



Safest People, Safest Places

Local Government Act 1972

A Meeting of the Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington will be held in the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters on Friday 14 March 2025 at 10.00 am to consider the following business:-

PART A

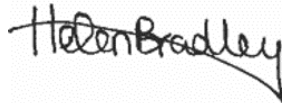
1. Declarations of interest, if any
If Members are aware of a private or personal conflict of interest in relation to any items on the Agenda, this should be disclosed at this stage or when the conflict of interest arises during consideration of an item in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Members
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2025 (Pages 3 - 8)
3. Current Correspondence - Report of Director of Emergency Response (Pages 9 - 16)
4. Notes of the Audit and Finance Committee - Report of the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee (Pages 17 - 18)
5. Notes of the Human Resources Committee - Report of the Chair of the Human Resources Committee (Pages 19 - 22)
6. Members Allowances Scheme - Report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (Pages 23 - 42)
7. Apprenticeships Predicted Costings and Income Generation - Report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (Pages 43 - 48)
8. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgent to warrant consideration
9. 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)

10. Notes of the Salary Review Group - Report of the Chair of the Salary Review Group (Pages 49 - 50)
11. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgent to warrant consideration

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



Helen Bradley
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 Shuttleworth, C Martin, J Atkinson, A Batey, R Bell, J Cairns, I Cochrane, C Hampson, B Kellett, L Mavin, L Maddison, R Manchester, C Marshall, I McLean, E Peeke, S Quinn, G Richardson, K Rooney, P Sexton, K Shaw and S Zair

Darlington Borough Councillors:

Councillors A Anderson, G Lee, D Ray and M Snedker

Minutes of the meeting of the Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington held at Fire and Rescue HQ, Durham on 17 February 2025 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Durham County Councillors:

Councillors J Atkinson, A Batey, J Charlton, C Hampson, B Kellett, L Maddison, R Manchester, C Martin, L Mavin, E Peeke, S Quinn, G Richardson, K Rooney, K Shaw, J Shuttleworth D Sutton-Lloyd and S Zair.

Darlington Borough Councillors:

Councillors A Anderson, G Lee and M Snedker

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Bell, J Cairns, A Fletcher (Independent Person), C Marshall, I McLean, D Ray.

Members of the public:

None in attendance

The Chair updated the Authority that an announcement was imminent with regard to Fire and Rescue Services moving from Home Office to MHCLG.

A1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

A2 Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2025

Item A10 PCC Request to join the Combined Fire Authority

Cllr S Quinn requested clarity of the process for recording the names of Councillors following the vote regarding the PCC request to join the CFA. The Senior Lawyer explained the process outlined in the constitution; the Committee agreed to reflect in the minutes those members who wished to be named.

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting of the 20 January 2025 subject to the changes agreed in respect of the vote for the PCC request to join the CFA (for copy file see copy see file minutes).

A3 Current Correspondence

There was no current correspondence for review.

A4 Notes of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 24 January 2025

The Authority received a report which provided an update on discussions and recommendations from the Audit and Finance Committee held on the 27 November 2024 (for copy see file of minutes).

Members **noted** the content of the report.

A5 Budget 2025/26 Report under Section 25 of Local Government Act 2003

The Authority received a report providing members with information on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of reserves, so that Members have authoritative advice available when they make their budget decisions.

Members **noted** the Treasurer's assessment of the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves

Members **agreed** to have regard to this report when approving the budget and the level of council tax for 2025/26.

A6 Community Risk Management Plan including consultation proposals

The Authority received a report updating members with details of the 2025-2028 Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), the proposals contained within the plan and the public consultation on it.

The consultation for 2025/26 will begin on 19 February 2025 and will run for 12 weeks closing on 14 May 2025. To ensure that a wide range of views can be gathered the Communications and Engagement Team will lead on all consultation activity, with the assistance of crews and other departments.

The consultation questions (as set out in paragraph 35) will be available to the public to answer in two formats, via an online survey created on Smart Survey and via a questionnaire style booklet.

A Communications and Engagement Plan has been created to assist with the consultation process.

Members **noted** the contents of the report the 2025-2028 CRMP summary provided.

Members **approved** the questions to be put to the public in the Consultation Document.

A7 2025/26 Revenue Budget and Council Tax, Capital Programme and Medium-Term Financial Plan

The Authority considered a joint report of the Treasurer and Chief Fire Officer which set out the revised revenue budget for 2024/25, proposed revenue budget for 2025/26, the Medium-Term Financial Plan, the capital budgets for 2025/26 to 2028/29 and the Authority's council tax requirement (for copy see file of minutes).

The Treasurer took the Authority through each section of the report providing an outline of the key information and proposals.

SECTION B - Consultation

Resolved:

That Members note the consultation arrangements.

SECTION C - Local Government Finance Settlement

The Authority notes the 2025/26 settlement and the uncertainty around the funding position from 2026/27 onwards.

SECTION D – Reserves Strategy

Resolved:

That the Authority agrees to the policy for reserves, that the Authority will:

- (a) Set aside sufficient sums in earmarked reserves as it considers prudent to do so.
- (b) Aim to maintain a general reserve of 5% of the net expenditure, currently £1.8m.

Cllr J Atkinson commented that 5% seemed low compared to others. The Treasurer confirmed that 5% is what is deemed reasonable within the national framework across other fire and rescue services.

SECTION E – Medium Term Financial Plan

Resolved:

That the Authority:

- (a) Agrees the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- (b) Notes the Treasurer's comments on the robustness of the estimates, the adequacy of reserves and the risks in the budget, as set out in the separate report under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003.

SECTION F – Revenue Budget

Resolved:

That the Authority adopts the following resolutions:

- (a) That the revised revenue budget for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix A be approved.

- (b) That the Treasurer be authorised to make any proper accounting transactions that would be in the interests of the Authority in relation to the accounts for 2024/25.
- (c) That the revenue budget for 2025/26 totalling £36,585,979 as set out in Appendix A be approved.

SECTION G - Capital Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28

Resolved:

That the Authority approves the Capital Strategy, the revised capital budget for 2024/25 and the capital budgets for 2025/26 to 2028/29.

