



25 April 2018

**(1) MEMBERS OF THE AVON FIRE AUTHORITY**

Councillors Abraham, Ashe, Barber, Barrett (N), Butters, Davies (C), Davies (D) (Chair), Davis, Dudd, Garner, Hale, Jackson, Jama, Lake, Massey, Morris, Phipps, Pomfret, Scott, Shah, Shelford, Tyrrell, Williams, Wilton and Windows.

**(2) APPROPRIATE OFFICERS**

**(3) PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Dear Member

You are invited to attend an Extraordinary meeting of the **Avon Fire Authority** to be held on **Thursday 3 May 2018 commencing at 10.00am**.

The meeting will be held in the Main Conference Room, Police and Fire HQ, Valley Road, Portishead, Bristol, BS20 8JJ.

The Agenda is set out overleaf.

Yours sincerely

**Guy Goodman**  
Clerk to the Fire Authority

**PROVIDING AVON FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**



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**Working in partnership with the Gambia Fire & Rescue Service (GF&RS)**

## **Notes**

**Attendance Register:** Members should sign the Register which will be circulated at the meeting.

**Code of Conduct – Declaration of Interests:** any Member in attendance who has a personal interest in any matter to be considered at this meeting must disclose the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent. A Member having a prejudicial interest must withdraw from the meeting room whilst the matter is considered.

### **Emergency Evacuation Procedure:**

- If the fire alarm sounds Members must leave the building by the nearest exit.
- The assembly point is situated in the Visitor's car park.

**Exempt Items:** Members are reminded that any Exempt reports as circulated with the agenda for this meeting contain exempt information and should therefore be treated accordingly. They should not be disclosed or passed on to any other person(s). Members are also reminded of the need to dispose of such reports carefully and are therefore invited to return them to the Clerk at the conclusion of the meeting for disposal.

**Inspection of Papers:** any person wishing to inspect Minutes, reports, or a list of the background papers relating to any item on this Agenda should contact Kathlin Baty on 0117 926 2061 ext. 231 or at Police and Fire HQ, Valley Road, Portishead, Bristol, BS22 8JJ but only by appointment and during normal office hours.

**Public Access:** under Standing Order 21 and providing 2 clear working days' notice has been given to the Clerk ([the.clerk@avonfire.gov.uk](mailto:the.clerk@avonfire.gov.uk)) any resident or representative of a business or voluntary organisation operating in Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset or North Somerset Council may address the Fire Authority or one of its Committees (for no more than 5 minutes) to present a petition, make a statement, or as leader of a deputation. This is a time limit of 30 minutes for Public Access

**Reports:** reports are identified by the relevant agenda item number.

**Substitutes (for Committees only):** notification of substitutes should have been received from Group Leaders by the Clerk prior to the meeting.

## **A G E N D A**

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Emergency Evacuation Procedures**
- 3. Declaration of Interests**
- 4. Chair's Business**
- 5. Minutes of the Fire Authority held on 23 March 2018**
- 6. Public Access**
- 7. Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 11 April 2018**
- 8. Consultation on the Composition of the Fire Authority**
- 9. Date of next meeting: Friday 8 June 2018 (2pm)**
- 10. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

To resolve that the public be excluded from the meeting during the following items of business on the grounds that they contained exempt information pursuant to Schedule 12A, Part I of the Local Government Act 1972 and that in accordance with Schedule 12A, Part II, paragraph 10 of the Local Government Act 1972 the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

- 11. Sale of HQ (verbal update)**

**AVON FIRE AUTHORITY****23 March 2018**

**Present:** Councillors Abraham, Ashe, Barber, Barrett (left at 3.44pm), Butters, Davies (C), Davies (D), Davis, Dudd, Garner, Hale, Jackson (left at 4.30pm), Lake (left at 4.30pm), Massey, Phipps, Pomfret (left at 3:52pm), Shah (arrived at 3:33pm), Shelford, Tyrell, Williams.

The meeting began at 2.40pm.

**80. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Morris, Scott, Windows, and Wilton. Councillor Jama was absent.

**81. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES** - the Interim Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive (CFO) outlined the arrangements.**82. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS** - the Chair drew attention to the requirements of the code of conduct as set out in the Agenda.

The Clerk advised that members of the Service Management Board and the Interim Treasurer should declare an interest in Item 86 and withdraw for consideration of that item. The Clerk also declared an interest in that item but would remain to assist Members.

**83. CHAIR'S BUSINESS****LGA Fire Conference**

The Chair reported that he and the Interim Chief Fire Officer (CFO) had attended the Fire Conference in Gateshead. Two key matters had been discussed:

- 1) The independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, is being led by Dame Judith Hackitt. The review is likely to lead to a fundamental re-regulation of building and development, which will in turn impact on the work of the Fire Authority.
- 2) A Home Office briefing indicated that government is seeking to review the pattern of funding for fire authorities. Risk and demand will be reviewed and support given to fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) will be realigned. No further information is yet available.

**Discussion with Unitary Authority Leaders**

The Chair reported that he and the Vice Chair (Cllr Jackson) had met today with the four Unitary Authority (UA) Leaders or their representatives. They had had a full and frank discussion about the future size of the Fire Authority. Three of the UA leaders favour a Fire Authority with 11 Members, plus independent (non-councillor) members. In contrast the Deputy Mayor of Bristol would prefer that the Fire Authority had 20 Members. The Chair reported his observations as follows:

- 1) The guidance from both the Home Office and the Fire Minister was that the decision on numbers is a Fire Authority decision. Legally the Fire Authority must make any changes it deems necessary through its own Combination Order.
- 2) The public consultation on numbers will conclude at 5pm on 26 March 2018.
- 3) A General Purposes Committee (GPC) meeting should be called in April to consider the consultation responses and produce a paper of options. These options should then be discussed and determined by the full Fire Authority.
- 4) The Chair said that five key areas should be considered:
  - a. The mathematics of any decision, some numbers work better than others.
  - b. Ensuring that the Fire Authority is fit to serve its legal purpose of keeping the people of Avon safe.
  - c. Retaining a base of skilled Members to serve the Fire Authority.
  - d. Ensuring that Members are representative of the whole area – potentially the most problematic area.
  - e. Ensuring that Members are representative of the people of Avon (i.e. gender, ethnicity, and age). The Fire Authority is working hard to ensure that the workforce reflects the population it serves and the Chair feels strongly that the Members of the Fire Authority should be similarly representative.

The Chair invited the Vice Chair to comment further. Cllr Jackson supported the comments of the Chair. The meeting with the UA Leaders enabled the Chair and Vice Chair to hear the thoughts and ideas of the UA Leaders; it was not a discussion or debate. Three of the UAs did not wish the Fire Authority to have more than 11 Members. The group of UA Leaders have stated that they wish to meet with the Fire Minister. Cllr Jackson supported the proposed actions set out by the Chair for the GPC to determine options for the consideration of the Fire Authority.

The matter was then discussed by the other Members of the Fire Authority.

Cllr Butters asked why the UA Leaders favoured a membership of 11, and asked if that was to include the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). The Chair replied that they had proposed 11 Members, with the PCC (if she decided to join the Fire Authority) as an additional member. Cllr Jackson said that the rationale for 11 Members was not made clear by the UA Leaders. When asked, the UA Leaders had said that this was the number recommended in the inspection report, but this was not the case as the report does not suggest 11 Members. Cllr Jackson stated that when the UA Leaders were asked for their comments about the impact of a small membership on smaller party group representation (such as Independent, Green and Liberal Democrats) their reply had been that the smaller parties needed to win more councillor seats to ensure greater representation.

Cllr Hale commented that it was good that the Vice Chair had also attended this meeting. He suggested that the next meeting with the Fire Minister should also be attended by the Vice Chair. The Chair, Vice Chair and Cllr Davis agreed that this would be beneficial.

Cllr Davis asked for clarification about the implementation date. The Chair replied that the consultation suggests an implementation date of May 2019, reflecting elections due to take place at that time in three of the four UAs. This date was

agreed by the Chair, the CFO and the GPC. More recently the Fire Minister and the Home Office have indicated that a change in Membership by the end of 2018 would be more desirable. At the meeting today the UA Leaders had stated that they wanted the changes to be effective by the end of 2018 and had stated that they would determine the size of the Fire Authority externally by deciding what numbers of Members they would send to the Fire Authority.

The Chair and the Vice Chair asked the Clerk to call a meeting of the GPC to progress this matter urgently in April.

**84. MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2018**

Cllr Barrett raised a matter regarding a Freedom of Information request. He was advised to write to the Clerk after the meeting.

The minutes of the Fire Authority held on 9 February 2018 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

**85. PUBLIC ACCESS** - No requests have been received.

**86. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

Members of the Service Management Board and the Interim Treasurer withdrew for consideration of minute 86.

**86.1 Employment Committee held on 1 March 2018**

Cllr Hale introduced the item stating that the Fire Authority had an opportunity to bring the Chief Fire Officer's (CFO) salary back in line with average CFO salary levels. He moved the recommendations in:

1) Minute 13 - Annual Review of the Remuneration of the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive

- a) The new CFO's salary should be set at £137,623 (this is the average basic pay of CFOs across the UK as set out in the 2017 pay survey from the LGA).
- b) Existing postholders below CFO will continue to be paid at their current salaries.
- c) However, for any new appointments the differentials with the new CFO's salary will be restored.
- d) The annual pay award from the NJC will be paid in accordance with the Gold Book.

2) Minute 14 - Pay Policy Statement 2018/19

Approve the proposed Pay Policy Statement 2018/19 subject to any changes resulting from the Fire Authority's decision on Minute 13.

**RESOLVED** to agree the recommendations of the Employment Committee as set out above.

**86.2 Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee held on 9 March 2018**

The minutes of the Committee were **NOTED**.

**87. URGENT ACTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 5.1**

87.1 **NOTED** that the Clerk, after consultation with the Chair, arranged for inaccurate comments concerning a member of staff to be muted in the published recording of the Fire Authority meeting of 9 February 2018.

