heterosexual, 1.9 per cent as gay or lesbian, and 1.6 per cent as bisexual. The proportion of staff recorded as heterosexual varied between 98.5 per cent of group managers and 91.9 per cent of trainee firefighters. (Table 4)

	Heterosexual		Bisexual		Gay or lesbian		Total	
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%
Area Manager	207	96.2%	2	0.8%	7	3.1%	215	100.0%
Group Manager	657	98.5%	3	0.5%	7	1.0%	667	100.0%
Station Manager	1,620	98.2%	7	0.4%	22	1.3%	1,649	100.0%
Watch Manager	4,843	97.4%	69	1.4%	62	1.3%	4,975	100.0%
Crew Manager	4,503	97.6%	43	0.9%	66	1.4%	4,612	100.0%
Firefighter (Competent)	15,050	96.3%	271	1.7%	302	1.9%	15,623	100.0%
Firefighter (Development)	1,851	93.1%	64	3.2%	73	3.7%	1,988	100.0%
Firefighter (Trainee)	441	91.9%	19	4.0%	19	4.0%	480	100.0%
Total	29,172	96.5%	479	1.6%	558	1.9%	30,209	100.0%

Leavers and recruits

Information was collected on the numbers of leavers from and recruits to FRSs over the financial year 2018/19⁵. The data are presented as turnover and recruitment rates which are the number of leavers/recruits in the year expressed as a percentage of the workforce at 31st March 2019⁶.

As with the workforce data, some of the data should be treated with caution because of the small numbers of staff in some roles/categories, and because the recalculation to remove 'not knowns' further reduced the base. In particular, no leavers or recruits were recorded for gender identity categories and hence no data are shown⁷.

Summary of turnover and recruitment

The overall turnover rate of non-retained staff was 6.9 per cent, slightly higher than the recruitment rate of 6.2 per cent. Turnover was highest for group managers (13.0 per cent) and lowest for firefighters (development) (2.9 per cent), while recruitment varied between 243.1 per cent for trainee firefighters and 0.6 per cent for watch and crew managers.

The turnover rate exceeded recruitment for all roles except firefighters (development) and trainee firefighters. The latter role accounted for 63 per cent of all recruits. (Table 5)

⁵ This excludes any moves within a fire service.

⁶ So that, for example, the turnover rate of female staff is the number of female leavers expressed as a percentage of female staff.

⁷ Note that two FRSs accounted for 22 per cent of all leavers and three accounted for 43 per cent of all recruits.

Table 5: non-retained staff - overall turnover and recruitment rates

	Leavers		Recruits		Base staff numbers
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos
Area Manager	26	12.1%	3	1.4%	215
Group Manager	87	13.0%	10	1.5%	667
Station Manager	208	12.6%	29	1.8%	1,649
Watch Manager	428	8.6%	31	0.6%	4,975
Crew Manager	244	5.3%	29	0.6%	4,612
Firefighter (Competent)	1,015	6.5%	337	2.2%	15,623
Firefighter (Development)	57	2.9%	252	12.7%	1,988
Firefighter (Trainee)	28	5.8%	1,167	243.1%	480
Total	2,093	6.9%	1,858	6.2%	30,209

Turnover and recruitment by gender

The turnover rate was higher among males (7.2 per cent) than females (4.5 per cent). Turnover was higher among men than women across all roles except trainee firefighters. (Table 6)

Table 6: non-retained turnover rates by gender

	Female	Male	Total	Base staff numbers
Area Manager	5.9%	12.6%	12.1%	215
Group Manager	9.6%	13.2%	13.0%	667
Station Manager	4.6%	13.3%	12.6%	1,649
Watch Manager	4.1%	9.0%	8.6%	4,975
Crew Manager	2.5%	5.6%	5.3%	4,612
Firefighter (Competent)	5.3%	6.6%	6.5%	15,623
Firefighter (Development)	2.6%	2.9%	2.9%	1,988
Firefighter (Trainee)	7.3%	5.5%	5.8%	480
Total	4.5%	7.2%	6.9%	30,209

The overall recruitment rate was higher among females (9.4 per cent) than males (5.8 per cent), although by role this was only true of firefighters (competent and development). For females, the recruitment rate exceeded turnover whereas for males turnover exceeded recruitment. (Table 7)

Table 7: non-retained recruitment rates by gender

	Female	Male	Total	Base staff numbers
Area Manager	0.0%	1.5%	1.4%	215
Group Manager	3.6%	1.4%	1.5%	667
Station Manager	1.5%	1.8%	1.8%	1,649
Watch Manager	0.2%	0.7%	0.6%	4,975
Crew Manager	0.2%	0.7%	0.6%	4,612
Firefighter (Competent)	2.9%	2.1%	2.2%	15,623
Firefighter (Development)	15.9%	12.0%	12.7%	1,988
Firefighter (Trainee)	180.2%	258.9%	243.1%	480
Total	9.4%	5.8%	6.2%	30,209

Turnover and recruitment by ethnicity

The overall turnover rate of non-retained staff was higher among BAME staff (9.5 per cent) than white staff (6.8 per cent), and this was true across all roles. (Table 8)

Table 8: non-retained turnover rates by ethnicity				
	White	BAME	Total	Base staff numbers
Area Manager	12.0%	14.8%	12.1%	215
Group Manager	12.5%	55.5%	13.0%	667
Station Manager	12.2%	25.1%	12.6%	1,649
Watch Manager	8.4%	12.8%	8.6%	4,975
Crew Manager	5.1%	9.8%	5.3%	4,612
Firefighter (Competent)	6.4%	8.3%	6.5%	15,623
Firefighter (Development)	2.8%	3.2%	2.9%	1,988
Firefighter (Trainee)	4.5%	21.0%	5.8%	480
Total	6.8%	9.5%	6.9%	30,209

The overall recruitment rate of non-retained staff was also higher among BAME staff (8.8 per cent) than white staff (6.0 per cent), although the opposite was true for several roles. For both categories, recruitment was lower than turnover. (Table 9)

Table 9: non-retained recruitment rates by ethnicity				
	White	BAME	Total	Base staff numbers
Area Manager	1.4%	0.0%	1.4%	215
Group Manager	1.5%	0.0%	1.5%	667
Station Manager	1.8%	2.0%	1.8%	1,649
Watch Manager	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%	4,975
Crew Manager	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%	4,612
Firefighter (Competent)	2.3%	0.7%	2.2%	15,623
Firefighter (Development)	13.2%	8.0%	12.7%	1,988
Firefighter (Trainee)	237.2%	303.8%	242.7%	480
Total	6.0%	8.8%	6.1%	30,209

Turnover and recruitment by sexual orientation

The overall turnover rate of non-retained staff was slightly higher among bisexual, gay and lesbian staff (7.8 per cent) than heterosexual staff (6.9 per cent), although the reverse was true of several roles, particularly managerial. (Table 10)

Table 10: non-retained turnover rates by sexual orientation				
	Heterosexual	Bisexual, gay or lesbian	Total	Base staff numbers
Area Manager	12.6%	0.0%	12.1%	215
Group Manager	13.2%	0.0%	13.0%	667
Station Manager	12.5%	19.8%	12.6%	1,649
Watch Manager	8.6%	3.1%	8.5%	4,975
Crew Manager	5.2%	6.6%	5.2%	4,612
Firefighter (Competent)	6.3%	10.8%	6.5%	15,623
Firefighter (Development)	3.1%	0.0%	2.9%	1,988
Firefighter (Trainee)	6.0%	3.7%	5.8%	480
Total	6.9%	7.8%	6.9%	30,209

The overall recruitment rate of non-retained staff was higher for bisexual, gay and lesbian staff (10.0 per cent) than heterosexual staff (6.0 per cent), and this was true for most roles. For heterosexual staff the turnover rate exceeded the recruitment rate, while the opposite was true of bisexual, gay and lesbian staff. (Table 11)

Table 11: non-retained recruitment rates by sexual orientation				
	Heterosexual	Bisexual, gay or lesbian	Total	Base staff numbers
Area Manager	1.4%	0.0%	1.4%	215
Group Manager	1.3%	14.3%	1.5%	667
Station Manager	1.8%	0.0%	1.8%	1,649
Watch Manager	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%	4,975
Crew Manager	0.6%	1.2%	0.6%	4,612
Firefighter (Competent)	2.1%	2.9%	2.2%	15,623
Firefighter (Development)	12.6%	13.6%	12.7%	1,988
Firefighter (Trainee)	249.1%	174.5%	242.7%	480
Total	6.0%	10.0%	6.1%	30,209

Retained duty system workforce

This section covers retained duty system (RDS) staff only.

A total of 18,183 staff were recorded, of whom just over a half (52 per cent) were in firefighter (competent) roles, 19 per cent were crew managers and 18 per cent were firefighters (development).

Sex

Overall, 93.6 per cent of RDS staff were male, a proportion that varied between 97.8 per cent of watch managers (excluding the small category of station managers) and 86.6 per cent of trainee firefighters. Among the largest group, firefighters (competent), 93.7 per cent were male and 6.3 per cent female. (Table 12)

	Female		Male		Total	
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%
Area Manager	-	-	-	-	0	-
Group Manager	-	-	-	-	0	-
Station Manager	0	0.0%	20	100.0%	20	100.0%
Watch Manager	32	2.2%	1,437	97.8%	1,469	100.0%
Crew Manager	97	2.8%	3,348	97.2%	3,445	100.0%
Firefighter (Competent)	593	6.3%	8,790	93.7%	9,383	100.0%
Firefighter (Development)	352	10.9%	2,882	89.1%	3,234	100.0%
Firefighter (Trainee)	85	13.4%	547	86.6%	632	100.0%
Total	1,160	6.4%	17,023	93.6%	18,183	100.0%

Gender identity

Almost all staff had the same gender as their sex registered at birth (99.9 per cent), with only 20 (0.1 per cent) recorded as having a gender different to their sex registered at birth. There was little variation by role. (Table 13)

	Gender same as sex registered at birth		Gender different to sex registered at birth		Total	
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%
Area Manager	-	-	-	-	0	-
Group Manager	-	-	-	-	0	-
Station Manager	20	100.0%	0	0.0%	20	100.0%
Watch Manager	1,469	100.0%	0	0.0%	1,469	100.0%
Crew Manager	3,436	99.8%	9	0.2%	3,445	100.0%
Firefighter (Competent)	9,378	100.0%	5	0.0%	9,383	100.0%
Firefighter (Development)	3,228	99.8%	6	0.2%	3,234	100.0%
Firefighter (Trainee)	632	100.0%	0	0.0%	632	100.0%
Total	18,163	99.9%	20	0.1%	18,183	100.0%

Ethnicity

Overall, 94.7 per cent of staff were white, 0.7 per cent were mixed, 0.2 per cent black, 0.2 per cent Asian, and 4.2 per cent of other ethnic origins. The proportion of staff who were white was lowest among crew managers (93.4 per cent) and, excluding the small category of station managers, highest among trainee firefighters (97.6 per cent). (Table 14)

Table 14: retained duty system workforce by ethnicity

	White		Mixed		Asian		Black		Other		Total	
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%
Area Manager	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	-
Group Manager	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	-
Station Manager	20	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	20	100.0%
Watch Manager	1,416	96.4%	6	0.4%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	46	3.1%	1,469	100.0%
Crew Manager	3,216	93.4%	11	0.3%	8	0.2%	5	0.1%	205	6.0%	3,445	100.0%
Firefighter (C)	8,912	95.0%	78	0.8%	17	0.2%	21	0.2%	355	3.8%	9,383	100.0%
Firefighter (D)	3,040	94.0%	28	0.9%	11	0.3%	12	0.4%	144	4.4%	3,234	100.0%
Firefighter (T)	617	97.6%	5	0.7%	5	0.7%	3	0.5%	3	0.5%	632	100.0%
Total	17,218	94.7%	125	0.7%	40	0.2%	41	0.2%	759	4.2%	18,183	100.0%

Sexual orientation

RDS staff were overwhelmingly heterosexual, 98.3 per cent, with 0.9 per cent each recorded as bisexual and gay or lesbian. There was little variation by role. (Table 15)

Table 15: retained duty system workforce by sexual orientation

	Heterosexual		Bisexual		Gay or lesbian		Total	
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%
Area Manager	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	-
Group Manager	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	-
Station Manager	20	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	20	100.0%
Watch Manager	1,450	98.7%	6	0.4%	13	0.9%	1,469	100.0%
Crew Manager	3,397	98.6%	36	1.0%	13	0.4%	3,445	100.0%
Firefighter (Competent)	9,224	98.3%	76	0.8%	83	0.9%	9,383	100.0%
Firefighter (Development)	3,162	97.8%	28	0.9%	43	1.3%	3,234	100.0%
Firefighter (Trainee)	618	97.8%	8	1.2%	6	0.9%	632	100.0%
Total	17,867	98.3%	155	0.9%	161	0.9%	18,183	100.0%

Summary of turnover and recruitment

The overall turnover rate of retained duty system staff was 11.1 per cent, slightly lower than the recruitment rate of 11.5 per cent. Both were markedly higher than the rates for non-retained staff (6.9 per cent and 6.2 per cent respectively)⁸.

⁸ For RDS staff, note that four FRSSs accounted for 25 per cent of all leavers and six accounted for 39 per cent of all recruits.