SECTION H - Fire Authority Council Tax Requirement

Resolved:

Based on the net expenditure of £36,585,979 and a Band D Council Tax of £123.12 it is recommended that the Authority adopts the following resolution for the year ended 31 March 2026:

- (a) That the 'council tax base' for the whole of the Authority's area be 184,665.10.
- (b) There be no Authority expenses relating to a part only of the Authority's area.
- (c) The 'basic amount of council tax' be £22,735,967.11 and the amount of the council tax for each category of dwelling be as set out in Table 19.
- d) the Net Expenditure be £36,585,979 and that, after taking into account revenue support grant of £5,899,594 business rates income of £1,634,183, top up grant of £6,231,987 and a surplus on the collection funds of £84,248, precepts totalling £22,735,967.11 be issued to Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council.

SECTION I - Prudential Code

Resolved:

That the Authority:

- a) Notes the prudential indicators.
- b) Approves the MRP Statement.

- c) Approves the following limits for external debt in 2025/26:
 - i. Authorised Limit of £20.498m
 - ii. Operational Boundary of £18.635m

SECTION J - Treasury Management 2024/25

Resolved:

That the Authority:

- (a) Continues to adopt the key recommendations of the CIPFA code.
- (b) Notes the Annual Treasury Management Strategy as set out in Annex J3.
- (c) Agrees to set an upper limit on the Authority's fixed interest rate exposures for 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 of 100% of its net outstanding principal sum.
- (d) Agrees to set an upper limit on the Authority's variable interest rate exposures for 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 of 30% of its net outstanding principal sums.

A8 Localism Act – Pay Policy Statement 2025/26 - Report of the Treasurer and Chief Fire Officer

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Authority of the pay policy statement for 2025/26.

Members **approved** the 2025/26 pay policy statement as set out at Appendix A.

Members **noted** that the statement will be published on the Authority's website.

A9 Any Other Business

Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

The Chair confirmed that there was no other business.

A10 Exclusion to 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 1 and 2 of Part 1 of the schedule 12A of the said Act.

PART B

A11 Serious Fire Learning Review

The Authority received a presentation from the Deputy Chief Fire Officer regarding a recent fire fatality in West Auckland.

Members discussed the presentation with officers and agreed to **note** the presentation.

A17 Any Other Business

Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

The Chair confirmed that there was no other business.

CLOSE OF MEETING



Current Correspondence: February – March 2025

No	Release Date	Subject	Summary	Action CFA Report	Action CFA Response	Action Info
1.	10/2/2025	Letter to MPs re Fire Service Funding Reduction	Appendix A Appendix B			X
2.	17/2/2025	Correspondence on Machinery of Government change for Fire - Minister Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP & Minister Alex Norris MP	Appendix C			X

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This matter is being dealt with by:
Ext: 03000 269 678
Date: 10 February 2025
Our Ref: JS.RB.RtHonARayner.Funding
Your Ref:

Clerk,
County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority
County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UL

Telephone Number: 03000 269 678

SENT VIA EMAIL

10 February 2025

Rt Hon Angela Rayner
Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Angela Rayner

We are writing to you on behalf of County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority (CDDFRA) to express our concerns about the level of funding available to fire and rescue services and the perceived injustice that exists within the current system. For over a decade the funding available to fire and rescue services has been under significant pressure and without a change in direction this is likely to lead to further cuts in services to our communities.

CDDFRA's grant funding for 2025/26 has been reduced by £410,000 (3.3%) and in addition we are facing a shortfall of £214,000 in the compensation grant to cover the cost of the increase in employers national insurance contributions which we were initially led to believe would be fully funded. Whilst we welcome the ability to increase band D council tax by up to £5 in 2025/26, its benefit has been outweighed by the loss of government grant and the increase in the employer's national insurance contributions. This leaves a below-inflation increase in spending power and the reality of the position we face is the additional income we can raise via council tax does not cover the cost increases through unfunded pay awards, inflation, and energy prices.

In CDDFRA as the amount of grant we receive has reduced we have experienced a shift in the structure of our funding arrangements over the last 10 years and we now receive two-thirds of our overall finding from local council taxpayers. This reliance on council tax provides real challenges to the Authority when we are faced with significant cost pressures. The impact is magnified in an area such as our where almost 80% of the properties are in council tax band A or band B. A 1% increase in council tax only raises an additional £218,000 for CDDFRA whereas in other areas 1% raises significantly more. Without additional support from government this is not sustainable and we recognise that our funding model of which two thirds relies on council tax places a disproportionate burden on communities during a cost-of-living crisis.

Following challenging budget settlements over recent years, the service has removed posts, collaborated with others where appropriate, invested in technology, removed waste and duplication, restructured every department and reduced spend. Notwithstanding the fact that CDDFRS is a highly productive, efficient and well-run service with a track record of delivering change against a reducing budget, without further financial support it is inevitable that further reductions to the operational establishment will be necessary, directly leading to a reduction in fire cover, increasing the risk to our communities.

The government is committed to reform of local authority funding to reflect an updated assessment of local need and revenues and we support this along with the proposal to update the data in the fire and rescue services Relative Needs Formula. However, we believe it is imperative that any revised funding formula ensures that central funding goes to those areas which need it most and that the years of cutting funding to deprived areas such as ours is reversed.

We hope that the information set out above illustrates our concerns and as always, we warmly extend an offer for you and your officials to visit staff within CDDFRS to discuss matters further.

Yours sincerely



**County Councillor John Shuttleworth
Chairman
County Durham and Darlington Fire
and Rescue Authority**



**Cllr Richard Bell
Chair
Audit and Finance Committee**

CC Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson, Minister of State for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention



This matter is being dealt with by:
Ext: 03000 269 678
Date: 10 February 2025
Our Ref: JS.RB.RtHonDJohnson.Funding
Your Ref:

Clerk,
County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority
County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UL

Telephone Number: 03000 269 678

SENT VIA EMAIL

10 February 2025

Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson
Minister of State for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

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Yours sincerely



County Councillor John Shuttleworth
Chairman
County Durham and Darlington Fire
and Rescue Authority



Cllr Richard Bell
Chair
Audit and Finance Committee

CC Rt Hon Angela Rayner, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government



Home Office

2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

17 February 2025

Machinery of Government change

Last week, the Prime Minister made a Written Ministerial Statement to the House of Commons on the Machinery of Government change in relation to responsibility for fire, which will move from the Home Office to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

The Phase 2 Grenfell Tower Inquiry report was published on 4 September. It brought forward 58 recommendations to improve fire safety that the Government is urgently considering, with a pledge to update the public within six months of the report's publication. However, we can update that we are taking immediate action to address issues highlighted by Sir Martin Moore-Bick on governance of fire policy within government.