87.2 **NOTED** that the Clerk, after consultation with the Chair and Group Leaders, arranged for the following vacancies to be filled:

- a) Audit, Governance and Ethics Committee - Cllr Morris.
- b) Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee - Cllr Ashe.

**88. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (PRESENTATION ONLY)**

HMICFRS Service Liaison Officer gave a presentation to outline the process which lies ahead for the development of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). He stressed that it was important that all Members understood the process as the critical date of 1 April 2019 is approached.

Members were reminded that the Fire Authority's statutory duties are:

- Fire Safety
- Fire Fighting
- Road Traffic Accidents
- Emergencies as defined by Sec of State under Section 9 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

In addition to statutory duties the Fire Authority has discretionary powers under Section 11 of the Act. Under this power the Fire Authority may carry out such activities as animal rescue, mud and water rescue and use high volume pumps where there is flooding.

Section 21 of the Act requires that a framework is published by Government. The current framework was published in 2012 and its replacement is expected to be published in June 2018. In turn the framework requires the Fire Authority to publish an IRMP.

The Officer stated that it was expected that the inspection regime will begin to standardise IRMPs between FRAs, and also to standardise the processes leading up to their publication.

The current IRMP was developed in 2015/16 taking due regard of fire and rescue related risks in our local area. Such factors included new housing developments, high-risk industrial areas, and the Fire Authority's perspective on national strategic risks (such as flooding, climate change and terrorism).

The IRMP was based on two fundamental matters:

- 1) There should be no change to response standards.
- 2) The corporate decision to align to the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) critical attendance standards (CAST).

Looking ahead, it was indicated that if these two fundamental decisions are changed then that will be integral to any changes in service provision and will affect the new IRMP.

The Fire Minister has made it clear that a review of the IRMP (which is currently due to expire in March 2020) is required as an integral part of the Fire Authority's improvement journey. It is therefore proposed that the Corporate Plan (which expires in March 2018) is integrated with the IRMP to form one single service plan effective from April 2019 onwards. Under this proposal, there would be one year of an interim Corporate Plan (April 2018 to March 2019) and then a fresh start from 1 April 2019 with an integrated plan.

Members' attention was particularly drawn to the early stages of the preparation for the new IRMP which would be happening in the next few months:

- 1) The strategic assessment will examine the local risks presented by housing, industrial activities, and as summarised in local community risk registers. National risk factors presented by terrorism, climate change, and other national risks will also be considered.
- 2) An internal risk review will also be conducted. This will examine factors such as previous incidents, response times, predetermined attendance levels, and indices of deprivation. This review has already been commissioned.

Once these two pieces of work have been completed, the focus will be on the confirmation of planning assumptions. The assumptions form the fundamental building blocks for building capability and capacity, so a discussion and decisions about the speed of response and the weight of attack, is critical to the future planning.

In due course, the decisions made will feed down into decisions made about estate, equipment investment and resourcing.

The framework requires that the IRMP must cover at least 3 years.

Overall there is much to do in a restricted period of time and Members were assured that a dedicated team was already underway with work in this area.

Questions and comments were received from Members as follows.

Cllr Shelford asked for more information about the 2004 Act, particularly with regard to Sections 9 and 11. In response it was indicated that there is national resilience funding for high volume pumping, under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. In addition, the devolved administrations have statutory responsibility for flood rescue but that English FRAs do not have this statutory responsibility. This situation appears unlikely to change in the near future.

Cllr Shelford said that the focus of his question was concern about the fatalities in both Bath and Bristol arising when young people had fallen into waterways late at night. He also asked for more information about response times. It was indicated that comparison work with other FRAs was being carried out, including seeking information about the evidence behind their response times.

Cllr Butters expressed concern about new housing developments, where often a whole housing estate is effectively one large cul-de-sac. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Delivery Support) (ACFO) responded that the Fire Authority was consulted regularly about new housing developments, particularly where there were

new roads or where the number of houses was significant. He was confident that fire safety was considered as part of the planning process and that the Fire Authority was appropriately consulted.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked the HMICFRS Service Liaison Officer for his presentation and emphasised to Members that the IRMP process is a critical piece of work for the Fire Authority over the next year.

## **89. Apprenticeship Levy**

The ACFO presented a report highlighting the changes to the way that government funds apprenticeships in England. He made the following key points.

The apprenticeship levy is charged at 0.5% of the annual wage bill, so the levy is approximately £150,000 per annum for the Fire Authority. The levy has been effective since April 2017.

Like all other organisations which pay the levy, the Fire Authority has choices about how to proceed.

The levy is lodged in a digital account, which gives the Fire Authority 24 months in which to spend the funds on appropriate training and qualifications. If the money is not spent then the funds are lost to HM Treasury.

Five options were presented to the Fire Authority for discussion. The ACFO recommended that Option 5 was selected. This option would enable the levy to be used to train current staff as part of an apprenticeship scheme. Standards are being developed for each managerial level up to and including strategic manager. It was recommended that work should continue to enable Options 3 and 4 to be effective in the near future.

The Chair stated that it was crucial that the Fire Authority took advantage of the money set aside through the levy to develop staff.

Cllr Shelford stated that Options 1 (allow the levy fund to be lost to HM Treasury) and 2 (allow the UAs to use the levy) were not at all desirable. He asked for clarification about the difference between Options 3 and 5. The ACFO explained that Option 3 would enable apprentices to be brought into the organisation to be trained for various roles. Option 5 would allow the organisation to train those already in employment for further or different roles.

Cllr Shelford asked why Option 3 was not a suitable path to follow at this stage. The ACFO stated that it would be preferable to adopt Option 5 at this initial stage, and to continue working on putting the infrastructure in place to support apprentices through Options 3 and 4 in 2019. This is because the apprentice pathway includes non-operational elements which must be completed before progressing to operational elements, and work needs to be done within the Fire Authority to ensure that the correct non-operational support is in place. If the apprenticeship levy is overspent then government will top up the apprenticeship levy fund by up to 90%.

Cllr Dudd asked questions about salary costs and the training arrangements. The ACFO confirmed that training must be recognised through the apprenticeship pathway to ensure that the levy can be recovered; and stated that salary costs were not recoverable. The ACFO stated it was good to consider training and development through the levy alongside planning for retirements next year.

Cllr Jackson asked for more information about the requirements of residence made of Firefighters; he was concerned that trained Firefighters may leave the Fire Authority. The ACFO said that previously Firefighters were required to be “constantly residing” in the Avon area. This was no longer the case, and the organisation aimed to retain staff through investment and good employment policies.

Cllr Butters stated that he would expect applications for apprenticeships to be competitive. The ACFO added that he would expect this style of recruitment and training to give the Fire Authority the opportunity to improve diversity in the workforce. It would be possible to allocate training opportunities to those coming from under-represented groups if that is what Members determined.

**RESOLVED to:**

- a) Approve Option 5 as the preferred approach at this time.
- b) Approve Options 3 and 4 for adoption in 2019.

At this point Councillor Barrett thanked the Officers of the Fire Authority for the service they had given to the Fire Authority over his years of service. He was now obliged to leave the Fire Authority following the change in policy regarding maximum years of service. Councillor Barrett then left the meeting.

**90. TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME REPORT**

This item was deferred to be considered after Item 94; however in the light of discussions during Item 94 it was then decided that the item would be deferred to a subsequent meeting.

**91. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: FRIDAY 8 JUNE 2018 (2pm)**

**92. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that the public be excluded from the meeting during the following items of business on the grounds that they contained exempt information pursuant to Schedule 12A, Part I of the Local Government Act 1972 and that in accordance with Schedule 12A, Part II, paragraph 10 of the Local Government Act 1972 the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**93. FIRE AND RESCUE INDEMNITY COMPANY LTD**

The Treasurer introduced the report to provide Members with an update on the Fire Authority’s membership of the Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company Ltd (FRIC) since it was approved in December 2017. Unfortunately, the Fire Authority will not be able to join FRIC until the expiry of the current long term insurance contracts in 2020.

Cllr Shelford agreed that it would be worth negotiating with the insurers for early release from the contracts. Lessons should also be learned for the future.

**RESOLVED to:**

- a) Continue with the existing long term agreements for insurance until their expiry.
- b) Defer membership of FRIC until April 2020.

- c) Authorise the Interim Treasurer to negotiate a two year contract with Bristol City Council for the provision of Risk Management and Insurance Services on terms to be approved by the Clerk.
- d) Negotiate with the current insurers for an early termination to the policies to enable the Fire Authority to join FRIC in 2020.

**94. SALE OF HQ**

The Clerk provided an update on the current supported by Peter Musgrove, Director of Lambert, Smith Hampton (commercial property agent) who provided further details of the revised offer to the meeting.

**RESOLVED** (with one abstention) to accept the revised offer of staged payments with the following conditions:

- 1) The deferred amount to be secured by way of first charge on the property.
- 2) Interest to be levied on the deferred amount at the rate of 2% over Bank of England base rate. This will be calculated daily and paid annually in arrears.
- 3) The deferred amount to be paid on the earlier of five years or sale.
- 4) The preferred bidder to deliver a policy compliant scheme (for the avoidance of doubt this is a minimum of 20% affordable housing level).

Meeting closed at 4.44pm

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Chair

**AVON FIRE AUTHORITY****GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE****11 APRIL 2018****PRESENT:** Councillors Davis, Davies (D) (Chair), Jackson, Windows.

The meeting started at 10.07am.

**22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Hale. Cllr Scott was not present.

**23. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES** – The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedures as set out in the Agenda.**24. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS** – The Chair drew attention to the requirements of the Code of Conduct as set out in the Agenda.**25. CHAIR'S BUSINESS** – None.**26. CONSULTATION ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY – RESPONSES AND NEXT STEPS**

The Chair introduced the report by saying that Members were agreed that the size of the Fire Authority should be reduced, as did other stakeholders. Other stakeholders had not presented a unified view on the preferred future size of the Fire Authority.

Cllr Jackson stated that not all Members shared the view that the Fire Authority should be reduced.

The Chair reported that he and Cllr Jackson had recently met with the Leaders of the four Unitary Authorities (UAs). Three of the four favoured a Fire Authority with 11 Members to be supplemented by unelected Members and further appointees if necessary in the future.