By role (excluding the small category of station manager), turnover was highest for trainee firefighters (24.4 per cent) and lowest for crew managers (6.4 per cent), while the recruitment rate varied between 201.6 per cent for trainee firefighters and 0.6 per cent for crew managers. The former role accounted for 61 per cent of all recruits. (Table 16)

Table 16: retained duty system workforce - overall turnover and recruitment rates

	Leavers		Recruits		Base staff numbers
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos
Area Manager	0	-	0	-	0
Group Manager	0	-	0	-	0
Station Manager	7	35.0%	1	5.0%	20
Watch Manager	117	8.0%	4	0.3%	1,469
Crew Manager	222	6.4%	19	0.6%	3,445
Firefighter (Competent)	1,099	11.7%	219	2.3%	9,383
Firefighter (Development)	411	12.7%	579	17.9%	3,234
Firefighter (Trainee)	154	24.4%	1,274	201.6%	632
Total	2,010	11.1%	2,096	11.5%	18,183

Turnover and recruitment by gender

The turnover rate of RDS staff was slightly higher among males (11.1 per cent) than females (10.1 per cent). Turnover was higher among men than women across all roles. (Table 17)

Table 17: retained duty system workforce turnover rates by gender

	Female	Male	Total	Base staff numbers
Area Manager	-	-	-	0
Group Manager	-	-	-	0
Station Manager	-	35.0%	35.0%	20
Watch Manager	3.2%	8.1%	8.0%	1,469
Crew Manager	4.3%	6.5%	6.4%	3,445
Firefighter (Competent)	10.4%	11.8%	11.7%	9,383
Firefighter (Development)	9.1%	13.2%	12.7%	3,234
Firefighter (Trainee)	21.6%	24.8%	24.4%	632
Total	10.1%	11.1%	11.1%	18,183

The overall recruitment rate was markedly higher among females (21.3 per cent) than males (10.9 per cent), and while the female recruitment rate exceeded the turnover rate, the opposite was true of males. Female recruitment rates exceeded those of males for all roles except trainee firefighters. (Table 18)

Table 18: retained duty system workforce recruitment rates by gender				
	Female	Male	Total	Base staff numbers
Area Manager	-	-	-	0
Group Manager	-	-	-	0
Station Manager	-	5.0%	5.0%	20
Watch Manager	3.1%	0.2%	0.3%	1,469
Crew Manager	1.0%	0.5%	0.6%	3,445
Firefighter (Competent)	2.8%	2.3%	2.3%	9,383
Firefighter (Development)	21.1%	17.5%	17.9%	3,234
Firefighter (Trainee)	181.5%	204.7%	201.6%	632
Total	21.3%	10.9%	11.5%	18,183

Turnover and recruitment by ethnicity

The overall turnover rate of retained duty system staff was higher among white staff (11.2 per cent) than BAME staff (7.9 per cent), and this was true across all roles except firefighters (competent). (Table 19)

Table 19: retained duty system workforce turnover rates by ethnicity				
	White	BAME	Total	Base staff numbers
Area Manager	-	-	-	0
Group Manager	-	-	-	0
Station Manager	35.0%	-	35.0%	20
Watch Manager	8.2%	2.3%	8.0%	1,469
Crew Manager	6.7%	2.4%	6.4%	3,445
Firefighter (Competent)	11.7%	12.6%	11.7%	9,383
Firefighter (Development)	13.2%	5.5%	12.7%	3,234
Firefighter (Trainee)	25.0%	0.0%	24.4%	632
Total	11.2%	7.9%	11.1%	18,183

The overall recruitment rate of retained duty system staff was also higher among white staff (11.8 per cent) than BAME staff (7.1 per cent), and this was of all roles except firefighters (development). The recruitment rate of white staff exceeded turnover, whereas the opposite was true of non-white staff. (Table 20)

	White	BAME	Total	Base staff numbers
Area Manager	-	-	-	0
Group Manager	-	-	-	0
Station Manager	5.0%	-	5.0%	20
Watch Manager	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	1,469
Crew Manager	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%	3,445
Firefighter (Competent)	2.4%	0.8%	2.3%	9,383
Firefighter (Development)	17.8%	20.0%	17.9%	3,234
Firefighter (Trainee)	202.3%	170.4%	201.6%	632
Total	11.8%	7.1%	11.5%	18,183

Turnover and recruitment by sexual orientation

The overall turnover rate of retained duty system staff was higher among heterosexual staff (11.4 per cent) than bisexual, gay and lesbian staff (4.4 per cent), and this was true of all roles except trainee firefighters. (Table 21)

	Heterosexual	Bisexual, gay or lesbian	Total	Base staff numbers
Area Manager	-	-	-	0
Group Manager	-	-	-	0
Station Manager	0.0%	-	0.0%	20
Watch Manager	8.1%	4.2%	8.0%	1,469
Crew Manager	6.9%	0.0%	6.4%	3,445
Firefighter (Competent)	12.0%	6.1%	11.7%	9,383
Firefighter (Development)	13.3%	3.7%	12.7%	3,234
Firefighter (Trainee)	24.3%	27.0%	24.4%	632
Total	11.4%	4.4%	11.0%	18,183

The overall recruitment rate of retained duty system staff was higher for heterosexual staff (11.7 per cent) than bisexual, gay and lesbian staff (7.5 per cent), and this was true of most roles. The recruitment rate exceeded the turnover rate for both categories. (Table 22)

	Heterosexual	Bisexual, gay or lesbian	Total	Base staff numbers
Area Manager	-	-	-	0
Group Manager	-	-	-	0
Station Manager	0.0%	-	0.0%	20
Watch Manager	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	1,469
Crew Manager	0.5%	0.7%	0.6%	3,445
Firefighter (Competent)	2.4%	2.0%	2.3%	9,383
Firefighter (Development)	18.0%	16.0%	17.9%	3,234
Firefighter (Trainee)	201.5%	204.1%	201.6%	632
Total	11.7%	7.5%	11.5%	18,183

Comparisons with 2018

Some comparison is possible with a similar survey conducted by the NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services in February 2018, and which also received responses from all FRSs.

Changes in workforce size

Figure 1 shows changes in employment of non-retained staff by role. Overall, there was a 2.1 per cent increase, and most roles saw an increase. The largest were for firefighters (development) (87.0 per cent) and trainee firefighters (55.8 per cent). Firefighters (competent) saw a fall in numbers of 4.5 per cent.

Figure 1: non-retained workforce – change in employment (2018-19)

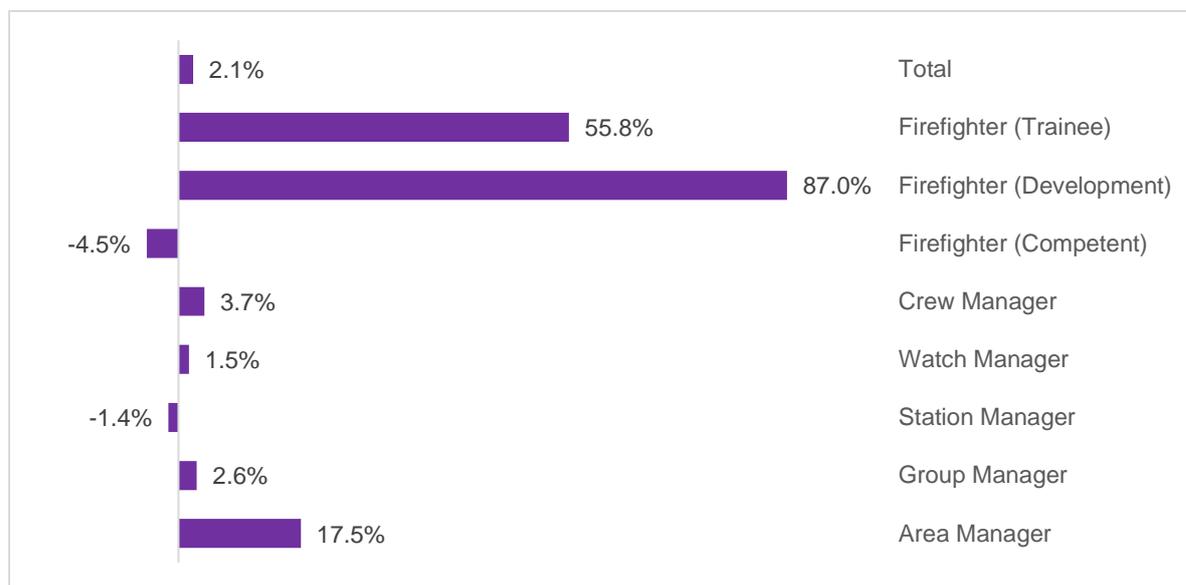
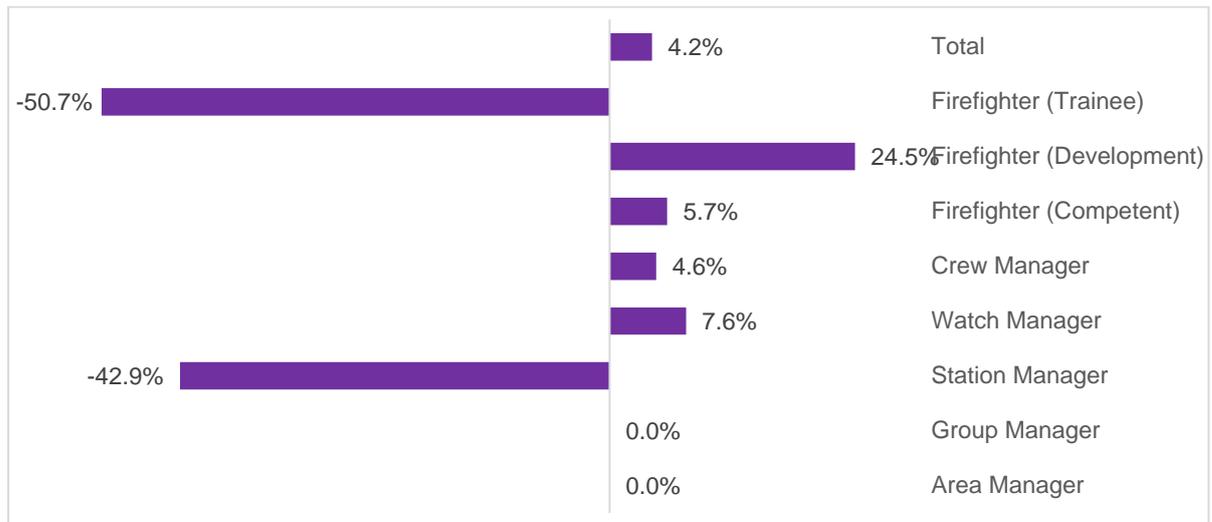


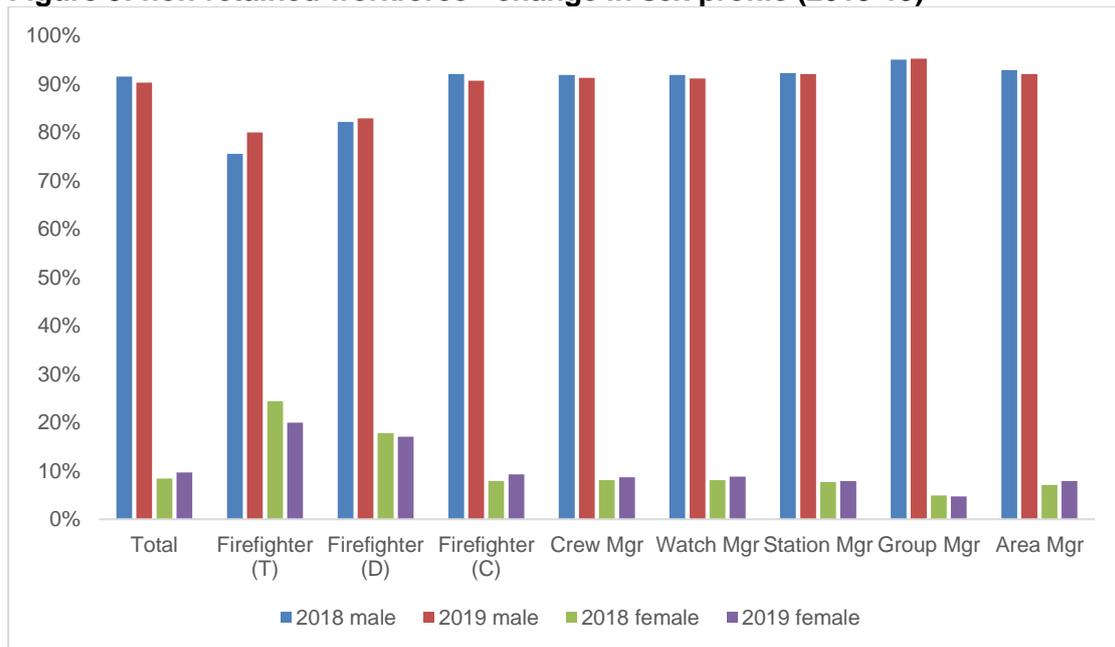
Figure 2 shows the equivalent picture for RDS staff. Overall numbers again increased, in this case by 4.2 per cent, and firefighters (development) by 24.5 per cent. Trainee firefighter numbers fell by 50.7 per cent.

Figure 2: retained duty system workforce – change in employment (2018-19)



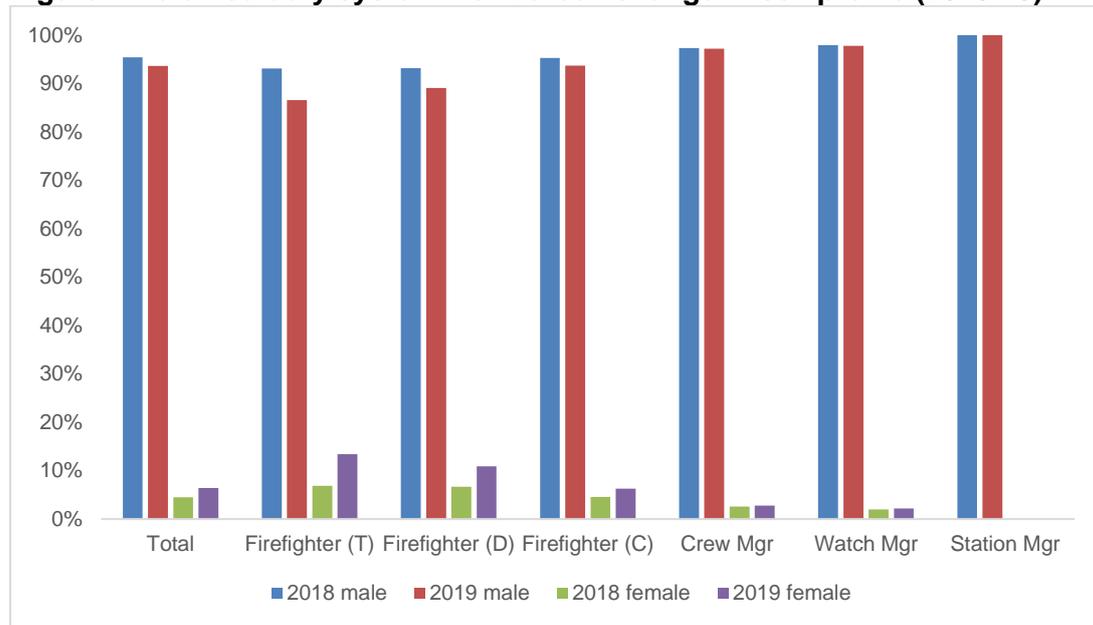
Overall, the proportion of non-retained staff who were male fell slightly from 91.0 per cent to 90.3 per cent. The largest increase in females was for firefighters (competent) (from 7.9 per cent to 9.3 per cent).