This change will bring responsibility for building safety and fire under a single Secretary of State, providing for a more coherent approach to keeping people safe from fire in their homes. The Home Office will retain management of the Airwave Service Contract on behalf of MHCLG and will remain responsible for the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. This change will be effective from 1st April 2025.

The MoG changes will drive improvements and provide a better service to the public. In making the recommendation on the governance of fire policy, Sir Martin said that having a single Secretary of State answerable to Parliament for all aspects of fire safety should improve the quality of government by enabling information to be shared more quickly and more effectively between teams. He said it should also ensure that greater emphasis is placed on ensuring the safety of the built environment and that policy is developed in a holistic and coherent way.

This move will bring fire into the same department as our work to strengthen multi-agency cooperation through local resilience forums (LRFs) – where Chief and Deputy Chief Fire Officers play key roles. It will mean work to prevent and prepare for major fires sits alongside our responsibilities to help LRFs work together to prevent and prepare for all local emergencies.

Ministerial responsibility will transfer to Alex Norris MP. As Ministers covering fire and building safety, we have already been working closely together.

We appreciate that this comes at a critical time in terms of the Spending Review. For fire, Spending Reviews have long been a joint process between MHCLG and Home Office, and officials from both departments worked closely on phase 1 of the Spending Review. The two departments will continue this close work as we move towards phase 2. Ensuring an effective Spending Review for fire remains a priority of both departments and all potential impacts will be considered as part of the move.

We have teams in place in the Home Office and MHCLG to manage the transition and ensure there is a smooth continuation of service and progress on reform.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diana Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'J'.

Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson MP

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Norris". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'A'.

Alex Norris MP

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

14 March 2025

Notes of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 25 February 2025

Report of the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee

Members Present: Cllr R Bell in the Chair

Cllrs B Kellett, A Batey, J Cairns, A Anderson, L Mavin

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 25 February 2025.

Audit Completion Report – Year Ended 31 March 2024

2. Members were presented with the the Audit Completion Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 by Mazars. They expressed their thanks and appreciation for CDDFRS Finance Team’s cooperation when going through the required processes to complete the audit and sign off the accounts during this time.
3. Mazars did not identify any evidence to indicate a significant weakness in Value for Money arrangements and there were no significant matters outstanding.
4. Mazars issued an unqualified audit opinion in the 2023/24 accounts and the audit certificate will follow after work is completed on Whole of Government Accounts.

The report was **agreed** and **noted**.

Draft Auditors Annual Report – Year Ended 31 March 2024

5. J Collins from Mazars informed the Authority that this document is the public facing report which will go alongside the financial statements, which include further detail on value for money, sustainability, economy and governance.
6. J Collins assured the members that there was nothing identified that needed raising.

The report was **noted**.

Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

7. T Hope introduced the report which sought Members' approval of the Statement of Accounts for County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority, for the financial year ended 31 March 2024.
8. Members noted their thanks to T Hope and the wider finance team.
9. The committee approved the Statement of Accounts of County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority for the financial year ended 31 March 2024.

The committee **approved** the Statement of Accounts of County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority for the financial year ended 31 March 2024.

Local Government Finance Settlement – Letters to Government

10. T Hope provided members with a copy of the letters sent to government regarding the Local government Finance Settlement, as agreed at the meeting on the 23 January 2025 by the Committee, Appendix A and B.
11. The letters explained the difficulties facing the Authority following the reduction in grant funding of 3.3% (£410,000) and in addition a shortfall of £214,000 in the National Insurance compensation grant.
12. To date there had been no acknowledgement to the letters.
13. Appendix C was the response from CDDFRS to the provisional settlement Consultation, which mirrored the contents of the letters to the MPs.

Members were requested to **note** the letters and response.

Recommendation

14. Members are requested to note the report.

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

14 March 2025

Notes of the Human Resources Committee held on 20 February 2025

Report of the Chair of the Human Resources Committee

Members Present: Cllr S Zair in the Chair
Cllrs A Batey, G Lee

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Human Resources Committee held on 20 February 2025.

Sickness Absence Performance Report Quarter Three 1 April 2024 to 31 December 2024

2. K Metcalfe introduced the report which provided an update on sickness absence performance for the period 1 April to 31 December 2024

K Metcalfe noted that sickness has increased compared to the previous year and each area was discussed in turn.

The Committee **noted** the report.

Health and Safety Report Quarter Two 1 April 2024 to 31 December 2024

3. S Linfoot introduced the report which provided Members with a summary of the Service's health and safety performance for the end of quarter three 2024/25 reporting period.

The Committee **noted** the report.

Standards of Behaviour: The Handling of Misconduct in the Fire and Rescue Service

4. K Metcalfe highlighted the HMICFRS Handling of Misconduct Improvement Plan which sets out 15 recommendations and the outstanding actions were discussed in turn.

The Committee **noted** the report.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan

5. JParry introduced the revised Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), strategy which will go live in April 2025 and supporting Action Plan covering 5 key priorities.

The Committee thought the Strategy had progressed a lot since the last one and thanked Justin and the staff involved for this.

The Committee **noted** the EDI Strategy and Action Plan contents.

Equality Reporting 2024

6. The purpose of this report is to update the Human Resources Committee (HRC) on the annual reports published by the Service for Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and Gender Pay Gap (GPG).

Copies of these reports are available on the service website via the following link:

[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service](#)

The Committee **noted** the report.

PART B

Employee Relations Update

7. K Metcalfe discussed the report.

The Committee **noted** the content of the report.