Cllr Jackson stated that the rationale on the proposed numbers set out by the three UAs was that this was the preferred Fire Authority size of the Fire Minister. However, the Fire Minister had not stated a preferred size.

The Chair reported that the Leaders of Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) and North Somerset in particular have said that their own UAs will decide the number of Members they will send to the Fire Authority, regardless of the Combination Order. He noted that the size of the Fire Authority was for the Fire Authority itself to determine and it was not for the UAs to determine the size of the Fire Authority by sending the number of Members of their choice. Legal advice had been sought from several sources and was consistent in this regard.

Cllr Jackson stated that the Leader of South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) had also said he would follow the same approach.

The Interim Chief Fire Officer (CFO) said that the Fire Minister had never made any comments on the number of Members on the Fire Authority. The inspection report had suggested that the numbers should be approximately halved.

The Chair stated that the remaining UA (Bristol City Council (BCC)) had been represented by the Deputy Mayor. The Deputy Mayor had stated that all party groups on Bristol City Council were in favour of the Fire Authority having 20 Members, although she personally favoured a slightly smaller number.

The Chair reported that he had recently met with representatives of the North Yorkshire Fire Authority. This Authority has some independent Members, in the form of the Police and Crime Commissioner and a representative of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). The North Yorkshire Fire Authority could also choose to invite representatives of other unions or other stakeholders to take a place on the Authority.

Cllr Jackson thought that the Hampshire Fire Authority appointed independent Members, although it was not clear if this was the case.

The Chair noted that meetings with stakeholders had been inconclusive. Three of the UAs favoured a Fire Authority with a “high-teen” number of Members. BCC favoured a Fire Authority with 20 Members.

The Chair proposed a framework to consider the future size of the Fire Authority. In his opinion the key matters to be considered were as follows:

1. Representative of the electorate
2. Accountable through role description and attendance
3. Reflect the population served
4. Capacity to undertake workload and fulfil statutory obligations
5. Simple allocation of Members.

Councillor seats in the Avon area are currently held as follows:

- 48% Conservative
- 25% Labour
- 22% Liberal Democrat
- 5% Green / Independent.

There was no overall control in the Fire Authority by any one political party. The Fire Authority had been experiencing challenging times and Members were working hard together to resolve matters. The fact that the Fire Authority

was not in Special Measures indicated that the current political balance was working well.

The Chair noted that the Fire Authority had been working to ensure that staff were more reflective of the population of Avon by increasing the numbers of females and BME in the workforce. He stated that it was important that the Members were not only drawn from the white, male population and should also reflect the population of the area.

The Chair stated that it was important that Members had a good record of attendance, and that if they cannot attend regularly they should be removed from the Fire Authority. Cllr Jackson supported this statement.

The Chair noted that the size of the Fire Authority must be adequate to carry out the statutory work of the Fire Authority, to keep the people of Avon safe.

The Chair stated that some numbers work better than others, leaving fewer fractions to be negotiated.

The Chair asked other Members for their comments.

Cllr Jackson stated that he was content with the proposed framework.

Cllr Davis stated he was not opposed to the proposed framework. He made the following points:

- The framework would provide a useful baseline for assessing potential Fire Authority sizes.
- The Fire Authority must determine its own size, the size is not a matter for the UAs to determine.
- Regardless of size, the date of change of the make-up of the Fire Authority should be May 2019, not 2018.
- The number of Members appointed to the Fire Authority should reflect the work which needs to be done.
- He particularly noted the number of inquorate meetings which had occurred. He noted that Local Authorities all have a six month rule, ensuring that Councillors cannot opt out of attending meetings indefinitely. He felt that attendance requirements should not be overcomplicated.
- His personal view was that Members of the Fire Authority needed to demonstrate commitment to the Fire Authority and attend all their scheduled meetings.

The Clerk was asked to present the results of the public consultation. The Clerk drew Members' attention to the graphics and comments included in the report. Members were informed of the following:

- There had been 53 anonymised online responses.

- There was no overall majority in favour of a particular number of Members.
- A Fire Authority with 10 Members was marginally more popular than a Fire Authority with 20 Members.
- A significant number of respondents favoured no change in the size of the Fire Authority.
- Respondents were asked to make a stark choice between 10 and 20 Members.
- The Fire Authority could choose a different number, it was not compelled to choose a number on which it had consulted.
- A small majority of respondents were opposed to a change in the Combination Order.

There had been further email responses from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), SGC, BCC and the unions. SGC favoured a Fire Authority with 11 Members and a new appointment model, whilst BCC favoured a Fire Authority with 20 Members on the existing appointment model. Overall the results were not decisive.

The Chair noted that the SGC Leader had said that all parties would be consulted. Cllr Davis said that the SGC Leader had not consulted with other Members at all.

Cllr Jackson understood that BANES Members had not been consulted and that many North Somerset Members were unaware of the consultation.

The Chair commented that 53 online responses was a good number.

Cllr Windows noted that the results of the consultation were a guide not an instruction.

The Chair stated that the results of the consultation were inconclusive.

Cllr Davis disagreed as he read the situation differently. He noted that Cllr Jackson favoured 20 Members, whilst he himself favoured 25 Members. Therefore he felt there was a view in the room that an Authority of 20 or more Members was the best size.

Cllr Jackson explained the process of consultation which had taken place amongst BCC Members. Each party group had been asked for its view and also to give its rationale for their favoured number. All political parties separately concluded that 20 was the best number, and gave similar rationales based around the value of cross-party working, representation of the people of Avon, and allowing for diversity amongst Members of the Authority. In addition, the Greens had also noted that a lesser number would exclude smaller party representation.

Cllr Jackson asked whether the PCC could be the Chair on joining the Fire Authority. The Clerk advised that a PCC who is a voting Member of the Fire Authority can also be Chair.

Cllr Windows asked if Members would need to vote if they wished the PCC to be Chair of the Fire Authority. The Clerk indicated that was the case and that a change in the Combination Order would be necessary to admit PCCs to Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) as full voting Members and that the necessary changes to the Combination Order by the Minister are expected to be made around September time.

Cllr Davies noted that the Fire Minister had initially indicated that a change in the size of the Fire Authority in May 2019 was acceptable. The CFO had been present at the meeting when this was indicated. However, more recently, the Home Office had indicated that May 2019 was too late, although January 2019 would be acceptable. Cllr Davies noted that the UA leaders wanted the Fire Authority to change its size in May 2018.

Cllr Jackson stated that BCC did not want the Fire Authority to change its size in May 2018.

Cllr Davies noted that:

1. There would be some advantages of making an early change: The change would be made and the Fire Authority could focus on other work, rather than its own composition.
2. The Fire Authority would have a year of continuity prior to the elections in three of the four Unitary Authorities in May 2019, when there would be further changes to the Membership.

Cllr Jackson asked, what were the ramifications of opting for a change in May 2019.

Cllr Davies replied that the Home Office would not be happy, currently the Home Office are supportive of the Fire Authority's change agenda and it would be regrettable if that support was lost.

Cllr Jackson noted that the three UA Leaders (North Somerset, BANES and SGC) wished to meet with the Fire Minister. No Councillor present believed that this meeting had yet taken place.

Cllr Davis stated that he agreed with Cllr Jackson. The Fire Authority must determine its own size. He felt the cross-party working on the Fire Authority was very positive and there was no need to play party politics in the matter of Fire and Rescue services.

Cllr Windows asked Members to consider the purpose of the meeting. He felt that a political smoke screen had been created to push the Fire Authority in a direction which was not necessarily in the best interests of the people of Avon. It was necessary to dig in and present the case strongly for the right-sized

Authority, regardless of anonymous figures in the background pushing for different agendas. Although he understood the Chair's wish to maintain the support of the Home Office, it was important to be independent and to determine what was the best solution for the Fire Authority and for local people.

The Chair reminded Members that they were considering the following dates for changes to the composition of the Fire Authority:

- a) May 2018
- b) January 2019
- c) May 2019

The Treasurer informed Members that a change in January 2019 would present difficulties. The budget for the new Municipal Year would be out for consultation from December 2018. It could be impractical to have a newly constituted Fire Authority with a number of new Members receiving feedback on the budget consultation, and having to set the precept immediately on appointment.

Cllr Davis stated that the change should not be made in January 2019. He was sympathetic to the Chair and understood that he was trying to make progress, but stated that it was important that the Committee dealt with the facts.

Cllr Jackson noted that in May 2018, BCC would appoint Members to the Fire Authority for the Municipal Year. BCC had already made it clear that Members appointed for the year would be expected to serve for the full period, no appointments would be cancelled part way through the year.

The Chair proposed that the three dates he had suggested should be put before the Fire Authority. This was agreed.

Cllr Jackson suggested that the appropriate Monitoring Officer should be informed:

- where a Member missed two meetings without apologies; or,
- where a Member missed three or four meetings even when apologies had been made.

Cllr Jackson noted that it would be easier for the appropriate UA (rather than the Fire Authority) to raise the matter with the Member, and take action.

The Clerk offered to put together some options for the management of Member attendance.

The CFO asked if it was intended to treat Committee meetings in the same way as Fire Authority meetings. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Delivery Support) (ACFO) said that consideration should be given to the fact that some Members were on many Committees and others on few.

The Chair and Cllr Jackson agreed that Committees and Fire Authority meetings were all important and should be treated in the same way. Cllr Davis stated that if Members attended Fire Authority meetings but did not attend their allocated Committee meetings then they should be removed from the Authority.

Cllr Jackson said that party group leaders should work with Members to ensure that all Members are allocated to Committees and attend.

The Chair requested that the Monitoring Officer should draft a Standing Order which states that there will be a presumption that all Members of the Fire Authority should sit on Committees.

The Clerk informed Members that the Member Job Descriptions had been drafted and were now ready to be submitted to the Fire Authority. The Chair said this would be a positive step towards transparency.

The Chair asked Members to consider the number of Members who should be on the Authority.

Cllr Windows observed that the inspector had criticised the Fire Authority for leaving power in the hands of a small number of Members, it would therefore run counter to the inspection report's findings to move to a much smaller Fire Authority where power would be in the hands of a small number of Members.