Figure 3: non-retained workforce - change in sex profile (2018-19)



Overall, the proportion of retained duty system staff who were male also fell slightly, from 95.4 per cent to 93.6 per cent. The largest increases in females were for firefighters (development) (from 6.7 per cent to 10.3 per cent) and trainee firefighters (from 6.9 per cent to 13.4 per cent).

Figure 4: retained duty system workforce - change in sex profile (2018-19)



Note: area and group managers excluded as there were no RDS staff in these roles.

There was no change in the ethnic minority profile of non-retained staff (95 per cent remaining white) while the proportion of RDS staff who were white fell slightly from 99 per cent to 95 per cent.

ANNEX

Tables in the main body of the report have been recalculated to exclude 'not knowns'. Tables A and B show these original 'not known' proportions for each duty system, role and data item.

Table A: proportion of workforce for whom information not known								
	Non-retained				RDS			
	Sex	Gender identity	Ethnicity	Sexual orientation	Sex	Gender identity	Ethnicity	Sexual orientation
Area Manager	0%	75%	10%	40%	-	-	-	-
Group Manager	0%	72%	12%	40%	-	-	-	-
Station Manager	0%	75%	12%	41%	0%	80%	15%	25%
Watch Manager	0%	78%	12%	44%	0%	80%	13%	54%
Crew Manager	0%	79%	14%	47%	0%	77%	15%	52%
Firefighter (C)	0%	81%	16%	52%	0%	78%	19%	50%
Firefighter (D)	0%	87%	16%	27%	0%	84%	24%	40%
Firefighter (T)	0%	85%	26%	38%	0%	91%	35%	49%
Total	0%	80%	15%	47%	0%	80%	19%	49%

Table B: proportion of leavers for whom information not known								
	Non-retained				RDS			
	Sex	Gender identity	Ethnicity	Sexual orientation	Sex	Gender identity	Ethnicity	Sexual orientation
Area Manager	0%	85%	15%	42%	-	-	-	-
Group Manager	0%	86%	13%	45%	-	-	-	-
Station Manager	0%	88%	10%	47%	0%	100%	43%	100%
Watch Manager	0%	87%	12%	51%	3%	100%	18%	55%
Crew Manager	0%	91%	18%	58%	4%	100%	26%	59%
Firefighter (C)	0%	87%	13%	57%	4%	100%	26%	58%
Firefighter (D)	0%	96%	9%	39%	0%	100%	25%	59%
Firefighter (T)	0%	86%	29%	29%	13%	100%	36%	51%
Total	0%	88%	13%	54%	4%	100%	26%	58%

Table C: proportion of recruits for whom information not known								
	Non-retained				RDS			
	Sex	Gender identity	Ethnicity	Sexual orientation	Sex	Gender identity	Ethnicity	Sexual orientation
Area Manager	0%	67%	0%	33%	-	-	-	-
Group Manager	10%	80%	0%	30%	-	-	-	-
Station Manager	0%	90%	3%	17%	0%	100%	0%	100%
Watch Manager	0%	77%	23%	39%	0%	100%	0%	50%
Crew Manager	0%	79%	7%	24%	0%	95%	5%	37%
Firefighter (C)	0%	89%	21%	45%	3%	95%	19%	57%
Firefighter (D)	0%	78%	19%	48%	11%	94%	51%	68%
Firefighter (T)	0%	87%	19%	31%	0%	82%	26%	41%
Total	0%	86%	19%	36%	4%	87%	32%	50%



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Inclusive Fire Service Group - Focus Group Report



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Introduction

This report provides an overview of the thematic analysis of a set of focus groups carried out independently by the Local Government Association (LGA) Research & Information (R&I) team on behalf of the Inclusive Fire Services Group (IFSG). It is divided into distinct sections that stand alone but relate to each other. There is a chapter for each of the different focus groups - Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, queer, inter-sex (LGBTQI) and female. Within each chapter the analysis is themed using the structure and topics as included in the IFSG 2017 strategy. Following this there is a section that highlights the cross-cutting themes across the three groups and a final section that provides an overview of perceived progress since the 2017 conversations.

Using the headings in the IFSG strategy has provided a useful architecture for analysis but it should be noted that groups placed different emphasis on different areas though all topics were covered using a semi-structured topic guide (see Appendix A).

Methodology

The LGA R&I team was commissioned by the National Joint Council (NJC) led IFSG to independently run a series of focus groups to capture the views of fire and rescue service employees on a range of equality and related issues. Three focus groups were held between 13 January and 16 January 2020. Given the nature of focus groups working with small numbers, the findings should be seen as an overview of the perceptions of participants and are not representative in any way.

LGA contacted Heads of Human Resources in each of the FRS's in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on behalf of the IFSG and asked them to send out a request for participation in a series of focus groups. Each of the unions represented on the IFSG were also asked to bring this request to the attention of their members. The focus groups were for those employees of the fire and rescue service (both operational and non-operational) who identified as one of the following protected characteristic groups:

- BAME
- LGBTQI; and
- Female

Potential participants responded to this call by replying directly to the LGA R&I team and these responses were logged. LGA then randomly selected participants from this logged list. Six focus groups were arranged (two for each protected characteristic group) and a set of questions was developed to be used with all of the groups to ensure consistency of response.

These questions covered:

- experiences to date, of being employees in the FRS including reference to any bullying and harassment issues
- how these experiences had been shaped by their gender, sexuality and ethnicity
- negative experiences due to their gender, sexuality, ethnicity
- grievance and disciplinary issues

- career progression
- how representative their FRS is in terms of senior management composition of the firefighter force
- whether the FRS feels like an inclusive place to work
- whether current approaches to recruitment and retention encourage an inclusive approach and the support provided; and
- what their FRSs do well and what they could do better
- how their experiences have changed since 2017; and
- the extent they feel senior ownership and leadership lead by example.

The focus group methodology also provided the opportunity for participants to highlight any other issues that were important to them not covered in the generic questions.

This report provides an overview of issues in each of the three groups and there is a short conclusions section that highlights cross cutting themes from all groups. It should be noted that participation in the groups was confidential and no individual is named or identifiable.

There is also a final section that provides a brief overview of the changes since these focus groups were last held in winter 2017.

Focus Groups

BAME focus group

Inclusivity

All participants felt that over the last three to five years the fire service had become a more inclusive place to work. This was not necessarily to say that there had been material change but rather there had been a recognition from senior managers that the FRS had not been an inclusive place to work and that change was needed. But the extent to which change was taking place was seen to be dependent on individual FRS, the senior management within each FRS, attitudes and perceptions within the individual fire station context and whether employees were operational or non-operational.

At the strategic level, participants noted that there had been attempts to ensure greater inclusivity be it through the development of strategies or approaches to encourage greater understanding of the importance of inclusivity. Whilst there was limited direct awareness of the IFSG 2017 policy document itself, participants were able to identify some changes that had taken place at a strategic level that were in the spirit of the changes suggested. There was felt to be a greater understanding from senior managers of the importance of developing more inclusive approaches which was positive, but the actual implementation of this was far more complicated. Participants noted that the fire service was predominantly white and male and that, structurally, little progress had been made in changing this. The result of this was that BAME colleagues were proportionately a small group within a much wider FRS workforce and that having strategies for greater inclusivity actually made little difference especially when it was noted that the majority of employees had little experience of working or living in ethnically diverse communities and they brought specific cultures, beliefs and approaches into the workplace. No amount of policy development at a central level was felt to change this.

This is not to say that progress had not been made over the past three years or so as there were now very visible BAME individuals within FRS who were seen as role models, champions and spokespeople for BAME colleagues. Whilst this was welcomed by the group there was concern that as these individuals moved through the roles, moved to other FRS or retired from the FRS, there were few who could take their place and the progress made to date would be lost.

Specific mention was also made about the importance of context with regard to inclusivity in relation to an FRS HQ, the individual fire stations and whether colleagues were operational or non-operational. Generally, it was felt that HQ was a more inclusive place to work than in individual fire stations, though experiences of this were not uniform. Those participants who worked in non-operational roles noted that they frequently felt that white colleagues were given chances and opportunities to develop and progress far more than they were and that generally, there was not parity of esteem between operational and non-operational employees even at HQ. Within individual fire stations, it was noted that the degree to which they were, or indeed were not, inclusive places to work was dependent on the station managers and crews in each station. Whilst overt acts of a racist nature were felt to now be limited, there were still noted to be implicit behaviours that worked against the inclusivity agenda. Where issues were raised by BAME colleagues in terms of grievance and disciplinary issues with regard to inclusivity, the approach of the more senior FRS managers was to, as far as they could, avoid any mention of inclusivity and related issues, rather any issues were described as being due to other reasons (for example, colleagues simply not liking one another) rather than this being due to ethnicity. The perception was that there was a fear amongst more senior employees

both within fire stations and HQ to suggest problems and challenges were due to the issues relating to ethnicity as this could then result in more detailed and challenging investigation and it was also perceived as easier to try and 'sweep issues under the carpet' and put issues down to other reasons that could be dealt with through a quiet chat rather than anything more formal.

Participants also discussed whether, from both their perspective and from the perspective of other BAME colleagues, their fire and rescue service was becoming more inclusive in terms of both its facilities and equipment. Generally, there was felt to be a lack of understanding amongst FRSs as to why there was a need for changes with, for example, protective clothing. It was noted that positive development had been made with regard to the provision of clothing for female colleagues and that seemed to have been the focus of attention for the service. Where questions had been raised by, for example Muslim female colleagues as to whether there would be protective clothing suitable for them to wear over the hijab, there had been no response. Equally, when male Muslim firefighters had requested protective clothing appropriate to them being able to wear beards, this was also not taken forward. What was felt to be concerning was that uniforms were available to accommodate, for example, the hijab, but that the will was not there within FRSs to take this forward. Again, there was a feeling that whilst strategically there was a move for the fire service to be more inclusive, the actual lived experiences of BAME firefighters suggested more limited development. There was also discussion around the provision of specific facilities for BAME colleagues within fire stations to enable them to fulfil their religious observations - specifically the provision of prayer rooms. Focus group participants noted that where new fire stations had been opened diversity requirements had been considered and prayer rooms were available, but this was frequently not the case in older buildings and this was an issue that needed to be considered. Linked to this were issues relating to catering both within fire stations and at fire grounds. Frequently there were no separate cooking facilities available at stations and at fire grounds, the only catering available often took the form of refreshments that were not suitable for all - for example, bacon rolls.

The role of the unions with regard to shaping and supporting inclusivity within the FRS was discussed. Whilst it was noted for example that involvement as part of the IFSG, was seen to be positive, there was some concern that, as the unions were representative of the FRS employees across the board that was very white and male dominated and was perceived as working in the best interests of their largely white membership. There was mention of specific groups that had been formed to represent specific ethnic groups within the fire and rescue service for example the BEAM (Black and Ethnic Minority) section of the FBU. and the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA), and the work that these groups were completing was welcomed as was the fact that they generally did receive support from senior colleagues and now had a higher visibility, but this was in the context of a predominantly non-ethnically diverse membership.

Recruitment

BAME participants had concerns about the recruitment process to the fire and rescue service in general as they felt that the ways in which people often joined the fire and rescue service did little to improve inclusivity. It was noted that structurally, with the retained and non-retained firefighters model, recruitment was complex. But it was felt that it was still too based on who those who were considering joining the fire and rescue service knew rather than what they knew. Recruitment to the service was, in some cases, felt to be nepotistic. Despite this, there had been attempts by individual FRSs to engage with their local communities and where these were more ethnically diverse, there had been engagement. Participants noted that the fire and rescue service was often able to appear more inclusive at recruitment and outreach events as they often included a more ethnically diverse group of colleagues and this had had a positive

impact on the understanding of the general population that firefighters were not always white. And whilst a more inclusive approach to recruitment was seen as positive, participants were uneasy as to what BAME colleagues joining the fire and rescue service would then experience as the service was not inclusive despite how it might have seemed at some of the recruitment events. If progress were to be made within recruitment it was felt that there had to be much greater diversity throughout the fire and rescue service than was currently the case.

Career progression

Career progression amongst BAME employees was seen to be complex as this encompassed issues relating to the type of role (non-operational and operational) as well as ethnicity. Colleagues who came from a non-operational context felt that they faced double discrimination in that they were not treated in the same way as firefighters and then issues associated with their ethnicity were layered on top of this. One participant described how non-operational employees were expected to already have the set of skills and knowledge required for more senior roles when going for promotion whilst operational employees were able to learn the skills required for more senior roles once they had been appointed and this was felt to be problematic. Allied to this were issues relating to ethnicity where non-operational participants felt they had seen white colleagues, especially white males, be promoted in advance of equally and suitably qualified BAME colleagues. In this, the non-operational structures were felt to be mirroring the culture and approach of operational employees.

With regard to operational colleagues, it was noted that opportunities for progression are, in theory, open to all employees but a perception exists that if applicants are BAME then the expectation is 'thirty percent higher' of what is required for white colleagues. The need to have to prove oneself in front of white colleagues was a recurring theme from the groups and it was noted that this was due to the lack of diversity within the fire and rescue service as a whole - the feeling that because one was part of a minority group more was expected and that the bar was set higher to achieve. Even when BAME colleagues did succeed and were successful in gaining promotion there was then a response from white colleagues that success was due to ethnicity rather than ability. Where this was felt to not be the case and where there was equity was with the fitness test required of all operational employees of the fire and rescue service. The ability to pass a test, or not, was felt not to be related to ethnicity in any way rather, the key feature was age.