Recommendation

8. Members are requested to **note** the report.

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County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

14 March 2025

Members Allowances Scheme

Report of the Clerk and the Treasurer

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with information on the level of allowances for councillors that are appointed onto the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) and to seek approval of the allowances payable from 01 April 2025.

Background

2. County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) is a corporate body and as such is required to have a scheme of allowances. These allowances are set under The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.
3. Regulations require the Authority to determine, prior to the start each financial year, Basic (payable at the same rate to all Members) and Special Responsibility Allowances, together with levels for reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses to Members. The Regulations also provide that, where an automatic uprating methodology is used, this should only apply for a maximum period of four years pending a more substantive review.
4. The Authority leads the Service setting the strategic direction, setting and overseeing the budget and ensuring the delivery of the overall objectives. The Authority is comprised of 25 elected members drawn from two constituent local authorities: Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council.

5. The structure supporting the authority's work as outlined in the constitution is:
 - a) Full authority meetings take place seven times a year which has a nominated Chair, Vice Chair and spokesperson for the minority group.
 - b) A supporting committee structure comprising:
 - a. The Audit & Finance Committee (meeting 4 times a year)
 - b. The Human Resources Committee (meeting 4 times a year)
 - c. The Performance Committee (meeting 4 times per year)
 - c) In addition, there is a bi-annual strategic planning session to update the Authority on important issues outside of the formal process and consult on future plans.
 - d) Finally, there is member representation on the Local Pensions Board which meets bi-annually and the Appointments and Appeals Committee which meet when required.

6. The Chair, Vice Chair, Spokesperson for the minority group as well as the Chair of the sub committees all receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for undertaking that role.

Existing Allowances

7. The initial level of allowances that are paid by the Authority were established in 1996, when Durham Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order came into force. Allowances were set at that time taking account of the allowances that were paid in the two constituent councils in Durham and Darlington.

8. The existing allowances that are paid to Fire Authority members are as follows:

Allowance Type	Annual Amount (£)	Number of Members	Total Annual Amount (£)
Basic Allowance	1,158	25	28,950
Chair	10,673	1	10,637
Vice Chair	6,595	1	6,595
Minority Group Spokesperson	1,738	1	1,738
Committee Chairs	1,064	3	3,192
Total			51,112

Constituent Authority Schemes

9. Both Durham County Council (DCC) and Darlington Borough Council (DBC) use independent panels to review their schemes of members allowances.

10. DCC reported the outcomes of their panel recommendations to the Council on 22 January 2025. DBC's last review was undertaken in December 2019 and the Panel's report was considered by Full Council on 30 January 2020.

11. In June 2023, DCC agreed that there would be no further changes to the existing allowances scheme until after the local elections in 2025 but requested that the Panel conduct a fundamental review of the scheme to take account of the changes under the Local Government Boundary Commission Review, which are to be implemented from May 2025. The panel recommended:
- a) The basic allowance is increased by an interim 5% to reflect the reduction in the number of members and is not to be reflected in a linked increase in Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs), which are to be frozen until the review is complete following the elections.
 - b) The basic allowance is increased for 2025, with reference to the September 2024 CPI rate of 1.7% and link further future increases to the CPI for a period of up to 4 years, as permitted by legislation, based on the CPI rate as of September of the preceding year.
12. The Darlington Borough Council independent panel recommended that the Basic Allowance for 2020/21 should be increased subject to any indexation that may apply. In making this recommendation the Panel noted that the Basic Allowance has not increased since 2012 (apart from a two per cent increase in 2017 to compensate for a tax exemption withdrawal). The Panel also noted that the Council had chosen not to increase the Basic Allowance as recommended as part of the 2016 review and that it had also chosen not to apply indexation for the last seven years.
13. In relation to Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA's), the Panel recommended no change in any of the current SRA's payable except for the payment of SRA's to the Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny, the Chair of the Monitoring and Co-ordination Group and the Chair of the Audit Committee. They also recommended that Members continue to claim only one SRA and that any indexation apply to all SRA's.

County Durham and Darlington Fire Authority Member Allowances

14. Taking into account the allowances agreed by both DCC and DBC, it is proposed that the Authority's basic allowances are increased by the September 2024 CPI rate of 1.7% and further future increases are linked to the CPI for a period of up to 4 years, as permitted by legislation, based on the CPI rate as September of the preceding year and SRA's will be frozen at the current rate.
15. Therefore, the revised rates would be as follows:

Allowance Type	Annual Amount (£)	Number of Members	Total Annual Amount (£)
Basic Allowance	1,177	25	29,425
Chair	10,673	1	10,637
Vice Chair	6,595	1	6,595

Minority Group Spokesperson	1,738	1	1,738
Committee Chairs	1,064	3	3,192
Total			51,587

16. All other allowances remain the same. An updated copy of the members allowances guide is attached as Appendix A.

Recommendations

17. Members are requested to:

- a) **Note** and **have regard** to the outcomes of the independent panels for both DCC and DBC.
- b) **Agree** with the recommendation to increase basic allowances by the September 2024 CPI rate of 1.7% from 01 April 2025 and further future increases are linked to the CPI for a period of up to 4 years, as permitted by legislation, based on the CPI rate as September of the preceding year
- c) **Agree** that SRA's will be frozen at the current rate.



County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority

Members Allowances Guide

Allowances as of 1 April 2025

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Preface

This booklet is intended to provide Councillors with a detailed guide to the rules governing the payment of allowances together with details of the amounts payable and the procedures to be followed in making claims, etc

Allowances Payable.

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require that an authority shall make a scheme in respect of the succeeding financial year on or before 31st March each year. The scheme may be amended at any time but may only be revoked with effect from the beginning of a year. Under these regulations Councils are required to establish and maintain an independent remuneration panel to provide the local authority with advice on its scheme and the amounts to be paid. Local authorities must have regard to this advice.

In the case of Combined Fire Authorities, they are required to have regard to the allowances paid in their constituent authorities. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2003 require that a scheme shall be made in accordance with these regulations on or prior to 31st December 2003. The prescribed components of the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service Scheme are as follows:

Basic Allowance

Payable to each Member of the authority. Where the term of office of a Member of the Fire Authority begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning or end of a financial year the amount of basic allowance due is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Number of days in office}}{\text{Number of days in year}} \quad \times \quad \text{annual basic allowance}$$

Basic Allowance is intended to recognise the time commitment of all Members of the Fire Authority, including such inevitable calls on their time as meeting with officers and constituents and attendance at political group meetings. It is also intended to cover incidental costs such as the use of their homes. The allowance is also intended to cover the cost of meals and other incidental expenses incurred within the region.