The Clerk stated that numbers of Members do not determine whether an organisation has good governance. He reminded Members that the Audit, Governance and Ethics Committee was about to commence, via a working group, consideration of the governance structure and constitution of the Fire Authority.

Cllr Jackson had asked the Labour Party Head Office for advice about numbers of Members on the Fire Authority. He had wanted to know if the Fire Authority could be challenged about the numbers of Members. The advice had been that the Fire Authority could be challenged about numbers. The Fire Authority is required to have balance and therefore any excluded groups could challenge the Fire Authority's decision on a legitimate basis. He had also been advised that whilst a challenge is considered, the Fire Authority would have to revert to its original structure.

The Clerk agreed with this analysis: during a challenge an interim injunction could be issued, requiring the Fire Authority to revert to the status quo. However, he felt it was likely that when being considered by the court, a change in numbers would not be regarded as an irrational change and would therefore be unlikely to be overturned easily.

The Chair observed that numbers of Members on the Fire Authority are made difficult by the current Combination Order. In the future, the Fire Authority could use the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) formula for

calculating the representatives from each UA, alternatively the calculation could be based on the number of Councillors in the Avon area. He asked Members if the Fire Authority should use the existing Combination Order or a smaller number and change the political balance. Cllr Jackson stated that the feeling of BCC Councillors was that BCC should have more Members as the BCC area contributes more financially to the Fire Authority.

The Clerk stated that he would include models for 10 Members, 20 Members and 25 Members on the Fire Authority using the WECA model, for the consideration of the Fire Authority.

The Chair asked Members if they wished to offer a recommendation to the Fire Authority.

Cllr Windows felt strongly that the Committee should offer a recommendation.

Cllr Jackson and Cllr Windows wished to recommend that the Fire Authority should have 20 Members. Cllr Davis stated that he would prefer 25 Members, but could accept 20 Members, he noted that BCC was the only UA which had consulted with all political parties, and that BCC would prefer 20 Members. He also commented that if the Fire Authority reduced to 20 Members, then it would be a visible sign that the inspection report recommendations had been followed.

The Chair said he would be happy to recommend that the Fire Authority should reduce its size to 20 Members.

The Clerk asked if the recommendation of 20 Members was to be based on the WECA model or on the existing methodology.

The Chair said that in his view if the number was 20 or 25, the Fire Authority should stick with the current methodology, whereas if the number was smaller then the WECA model would be necessary.

Cllr Jackson noted that BANES and North Somerset do not favour the WECA model.

The Chair stated that if the number was reduced to less than 20 then it was more likely to be necessary to change the Combination Order to reflect the political balance using the WECA model. Cllrs Jackson and Windows agreed.

Cllr Jackson asked for confirmation that if the number was set at 20 there would be no overall political control. The Clerk confirmed that this should be the case.

Cllr Jackson stated that if the Fire Authority reduced to less than 20 Members it would be difficult to represent the people of the area fairly. The Chair stated that the distribution of seats would still be fairer than the current Combination Order. The Chair noted that the average number of Members in all FRAs is 19.9 Members.

**RESOLVED** to recommend to the Fire Authority at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Fire Authority to be convened on 3 May 2018 to consider the consultation and make a determination on the future composition that:

- a) the number of Members of the Fire Authority should be reduced from 25 to 20.
- b) the change should be effective from May 2018.
- c) attendance requirements of Members should be included in the Standing Orders of the Fire Authority.

27. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Thursday 3 May 2018 – this meeting is cancelled.

The meeting concluded at 11.07am.

.....  
Chair

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>3 May 2018</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>The Clerk</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Consultation on the Composition of the Fire Authority</b>

1. **SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to present to the Fire Authority with the responses to the public consultation on the future composition of the Fire Authority and to consider the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee on this and other related issues.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Approve a reduction in the number of Members of the Fire Authority from 25 to 20.
- b) Approve that the reduction in a) above should be effective for the Annual Meeting on 8 June 2018.
- c) Approve new Standing Order 1.7A

**1.7A Non-attendance of Members**

*1.7A.1 Where a Member fails, throughout a period of three months from the date of their last attendance, to attend any meeting of the Fire Authority, then the appropriate Political Group Leader shall be advised of the non-attendance and asked to take appropriate action. Where the Member is not a member of a political group the Clerk shall advise the Member directly.*

*1.7A2 Where a Member fails, throughout a period of six months from the date of their last attendance, to attend any meeting of the Fire Authority, then the Clerk shall write to the Chief Executive of the Member's Unitary Authority advising them of the non-attendance and inviting that Authority to consider removing the Member and appointing an alternative.*

1.7A3 *Paragraphs 1.7A.1 and 1.7A.2 shall not apply where the failure to attend was as a result of some reason approved by, or on behalf of, the Fire Authority or one of the Unitary Authorities before the expiry of that period.*

1.7A4 *A 'meeting of the Fire Authority' includes meetings of the Fire Authority itself and of its committees.*

1.7A5 *Where a situation arises with a Member's non-attendance which is not specifically covered by the preceding paragraphs of this Standing Order the Clerk shall take whatever reasonable action he deems appropriate within the spirit of this Rule to deal with that situation.*

d) Approve new Standing Order 1.25

1.25 ***Expectations of Members***

1.25.1 *There is an expectation that each Member shall volunteer to sit on at least one Committee of the Fire Authority and in default the Fire Authority shall allocate that Member to a Committee unless there is a good reason not to do so.*

1.25.2 *The Fire Authority has adopted a role description for Members and there is an expectation that each Member will fulfil that role description (as amended from time to time) upon appointment and throughout their tenure as a Member.*

1.25.3 *Members have a responsibility to keep their compliance with the role description under regular review and if they feel at any time that they are unable to meet its requirements then they should consult their Unitary Authority about their continued membership.*

e) Approve the proposed Member Role Description

3. **BACKGROUND**

**Consultation**

3.1. On 9 February 2018, the Fire Authority approved a consultation document on its future composition. The following 3 questions were posed:

Question 1

*Taking into account the enclosed background documentation please indicate which of the proposed size and structure models for the Fire Authority set out below would be the most effective to enable the Fire Authority to discharge its responsibilities:*

- *25 Members (status quo)*
- *20 Members*
- *10 Members*

*Please provide any explanation you feel is pertinent to your responses.*

*If the Police & Crime Commissioner for Avon & Somerset requests to become a Member and the Fire Authority accepts the request in accordance with the proposed statutory framework then the membership will increase accordingly.*

### Question 2

*Whether the Minister should be invited to amend the method of appointing Members set out in the Avon Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1995 (which governs the governance arrangements for the Fire Authority). From June 2019 rather than the current system where Members are appointed by each Unitary Authority (UA) on the basis of the number of electoral voters as a proportion of the total number of voters across all four UAs should Members be appointed in accordance with the arrangements for the appointment of members to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of a Combined Authority?*

*Please provide reasons for your answer.*

### Question 3

*Please set out any other comments you may have which you believe are relevant to this consultation.*

- 3.2. The consultation was opened to the public via an online survey on Thursday 22 February 2018. Key stakeholders were e mailed on 21 February 2018 and 19 March 2018.

### **Consultation Responses**

- 3.3. There were 53 responses to the online survey. These are set out at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.4. Individual responses were received from the Police & Crime Commissioner for Avon & Somerset, South Gloucestershire Council, a joint response from the FBU, UNISON and Unite, and a joint response from the Bristol Labour Group, Conservative Group, Green Group, and Liberal Democrat Group. These responses are set out at **Appendix 2**.

### **Recommendations of the General Purposes Committee**

- 3.5. On 11 April 2018, the General Purposes Committee considered the consultation responses. The draft minutes from that meeting are to be found elsewhere on today's agenda.
- 3.6. The Committee adopted the following framework in considering its response to the consultation responses that the membership should:
1. Be representative of the electorate
  2. Be accountable to role description and attendance
  3. Reflect the population served

4. Have the capacity to undertake workload and fulfil statutory obligations
  5. Be allocated as simply as possible.
- 3.7. Following extensive discussion the Committee resolved to recommend to the Fire Authority that:
- a) the number of Members of the Fire Authority should be reduced from 25 to 20.
  - b) the change should be effective from May 2018.
  - c) attendance requirements of Members should be included in the Standing Orders of the Fire Authority.
- 3.8. The Clerk was asked to provide suitable wording for a new Standing Order. The following revision to Standing Orders is provided for Members' consideration:

**Insert new Standing Order 1.7A**

**1.7A *Non-attendance of Members***

- 1.7A.1 *Where a Member fails, throughout a period of three months from the date of their last attendance, to attend any meeting of the Fire Authority, then the appropriate Political Group Leader shall be advised of the non-attendance and asked to take appropriate action. Where the Member is not a member of a political group the Clerk shall advise the Member directly.*
- 1.7A2 *Where a Member fails, throughout a period of six months from the date of their last attendance, to attend any meeting of the Fire Authority, then the Clerk shall write to the Chief Executive of the Member's Unitary Authority advising them of the non-attendance and inviting that Authority to consider removing the Member and appointing an alternative.*
- 1.7A3 *Paragraphs 1.7A.1 and 1.7A.2 shall not apply where the failure to attend was as a result of some reason approved by, or on behalf of, the Fire Authority or one of the Unitary Authorities before the expiry of that period.*
- 1.7A4 *A 'meeting of the Fire Authority' includes meetings of the Fire Authority itself and of its committees.*
- 1.7A5 *Where a situation arises with a Member's non-attendance which is not specifically covered by the preceding paragraphs of this Standing Order the Clerk shall take whatever reasonable action he deems appropriate within the spirit of this Rule to deal with that situation.*

- 3.9. The Committee was also strongly of the view that each Member should be a member of at least one Committee which they should attend and participate in so that the workload was shared by all Members. The Clerk was asked to draft a new Standing Order which contains a presumption to this effect. The following revision to Standing Orders is provided for Members' consideration:

## **Insert new Standing Order 1.25**

### **1.25 *Expectations of Members***

*1.25.1 There is an expectation that each Member shall volunteer to sit on at least one Committee of the Fire Authority and in default the Fire Authority shall allocate that Member to a Committee unless there is a good reason not to do so.*

- 3.10. The Committee was also of the view that the Member role description developed by the Member Development Working Group (attached at **Appendix 3**) should be recommended to the Fire Authority for adoption and provided to the four Unitary Authorities for any new appointments in May 2018. It is also proposed that the role description should be reinforced by a new Standing Order as follows:

### **Add to new Standing Order 1.25**

*1.25.2 The Fire Authority has adopted a role description for Members and there is an expectation that each Member will fulfil that role description (as amended from time to time) upon appointment and throughout their tenure as a Member.*

*1.25.3 Members have a responsibility to keep their compliance with the role description under regular review and if they feel at any time that they are unable to meet its requirements then they should consult their Unitary Authority about their continued membership.*

- 3.11. **Appendix 4** sets out the allocation of Members in the event that the WECA Model (as set out in the consultation) was adopted. The Committee was of the view that if the Fire Authority accepts the recommendation for a reduction to 20 Members a change to the appointment model would not be necessary.