Retention

Given the small number of BAME colleagues within the fire and rescue service, retention was seen as a key issue and mention was made of the concern amongst participants as to what would happen when BAME champions left their respective FRS as this could negatively impact other BAME colleagues still in service. Whilst the group acknowledged that people came into and left the fire and rescue service for a variety of reasons it seemed that BAME colleagues were leaving the service earlier and in proportionately greater numbers than their white colleagues. The reasons for this were felt to be that:

- BAME colleagues still experienced day to day challenges due to their ethnicity that were not being addressed
- Where BAME colleagues had raised issues of grievance and concern with more senior managers either little or no action had been taken and individuals felt that they had no option but to resign. Indeed, it was noted that at times, individuals who had raised grievance issues relating to their ethnicity had themselves then been accused of being the perpetrator and therefore had had little option but to leave; and

- Where there had been BAME colleagues who had acted as champions they had often left the FRS earlier than they could have done as they had felt worn down by battling for organisational and cultural change.

LGBTQI

Inclusivity

Participants noted that being LGBTQI in the fire and rescue service was still, at times, challenging though different for those who identified as gay to those who identified as lesbian. It was felt that it was more difficult for a gay man to be a member of the fire and rescue service as the number of out employees was still very small in relation to the wider male workforce. Female participants in the group noted that, from their perspective, it was easier for them to be out in the fire and rescue service as there were felt to be a greater proportion of female employees who identify as Lesbian than did not. This was especially the case for operational fire fighters. More generally, participants felt that the fire and rescue service overall remained hetero-normative and that there was still real reluctance amongst firefighters who were gay to come out to their colleagues. Again, the experience of female employees was different, and the fire and rescue service was felt to be more accepting of lesbian colleagues.

The awareness of the IFSG strategies amongst the group was generally high but there was a feeling that even though the strategy was in place, there was limited material change and impact and that policy had not readily translated into impact at a local level. There was now generally more support of LGBTQI diversity amongst some senior managers within FRSs. One service was highlighted as being very supportive, but this was not the case in all fire and rescue services. Though many senior managers had encouraged FRS participation at local and national LGBTQI events, there were still episodes of senior managers encouraging FRS employees who had come out to be discreet and not to draw attention to themselves. This approach was felt to be discriminatory as there was no similar advice given to straight colleagues. The experience of focus group participants with regard to senior managers led them to be concerned about the actual extent of understanding of what it was like to be LGBTQI in the fire and rescue service. Frequently, senior managers only became focused on LGBTQI issues when there was direct, indisputable and overt homophobic behaviour to which they had to respond. More generally, implied homophobia was something that senior managers tended to ignore. Where disciplinary and grievance issues relating to sexuality were raised, the response of more senior managers (especially within a fire station context) was to attribute to personal issues rather than due to sexuality.

Participants noted that the IFSG strategies had called for greater awareness and that training was the best way to do this. This said, reductions in budgets had resulted in training around diversity issues being reduced considerably with a minimal amount of time spent training employees on equality and inclusion issues. Of greater concern to participants was that new recruits into the fire and rescue service were having their training on inclusion and related issues reduced to a point where it was only briefly covered. This meant that generally, new employees of the FRS did not have a working understanding and knowledge of equality and diversity issues.

The role of the unions was felt to be key in developing the LGBTQI agenda going forward in that they had a major stake in developing mutually beneficial policies for all, in particular, ensuring that all employees of the fire and rescue service treated each other with dignity and respect. This said, there was some unease that those employees of the FRS that had become recognised champions for LGBTQI issues were being asked to lead the development of

strategy and policies when this should have been the role of relevant Human Resources (HR) colleagues.

Participants also highlighted issues that LGBTQI colleagues faced with regard to facilities both at fire stations and at fire grounds. There was real concern that the fire and rescue service did not understand, at all, the specific support needs of trans employees, especially around fire station sleeping and washing and toilet facilities. Older fire stations were not fit for purpose and so, for older properties, toilets had been reassigned as gender neutral and this was felt not to be appropriate by those employees of the FRS who identified as Trans. On the fire grounds, it was noted that, due to budget reductions, a number of FRSs had contracted out their fire ground catering facilities. These had been taken over by an organisation that had a publicly stated hetero-hegemonic belief structure that was at odds with an FRS equality and diversity policy. The impact of this was that some LGBTQI employees felt unable to accept refreshment from this organisation whilst on the fire ground. Concerns had been raised to senior managers, but these had been dismissed. Again, this was felt to be evidence of the dominant hetero-normative narrative within the fire and rescue service.

What was also evidenced, with specific regard to LGBTQI, was the difference between the individual services and HQ and fire stations. Even in FRSs with supportive senior managers, there was perceived to be a real difference between HQ and fire stations. Often fire stations, with smaller numbers of operational employees (especially where there were high proportions of non-retained colleagues) were felt to be less LGBTQI friendly than they could be.

With regard to the general fitness requirements for employees, sexuality was felt to have no impact on the extent to which people passed or failed, rather this was on physical ability alone.

Recruitment

Group participants noted that there was very little focus on recruiting from the LGBTQI community as the emphasis of recruitment activity was on ethnicity and gender. Some effort had been made by individual FRSs to encourage LGBTQI interest, but this frequently manifested itself as an FRS attendance at PRIDE and other LGBTQI events.

Career progression

There was concern amongst the group about career progression within the fire and rescue service more generally. A number of FRSs had recently made out of service appointments for senior managers, which meant that opportunities for both existing operational and non-operational employees were perhaps becoming more limited than before. Whilst those who had come from outside the service were viewed positively, there was concern that not having worked up through the roles meant that senior managers appointed from outside would not understand the pressures of being a firefighter. With regard to the impact of LGBTQI, there was no explicit barrier to promotion but rather there was felt to be an implicit bias against LGBTQI employees, especially if they acted as champions for the wider LGBTQI fire and rescue service community. For example, participants discussed that involvement in union related activity to support LGBTQI colleagues could have a negative impact on career progression. Senior managers could identify these individuals as being 'trouble makers' and would therefore promote others over them. More generally, participants noted that as the fire and rescue service was predominantly white, straight and male, promotion often went to this specific group and this did nothing to encourage or indeed develop diversity. Where this was different was felt to be in London Fire Brigade where the FRS was perceived as more inclusive and promotion was more open. Non-operational employees noted that they had less

opportunity to develop their skills and that there was less training available to them than their operational counterparts.

Retention

LGBTQI focus groups did not think that retention was affected by sexuality but did note that, for example, when leave around public holidays was being agreed, it was always the standard heterosexual-normative family unit (husband, wife and children) firefighters who were given preference. This could, in time, make LGBTQI employees more likely to leave the fire and rescue service as it was another example of being treated differently to the majority. Linked to this was that for many colleagues who come out, there was felt to be a need to be more resilient than other employees of the FRS, so as to be able to cope with being treated differently due to sexuality. It was not that this was overt but rather having to work within the warp and weft of a predominantly heterosexual environment was challenging.

Female

Inclusivity

Overall, the group felt that the fire and rescue service was now a more inclusive workplace for female employees than it had been even four to five years ago. There appeared to be a greater acceptance of female employees within operational roles and there were more women entering the fire and rescue service which was slowly having an impact on the culture. The fact that a number of very senior managers were female was felt to have provided a visible and tangible message that working in the fire service was open to women. This said, there was still felt to be a difference between the experiences of operational and non-operational employees, with those working in predominantly administrative roles perceiving that they were a less valued part of the fire and rescue service.

Though there had been these positive developments, gender was still felt to be an issue within the context of individual fire stations. Though there were more women entering the fire and rescue service, the numbers proportionately were still small, and it was often the case that a fire station might not have women based there at all or only one or two. In this context, group members noted that their male counterparts had been so used to working in all male environments they often did not know how to behave appropriately. Either they treated female colleagues as 'one of the lads', which itself was problematic as some of the behaviours exhibited had caused offence or other male colleagues were described as overprotective of female employees or awkward and nervous around them. Linked to this were the concerns that had been raised with female firefighters by the wives and partners of male firefighters who worried about the nature of their working relationships. All of this was felt unnecessary by focus group participants but felt that there was little that could be done about it.

A key issue for female employees had been the provision of both fire and rescue service uniforms and protective equipment that had not been gender appropriate. Over the last three or so years, protective equipment that was gender specific was now being provided though it was noted that this was not always the case during recruitment where female candidates were still being asked to take the physical entrance tests whilst wearing older style male kit. Participants noted that provision was now being made for women who were pregnant and also for those experiencing the menopause and this positive development was welcomed.

Where there were still issues faced by female colleagues was in fire stations that, on the whole, were not suitable for both male and female firefighters. Where new fire stations had been commissioned, separate and appropriate facilities had been provided for both males and

females. For older fire stations, the retrofitting of facilities was taking some time and often, female changing and sleeping facilities were created in spaces that had previously been used by male colleagues for other purposes. The result of this was that there was, at times, some ill will against female colleagues for the impact that their presence had on the physical environment within a station. More specifically, where fire stations had been adapted some female employees spoke about the inappropriateness of this adaptation with shower cubicles being gender neutral or female showers being located next to the male changing room. With regard to toilet facilities, the change of gendered to gender neutral cubicles was an issue with instances of female employees requesting gendered toilets. Focus group participants noted that the fire station buildings posed a challenge that would take some time to address.

Approaches to grievance and disciplinary issues were discussed. Operational employees of the focus groups felt that when employees reported gender related issues, they were dealt with effectively and appropriately and employees were aware of the relevant policies and procedures in place. For non-operational employees, the situation was more complex as though there were systems and policies in place there was hesitation as to the extent to which these were used, as the approach frequently taken by more senior managers was to ignore any gendered aspect and attribute it to personal circumstance rather than gender. Likewise, those female employees who had experienced discrimination were, at times, not able to fully report this. The reason for this was because of the associated stigma that was attached to colleagues who had raised such issues and the response from male colleagues that they should really become more resilient and not make an issue out of this. Much of the experience of female employees toward the disciplinary and grievance process was dependent on the particular senior manager involved. The quality, attitude and experience of the senior manager involved could shape the experiences and outcome of gender related disciplinary issues for female employees and there was a perception that a successful outcome was something that had to be battled for. Allied to this was uncertainty as to whether there was an HQ wide understanding of the issue as it was not clear whether data relating to the type of grievance were either analysed or indeed logged.

An issue that was raised by participants was the fitness test required of all operational employees. It was noted that it was perhaps more difficult for women approaching the menopause to retain the high levels of fitness required of them and that the fire and rescue service had to consider this going forward. Recently, a number of FRSs had appointed a fitness adviser whose role was to work with female firefighters so that they could remain operationally active for longer.

The role of the unions in supporting female firefighters was seen to be important. Often female employees felt more able to be open and honest with their female union representative than with their manager as it was perceived that they would be treated with greater empathy. The unions also had a key role in providing the structure for specialist female networks and support groups.

For non-operational employees, the role of the union was more contested. On beginning work in an FRS, non-operational employees were provided with details and information regarding union representation. This was welcomed, but there was some concern that unlike for example the FBU, the unions of which they were able to become a member represented workers across the public services, whereas it was a representative body for firefighters only.

Recruitment

The perception of the general public to female firefighters was felt to be a challenge that needed to be addressed as this did have an impact on recruitment. Examples were provided

of when during a fire incident, members of the public would speak with the more junior male firefighter than the female manager who was in charge. This was seen as symptomatic of a wider view held in society that firefighting was not a profession that females took part in, and this view was felt to impact on the recruitment of females into the fire and rescue service. All participants in the female focus groups noted that their FRS did target females through a range of activities including female only 'Positive Action' and 'have a go days' where potential recruits were offered the opportunity to use firefighting equipment. There was some unease that similar activities were not held for potential male recruits and this was not felt to be equitable. It was also noted that some FRSs were using local and social media to increase the visibility of female firefighters and therefore make the FRS more attractive to females as a career opportunity. Mention was made of the female firefighter apprenticeship scheme which was welcomed though there was concern about the twelve-month grace period after acceptance onto the scheme where participants were able to improve their fitness to the levels required.

Career progression

Participants felt that female employees were able to progress through the roles but there was a perception, amongst male colleagues, that any promotion was due to their gender rather than their ability. Linked to this was the concern amongst female operational employees that they had to be better at the role than their male counterparts to prove that they had the skills to achieve a more senior position. It was also felt that female employees had to be far more resilient whilst applying for roles and once in post if successful, as the number of female senior managers was small and therefore, they were more visible. Programmes such as 'He for She' were seen to be positive but there was unease as to why this type of programme was needed at all as career progression should not be impacted in any way by gender.

For non-operational employees, there remained concern about the inequalities of promotion where there was a perception that the skills expected for more senior roles had to be achieved before promotion which was not the same for operational employees. The gender composition of non-operational structures was also discussed and it was noted that there were far more male than female senior managers and where there were females, these had come from outwith of the FRS suggesting that there is little movement of female employees through the non-operational structure into more senior positions.

Retention

The fire and rescue service was felt to be putting policies and working patterns in place that would encourage retention of female employees. For example, provision was made for caring responsibilities (for both children and other relatives) as well as the introduction of part-time and other flexible working patterns. The speed at which these had been introduced was more problematic as frequently the timescales to which individual FRS worked to, were long. Allied to this, there was concern that even when policies were in place, employees only found out about them through word of mouth rather than through anything more systematic. The role of the individual manager was felt to be key here as it was their willingness, or not, to accommodate flexible working which affected whether employees were able to work more flexibly. More generally, retention of female managers was not an issue of concern as it was felt that the fire and rescue service had policies in place that encouraged female colleagues to remain. This said, the speed at which these policies had been introduced was not uniform.