The amount per Member from 1st April 2025 is £1177 per annum and is to be paid monthly.

Special Responsibility Allowance

Payable to Members of the Authority specified in the Scheme who have special responsibilities. Where a Member of the Fire Authority takes up or relinquishes any special responsibility otherwise than at the beginning or end of the financial year the amount of special responsibility allowance payable is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Number of days performing special responsibility}}{\text{Number of days in year}} \quad \times \quad \text{annual special responsibility allowance}$$

No Member can receive more than one Special Responsibility Allowance. The amounts payable is shown in **Appendix A**.

Scheme Amendments

The amounts specified in Appendix A are subject to a review each year.

Forgoing allowances

A member may, by notice in writing given to the Treasurer of the Authority, elect to forgo any part of their entitlement to an allowance under this scheme.

Co-opted Members

Co-opted Members are entitled to claim travelling allowance at the rates given in **Appendix B**. This allowance is taxable. A claim form should be completed and forwarded to the Treasurer as soon as practicable after the duty has been performed.

Dependant Carers' Allowance

A dependant carers' allowance is payable at a rate not exceeding £8.36 an hour to those Members of the Fire Authority who incur expenditure for the care of dependent relatives or children whilst undertaking approved duties.

Payment is claimable in respect of children aged 16 or under and in respect of other dependants where there is medical or social work evidence that care is required. Evidence would take the form of a letter from a doctor or social worker stating the maximum time that the dependant could be left without care.

The allowance is paid against actual expenditure evidenced by receipts. The allowance is not payable to a member of the claimant's household. The maximum rate payable will be reviewed each year in line with the annual review.

Definition of Approved Duties

"Approved duties" are specified in legislation and are as follows:

- A meeting of the executive
- A meeting of a committee of the executive.
- A meeting of the authority.
- A meeting of a committee or sub-committee of the authority.
- A meeting of some other body to which the authority makes appointments or nominations, or
- A meeting of a committee or sub-committee of a body to which the authority makes appointments or nominations.

- A meeting which has both been authorised by the authority, a committee, or sub-committee of the authority or a joint committee of the authority and one or more other authorities, or a sub-committee of a joint committee, and to which representatives of more than one political group have been invited (if the authority is divided into several political groups) or to which two or more Member of the Fire Authority have been invited (if the authority is not divided into political groups).
- A meeting of a local authority association of which the authority is a member.
- Duties undertaken on behalf of the authority in pursuance of any standing order requiring a member or members to be present while tender documents are opened.
- Duties undertaken on behalf of the authority in connection with the discharge of any function of the authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises.
- Duties undertaken on behalf of the authority in connection with arrangements made by the authority for the attendance of pupils at a school approved for the purposes of section 342 of the Education Act 1996.

The definition of an approved duty for travel and subsistence is as follows:

- A meeting of the Fire Authority or of any committee, or sub-committee or of any body to which the Authority makes appointments or nominations, or of any committee or sub-committee of such a body.
- Any other meeting the holding of which is authorised by the Fire Authority, a committee or sub-committee of the Authority, or a joint committee of the Authority and one or more other authorities, or a sub-committee of such a joint committee, provided that it is a meeting to which Members of at least two political groups have been invited.
- A meeting of any association of authorities of which the Authority is a member.
- Duties undertaken on behalf of the Authority in pursuance of any standing order requiring a member or members to be present while tender documents are opened.
- Any other duty approved by the Authority in connection with the discharge of the functions of the Authority or of any of its committees or sub-committees including the making of official and courtesy visits on behalf of the authority. Tasks so approved are shown below:
 - (i) Attendance by Members of the Fire Authority at Service Headquarters to read official papers and deal with correspondence.
Note: Members are required to sign the Attendance Book on such occasions.

- (ii) Attendance by chair and vice-chair at pre-meeting discussions with officers.
- (iii) Attendance at a meeting to which the Member is invited whether as Chair, vice-chair or otherwise, by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Chief Fire Officer to discuss matters or consider issues relating to the functions of the Authority, including meetings with third parties such as government departments, statutory bodies, other local authorities, trade unions and the public.
- (iv) Attendance at a press conference to which the Member is invited by the Chief Executive/Chief Fire Officer.
- (v) Attendance by a Member at the request of the Commission for Local Administration in England, for interview by an officer of the Commission in relation to a complaint against the Fire Authority.
- (vi) Attendances at conferences or meetings held inside or outside the United Kingdom and convened by any person or body (other than a person or body convening it in the course of a trade or business or a body the objects of which are wholly or partly political) for the purpose of discussing matters which in their opinion relate to the interests of their area or any part of it or the interests of the inhabitants of their area or any part of it.
- (vii) Official openings of Fire Authority establishments, Developments and Exhibitions at the invitation of the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chair or Vice Chair of the Authority. This is intended to cover situations where Members are required to perform a duty such as an opening ceremony, make a speech, give prizes etc. Courtesy invitations issued to several or all Members are functions which do not qualify for payment. Members are advised to seek guidance from the Chief Executive/Chief Fire Officer.

Note: Invitations from groups or bodies to attend meetings as a Local Member are not approved duties for the payment of travelling and subsistence allowances. These duties are constituency matters not connected with the discharge of the functions of the Fire Authority.

Travelling and subsistence allowances

Payable in respect of expenditure incurred in the performance of approved duties. Subsistence allowance is not payable for duties performed within the boundaries of the counties of Durham (including Darlington) and Northumberland, and the former administrative counties of Tyne & Wear and Cleveland.

Details of the travelling and subsistence allowances currently payable are shown in **Appendix B**.

Travelling to Conferences, Seminars, etc.

Members who in their capacity as a Member of the Fire Authority receive an invitation directly to a conference, seminar etc. should, if they wish to attend, contact the Chief Executive/Chief Fire Officer. All conferences, seminars etc. should be booked through the Governance Team at Fire and Rescue HQ.