## **4. CONSIDERATIONS**

### **4.1. Contribution to Key Policy Priorities**

The work required following the consultation is crucial to the Fire Authority's own improvement programme and governance transformation in light of the adverse findings on governance in the Statutory Inspection Report.

### **4.2. Financial Implications**

Consideration will need to be given to the remuneration of Members via the Members' Allowances Scheme should the decision be made to significantly reduce the number of Members of the Fire Authority to reflect the increased workload that would follow.

### **4.3. Legal Implications**

The Avon Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1995 which sets out the constitutional arrangements for the Fire Authority prescribes a maximum number of Members only and therefore the Fire Authority is able to reduce the

number of Members provided the proportionality arrangements by the number of electoral voters in each Unitary Authority area is maintained.

4.4. Equality & Diversity Implications

These are mentioned in the consultation document.

4.5. Corporate Risk Assessment

Failure to deal with the issues raised in the Statutory Inspection Report could lead to statutory intervention by the Home Secretary.

4.6. Environmental/Sustainability Implications

None.

4.7. Health & Safety Implications

None.

4.8. Crime & Disorder Implications

None.

5. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Consultation Document

6. **APPENDICES**

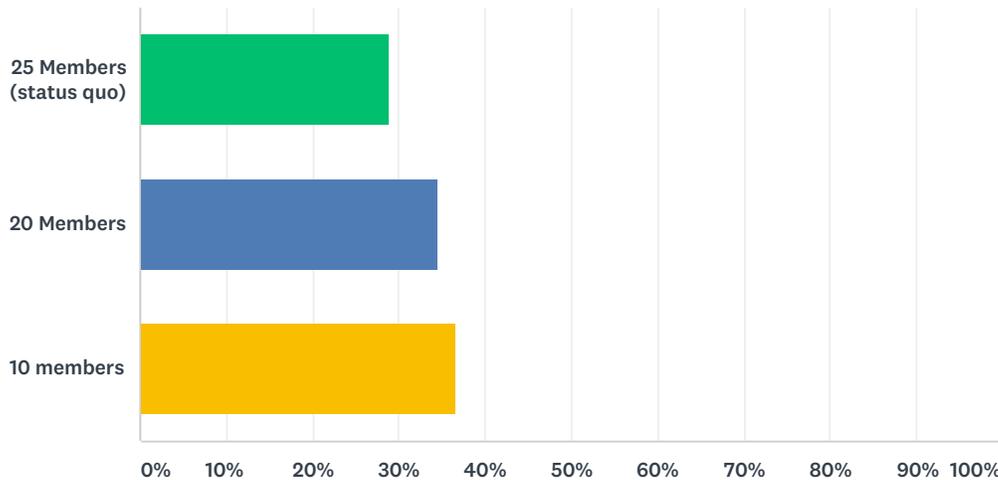
1. Consultation Responses – Online
2. Consultation Responses – Individual
3. Proposed Member Role Description
4. WECA Modelling

7. **REPORT CONTACT**

Guy Goodman, the Clerk, extension 231.

## Q1 Taking into account the background documentation please indicate which of the proposed size and structure models for the Fire Authority set out below would be the most effective to enable the Fire Authority to discharge its responsibilities

Answered: 52    Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
25 Members (status quo)	28.85%	15
20 Members	34.62%	18
10 members	36.54%	19
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>52</b>

#	PLEASE PROVIDE ANY EXPLANATION YOU FEEL IS PERTINENT TO YOUR RESPONSES. IF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR AVON & SOMERSET REQUESTS TO BECOME A MEMBER AND THE FIRE AUTHORITY ACCEPTS THE REQUEST IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROPOSED STATUTORY FRAMEWORK THEN THE MEMBERSHIP WILL INCREASE ACCORDINGLY.	DATE
1	It would not be democratic to have fewer than 20 members. The people of this Authority should be represented properly and not by members of the same political party which would be the case. It would be to the detriment of the area to have no effective opposition and no proper scrutiny. And please don't forget the seriousness of the Authority's tax raising capacity.	3/26/2018 3:08 PM
2	Agility and no politics	3/23/2018 3:52 PM
3	Whilst I can see a case for a minor reduction in number of members on the Fire Authority, it is extremely important that this does not go too far. It is vital that the Authority continues to represent the considerable plurality of opinion within the electorate that it represents. If the number of members is reduced to 20 or fewer there is far too great a risk, given the political make-up of Avon & Somerset, that this plurality would in effect be lost and the Authority captured by a narrow clique. Examples of the adverse impact of this are widespread amongst local authorities up and down the land: whatever the political tendencies of the majority group, once it gains an overwhelming majority, effective opposition is nullified and decisions can be made without proper scrutiny. Schemes are steam-rolled through to the long-term detriment of the public. This democratic deficit is, of course, a matter of serious concern, given the Authority's tax-raising capacity.	3/15/2018 6:14 PM

## Consultation on the Composition of the Membership of Avon Fire Authority

4	25 or 20 is too many, you need to have a smaller number who can have a greater understanding of the organisation and make decisions quickly and effectively. 10 is not enough to provide resilience. I would suggest 16 or 17 is a better number which still gives a good balance of the political parties.	3/14/2018 12:17 PM
5	A smaller Authority will be able to provide scrutiny on key strategic issues and develop detailed knowledge and understanding of the FRS A reduced number allows for more effective challenge and accountability	3/13/2018 2:19 PM
6	Having considered the relative size of Avon in relation to Hampshire I can see no justification in a Fire Authority member size of 20 or 25. Hampshire FRS has 59 stations, Avon 21. The approximate population of Hampshire is 1.83 million, Avon area is 1.14 million. I can see little or no justification in considering the political make up of the Fire Authority and see this as just a red herring to have a bigger member count. Clearly if an authority that has 2.8 times as many stations and a population 1.6 times greater functions with 10 members why does Avon require so many? The actual geographic area of the Hampshire F.A is at least twice that of Avon, and includes the Isle of Wight.	3/13/2018 12:08 PM
7	The Fire Authority has always responded well and supported the requirements of Avon Fire and Rescue Service which is a Combined fire and Rescue service model and should remain that way It effectivly and efficiently serves the needs of the geographic area that it serves. The P.C.C. should not be allowed to join the Fire Authority or become involved with the running of Avon Fire and Rescue Service. The composition of the present Fire authority should only be changed if North Somerset council area is removed from the area served by the Avon Fire and Rescue service and all North Somerset councillors are removed from the fire authority. This should particularly happen if W.E.C.A. is asked to take over the running of the authority as North Somerset Council is not a member of the W.E.C.A. combined authority. North Somerset area should be served by Devon and Somerset Fire Service.	3/13/2018 2:44 AM
8	Unless you have and excellent chair a larger committee can be too unwieldy to be efficient and effective. I object to the PCC diluting their time from running Avon and Somerset Police, there is more than sufficient work for the post just concentrating on police business.	3/11/2018 6:44 PM
9	Members of the fire authority should be interested, experienced and have at least a modicum of knowledge about how fire and rescue services are run. The service is not benefitted by individuals on the authority who are self serving or trying to enhance their C.V.'s.	3/11/2018 3:58 PM
10	There is insufficient evidence that Police & Crime Commissioners have in any way enhanced the functions of the Police service. They should not now seek to increase their scope. Avon F&RS are aware of failings in the past, and the proposal to reduce to 20 members, with the alterations set out in the document, will achieve the required improvements.	3/11/2018 12:36 PM
11	There should be a broad range of views within the authority so that it can come to balanced and reasoned decisions on the matters in hand. Too few members such as 10 is unlilely to represent the views of the communities they serve.	3/10/2018 12:32 PM
12	In the event that the Police & Crime Commissioner is willing to become a Member and can find the time to fulfil such a role then this would be most welcome. My comments are given with regard to my understanding of how effective the membership might be, given that the existing status quo, has been found wanting in this matter.	3/9/2018 7:23 PM
13	Do not water down knowledge, experience and capability of councillors to just ten people. This is obviously a service with complex and multiple aspects of governance, that needs good support from authority members. With a broad base of councillors from across the political spectrum the authority will be able to move forward, with each councillor sharing the burden of governance.	3/8/2018 10:54 PM
14	It is important to satisfy the statutory inspection report but to reduce members to 10 would place undue strain on remaining members. The number of Authority panels and the need to make significant improvements will mean 10 members would be spread thinly across the Authority and may not be able to meet specific needs. Also it is important to keep a wide range of experience, talent and view points on the Authority otherwise a small number of members will have too much individual influence on key areas of service work.	3/8/2018 6:32 PM
15	I have read the home office report in detail and too large a team allows responsibilities to be avoided.	3/7/2018 10:04 AM