Cross cutting themes

This section of the report highlights the key messages that ran across all three of the focus groups:

- Intersectionality (as in the issues being experienced across the protected characteristic groups) was raised as an issue - the challenges that were faced were not simply in relation to ethnicity, gender or sexuality but rather were a combination of factors. For example, issues faced related to being black and female or female and lesbian. There was concern that strategically, the fire and rescue service did not necessarily comprehend the importance of intersectionality when developing policy - rather it treated each protected characteristic as separate;
- Linked to the above, the fire and rescue service was felt to have made less progress around the equality and diversity agenda than other public services;
- There was a greater level of understanding amongst senior managers about issues relating to equality and diversity (hence the development of strategy) but how this played out at the fire station level was complicated;
- Direct knowledge of the 2017 IFSG Improvement Strategies was limited;
- There was an apparent disconnect between HQ that was putting the architecture in place for a more diverse and equitable FRS and the systems and structures on the ground;
- The fire and rescue service remained predominantly white and male and therefore any development around equality and diversity would take longer to effect real change;
- The scale of the financial challenge that the fire and rescue service was facing meant that training and support around equality and diversity issues was being reduced all the time. There was concern what the impact of this would be in the longer term;
- The outsourcing of services due to financial pressures (for example fireground catering) had been carried out without due process and checks taking place. The impact of this was that some providers of choice held views that were at odds with the FRS equality and diversity policies;
- Linked to the above, whilst senior managers were perceived to be more supportive there was little commonality in approach or specific standards that could be adhered to. The impact of this was that the extent to which protected characteristic employees experienced equality and diversity was reliant on individual senior managers rather than something more general and tangible;
- There was concern that where grievances and issues were raised regarding equality and diversity, the FRS response was often to ignore the protected characteristic element and suggest issues were of a personal nature;
- There was felt to be a more rapid turnover of protected characteristic employees and this was felt to be due to a cumulative set of pressures and challenges that this group faced;
- Employees who were Female, Black and LGBTQI noted that, despite the progress made, they still felt a sense of otherness, in that they were part of the fire and rescue service but were still viewed by their FRS and colleagues as being different;
- There was a lack of consistency with regard to provision of protective clothing and uniforms. Development had been made with some aspects of the kit, for example with protective wear for females and uniforms suitable for pregnant women. This said, there was felt not to be the will to provide protective clothing and kit suitable for firefighters to observe specific religious belief;
- New facilities coming on stream were felt to be suitable to accommodate the needs of a diverse workforce. Older fire stations were not as suitable and even when they had been retro-fitted, were not always fit for purpose. There was a linked concern that

where retro-fitting had taken place, there was a narrative amongst the predominantly white and male firefighters that the changes made had negatively impacted on their experience by reducing the space and facilities available to them;

- Members of protected characteristic groups were able to progress through the fire and rescue service but the extent of this was limited and there was concern that the general perception was that promotion of BAME, LGBTQI and female employees was due to their protected characteristic rather than their ability;
- All participants in the groups felt that they had to prove themselves in ways that white male colleagues did not;
- There was a real difference in experience among operational and non-operational colleagues with the latter group feeling that they were more disadvantaged due to the nature of their job;
- There were felt to be noticeable differences with regard to individual FRSs. It was felt that the London Fire Brigade was an example of good practice with regard to equality and diversity issues; and
- The role of individual champions and voices was felt to be very important in progressing the equality and diversity agenda but there was concern about what would happen when these individuals moved on.

Developments since 2017

This section provides an overview of the perceived developments around the equalities and diversity agenda since the previous set of focus groups were completed in 2017. These findings should be treated with some caution as the participants in the focus groups were not the same so direct comparison cannot be made. Rather, they should be viewed as the interpretation of the focus group facilitators as to what they heard in late 2017 and early 2020:

- The fire and rescue service had developed its thinking around equality and diversity but perhaps thinking was siloed in that it should ideally be a concept that was embedded in day to day working rather than a discreet set of activities, policies and processes;
- There was now greater visibility of strategies and policies to support those from protected characteristic groups than had been evident in 2017;
- Recruitment was still felt to be predicated on the white male model though some efforts had been made to engage with a more diverse set of recruits;
- There has been positive development around the provision of uniforms and protective clothing suitable for female firefighters but issues remained around fit for purpose equipment, for example with regard to protective clothing suitable for Muslim firefighters;
- Where new fire stations had come on stream, equality and diversity issues had been considered, although not always entirely to the satisfaction of employees, but older facilities, including those that had been retro-fitted were still not fit for purpose;
- There seemed to be an increased buy-in to the equality and diversity agenda amongst senior managers, but the extent to which real material change had taken place was not uniform;
- Experience of overt negative behaviours relating to gender, ethnicity and sexuality appear to have reduced but there is still some experience of implicit bias against protected characteristic groups;
- The composition of the fire and rescue service had not changed considerably since 2017. It remains white and male dominated and participants do not think that this will change over time as few recruits from protected characteristic groups are joining;
- The role of the relevant unions is important in developing equality and diversity but they can, at times, be perceived to impact negatively on progress given the composition of their membership;
- There remained a perception of otherness amongst protected characteristic group participants in that there was feeling that employees from these groups had to prove themselves more both during promotion activity but also in the day to day;
- There currently appears to be a greater proportion of protected characteristic colleagues leaving the fire and rescue service at an earlier stage than in 2017;
- There was a real sense amongst participants that the experiences of operational and non-operational employees was different and that was perhaps little parity of esteem; and
- There remains a dislocation between FRS HQ and individual fire stations.

Annex A: IFSG – Improvement Strategies Focus Groups (2020)

Focus Groups: BAME (13.01.20)
 LGBTQI (15.01.20)
 Female (16.01.20)

Introduction

Introduction will include an overview of the purpose of the session, confidentiality and the fact that no individual will be named or identified in any write up. And the focus here is on the changes that have taken place since the introduction of the Improvement Strategies from 2017 onwards.

Questions

- Q1) **What have your experiences been, to date, of being employees in the fire and rescue service?**
- Q2) **Have your experiences changed since 2017?**
- Q3) **How have these experiences been shaped by your gender / sexuality / ethnicity?**
- Q4) **To what extent do you feel senior ownership and leadership lead by example and to ensure that local strategies and initiatives become reality on the ground, thereby embedding inclusion as the norm?**
- Q5) **Have you experienced any negative experiences due to your gender / sexuality / ethnicity?**

Prompt – bullying and harassment

- Q6) **Do you think all employees are aware of, and understand, the relevant equality policies and where an issue is reported and found to be accurate that action is taken as a result?**
- Q7) **Do you think your career progression to date has been affected by your gender / sexuality / ethnicity?**
If yes, how?
- Q8) **Do you think potential barriers are being removed to encourage promotion such as exploring the greater use of flexible working arrangements or similar enabling policies which may assist with improving diversity within management?**

Q9) **Have you experienced difficulty in securing the required/appropriate facilities and/or equipment tailored to your needs?**

Prompts: Gender specific Personal Protective Equipment
Gendered station/fire ground facilities
Prayer spaces etc.

Q10) **More generally, do you feel the fire and rescue service is fit for purpose for all groups of employees including correct Personal Protective Equipment, uniform, policies and gender specific station and fire ground & workplace facilities?**

Q11) **Do you feel that your FRS is able to effectively deal with bullying and harassment in the workplace?**

Prompts: How to have difficult conversations; and
How to deal with bullying and harassment.

Q12) **Do you think your FRS monitors the use of discipline and grievance procedures and identifies and correct any problematic trends and tries to address issues early and informally where possible?**

Q13) **Do you feel that challenge (both up and down structure) is accepted and welcomed within all levels of your FRS?**

Q14) **Do you feel that your FRS does enough to encourage interest in promotion in general?**

Prompts: Job swaps
taster weeks
acting-up/temporary promotions
upskilling (so not only career progression but skill progression also)

Q15) **Do you feel your FRS offers family friendly working policies/environment?
And has this changed since 2017?**

Prompts: Flexible-working arrangements, Job-shares etc.

Q16) **Do you feel your FRS ensures all are aware of the fitness expectations of employees, and that support tailored to the individual is available to those who need it?**

Q17) **Do you think that current approach to recruitment by your FRS encourages diversity of applicants?**

Prompt: Representative of the community it serves?

Q18) **Does your Fire & Rescue Service undertake greater and early engagement with specific communities/schools/colleges and not just when recruitment is on the horizon?**

- Q19) **What else could your FRS do to improve its ability to meet the needs of a diverse workforce?**
- Q20) **Is Union involvement recognised by management as an important factor in delivering improvement, particularly in respect of peer to peer involvement?**
- Q21) **Anything else that you wish to add**

Close and next steps



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Inclusive Fire Service Group Workshop Feedback Report

Monday 13 January 2020 - Bevin Hall, 18 Smith Square, Westminster SW1P 3HZ

Friday 17 January 2020 - The Queens Hotel, City Square, Leeds LS1 1PJ

Introduction

The Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG) joint secretariat held workshops with FRS equality and diversity officers and local union representatives to capture their experiences, comparisons and views going forward. Both sessions were opened with a joint secretariat presentation on the views expressed during the last round of workshops in 2017, explaining how the group had considered the views expressed and how these had influenced the formation of the improvement strategies.

General feedback (not specifically related to any of the strategies)

- In some cases, managers had not forwarded on the workshops invite to the relevant equality & diversity manager, but they had been captured through a separate communication.
- Information about the IFSG isn't always reaching the right people, sometimes PA's might be left to determine who these emails go to.
- CFOs in place at the time the strategies were launched may have moved on; in many instances this may have led to work not being passed on or progressed.
- How do the various interests on these matters fit together e.g. how does the IFSG sit in relation to National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) or other programmes?
 - Most felt that awareness in the sector around issues of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion was improved. But some were sceptical whether it would feel like change on the ground to some staff – has it failed to filter down from strategic/management level?

Promoting an Inclusive Culture

On promoting an inclusive culture some felt that all FRSs now acknowledged that this is of vital importance, but the amount of time and resources committed to solving these issues varied. Most major private firms are now treating inclusion as a risk critical part of their business. More needs to be done to achieve a truly inclusive culture, the right training is important and has a role to play in this, especially equipping managers with the right skills and awareness.

It was felt that levels of training on equality, diversity & inclusion (ED&I) issues across the UK was inconsistent, but that due to different area profiles across the country it would be difficult to deliver a single package/suite of training across the board. There was a need to centrally gather and share best practice amongst all UK FRSs. It was believed there are examples of good practice out there, but it needs to be shared.

There was recognition that many of these issues were a result of years of deep institutionalised behaviour and that we need to bring about a new culture. It will not be a quick fix and we cannot expect 'instant wins'.

There was some concern about the commitment to ED&I issues. In a context of decreasing funding and the renewed HMICFRS focus on core duties, this has seen the majority of ED&I issues relegated to PowerPoint style training sessions.

It was felt that the sector as a whole needed to be more open and up-front about:

- The importance of a good ED&I environment and why issues around this should be top of the agenda
- Working patterns & practices (e.g. job sharing, flexible working)
- Bullying & harassment issues and the scale of this in some services

It was felt that all policies, procedures and any changes to them should be Equality Impact Assessed (EIA). It was acknowledged that some FRSs were good at this, but it was not yet embedded as the norm. Also, the importance of early engagement in any decision-making process, ensuring this is genuine engagement and not just a 'box-ticking' exercise, was noted.

Some services encouraged an environment where challenge was genuinely welcomed, others did not. Whilst it was vital for this approach to be promoted and accepted from the 'top-down' it also needed to be from and ingrained within all-levels, i.e. sideways, and up the management structure too.

There was discussion about a disconnect between the experiences of WT & RDS employees. ED&I related policies and training were not as easily accessible for RDS staff compared to WT.

Recruitment

Overarching principle of “the workforce should reflect the community it serves”.

It is important to ensure the service is a suitable and diverse workplace at all times, not just during a recruitment phase. Recruitment and retention should be looked at together – not as separate issues.

Conversations were necessary with community leaders to inform our thinking as to what the barriers are to people from their communities joining the service. There was a need to build and foster these relationships to inform our thinking. Community engagement was vital in achieving this, ensuring better exposure of the UK FRS as a role genuinely accessible to all – thus ensuring people from underrepresented communities are more likely to consider it as a career.

A nationwide recruitment campaign, broader than just RDS, would be helpful to help FRSs pool resources. It could also be helpful to provide materials and maintain consistent engagement (i.e. not just during recruitment phases).

Many services are investing in apprenticeships and have started schemes, and this was welcomed by all. However, the approaches to apprenticeships differ greatly from service to service. Durham & Darlington run a scheme whereby apprentices (45% of the last intake were female) are given experience of both corporate and operational parts of the service, as well as:

- Amended fitness standards on joining but are then given dedicated support to achieve full operational fitness standard within 12 months of joining.
- Full-support by a dedicated apprenticeships manager for first two-years, they then spend their final year as a development level firefighter.

Flexible working policies differed greatly between FRSs, no set standard but all agreed that as a policy flexible working should be offered where possible. Serious conversations needed to be had around the current barriers to job-sharing - acknowledgement that it is difficult but by no means impossible to achieve, and the benefits of it could be great.

It was felt there is a need for a consistent standard of monitoring and analysis across the board to find out where people are dropping-out or are unsuccessful in the recruitment process. Many shared examples of easily identifiable barriers to recruitment that affect different communities, both of the following could be achieved within a relatively short time frame and alone should not rule someone ineligible for a position, for example:

- Some communities have lower levels of those with driving licences.
- A cadet fitting all other requirements but could not swim at time of application.

Some thought that the service as a whole should strive to comprehensively explain the term ‘positive action’ and ensure the differences between it and positive discrimination are understood due to the negative connotations associated with positive discrimination.

Progression/Promotion

All felt that nepotism is still a problem when going for promotion to management positions. Some ideas to prevent this included:

- Appropriate training on affinity & unconscious biases
- Interview panels of three
- Actively identify sources of potential conflicts/unfair advantages:
 - i.e. similar backgrounds, same social clubs or children going to the same school etc.

Historically promotion processes have evolved in some services, are not clearly written down and are different from service to service. They need to be published and communicated or else processes can feel secretive. A nationally set process that is equality impact assessed could be an effective tool and it would also allow for greater mobility between FRS (which could also assist with retention). The HMICFRS report in England made reference to the increasing pressure on promotion processes. The Royal College of Policing have nationally set criteria. Some attendees felt the service was unclear about what is required for different roles – the NFCC framework or promotion pathways etc?

Some attendees made positive reference to changes at London Fire Brigade (LFB) where operationally focused questions had been removed from promotion interviews given applicants would already have been determined competent at that level to be considered for the post. Instead, the main focus of the interview was focussed on behaviours and values.

Acting-up or temporary positions could be a useful tool if used correctly to support promotion as identified in the strategies. However, when used (as most still do) just on an ad-hoc basis and not as a development tool it was felt this can lead to a negative perception of acting-up arrangements. i.e. just because of not having enough staff to fill positions. There is also a need to recognise that not all employees will have ambitions for promotion, for example, many firefighters are happy at firefighter level. But more needs to be done to ensure those who are interested in progressing do not lose interest due to lack of faith in the process.