Payment of Expenses of Official and Courtesy Visits etc

Subject to paragraph 17 the Authority will pay the cost of any travelling or other expenses reasonably incurred by or on behalf of any members in making official and courtesy visits, whether inside or outside the United Kingdom, on behalf of the Authority.

In the case of a visit within the United Kingdom, the amount paid under this section in respect of the expenses of any member of the Authority shall not exceed the payments which he would have been entitled to receive by way of travelling allowance or subsistence allowance if the making of the visit had been an approved duty of that member.

Ground rules for travel

Ground rules for Members' Claims for Travel and Subsistence are set out in **Appendix C**.

Deduction for Meals provided

Where a meal is provided free of charge by the Authority or any other authority or body, the allowance for the meal provided cannot be claimed, i.e. breakfast, lunch dinner, etc. Where this occurs in a 24-hour period covered by overnight subsistence, the allowance for the meal should be deducted from the amount claimed.

Meals on trains

Members may claim full reimbursement of the reasonable cost (including VAT) of a main meal (full breakfast, lunch or dinner) taken on a train. Members wishing to claim must submit receipts. Where full reimbursement is claimed the allowance for the meal provided cannot also be claimed, i.e. breakfast, lunch, dinner, etc.

Travel outside the United Kingdom

Members may claim for reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred. Receipts for all expenses must be submitted with any claim.

Out of pocket expenses

Where the attendance fee for a course or conference includes accommodation and meals, an out-of-pocket expense allowance is payable in place of the normal subsistence allowances.

The current rates are set out in **Appendix C**.

Claim Forms

Completion

The attention of Members is drawn to the following points when completing a claim form:

- a) The claim form must be completed and signed in ink.

- b) Full details/description of an approved duty must be given
 - (i) if the reason for claiming travelling or subsistence allowances is a qualifying meeting, the full title of the meeting should be given;
 - (ii) for conferences, seminars, etc., full details must be given, including names of any officers involved, conference title and location, etc; iii) VAT receipts for purchase of petrol should be attached to all claims

Submission

All claims are to be submitted monthly. A list of deadlines and pay dates is circulated to all members at the beginning of each year. Pay day is the last working day of each month.

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 prescribe that claims must be submitted within two months of the date of the meeting for which the claim is made.

Avoidance of Duplication of Allowances

A Member of the Fire Authority performing approved duties as a member of more than one body or becoming entitled to payments under any other legislation must ensure that only one claim is made for that duty.

Withholding Allowances

Where payment of any allowance has already been made in respect of any period during which the member concerned is:

- a) ceases to be a member of the Authority, or
- b) is in any other way not entitled to receive the allowance in respect of that period, the Authority requires that such part of the allowance as relates to any such period be repaid to the Authority.

Members appointed to other bodies

Special arrangements apply to Members who are appointed to certain bodies, such as the Local Government Association (e.g. Fire Commission), the North East Regional Employers' Organisation and other bodies which operate their own allowances schemes. Attendance allowances payable under these schemes are in addition to the basic allowance from the Authority.

Income Tax

Tax is payable on basic allowances, special responsibility allowance, attendance allowance payable by other bodies, dependant's carers' allowance and co-optees' allowance. Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) is notified of all new Members. However, as Members' circumstances vary, and their tax may be dealt with at other HMRC offices, it is advisable for Members to make arrangements with their Tax Inspector for a tax code number to be allocated.

Social Security

National insurance contributions

National Insurance contributions are payable on all basic allowances, special responsibility allowances, attendance allowances payable by other bodies, plus elements of mileage allowances, provided the aggregate amount of these allowances reaches a lower earnings limit (currently £123 per week or £533 per month based on 2024/25) and the Member is under state pension age. Members who are state pension age are not liable to pay National Insurance contributions provided confirmation is provided of their age in the form of a birth certificate or passport (originals only) which should be sighted by the Members' Expenses Officer. Alternatively, a certificate of non liability could be supplied by the local office of the Department of Work and Pensions. It is necessary to apply for a certificate and application forms are available from the Treasurer.

There is an annual maximum contribution liability for people with more than one job and, in some instances, Members in this position may be entitled to a refund of contributions; alternatively, they may apply to the DWP to defer payment of contributions in their capacity as Members of the Fire Authority.

Benefits

The National Insurance contributions paid by Members count towards the full range of contributory benefits, including statutory sick pay, state pensions, unemployment benefits, etc.

Advice

Advice on contributions and benefits can be obtained from the local office of the Department of Work and Pensions.

Sick Pay

Members who fall ill will receive their basic allowance and special responsibility allowance, as normal. As there is no deduction for being off sick, Statutory Sick Pay is not payable in addition to these allowances and it is not necessary to submit a self-certification of sickness form or a doctor's sick note when you are ill.

Appendix A

Special Responsibility Allowances

Chair	£10,637 pa
Vice Chair	£6,595 pa
Spokesperson for Minority Group	£1,738 pa
Chair of Audit and Finance Committee	£1,064 pa
Chair of Performance Committee	£1,064 pa
Chair of Human Resources Committee	£1,064 pa

Appendix B

Travelling allowances

Travelling allowances are payable for journeys undertaken in the performance of official duties. The rates are as follows from 1 April 2019.

The rate for travel by a member's own private motor vehicle, or one belonging to a member of their family or otherwise provided for their use, will be paid at 45.0p a mile.

The rate for travel by a hired motor vehicle, other than a taxicab or cab, shall not exceed the value of the claim which would have been applicable had the vehicle belonged to the Member who hired it.

The rate for travel by taxicab or cab shall not exceed:

- a) in cases of urgency or where no public transport is reasonably available, the amount of the actual fare and any reasonable gratuity paid (receipts should be obtained where possible);
- b) in any other case, the amount of the fare for travel by appropriate public transport

Motor Vehicle Insurance

Members are advised that when using their own vehicle for meetings they will be deemed to be using it on Authority business. It is therefore essential that vehicles should be adequately insured, and Members are therefore required to ensure that insurance covers business use as well as for the usual social, domestic and pleasure categories.