## Consultation on the Composition of the Membership of Avon Fire Authority

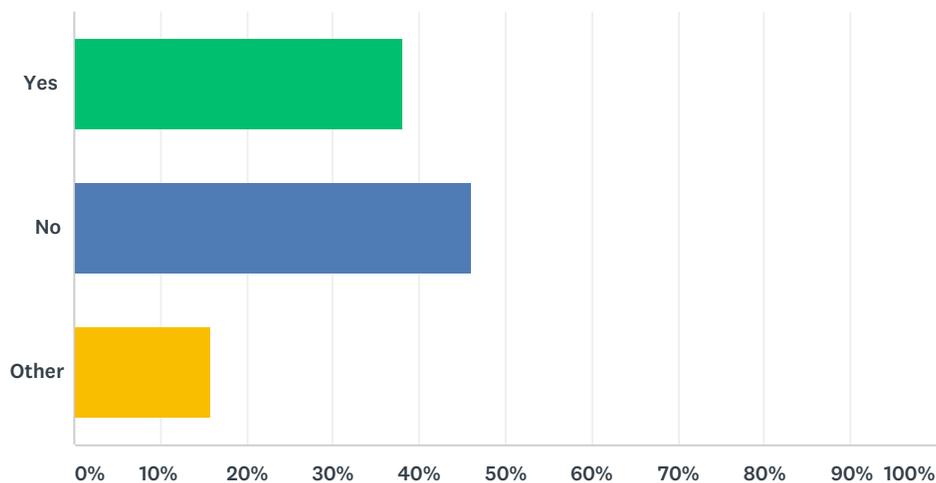
16	I strongly agree with the position outlined in the background reading, that reducing dramatically to 10 members would make it very difficult to populate subcommittees and get the mix of skills and experience needed for the authority to function well. I would support a smaller authority of say 16 - 20 members. Looking at the seat allocation for a 20 member authority, the numbers don't seem right - distributing 8 Bristol seats according to party proportionality (within Bristol) gives Lab = 4.2, Con = 1.6, Grn = 1.3, LD = 0.9 i.e. an allocation of 4, 2, 1, 1 respectively. 20 seats BANES Bristol N Som S Glos TOTAL Con 2 2 3 3 10 Lab 0 4 0 1 5 LD 1 1 0 1 3 Ind / Green 0 1 1 0 2 Even if the Calculation as given were correct, it does not make sense to allocate 6 Labour members from Bristol when the calculation gives them 4.8.	3/5/2018 3:05 PM
17	Equally spread across the four Unitary Authorities 5 members each.	3/2/2018 9:14 PM
18	There need to be enough Members to ensure all Committee Meetings have an effective quorum.	3/1/2018 11:42 AM
19	I certainly don't support a reduction that reduces diversity and the range of opinions and perspectives on the authority - it would not help ensure the service recovers from recent setbacks or develops in innovative and imaginative ways into the future - or reflect the mix of representation the constituent authorities have.	2/28/2018 6:03 PM
20	I oppose a reduction in the numbers because it will change the political balance of the Fire Authority to be less representative to the overall political balance in the area. As the report states, this would both seriously disenfranchise a large part of the electorate and also, at a time when a non-partisan approach is beginning to bear fruit, to make the Authority potentially a partisan body. In particular, if the Membership is reduced to 10 there would be no Liberal Democrat, Green or Independent councillors on the Fire Authority.	2/28/2018 4:30 PM
21	There should be a selection process and a code of conduct and clear remit for the Elected Members. A smaller group, as long as they are representative and knowledgeable about the work of the service, will hopefully achieve greater unity and improve quick decision making and ensure greater accountability.	2/28/2018 11:25 AM
22	The current size/structure appears to be too large. Although the FA should be proportionally representative with a combination from each of the UAs, too many members can have a disproportionate balance in terms of each member having too narrow a view of the FRS. A smaller authority will ensure that members become involved in more aspects of the FA role - surely this is a good thing as they will get a more rounder view of the organisation, rather than be limited to a specific avenue? If a smaller number of people are being held to account, as well as themselves holding principal officers to account, this can only encourage members to challenge decisions and proposals in ways that do not appear to have been done for a very, very long time - if ever.	2/27/2018 7:58 PM
23	Should the PCC request to join AFA then it shows that she does not have enough work looking after A&S Police! I feel it would be wrong to reduce the number of elected members and then appoint an outsider with no knowledge or understanding of the Fire Service.	2/27/2018 10:55 AM
24	I believe that the numbers should remain the same until the 2019 local authority elections, when 3 out of the 4 unitary councils have elections. To reduce before then would mean less members to deal with the fall out of recent events and the transformation process. If you change in May 18 to a lower number almost certainly there will be changes in personnel again in 2019 following the elections, to get a new political balance.	2/25/2018 6:40 PM
25	The Baker report identified the historical problem of too many decisions being made by too few people. Reducing the size of AFA exacerbates this. A reduction would also be likely to lead to a reduced level of scrutiny over AFA decisions. The consultation document uses the word "nimble" a couple of times. Is this not just a euphemism for unaccountable? The impending increased workload flowing from imminent changes and investigations would also seem to require a full strength authority. Finally, the maintenance of a politically balanced authority, whilst inconvenient for the political parties, seems to serve the public well and maximise scrutiny and challenge for change which may be driven more by political dogma than operational effectiveness, resilience and public safety.	2/25/2018 10:58 AM
26	A smaller authority would be more dynamic and agile leading to faster decision making. I do not feel that there would be less scrutiny of decision making only less indecision. Until there is boundary convergence with the A&S area I do not feel the PCC sitting on the FA would be advantageous as there could be unconscious bias from them reflecting from wider considerations regarding their area.	2/24/2018 2:05 PM

## Consultation on the Composition of the Membership of Avon Fire Authority

27	A smaller fire authority is more likely to achieve goals and is less likely to suffer from cross party differences resulting in little or no action being taken. Just as the fire service has had to shed excess workforce, then the FA should show willingness to adapt. However I do believe that it should be an odd number of members for voting purposes, with the chairman having the casting vote.	2/23/2018 12:18 PM
28	The FA needs to needs to represent the needs and views of the people of the Avon area. In addition, there are a number of sub-committees and task and finish groups that require additional commitment from members. This would all be difficult to achieve with less than 25 members. Inclusion of the PCC would be undemocratic as she was not elected to perform any role in relation to the fire service. In addition, she was partly elected by the people of Somerset who have no direct interest in Avon Fire Authority and the services it provides. On that basis, I do not believe the Fire Authority should allow her to become a member until these issues are addressed. However, I do believe it would be beneficial to consult with her and, consequently, she should be invited to attend meetings as a non voting participant.	2/22/2018 6:26 PM
29	No decline police and fire remain independent.	2/22/2018 1:03 PM
30	no decline police and fire should be independent	2/22/2018 1:02 PM
31	The Authority was never broken until the rouge, attention seeking new Members joined. They ruined a cohesive and hard working Authority. They do not have the best interest of the service in mind. Reducing by any less than 25 strengthens their power bases. That's what they want.	2/21/2018 7:20 PM
32	The greater range of views and diversity the better. With a smaller number of members there is a risk that personal prejudices will influence policy. The Fire Authority should be non political and should not be used as a political football.	2/21/2018 5:05 PM
33	The police commissioner shouldn't be a member of the authority, there is no mandate for this. If they wanted to do this it should be voted for by the public. There should be an odd number to get decisions passed, ideally 21. Members should included members of the work force to explain some of the complexities of some of the questions asked of the authority. The decisions made will have consequences that may not have been considered by authority. A serving member could explain this.	2/21/2018 3:52 PM
34	Why so many its a joke. Get rid of all and replace but add 2 members of public to get what the public want not what coucillors want. Former firefighters should also be in authority to give the truth to authority.	2/21/2018 3:24 PM
35	25 is a good number, 20 is acceptable but 10 is not. 10 would not allow for a decent representation for the three authorities outside of Bristol - B&NES would have just 1 or 2 reps! The point of having a reasonable number is that there also ability to accommodate some range of political views to ensure transparency and scrutiny - this would be impossible with 10 members.	2/21/2018 2:36 PM
36	A smaller decision making group is likely to be more dynamic and effective.	2/21/2018 11:51 AM
37	10 elected members plus 3 co-opted members, to include PCC and someone from SARI. Members should be selected to have an impact. These numbers could be reviewed periodically. I believe any higher numbers initially will stop the necessary changes happening.	2/21/2018 11:40 AM

**Q2 Whether the Minister should be invited to amend the method of appointing Members set out in the Avon Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1995 (which governs the governance arrangements for the Fire Authority). From June 2019 rather than the current system where Members are appointed by each Unitary Authority (UA) on the basis of the number of electoral voters as a proportion of the total number of voters across all four UAs should Members be appointed in accordance with the arrangements for the appointment of members to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of a Combined Authority?**

Answered: 50 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	38.00%	19
No	46.00%	23
Other	16.00%	8
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>50</b>

#	PLEASE PROVIDE REASONS FOR YOUR ANSWERS	DATE
1	I believe that this is acceptable providing that it represents the political landscape of Avon and not one or two parties.	3/26/2018 3:08 PM
2	I believe that the current system should be maintained. Across Avon and Somerset the electorate is very diverse, and it is important that that diversity continues to be represented. This means that the Fire Authority should in the future include representatives of all the political parties holding seats across the local authorities, especially when our electoral system leads to such a major underrepresentation of smaller parties. This, of course, links to the first issue – i.e. the size of the Authority: only if it is large enough will any system of choosing representatives lead to an appropriately diverse group and avoid political capture by any one group.	3/15/2018 6:14 PM
3	This question does not make sense to me	3/13/2018 2:19 PM