The appraisal process also tends to be very ad-hoc in many services. This is another useful tool for identifying and progressing talent to develop but it has to be used effectively. The HMICFRS report in England also raised concerns around promotion processes and how chances to identify talent are lost through ineffective performance management processes.

Retention

The issue of unfit PPE had still not been completely solved, there remained some problems with gender specific equipment but also with PPE fit for religious considerations, such as breathing apparatus (BA) suitable for beards, turbans etc. The view was that the army had procured suitable BA for these requirements, so it was something the service could achieve. There was concern that the image sold to females in respect of on the job experience during a recruitment phase, or at taster-days, didn't always accurately reflect the actuality of suitable equipment and/or appropriate facilities. The experience can be very different from initial perception.

Support for women to return to operational duties after returning from maternity leave could be improved by a national approach. An example was given of women returning to operational duties too early after giving birth and this causing health complications. Whilst the Grey Book contains the national maternity scheme, with the ability to improve policies by agreement at local level, there also needs to be better understanding of the impact of the menopause on female employees, whether operational or non-operational. All staff should be provided with information, including managers, to provide the right support. Some services had provided personal trainers to work with female employees and managers to better understand the symptoms and the impact on fitness etc. There was a need for national operational menopause guidance as it can be difficult for individual services to source information or support.

It was felt by some attendees that West Yorkshire FRS had examples of good practice: menopause champions, uniform changes and welfare packs on appliances etc.

Also, some attendees were aware that Chief Inspector Helen Smith (Greater Manchester Police) had detailed [her experience](#) of menopause as an operational police chief . The National Police Chiefs Council had also published guidance: [Management of Menopause Transition in the Police Service](#).

The problem of station and workplace facilities and whether they are appropriate for gender or religious considerations (i.e. separate toilets, changing & shower facilities for women, prayer rooms etc) was discussed. Although these things are now being considered in the design of newer buildings, it was felt that older facilities are harder to retrofit with these requirements and that there seemed to be little appetite to do this.

It was felt that serious conversations were needed about perceived barriers to job-sharing. It is difficult but by no means impossible to achieve. The issue of flexi-duty at Station Manager level is a big issue for progress, especially to those with caring responsibilities - could job sharing help alleviate this?

The importance of engaging with staff who are leaving the service is a very important vehicle for learning. The thoughts of those leaving, both positive and negative, need to be fed back in, analysed and used, where appropriate to inform change. It is paramount that lessons are learnt where possible to identify key issues and barriers that had prevented staying within the fire and rescue service.

What do you want the IFSG to do?

At the close of both sessions, attendees were asked if there was one priority that they would want the IFSG to take away and progress. Those with the most traction are indicated below:

- At the core of everything is culture - ingrained and outdated culture needs to be challenged and eradicated where it does not support inclusion.
- Further work needs to happen to develop 'inclusive leaders' in order to make sure leaders at the highest levels drive forward positive change throughout the organisation
- Recruitment-wise it was felt that FRSs were largely heading on the right track regarding new recruits, but they needed to crack the inclusion side of things to ensure the continued retention and progression of a more diverse intake of staff.
 - The vast amount of work getting people to apply is wasted if they do not feel welcome and do not stay with the service.
- Regular communications from the IFSG and other bodies (e.g. NFCC) to ensure that inclusion doesn't slip down the agenda recognising that consistency of approach would also be helpful
- Reinforcing the IFSG strategies would be helpful as they remain sensible and appropriate. In particular bullying and harassment remains a significant issue which needs to be challenged at all levels.
- Progress is being made but we need to be sharing best practice more as a sector.
 - How do we ensure good examples are signposted?

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

10 June 2021

MEMBER CHAMPIONS

Report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

1. This report sets out details of the Authority's Member Champion roles and seeks nominations for the individual roles for the forthcoming two-year period.

Background

2. As part of the approach to developing the Authority's services and engaging with stakeholders, the Authority has sought to 'champion' particular areas of work through a CFA Member Champion role.
3. Member Champions provide the Service with an opportunity to work closely with individual Members to help to develop services and to engage with local communities, staff, councillors and other stakeholders through a closely aligned officer and member relationship.

Member Champion Roles

4. The following Member Champion roles have been identified as bringing significant advantages to the Service and Authority:
 - Community Safety
 - Business Fire Safety
 - Public Health
 - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
 - Health, Safety & Wellbeing
 - Retained Duty System

- Fire Cadets
 - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescues Services (HMICFRS)
5. The individual role requirements for each Member Champion are set out in Appendices A-H.
 6. Given the extremely challenging financial position facing public services, the role of a Member Champion is more important than ever if the Service is to ensure performance is sustained over the medium to longer term.
 7. Any Members undertaking a Member Champion role will gain a significant amount of personal development in relation to the specific role being undertaken, whilst the Service benefits from the local knowledge, experience and public standing of Members.
 8. Details of work undertaken by Member Champions will be recorded on individual training and development records.

Expressions of Interest

9. Members are requested to complete and submit the expression of interest form attached as Appendix I for any of the Member Champion roles and return it to Janine Hindmarch via email pa@ddfir.gov.uk by 5 July 2021.
10. If there is more than one expression of interest in a particular role, a final decision on allocating the role will be made by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority.
11. The outcomes of this process will be reported to the Combined Fire Authority on the 20 July 2021.

Recommendations

12. CFA Members are requested to:
 - a. **Note** the member champion roles as set out in this report and as detailed at Appendix A-H.
 - b. **Note** that the expression of interest form Appendix I needs to be submitted by email by the 5 July 2021.
 - c. **Note** that the Fire Authority will approve the Member Champions at the Combined Fire Authority meeting on the 20 July 2021.

Sarah Natrass, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, 0191 3755587

Member Champion for Community Safety

Role Description

Overview	<p>County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority Member Champions play a pivotal role in helping to shape the way services are provided to local communities. Member Champions also play a pivotal role in engaging with key stakeholders and making the best use of links with other councillors to promote the work of the Authority.</p> <p>A Member Champion role provides a unique opportunity to work closely with the Service and to help the Authority deliver its vision of Safest People, Safest Places.</p>
Strategy	<p>A fundamental part of this Member Champion role is to assist the Service to develop its approach to community safety and to help to ensure that services provided by the Authority are fit for purpose, effective and take full account of the statutory requirements placed on the Authority through the Fire Services Act, National Framework and Regulatory Reform Order. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being involved in the early stages of community and business safety strategy development • Having oversight of the Service's performance in relation to prevention • Helping align the Authority's community safety work with the IRMP • Helping to align the Authority's community safety work with the wider community safety agenda for County Durham and Darlington
Policy Implementation	<p>The implementation of the Authority's prevention strategies are important in ensuring that the communities we serve remain safe.</p> <p>The Member Champion will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as a sounding board for proposals relating to community safety • Assist the Service to understand local issues from an elected Members perspective and to ensure policy implementation takes account of these issues. • Ensure that policy implementation takes account of partners and other stakeholders policies where this is practical • Ensure that the strategies we employ are effective.
Stakeholder Engagement	<p>Member champions can play a pivotal role in engagement with stakeholders. This will include pro-active engagement with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Fire Authority members • Councillors • Staff • Partner agencies • Public • Interest groups • Media • Government officials

Member Champion for Business Fire Safety (BFS)

Role Description

Overview	<p>County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority Member Champions play a pivotal role in helping to shape the way services are provided to local communities. Member Champions also play a pivotal role in engaging with key stakeholders and making the best use of links with other councillors to promote the work of the Authority.</p> <p>A Member Champion role provides a unique opportunity to work closely with the Service and to help the Authority deliver its vision of Safest People, Safest Places.</p>
Strategy	<p>The Fire Authority have a statutory duty under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) and have delegated powers to the Chief Fire Officer through the CFA Constitution.</p> <p>A fundamental part of this Member Champion role is to assist the Service to develop its approach to BFS and to help to ensure that services provided by the Authority are fit for purpose, effective and take full account of the statutory requirements placed on the Authority through the Fire Services Act, National Framework and Regulatory Reform Order. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being involved in the early stages of BFS strategy development • Having oversight of the Service's performance involving BFS • Helping to align the Authority's BFS work with the IRMP and wider business community agenda for County Durham and Darlington
Policy Implementation	<p>The implementation of the Authority's BFS strategy is important in ensuring that the communities we serve remain safe.</p> <p>The Member Champion will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as a sounding board for proposals relating to BFS • Assist the Service to ensure policy implementation takes account of local issues • Ensure that policy implementation takes account of partners and other stakeholders policies where this is practical • Ensure that the strategies we employ are effective • Assist the Service in promoting sprinkler installation
Stakeholder Engagement	<p>Member Champions can play a pivotal role in engagement with stakeholders. This will include pro-active engagement with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Fire Authority members • Councillors • Staff • Partner agencies • Public • Local businesses • Interest groups / Media • Government officials

Member Champion for Public Health

Role Description

Overview	<p>County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority Member Champions play a pivotal role in helping to shape the way services are provided to local communities. Member Champions also play a pivotal role in engaging with key stakeholders and making the best use of links with other councillors to promote the work of the Authority.</p> <p>A Member Champion role provides a unique opportunity to work closely with the Service and to help the Authority deliver its vision of Safest People, Safest Places</p>
Strategy	<p>A fundamental part of this Member Champion role is to assist the Service to develop its approach to Public Health and to help to ensure that services provided by the Authority are fit for purpose, effective and take full account of the statutory requirements placed on the Authority through the Fire Services Act and National Framework and other legislation. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being involved in the early stages of public health strategy development • Helping align the Authority's public health work with the IRMP • Helping to align the Authority's public health work with the wider community safety agenda for County Durham and Darlington
Policy Implementation	<p>The implementation of the Authority's public health strategies are important in ensuring that the communities we serve remain safe.</p> <p>The Member Champion will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as a sounding board for proposals relating to public health • Assist the Service to understand local issues from an elected Members perspective and to ensure policy implementation takes account of these issues. • Ensure that policy implementation takes account of partners and other stakeholders policies where this is practical • Ensure that the strategies we employ are effective
Stakeholder Engagement	<p>Member champions can play a pivotal role in engagement with stakeholders. This will include pro-active engagement with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Fire Authority members • Councillors • Partner agencies • Staff • Public • Interest groups • Media • Government officials

Member Champion for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Role Description

Overview	<p>County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority Member Champions play a pivotal role in helping to shape the way services are provided to local communities. Member Champions also play a pivotal role in engaging with key stakeholders and making the best use of links with other councillors to promote the work of the Authority.</p> <p>A Member Champion role provides a unique opportunity to work closely with the Service and to help the Authority deliver its vision of Safest People, Safest Places</p>
Strategy	<p>A fundamental part of this Member Champion role is to assist the Service to develop its approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and to help ensure that services provided by the Authority that take full account the legal requirements that are placed on public bodies. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being involved in the early stages of equality, diversity and inclusion strategy development • Assisting the Service to determine how equality, diversity and inclusion can be mainstreamed • Helping to align the Authority's equality, diversity and inclusion work to other strategies
Policy Implementation	<p>The implementation of the Authority's equality, diversity and inclusion strategies are important in ensuring that fairness and equity are at the heart of services provided. The Member Champion will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as a sounding board for proposals relating to equality, diversity and inclusion. • Assist the Service to understand local issues from an elected Members perspective and to ensure policy implementation takes account of these issues. • Ensure that policy implementation takes account of partners and other stakeholders policies where this is practical • Ensure that staff consultation and engagement is appropriate and fit for purpose.
Stakeholder Engagement	<p>Member champions can play a pivotal role in engagement with stakeholders. This will include pro-active engagement with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Fire Authority members • Councillors • Partner agencies • Staff • Public • Interest groups • Media • Government officials

Member Champion for Health, Safety & Wellbeing

Role Description

Overview	<p>County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority Member Champions play a pivotal role in helping to shape the way services are provided to local communities. Member Champions also play a pivotal role in engaging with key stakeholders and making the best use of links with other councillors to promote the work of the Authority.</p> <p>A Member Champion role provides a unique opportunity to work closely with the Service and to help the Authority deliver its vision of Safest People, Safest Places.</p>
Strategy	<p>A fundamental part of this Member Champion role is to assist the Service to develop health, safety & wellbeing strategies that continue to ensure the Authority has health and safety performance that is amongst the best in the country. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being involved in the early stages of health, safety & wellbeing strategy development • Assisting the Service to determine health, safety & wellbeing strategies that best fit with local circumstances • Helping to align the Authority's health, safety & wellbeing strategies to other agencies strategies where appropriate.
Policy Implementation	<p>The implementation of the Authority's health, safety & wellbeing strategies are focused on the Safe Person concept. The Member Champion will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as a sounding board for implementation plans prior to consideration by the Authority's Committee's or full Authority. • Assist the Service to understand local issues from an elected Members perspective and to ensure policy implementation takes account of these issues. • Ensure that policy implementation takes account of partners and other stakeholders policies where this is practical.
Stakeholder Engagement	<p>Member champions can play a pivotal role in engagement with stakeholders. This will include pro-active engagement with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Fire Authority members • Councillors • Partner agencies • Staff • Public • Interest groups • Media • Government officials

Member Champion for Retained Duty System

Role Description

Overview	<p>County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority Member Champions play a pivotal role in helping to shape the way services are provided to local communities. Member Champions also play a pivotal role in engaging with key stakeholders and making the best use of links with other councillors to promote the work of the Authority.</p> <p>Member Champion role provides a unique opportunity to work closely with the Service and to help the Authority deliver its vision of Safest People, Safest Places.</p>
Strategy	<p>A fundamental part of this Member Champion role is to assist the Service to specifically develop its retained duty system (RDS). This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being involved in the early stages of RDS strategy development • Assisting the Service to determine RDS strategies that best fit with local circumstances • Helping to align the RDS strategy to other agencies strategies.
Policy Implementation	<p>The implementation of the Authority's RDS strategies is focused on ensuring that staff resources are maximised and that the workforce is aligned to the Authority's vision. The Member Champion will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as a sounding board for implementation plans prior to consideration by the Authority's Committee's or full Authority. • Assist the Service to understand local issues from an elected Members perspective and to ensure policy implementation takes account of these issues. • Ensure that policy implementation takes account of partners and other stakeholders policies where this is practical
Stakeholder Engagement	<p>Member champions can play a pivotal role in engagement with stakeholders. This will include pro-active engagement with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Fire Authority members • Councillors • Partner agencies • Staff • Public • Interest groups • Media • Government officials