Taxable/Non-Taxable Mileage

From 6 April 2016, following a change in HMRC guidance, all mileage claimed for journeys from this date should be shown as non-taxable mileage.

Appendix C

Ground Rules for Travel and Subsistence

Travel by Rail

Rail tickets should be requested from the Governance Team in advance of travel.

Standard Class rail travel is the approved class of travel, although first class rail can sometimes be the cheaper option dependent upon the time of booking.

Members wishing to travel first class when it is not the cheapest option can choose to do so but will be required to pay the difference between that cost and the standard cost. The difference will be recovered by payroll deduction.

Tickets can be booked up to 3 months in advance of date of travel. Members should make their requests as far in advance as possible in order to maximise savings and should you have any special requirements to assist you with your journey please advise a member of the Governance Team at the time of the request.

Members eligible for a Senior Citizens Railcard or any other concessionary travel railcard and who may be required to travel as part of their duties are encouraged to buy one as this results in a further discount on the ticket cost. The cost of the railcard will be reimbursed upon receipt of your first claim for travel and subsistence.

Overnight Accommodation

Where it is concerned that an overnight stay is required, then accommodation should be organised in advance by the Governance Team.

Members should contact the Governance Team who will be able to satisfy any specific queries or special requirements which you may have.

Accommodation along with Breakfast and Evening meal, if required, will be booked and paid for in advance. Members should make their requests as far in advance as possible in order to achieve the best prices and should you have any special requirements in relation to your booking please advise us at the time of your request.

Reimbursement for any additional meals purchased up to the maximum amounts detailed below i.e. breakfast, lunch, tea or evening meal can be claimed retrospectively (less any meals provided) on the production of receipts.

In exceptional circumstances an advance can be given to cover incidental subsistence/travel requirements i.e. lunch, evening meal, taxis, where it has not been possible to organise these prior to travel. Receipts should be retained to cover all advance expenditure and this can be reconciled on return.

Rates are set out below and also for reference shown on members' claim forms.

Allowance	Minimum absence from home	Rate £
Breakfast	2 hours which must be before 11:00am	6.75
Lunch	2 hours which must be between 12 noon and 2:00pm	9.27

Tea	3 hours which must include 3:00pm to 6:00pm	3.65
Evening Meal	3 hours which must be after 7:00pm	11.48

NB. No reimbursement for alcohol purchased will be made – should this be included on your receipt it will be deducted from the amount claimed.

Whilst it is appreciated that most travel is planned and can be organised in advance there may be exceptional circumstances where Members may need to organise themselves. In such circumstances, retrospective claims for travel or accommodation will be paid when submitted on monthly claim forms on the production of receipts.

The current rates are laid out below and are intended to cover the costs of accommodation and associated subsistence during a 24-hour period. However, it is also recognised that on occasion it may not be possible to obtain accommodation and subsistence within these limits and therefore higher amounts can be claimed up to a reasonable amount upon presentation of receipts. However only in exceptional circumstances should this be the case.

Overnight Allowance		Rate £
London	Up to a maximum claim on production of receipts	£124.76
Outside London	Up to a maximum claim on production of receipts	£109.39

Travel by car as an alternative to Rail

As a general rule, journeys outside the locality should be undertaken by rail as this is usually the cheapest mode of travel for someone travelling alone.

The ability to get to a particular destination by rail needs to be taken into account. Where the venue for the meeting is some distance from the railway station, the advantages and disadvantages of alternative methods of travel should be considered. Where Members choose to travel by car on a journey that would be reasonable to travel by rail either mileage or the cost of the cheapest available rail fare will be paid, whichever is the cheapest.

Air Travel

The cost of travel by air shall not exceed the cost applicable to travel by appropriate alternative means of transport. Unless in circumstances where the saving in time is so substantial as to justify payment of the fare for travel by air.

All arrangements should be made by contacting the Governance Team to organise for you. Please contact the Governance Team in relation to any specific queries or special requirements which you may have.

Travel Outside the United Kingdom

The same procedure as shown above will apply.

Out of Pocket Expenses

Where the attendance fee for a course or conference includes accommodation and meals, an out-of-pocket expense allowance is payable, as follows:

	£ per day
Courses or conferences within the UK	5.00
Courses or conferences overseas	18.00

The day of arrival and departure being counted as one day.

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

14 March 2025

Apprenticeships, Predicted Costings & Income Generation

Report of Director of People and Organisational Development

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Authority on the various types of apprenticeship schemes currently operating within the Service and the costs associated with them. Potential income generation through sub-contracting work and levy sharing is also explained.
2. It must be noted that this report does not detail the financial implications in terms of salary costs, due to the difficulty in quantifying time taken from work or attendance at training establishments on days off.

Background

3. An apprenticeship levy was introduced by the government on 6 April 2017 for all organisations with a pay bill in excess of £3 million. The levy was set at 0.5% of an employer's pay bill.
4. The amount of levy County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) pay is based on the Service's monthly PAYE and therefore continually changes.

5. If the Service does not have enough funds in their levy account to pay for training in a particular month, they are responsible for the remaining cost of the apprenticeship for that month. This is called 'co-investment'.
6. With 'co-investment', the Service pay 5% of the outstanding balance and the government pay the remaining 95%. If costs go over the maximum amount of levy the Service have, then the Service must pay the difference from their own budget.
7. Firefighter apprenticeships were introduced into the Service in 2017 which also led to a significant amount of work being carried out to look at other apprenticeship opportunities across the organisation to further develop staff whilst maximising use of the levy.
8. One particular area it was felt that the use of the levy would be beneficial was internal Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in areas such as leadership and management, which historically the Service has invested significant funds from existing budgets to pay for.
9. The Service currently have fifteen apprenticeship standards running across seven training establishments that utilise the levy. CDDFRS currently has 52 employees working towards apprenticeship standards and the maximum funding band for each of these is detailed in the table below.