## Consultation on the Composition of the Membership of Avon Fire Authority

4	The minister should not interfere with the running of the Avon Fire Authority and the status quo needs to remain without any interference at government level as the Avon Fire and Rescue service is paid for by the council tax payers of the area it serves and particularly as government funding has been reduced. The existing governance is effective and the service is financially run well by the financial officer.	3/13/2018 2:44 AM
5	Minister should be invited to amend the committee to an equal mix of members from UAs and direct appointees from the public, this would increase the skill set pool available to the committee rather than the limited pool from UA members.	3/11/2018 6:44 PM
6	This would be an undemocratic and unrepresentative method of selecting members	3/10/2018 12:32 PM
7	The Minister should be invited to amend the method of appointing Members set out in the Avon Fire Service (Combination Scheme). Order 1995. From June 2019 rather than the current system. There should still be an appointment of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee of a Combined Authority if only as a safeguard for the future.	3/9/2018 7:23 PM
8	No keep it local, otherwise you begin to lose local democracy.	3/8/2018 10:54 PM
9	It's a fair system.	3/8/2018 10:09 PM
10	It is localism and democracy. It's important to keep local control of appointments otherwise political basis will creep into local matters.	3/8/2018 6:32 PM
11	yes as it will avoid too much influence by the UA which has led to the current messy situation	3/7/2018 10:04 AM
12	Using party balance to enable the authority to represent voters across the area is important, and would be harder to achieve in a smaller body. Changing the allocation method to that outlined mitigates this.	3/5/2018 3:05 PM
13	Should be on the Fire Authority on knowledge of the service and how a Fire Service performs ie Right person for the job not just someone who is friend with the chair or other members	3/2/2018 9:14 PM
14	Keep the current approach that ensures a true diversity of representation, as mentioned above.	2/28/2018 6:03 PM
15	This question seems to actually contain two questions, which are slightly different and not written clearly. Please clarify.	2/28/2018 4:30 PM
16	Appointment of those Elected Members appointed to the Fire Authority is critically important. I consider that it is necessary to select individuals based upon their knowledge and commitment to ensure they can allocate the time required to review documents fully, reach informed decisions and attend the meetings.	2/28/2018 11:25 AM
17	I don't think this question reads very clearly, hence the "other" answer above. The minister should be given the opportunity to amend the CSO 1995, and the FA should reflect the risk profile of each UA. This should not so much be a political FA but a FA that can put party politics aside to ensure the fire and rescue authority has only one objective - to provide a value for money service for the community it serves.	2/27/2018 7:58 PM
18	The current system is more democratic.	2/27/2018 10:55 AM
19	It is essential that local authorities decide who has input to the priorities of this emergency service, not someone who knows nothing of the area.	2/25/2018 6:40 PM
20	The process for appointing members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be kept as separate as possible (culturally and procedurally) from the AFA appointment process to increase the credibility and independence of the O&S committee	2/25/2018 10:58 AM
21	Members are appointed in proportion to the way the community have voted - this is representative of the electorate and therefore democratic.	2/24/2018 2:05 PM
22	A government minister could be biased when appointing members and therefore they should be appointed based on local elections to serve the will of the public.	2/23/2018 12:18 PM
23	What are the arrangements to appoint to the Overview and scrutiny committee? The FA needs to represent the needs and views of the people of the Avon area and so representation on the Fire Authority should be proportionate and fair according to population.	2/22/2018 6:26 PM
24	Defeats the object of localism. Government controlling local democracy and decision making.	2/21/2018 7:20 PM
25	The current system is organic and develops in line with voters aspirations. It reflects the changing local environment.	2/21/2018 5:05 PM

## Consultation on the Composition of the Membership of Avon Fire Authority

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26	The composition should be made up of residence of Avon to include business leaders, the work force and members of the public to who the decision affect. Not politicians who have an agenda and may have to leave if they are voted out by an election. John Lewis is a model which could be followed.	2/21/2018 3:52 PM
27	Local residents should be on the authority public council tax payers should have say	2/21/2018 3:24 PM
28	The existing arrangement is likely to be the most representative.	2/21/2018 11:51 AM
29	Method works well enough at present, the eight year rule will help to keep the authority fresh in the future.	2/21/2018 11:40 AM

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## Q3 Please set out any other comments you may have which you believe are relevant to this consultation.

Answered: 22 Skipped: 31

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I don't believe that any Authority should be controlled by one political party, it is not how the electorate vote and the electorate's views should always be heard in opposition.	3/26/2018 3:08 PM
2	Need more cooperation with the police.	3/23/2018 3:52 PM
3	It is very important that the governance failings that have been so clearly identified in the recent past are not allowed to recur. Such failings have been too frequently linked in authorities across the political spectrum in England to decisions taken by over-dominant political cliques: the risk of such a clique taking control of the Fire Authority must be minimised and that implies keeping a properly representative membership. A further factor is the workload on the membership: a smaller group would inevitably mean a heavier workload, and further increase the tendency of such bodies to exclude effective representation by people other than relatively elderly, prosperous, white people. In consequence, apart from the likely failures in decision-making caused by inadequate representation, a smaller group would be likely to yet further alienate underrepresented groups from our political system, and further reduce faith in democratic processes.	3/15/2018 6:14 PM
4	The important thing is to have a political balance among the members so the issues are debated on what is sensible not along party political lines.	3/14/2018 1:49 PM
5	There should be a process to ensure that the appointed members have skills, experience, values and commitment to ensure that they have the good of the organisation and the good of the public at heart.	3/14/2018 12:17 PM
6	Attendance and duration of attendance of all Fire Authority members at Fire authority meetings and sub committees should be published and kept under constant scrutiny to ensure that the Fire Authority committee membership is fully represented by all councillors and that they remain fully committed to the service, council tax payers, and local authorities that they are representing. This should particularly apply as all members should be fully accountable as they receive a paid allowance for being on the Fire Authority.	3/13/2018 2:44 AM
7	It is clear the committee as is has not performed well and the suggestion that reducing the number of members is radical is laughable. As I mentioned above you need to change the pool of talent available to be on the committee.	3/11/2018 6:44 PM
8	. I do not believe the fire authority should not accept any request from the police and crime commissioner for membership as this would blur the priorities of each service.	3/10/2018 12:32 PM
9	Education: There seems to be no detailed public information as to how or under what circumstances members of the public can join any Safeguarding Committee. There seems to be little or no information as to how the Unitary Authority's select or appoint people to serve on any of the Membership of Avon Fire Authority.	3/9/2018 7:23 PM
10	Political and personal bias is more likely to creep into an authority with few members. The authority must truly be representative of the people it serves.	3/8/2018 10:54 PM
11	If the number were only reducing to 20, and if members of longer than 8 years' standing are being asked to stand down anyway, it might be possible to make the reduction sooner than 2019.	3/5/2018 3:05 PM
12	the document does not seem to offer strong reasons for the major reduction proposed and I think this speaks for itself.	2/28/2018 6:03 PM
13	There are many excellent Members of the Fire Authority but some behave in a way which does not reflect the values or expectations of those in such an important role.	2/28/2018 11:25 AM
14	I totally agree that there should be a time limit on the length of time that members should serve on the FA. Some of the current members have been around for so long it appears that they may have lost sight of the concept of challenge in order to move the service forward into the 21st century.	2/27/2018 7:58 PM

## Consultation on the Composition of the Membership of Avon Fire Authority

15	As the AFA are always looking for savings, try starting with the Flexi Duty Officers who get an extra 20% on top of their salary and expenses, just for doing their job! There are FDO's who don't even go out on shouts getting this same perk.	2/27/2018 10:55 AM
16	It is vitally important that the AFA works as a partnership with the PCC, but that there is no transfer of authority. Whilst the Police and Fire Service share a phone number, there is very little real crossover of function and the political independence of the UKFRS has protected firefighters in times of unrest and allowed humanitarian access to situations where the police are unwelcome. Operationally, the two organisations co-operate well without shared management. Surely what is demonstrated on the street can be replicated throughout the management structure?	2/25/2018 10:58 AM
17	Restrict membership to a maximum of 8 years. I.e. two election cycles	2/22/2018 6:26 PM
18	Everyone knows the FA is an embarrassment to the Service and it's communities. It's not the size, it's the behaviour, egos, ambitions and arrogance of some Members that have made it that way. Shameful destruction of a good service. The staff don't deserve this.	2/21/2018 7:20 PM
19	Personal agendas have influence policy over the past year or so and there are those that are pursuing personal agendas over the needs of the service. This must stop!	2/21/2018 5:05 PM
20	Scout group leaders, community workers, members of the public and employees should be on the authority. The authority should be universal politics.	2/21/2018 3:52 PM
21	Get rid of jibs for the boys attitude	2/21/2018 3:24 PM
22	Given the area covered includes one large city, several smaller cities/towns, market towns and a large rural area - i.e. a very diverse population and geography - it is vital the governing body is made up of wide range of representatives. The views and needs of the city Bristol, whilst the largest in population centre, should not be able to dominate and dictate direction of the Authority to the detriment of the needs of other areas. For example, the service must not be focussed on solely urban issues.	2/21/2018 2:36 PM

**Consultation Responses – Individual**

1. **Police & Crime Commissioner for Avon & Somerset**

Please see below the response to your consultation from the PCC.

**Question 1**

Taking into account the background documentation please indicate which of the proposed size and structure models for the Fire Authority set out below would be the most effective to enable the Fire Authority to discharge its responsibilities:

- 25 Members (status quo)
- 20 Members
- 10 Members

Please provide any explanation you feel is pertinent to your responses.

If the Police & Crime Commissioner for Avon & Somerset requests to become a Member and the Fire Authority accepts the request in accordance with the proposed statutory framework then the membership will increase accordingly.

I agree with the findings of the lead Inspector. A Fire Authority of 10 members would in my view be more focused, better informed, more nimble and more decisive. It would also be better value for money to support fewer members.

**Question 2**

Whether the Minister should be invited to amend the method of appointing Members set out in the Avon Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1995 (which governs the governance arrangements for the Fire Authority). From June 2019 rather than the current system where Members are appointed by each Unitary Authority (UA) on the basis of the number of electoral voters as a proportion of the total number of voters across all four UAs should Members be appointed in accordance with the arrangements for the appointment of members to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of a Combined Authority?

Please provide reasons for your answer.

I believe the constituent local authorities and the fire authority can work together to make these changes. There is no need to involve the Minister of delay making changes.

**Question 3**

Please set out any other comments you may have which you believe are relevant to this consultation.

Given the Inspector Report which raised a number of concerns was published in July 2017, I do not believe it is necessary or justified to make these changes in June 2019 – virtually 2 years later. I believe the changes should be introduced in June 2018 at the latest.