Member Champion for Fire Cadets

Role Description

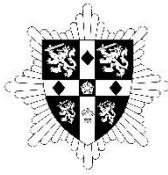
<p>Overview</p>	<p>County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority Member Champions play a pivotal role in helping to shape the way services are provided to local communities. Member Champions also play a pivotal role in engaging with key stakeholders and making the best use of links with other councillors to promote the work of the Authority.</p> <p>Member Champion role provides a unique opportunity to work closely with the Service and to help the Authority deliver its vision of Safest People, Safest Places.</p>
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>A fundamental part of this Member Champion role is to assist the Service to specifically develop its fire cadet schemes. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being involved in the early stages of Fire Cadet strategy development • Assisting the Service to determine Fire Cadet strategies that best fit with local circumstances • Helping to align the Fire Cadet strategy to other agencies strategies.
<p>Policy Implementation</p>	<p>The implementation of the Authority's Fire Cadet strategy is focused on ensuring that our Fire Cadet schemes are investing in the young people of County Durham & Darlington, act as a genuine firefighter recruitment route and are aligned to the Authority's vision. The Member Champion will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as a sounding board for implementation plans prior to consideration by the Authority's Committee's or full Authority. • Assist the Service to understand local issues from an elected Members perspective and to ensure policy implementation takes account of these issues. • Ensure that policy implementation takes account of partners and other stakeholders policies where this is practical
<p>Stakeholder Engagement</p>	<p>Member champions can play a pivotal role in engagement with stakeholders. This will include pro-active engagement with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Fire Authority members • Councillors • Fire Cadets • Partner Agencies • Staff • Public • Interest groups • Media • Government officials

Member Champion for Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

Role Description

<p>Overview</p>	<p>County Durham and Darlington aspire to achieve the best possible outcome from the HMICFRS inspection of the Service and be recognised as an outstanding Fire and Rescue Service.</p> <p>A Member Champion role provides a unique opportunity to work closely with the Service and assist in achieving an outstanding outcome from the HMICFRS inspection.</p>
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>A key part of this Member Champion role is to promote the benefits of the collaborative relationship of the Service and its key partners as this area is described in detail within the efficiency pillar of the inspection methodology. This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having an oversight of CDDFRS key partners and historical knowledge of the key outcomes of collaboration with the Service; • Liaison with key partners to prepare them for their involvement in the HMICFRS inspection as they will be required to evidence the working relationship and collaborative benefits of working with the Service.
<p>Policy Implementation</p>	<p>The HMICFRS will conduct a series of surveys with a range of stakeholders in the pre-fieldwork phase of the inspection of the Service. These surveys will be conducted with CDDFRS internal staff, members of the public from both County Durham and Darlington who have received a service from CDDFRS and key partners who engage in collaboration with CDDFRS to achieve joint organisational objectives.</p> <p>The HMICFRS inspection Member Champion will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with key stakeholders to raise the awareness of the working arrangements and outcomes from collaboration with the Service; • Provide a conduit between the Service and the Authority on matters relating to the HMICFRS inspection; • Highlight support to the HMICFRS inspection process and emphasise the importance of the outcome.
<p>Stakeholder Engagement</p>	<p>The Member Champion would play an essential role in promotion of the collaboration between the Service and key stakeholders. Outcomes from the initial HMICFRS inspections indicate the following organisations would be contacted for their feedback and opinions on the relationship with the Service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police; • Health; • Voluntary sector; • LRF chairs of strategic, tactical and supporting groups; • Organisations involved in the sharing of any CDDFRS estate; • The local community.

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Member Champion Expression of Interest

Name:	
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Member Champion Role	Tick Box
Community Safety	
Business Fire Safety	
Public Health	
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	
Health, Safety & Wellbeing	
Retained Duty System	
Fire Cadets	
HMICFRS	

Please state why you are interested in this role:

Have you any particular skills and/or experience you can bring to this role?

Please return to Janine Hindmarch via pa@ddfire.gov.uk by the 5 July 2021.

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County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Service



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

10 June 2021

**Community Risk Management Plan Consultation 2021
Results**

Report of the Policy Support Officer

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with information regarding the results of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Consultation which began on 8 February 2021 and ended on 23 March 2021.

Background

2. The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework document places a legal responsibility on all fire and rescue authorities to produce and consult on their CRMP. These documents direct fire and rescue authorities to:
 - be accountable to communities for the service they provide;
 - identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face;
 - make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and the response to fire and rescue related incidents;
 - develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse;
 - collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide.

Promotion

3. The CRMP document and an explanatory booklet have been published on our website together with the Community Risk Profile (CRP). Accessible versions of these documents have also been published.
4. In order to ensure that a wide range of views were gathered, links to an online survey were made available via the website and promoted throughout the Service and beyond.
5. The information regarding the Consultation and survey was sent to a range of partner organisations in sectors including Councils, Police, Health, Voluntary and Community, Education, Business, Faith and Housing. Colleagues shared the information to encourage participation.
6. Covid restrictions meant we could not distribute leaflets in the usual way, engage at community venues due to their closure, or hold face to face events. Instead, we sent posters to be displayed in GP practices which also contained information about how to access the survey if you were unable to get online.
7. The Consultation was presented at various online community meetings including at Area Action Partnerships (AAPs), and AAP Co-ordinators promoted the survey link to their contacts and on their Facebook pages where possible. We also presented to Darlington Borough Council, to Durham County Council's Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to the Darlington Partnership and to the Durham Youth Council. We also consulted with the Senior Command teams of our neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services as well as the Senior Leadership Team of the Police, Crime and Victim's Commissioner's Office.
8. The consultation was promoted extensively on social media. We posted about the CRMP Consultation 11 times on Facebook with an average reach of almost 3861 people per post. On Twitter our tweets over the period averaged over 1575 impressions per tweet. There have been three LinkedIn posts with 335 impressions.

Results

Number of responses: 237

9. Question 1

Do you have any overall comments about our CRMP and approach to allocating our resources?

Most respondents did not comment but where the free text box was completed in detail the following issues were raised:

- Fully crewed fire engines should be used rather than Targeted Response Vehicles.

- The plan is comprehensive and there should be an emphasis placed on communities being at the forefront of policy.
- Consideration should be given to the expansion of towns when deciding where resources are located.

10. **Question 2**

Protection: Should we continue to invest and prioritise Business Fire Safety activities to ensure the built environment within County Durham and Darlington remains safe for occupants and visitors?

Yes 93%

No 7%

11. **Question 3**

Emergency Response: Should we continue to trial the use and various crewing arrangements of Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs)?

Yes 56%

No 44%

12. **Question 4**

Collaboration: Should we identify opportunities for collaboration with local Fire and Rescue Services and key partners?

Yes 96%

No 4%

13. In addition to the questions put to the public about the Service's future plans we also sought to gain more understanding of the diversity of our respondents. This will allow the Service to analyse whether there are low response rates for particular groups and will assist us to improve our engagement and address any gaps in the future.

The responses were as follows:

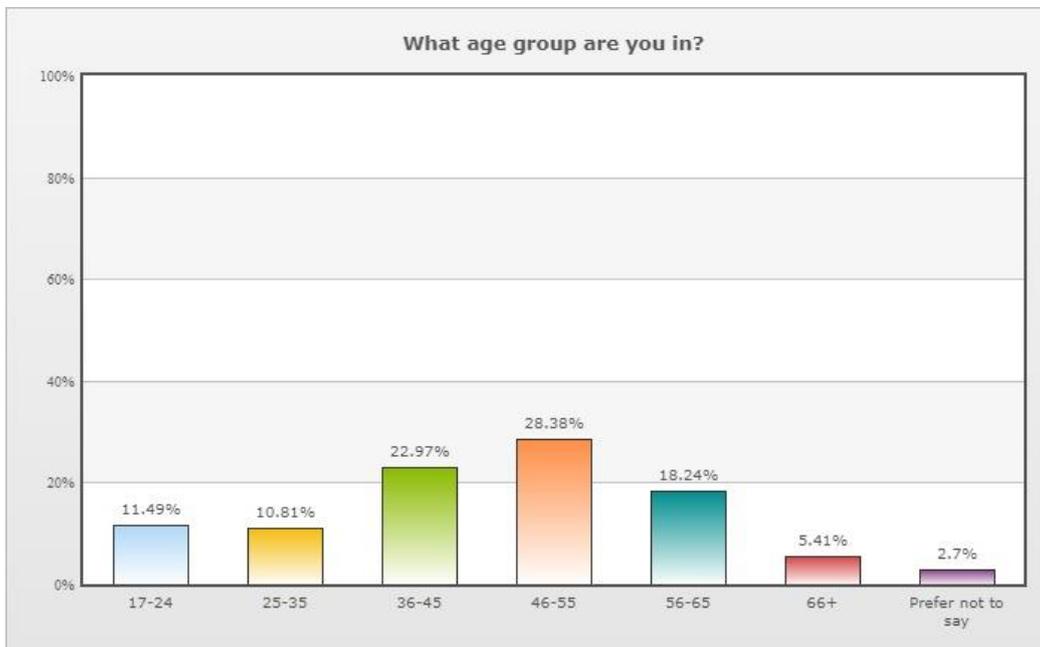
14. **Question 5**

What best describes your gender? (Please self describe)

Male	64%
Female	33%
Non-Binary	1%
Preferred not to say	2%

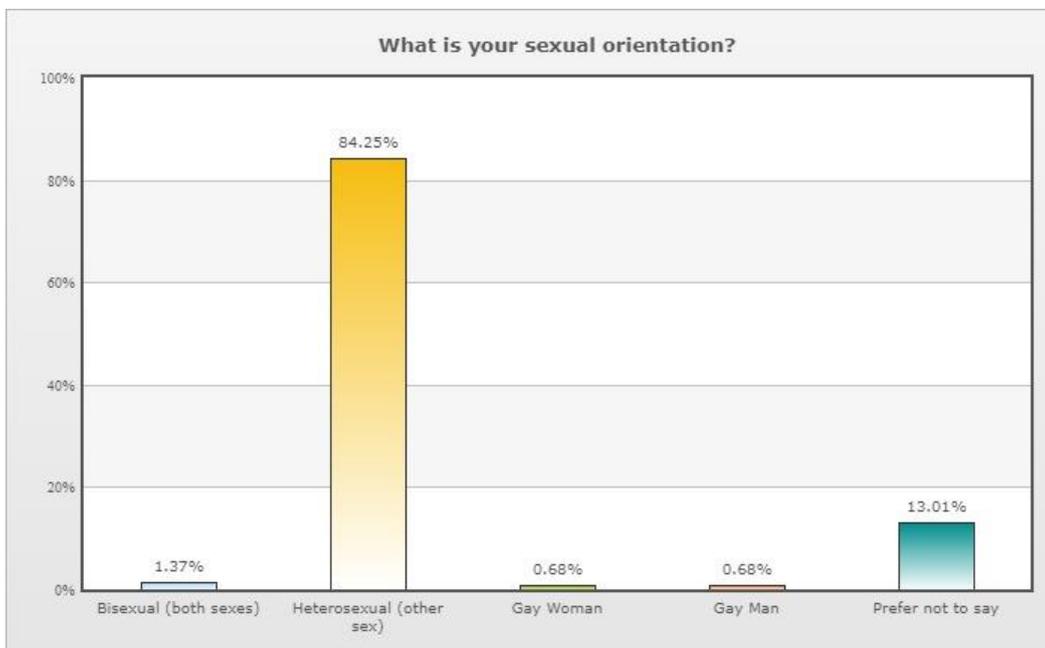
15. **Question 6**

What age group are you in?



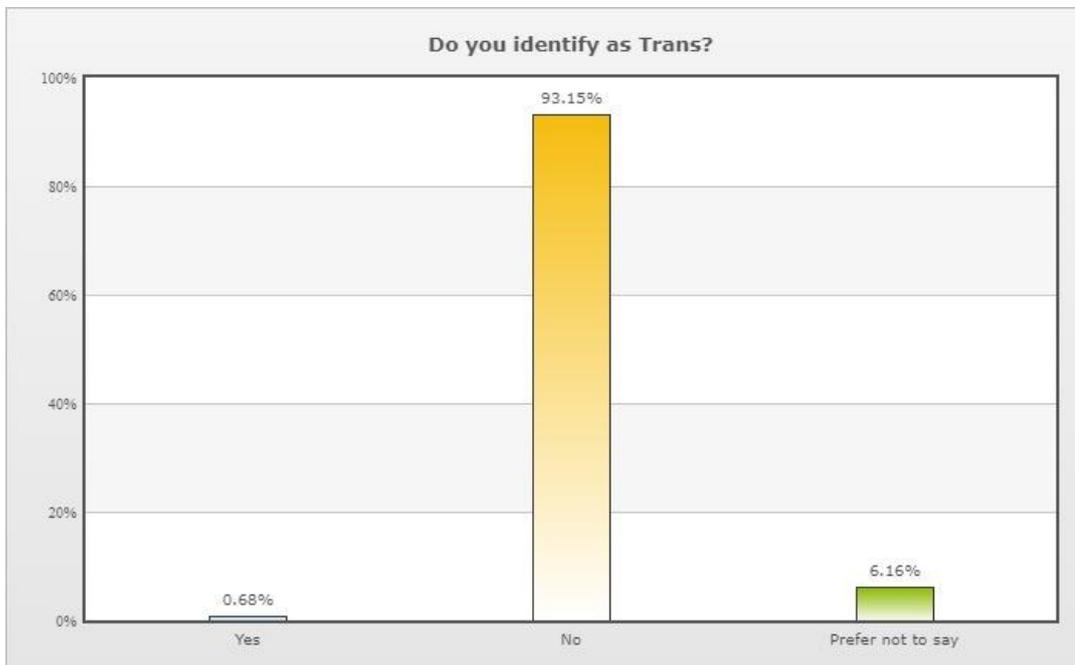
16. **Question 7**

What is your sexual orientation?