Current types of apprenticeships and overall cost per learner

Type of apprenticeship	Training provider	Overall cost per learner
Level 3 Community Safety Advisor	New College Durham (NCD)	£3,500
Level 3 Operational Firefighter	CDDFRS/ NCD	£14,000
Level 3 Team Leader/Supervisor	Raise The Bar	£4,500
Level 3 Emergency Call Handler	CDDFRS/ NCD	£12,000
Level 3 Business Administration	NCD	£5,000
Level 3 HR Support	NCD	£4,500
Level 3 Vehicle Damage Panel Technician	Gateshead College	£15,000
Level 3 Heavy Vehicle Service Technician	Gateshead College	£15,000
Level 4 Business Analyst	QA Apprenticeships	£18,000
Level 5 Operations Departmental Manager	Gateshead College	£7,000
Level 5 People Professional	NCD	£11,000
Level 6 Chartered Manager Degree	NCD	£22,000
Level 7 Senior Leadership	Sunderland/Teesside University	£14,000
Level 7 Accountancy or Taxation Professional	CIPFA	£19,677
Level 7 Senior People Professional	Teesside University	£19,000

10. Although the table above shows the overall cost per learner this is not the amount that the Service will pay. The cost to the Service is dependent on the amount of levy available and at what point co-investment comes into operation.
11. The total expected apprenticeship training costs for the service from April 2022 to March 2027 is **£1,271,608.11** as shown in the table below.

Year	Training Costs (including forecasted)
2022/23	£256,068.00
2023/24	£275,134.23
2024/25	£327,511.75
2025/26	£257,423.48
2026/27	£155,470.65
Total	£1,271,608.11

Costs to the Service

12. All costings detailed in the table below are approximations, due to the fluctuating level of monthly PAYE paid, which will impact on the amount of funds available in the levy pot.
13. The table below details actual payments made for years April 2022 – April 2024. From April 2024 the figures included are forecasted which takes into account projected recruitment and numbers of staff currently enrolled onto apprenticeships.

Year	Levy Payments (including forecasted)	Co-investment (including forecasted)
2022/23	£75,246.00	£8,863.68
2023/24	£83,414.00	£8,861.31
2024/25	£82,928.00	£10,321.96
2025/26	£82,928.00	£8,310.13
2026/27	£82,928.00	£3,212.49
Total	£407,444.00	£39,569.57

14. From April 2022 to March 2027 the levy that the Service is obligated to pay is forecasted to be approx. **£407,444.00**.

15. It should be noted that the government adds a 10% top-up to the funds in the service's levy account, which equates to **£40,744.40** from April 2022 – March 2027.
16. Based on actual levy payments made to December 2024, the Service will have a co-investment cost of **£10,321.96** to pay during the year 2024/25. This payment is broken down and paid directly to the appropriate provider on a monthly basis. Although there is a co-investment cost to pay this equates to only 3.15% of the overall training costs during the year 2024/2025. (difference as a percentage).
17. From April 2022 to March 2027 the total co-investing cost for the service is **£39,569.57**.
18. The total cost for the service over this five-year period is **£447,013.57** (point 14+17).

Income generation

19. NCD are the current training providers for the Level 3 Operational Firefighter and Emergency Call Handler Apprenticeship schemes delivered at CDDFRS. Due to NCD not having the skill set or dedicated resources to deliver the training, this is sub-contracted back to the service.
20. A breakdown of the year-on-year income (academic year, paid monthly) as a result of the sub-contracting work is outlined in the table below:

Year	Sub-contract income (including forecasted)
August 22 to July 23	£93,918.25
August 23 to July 24	£87,453.78
August 24 to July 25	£108,881.50
August 25 to July 26	£78,994.86
August 26 to July 27	£77,067.33
Total	£446,315.72

21. The projected overall income generation based on workforce planning assumptions and initial route to competence from April 2022 to March 2027 years is **£446,315.72**.
22. NCD pay CDDFRS, **£1,000** for employing any apprentice aged 16-18 years of age. This is paid direct to the Service and not via the digital account. During 2023-2024 the Service have employed two individuals, totalling **£2,000**.
23. Any future incentive payments will be dependent upon the number and age of new employees recruited onto apprenticeship schemes.
24. The total income received over this five-year period is **£448,315.72** (point 21 + point 22).
25. Additionally, the service has negotiated a levy sharing agreement with Durham County Council (DCC) to fully fund a level 5 Operations/Departmental Management Apprenticeship for nine managers. This allows CDDFRS to use DCC's levy pot at a total training cost of **£63,000.00**, which is paid monthly to CDDFRS.

Conclusion

26. Comparing the income and costs, the service has received **£1,302.15** (point 24 – point 18) more income than cost over this five-year period.
27. Therefore, the Service has secured training worth **£1,271,608.11**, and an additional income of **£1,302.15** through efficient and effective use of the apprenticeship levy.

Summary

28. The figures used within this report are based on current apprenticeship schemes in operation within the Service, drawing down from the levy as well as workforce planning assumptions based on recruitment of ten firefighter apprentices in 2025.
29. If the Service continue to utilise the Emergency Contact Handler and Operational Firefighter Apprenticeships, as they have done previously, the sub-contracting income will remain on par with previous years, ensuring that the annual levy payment is recouped.
30. It is anticipated that CDDRS will continue to make use of the levy sharing arrangement with Durham County Council, which would fully fund apprenticeship cohorts in the future. There is scope to reach out to other organisations to support this as large employers who pay into the apprenticeship levy can now share up to 50% of their levy allowance to other businesses. In 2023, £3.3 billion of unused apprenticeship levy funds were returned to the treasury.

31. It is anticipated that more apprenticeship schemes will be used for internal development which is identified through the annual Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and as a result there will be a constant change to the exact amount of levy spent and co-investment required. However, the income from the sub-contracting work will remain static unless the funding band for the Level 3 Operational Firefighter and Emergency Call Handler Apprenticeship is amended or the number of employees enrolling and completing the standard changes.
32. Looking ahead, the Labour Government are planning to transform the Apprenticeship Levy, into the new Growth and Skills Levy which is part of their broader strategy to allow businesses the flexibility they need to train their workforce. The reformed levy is likely to continue to include apprenticeships but will provide scope for businesses to fund other training programmes in addition to apprenticeship standards.

Recommendations

33. Authority Members are requested to:
 - a. **Note** and **comment** on the contents of this report.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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