**John Smith**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## 2. South Gloucestershire Council

In response to the questions raised please note the following:

### **1 The proposed size of the Fire Authority**

I note the suggested sizes of the Committee, 25, 20 or 10. I have carefully considered each as an option and my preference is for a smaller committee. The consultation makes specific reference to the size of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the West of England Combined Authority. As you are aware this committee is constituted of 11 members. I consider that a committee of 11 would be the appropriate figure for the Avon Fire and Rescue Service, both in terms of size and proportionality. It is the best fit based on the suggestion that the committee be reduced in size to 10. A committee of 11 is proven to be of sufficient size to effectively and efficiently discharge the functions of the committee. In the event the PCC requests membership, their membership of the Fire Authority should be a standalone membership and not impact on the proportionality calculations.

### **2 The timing of an amendment to the Avon Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1995 (the Order) to formally amend the membership and the method of appointment.**

Given the recent inspection report there is in my opinion no rationale for delaying the implementation of any decision relating to the size of the Fire Authority until 2019 so as to coincide with elections. The Order specifies that the the Fire Authority "*shall consist of no more than 25 members*". It is clear therefore that the membership can be a lesser number. The Fire Authority is therefore not reliant on a change in the Scheme to achieve a smaller membership.

As a general rule Councils make or confirm appointments to outside bodies as part of its Annual Business Report in May of each year. In the event the Fire Authority determines the appropriate size of membership in advance of May, it is open to each Council to resolve at its AGM to simply appoint the corresponding number of members to be its representatives on the Fire Authority, i.e. the participating authorities achieve the reduction by agreement in advance of any formal amendment to the Order. This will enable the revised Fire Authority to concentrate its efforts on achieving the improvements required by the inspection report without delay. The coincidence of the local elections in 3 of the 4 Unitary Authorities in 2019 is not relevant.

The current method of calculating proportionality is based on the political proportionality of each member authority. The suggestion that the calculation is amended to be based on the political proportionality of the area of the Fire Authority taken as a whole is supported as this results in a representation that accurately reflects the voting of the electorate as a whole across the area. I therefore support the suggestion that the Scheme is amended to reflect the method of calculation of proportionality contained in The Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees Order 2017 Part 2 s4(1).

**Cllr Matthew Riddle  
Leader of the Council**

### 3. Joint Response by the FBU, UNISON and Unite

As representatives from the three trade unions recognised by AF&RS, The Fire Brigades Union, Unison and Unite, we are writing jointly in response to the public consultation concerning the proposal to reduce the number of members of the Avon Fire Authority as discussed at the Fire Authority meeting of 9th February 2018.

We are concerned that, given this has been put out to public consultation, the response is likely to be small as many members of the public will not be overly aware of the Fire Authority and it's role, and those who do respond will likely be swayed by the perception of less members = less cost as potentially they may not be in a position to understand some of the wider unintended consequences and so will not be a truly informed and representative view.

Whilst we do not object in principle to a reduction in size, we do have significant concerns about the effect the reduction in members will have on the Fire Authority if it were to reduce down to only 10 members. We believe it is crucial that Avon Fire Authority remains politically balanced and unbiased in order to make decisions based first and foremost on the best needs of the Fire Service and the communities we serve, and to challenge political agendas and decisions made at both local and national levels that may work against their primary aim of keeping the public and their staff safe.

Having only 10 elected members on the Authority will put increased pressure on those members and also increase the risk of meetings becoming dominated by those who have less demands on their time than others, due to the massive reduction in available resources, knowledge and skills. Whilst we agree that the Fire Authority role is one which should be taken on fully and with commitment, it will doubtless sit alongside many other responsibilities for those elected members which their wider councillor role demands.

One of the very criticisms of Dr Baker in his report was that a small number of people were *potentially* having too much influence on the running of the Authority, if there were a move to reduce members in number down to 10, this would turn this perception into a fact. With such a reduction the Authority would lose the ability to democratically represent the very communities we serve as it would leave 2 major political parties (as the current political landscape lies) with no representation on the Authority at all. This cannot be seen as acceptable, it would go against the very idea of a balanced and democratic Authority.

It would result inevitably in a less progressive, inclusive and diverse Authority going against all of the other good areas of work that are currently being carried. It would increase the likelihood, quite rightly, for future heavy criticism in the event of any potential controversial decisions that may need to be taken – given the current government's drive towards further funding cuts, this unfortunately has to be a real possibility.

Having read the consultation document provided, if a reduction is considered necessary, we believe the reduction to 20 is the only option that would allow members to continue to deliver a political balance in the future, and would ensure there were sufficient numbers to function effectively and remove the necessity to change any governance arrangements which would inevitably create another work stream further taking away vital time and efforts in getting on with the running of Avon Fire Authority in the best way possible for both public and staff.

**Gary Spindler**  
**Avon Fire Brigades**  
**Union**  
**Brigade Secretary**

**Clare Pratt**  
**Unison**  
**Workplace**  
**Representative**

**Tony Venn**  
**Unite**  
**Workplace**  
**Representative**

4. Joint Response from the from the Bristol Labour Group, Conservative Group, Green Group, and Liberal Democrat Group

Question 1

The Bristol Labour Group, Conservative Group, Green Group, and Liberal Democrat Group on Bristol City Council all support moving to a twenty-member strong Fire Authority, in line with the average size of England's Combined Fire Authorities. Any smaller number, particularly the smallest suggested in this consultation, would stretch members too far and therefore put effective scrutiny at risk. A ten-member limit would also prevent a truly cross-party Fire Authority.

Question 2

The appointment of members by their respective constituent Unitary Authorities should be retained, to keep the strongest possible direct link between the public and those who oversee the Fire Authority on their behalf. In line with recommendations in the report, members' service should be capped – including the six year time limit set out for chairs and vice chairs.

**Avon Fire Authority**

**Member Role Description**

1. **Introduction**

- 1.1. Members of the Fire Authority provide political leadership and set the strategic direction for the organisation. They represent all of the communities across the 4 Unitary Authority areas in a fair and impartial manner ensuring that their decision-making is focused on the risks within those communities and securing an equitable distribution of resources to meet those risks.
- 1.2. All Members are expected to actively contribute and share responsibility for the good governance of the Fire Authority and the welfare of the communities served by the organisation.

2. **Key Roles and Responsibilities**

2.1. Members collectively are responsible for:

- a) Setting the council tax / budget.
- b) Determining the Fire Authority's priorities and objectives for the purposes of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and approving the IRMP.
- c) Approving the Statement of Assurance and Annual Governance Statement.
- d) Approving the Annual Statement of Accounts.
- e) Appointing, suspending or dismissing the Chief Fire Officer (CFO), the Deputy CFO and the Statutory Officers.
- f) Holding the CFO to account for the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of service delivery and continuous improvement in implementing the Fire Authority's vision, mission, values, objectives, priorities, plans and strategies.
- g) Holding the Statutory Officers to account for the discharge of their statutory functions.
- h) Approving a pay policy statement.
- i) Approving arrangements:
  - i. to enter into a reinforcement scheme
  - ii. with other employers of firefighters
  - iii. for discharge of functions by others.
- j) Approving business continuity plans to enable the Fire Authority to perform its fire and rescue functions if an emergency occurs.
- k) Approving any arrangements for the co-operation with Category 1 and 2 responders under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
- l) Appointing a local auditor and deciding whether to enter into a liability limitation agreement.

## 2.2. Members individually are responsible for:

- a) Representing all the local communities in the 4 Unitary Authority areas and representing the Fire Authority to all local communities.
- b) Comply with the Members' Code of Conduct and the Protocol for Member / Officer Relations, demonstrate commitment to the 7 Principles for Public Life and promote the highest standards of corporate governance.
- c) Develop and maintain respectful and effective working relationships with employees and other Members.
- d) Ensure that the Fire Authority is an equal opportunity employer and meets its equality objectives.
- e) Ensure attendance at and active participation in all meetings of the Fire Authority and those committees, panels and working group to which the Member is allocated (unless they provide an appropriate reason for their absence).
- f) Participate in any consultative processes with local communities and other stakeholders and encourage those communities to participate constructively in such consultations particularly "hard to reach" groups.
- g) Develop and maintain a sound working knowledge of the Fire Authority's duties, policies and practices including the services and activities which affect and impact on local communities.
- h) Attend and actively participate in the Member Training Programme in addition to identifying and addressing their own development needs.

## 3. Key Competencies

### 3.1. To effectively undertake the roles and responsibilities detailed above, Members will need to show commitment to achieving the following competencies:

- a) Sufficient time to read and understand the papers for meetings
- b) Ability to provide constructive challenge and scrutiny.
- c) Ability to make evidence and risk based decisions.
- d) Awareness and understanding of:
  - i. the roles and activities of the fire and rescue service.
  - ii. good governance.
  - iii. equalities issues.
  - iv. financial issues and budgeting.
  - v. procurement.
  - vi. project management.
  - vii. risk management.

### 3.2. Members should be prepared to devote 2.5 days per month to Fire Authority work.

## Appendix 4

4 UA / AFA AREA			Size of AFA					
			10		20		25	
Party	Total Party Seats	% of Party across [4] UAs						
Conservative	127	49.80%	5	4.98%	10	9.96%	12	12.45%
Labour	60	23.53%	2	2.35%	5	4.71%	6	5.88%
Liberal Democrats	43	16.86%	2	1.69%	3	3.37%	4	4.22%
Green	13	5.10%	1	0.51%	1	1.02%	1	1.27%
Independent*	11	4.31%	0	0.43%	1	0.86%	1	1.08%
No Party	1	0.39%	0	0.04%	0	0.08%	0	0.10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10.00%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20.00%</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25.00%</b>

\* Independents not a group

\*\* see note below

Population for 4UA / AFA Area			10		20		25	
Population for	Figure	% of Area	Seats		Seats		Seats	
Bristol	449,328	40.16%	4	4.02%	8	8.03%	10	10.04%
SGC	274,661	24.55%	2	2.45%	5	4.91%	6	6.14%
NSC	209,944	18.76%	2	1.88%	4	3.75%	5	4.69%
BANES	184,874	16.52%	2	1.65%	3	3.30%	4	4.13%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,118,807</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10.00%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20.00%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25.00%</b>

Please note that all percentages are rounded to 2 decimal places. This may mean a variance of + or - 0.01%. However, the proportionality calculations are correct

Adapted from information kindly provided by South Gloucestershire Council