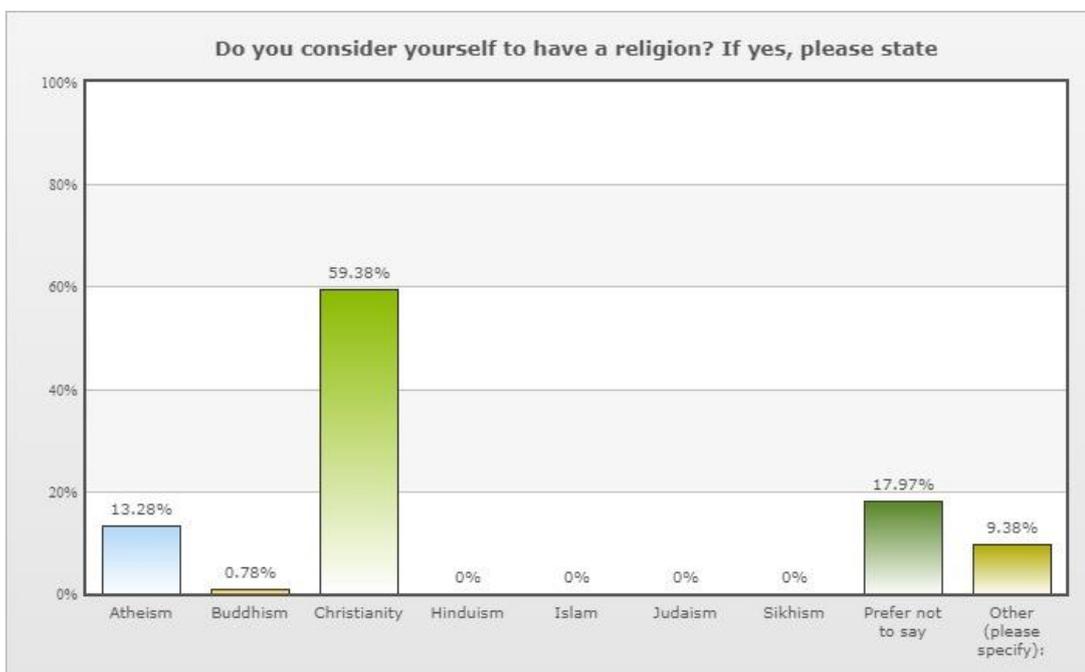
17. **Question 8**

Do you identify as Trans?



18. **Question 9**

Do you consider yourself to have a religion? If yes, please state



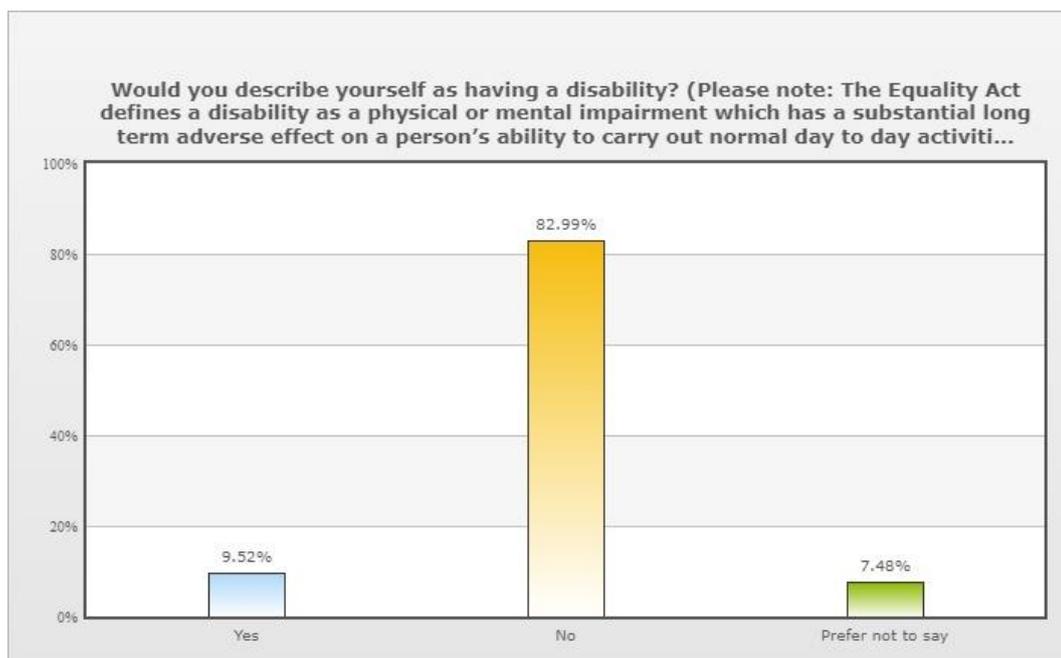
19. **Question 10**

What is your ethnic background?

White British	89%
White Gypsy or Irish Traveller	2%
Any other white	2%
Any other mixed background	1%
Did not disclose	6%

20. **Question 11**

Would you describe yourself as having a disability? (Please note: The Equality Act defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Cancer, HIV and Multiple Sclerosis are covered from point of diagnosis. People who have had a disability but no longer have one are covered by the Act).



Next Steps

21. The Service will analyse the results of the CRMP Consultation, including the Equality and Diversity questions we asked in the survey, together with the Equalities Impact Assessments we carried out on the CRMP document and on the consultation process and incorporate the learning from this into next year's consultation. Current thinking is to carry out the next consultation from December 2021 to February 2022.

Recommendations

22. Members are requested to:
 - a) **note** the contents of the report.
 - b) **consider** the survey results as part of the decision-making process when considering Service resources going forward.

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County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

10 June 2021

Outcome of the Review of the Role of Police and Crime Commissioners

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

1. This paper outlines the outcome of the review into the role of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), the forthcoming White Paper on Fire Reform and the potential implications for the Authority.

Background

2. On 22 July 2020, the then Minister for Crime and Policing, Kit Malthouse MP, laid a Written Ministerial Statement in Parliament launching a review of the Police and Crime Commissioner model. The statement announced that the review would be undertaken in two parts.
3. On 16 March 2021, a further Written Ministerial Statement was laid in Parliament, setting out the findings from part one of the Review. The statement is available at:

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-03-16/hcws849>
4. The same day Lord Greenhalgh, Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities, wrote to Chief Fire Officers and Fire Authority Chairs, outlining the recommendations of the review and next steps. A copy of this letter is attached as Appendix A.
5. The second part of the Review is due to commence imminently.

Findings of the Review

6. Part one made recommendations to the Home Secretary on how to improve the accountability, scrutiny and transparency of the current PCC model. It also considered the long-term ambitions on fire governance reform, and the links between the PCC model and mayoral devolution.
7. The Government have also used the Review to map out their longer-term reform ambitions for fire, in order to respond to the significant recommendations arising from Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, the Manchester Arena attack and to build on the findings from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspections and Sir Thomas Winsor's State of Fire and Rescue Report 2019.
8. The letter from Lord Greenhalgh also outlined that the Government believed that the response to the Covid-19 pandemic has also demonstrated the wider support and skill that fire and rescue services can provide for their emergency service partners and in keeping the public safe. They are keen to build on this learning to create and embed services which are fit for the challenges of the 21st century.

White Paper on Fire Reform

9. The Government also announced that further consultation will take place with key stakeholders when they publish a White Paper on Fire Reform later in the year. The White Paper is expected to focus on three key areas: people; professionalism and governance.
10. From a people perspective they stated that it is vital that services get the best out of their people and ensure the fire and rescue service is fit for the future. They intend to unlock talent and diversity within services and develop clear skills pathways with clear competency frameworks. They will also take action to ensure they are supporting the creation of a positive culture in services. The Government has also indicated that they will respond to the HMICFRS recommendation to urgently clarify the role of the fire and rescue service and firefighters. They state that they wish to see local flexibility to determine roles, which would enable firefighters to do more to support their communities, other emergency services (including providing significant support to ambulance services) and other local partners, as was demonstrated in the response to Covid-19.
11. On professionalism the Government want to see professional, well led services with credible operational standards at their heart. This will include a strengthened model of sector leadership and greater assurance through inspection. They are intending to consult on the development of a mandatory 21st century command course for progression to senior roles, minimum entry requirements for anyone joining services and they are looking to develop schemes to consistently identify and nurture talent.

12. From a governance perspective they have stated that the majority of their focus will be on implementing the recommendations arising from the PCC Review. Government believes that the variation of forty-five fire and rescue authorities across England, operating under a range of different governance models, has led to a lack of consistency and challenges of accountability and transparency.
13. They go on to say that the White Paper will consider the following recommendations:
- Consulting on whether to mandate the transfer of fire and rescue functions to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) model across England where boundaries are coterminous, unless there is an option to transfer fire governance directly to an elected Mayor.
 - Consulting on how to address coterminosity challenges, including in the South West.
 - Legislating to create operational independence for Chief Fire Officers and to clearly separate and delineate strategic and operational planning for fire and rescue.
 - Considering options to clarify the legal entities within the PFCC model.
14. The review also outlined the view that in terms of mayoral devolution, there are advantages in joining up public safety functions under a combined authority mayor and that this has the potential to offer wider levers to prevent crime. The Home Office will take steps to remove barriers to more mayors taking on these functions and will work with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to develop the forthcoming Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper with that longer-term trajectory in mind.

Implications for the Authority

15. The White Paper will arguably outline the most significant changes to the fire and rescue service for decades. Some of the changes will require completely new ways of working and could alter the core roles and responsibilities of the organisation.
16. The review has the potential to radically impact on fire and rescue authorities and could move governance either under the PCC or elected mayors if wider devolution deals were announced in the North East. Given County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service is coterminous with Durham Constabulary there is the possibility the service could be mandated under the PCC.
17. It is believed that the White Paper could be published at the end of June or the beginning of July 2021, although it is difficult to predict parliamentary timelines at the moment. The Home Office have committed to a full twelve-week consultation on the White Paper, and it would be prudent for the Authority to make a formal written response under this consultation process.

Recommendations

18. Members are requested to:

- Note the report and the outcome of part one of the PCC review into the role of PCCs and the potential implications on the Service and the Authority.
- Receive further reports once the White Paper on Fire Reform is produced later in the year.



Home Office

Lord Greenhalgh
Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire
and Communities

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

To: Chief Fire Officers
Fire Authority Chairs
Fire Partners
By Email Only

16 March 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Review into the role of Police and Crime Commissioners: Part One Recommendations and Next Steps

As you may be aware, we have today laid a Written Ministerial Statement in Parliament setting out the findings from part one of the Review of the role of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). I have attached a copy of our statement to this letter.

Last year, in line with the manifesto commitment, this Government committed to consider the model and how we could strengthen PCC accountability and expand their role. Part One of the Review commenced on 22 July 2020 and sought to identify areas where the model can be improved, drawing upon wide-ranging consultation with stakeholders across policing, fire, local government, and the views of the public. The first stage of the Review, which concluded last October, made recommendations to the Home Secretary on how to improve the accountability, scrutiny and transparency of the current PCC model. It also considered how we set out our long-term ambitions on fire governance reform, and the links of the PCC model to mayoral devolution.

I am confident that once implemented, these recommendations will ensure that the public have a greater say over policing and can better hold PCCs to account for bringing crime down – making their streets and neighbourhoods safer, and restoring confidence in the criminal justice system.

We also used the Review to map out our longer-term reform ambitions in order to respond to the significant recommendations arising from Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, the Manchester Arena attack, and to build on the findings from HMICFRS inspections and Sir Thomas Winsor's State of Fire and Rescue Report 2019. The response to the Covid-19 pandemic has also demonstrated the wider support and skill that fire services can provide for their emergency service partners and in keeping the public safe. I am keen to build on this learning to create and embed services which are fit for the challenges of the 21st century, supporting both their people and the public.

We have identified a number of options and recommendations to this effect and I am keen we explore these with you in more detail, to gather further evidence and garner wider input from both stakeholders and the public. As a result, the Home Office will be launching a White Paper on fire reform.

The White Paper - centred around improvements in **Professionalism, People, and Governance** - will set out a clear vision and roadmap for reform. Taken alongside our comprehensive legislative programme on fire and building safety, it will build on the progress we have already made to ensure that fire and rescue services are outward looking, professionally led and governed, and fully support the communities and public that they serve.

On **Professionalism**, I want to see professional, well led services with credible operational standards at their heart. This will include a strengthened model of sector leadership and greater assurance through inspection. We will also consult on the development of a mandatory 21st century command course for progression to senior roles, minimum entry requirements for anyone joining services, and look to develop schemes to consistently identify and nurture talent.

On **People**, it is vital that we get the best out of our people and ensure the fire service is fit for the future. We will work to unlock talent and diversity within services and develop clear skills pathways with clear competency frameworks. We will also take action to ensure we are supporting the creation of a positive culture in services.

In addition, and as highlighted most recently in HMICFRS' Covid-19 report, the role of fire and rescue services and the firefighter needs urgent clarification. Local flexibility to determine roles would enable firefighters to do more to support their communities, other emergency services (including providing significant support to ambulance services) and other local partners, as demonstrated in the response to Covid-19.

On **Governance**, the majority of our focus will be on implementing the recommendations arising from the PCC Review. We know that the variation of 45 fire and rescue authorities across England operating under a range of different governance models has led to a lack of consistency which has led to challenges of accountability and transparency. As a result, we will be considering the following recommendations within the White Paper:

- Consulting on whether to mandate the transfer of fire and rescue functions to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner model across England where boundaries are coterminous, unless there is an option to transfer fire governance directly to an elected Mayor.
- Consulting on how to address coterminosity challenges, including in the South West.
- Legislating to create operational independence for Chief Fire Officers and to clearly separate and delineate strategic and operational planning for fire and rescue.
- Considering options to clarify the legal entities within the PFCC model.

Regardless of any changes which may be made, we are committed to preserving and utilising the expertise developed in local authorities with regard to the oversight and scrutiny of fire and rescue services.

We will now focus on implementing the agreed reforms and launching the White Paper consultation. I would like to reiterate my thanks to you all for your ongoing engagement and contributions to developing this reform agenda and would welcome your continued engagement as we progress this work. I look forward to communicating more about these plans in due course.

Yours Ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lord Greenhalgh', written in a cursive style.

Lord Greenhalgh
Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities at
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and Home Office

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