



13 July 2011

- (1) **MEMBERS OF THE AVON FIRE AUTHORITY**
Councillors Abraham, Alexander, Ann, Ball, Barrett (C), Barrett (N), Bell, Cave, Comer, Cook, Cranney, Davies, Drew, Gregor, Hale, Holbrook, Hugill, Jackson, Judd, Marter, Martin, Sandry, Stone, Townsend and Walker
- (2) **APPROPRIATE OFFICERS**
- (3) **PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Dear Member

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Fire Authority being held at **2.00pm on Friday 22 July 2011**. The meeting will be held in the Conference Room, Avon Fire and Rescue Service HQ, Temple Back, Bristol.

The Agenda is set out overleaf.

Yours sincerely

Geraldine Gee
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:

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 Lynette White, who is available by telephoning 0117 926 2061 ext. 233 or by visiting Avon Fire & Rescue Headquarters, Temple Back, Bristol (during normal office hours).

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

The appended supporting documents are identified by agenda item number.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure:

- The fire alarm or notification of any other threat is a continuous siren.
- In such cases Members must leave the building by the nearest exit.
- In the event of explosion or smoke where controlled evacuation is not possible, Members must follow fire exit signs.
- All corridors are lit with emergency lighting.
- The assembly point is the Station Drill Yard at the rear of the Brigade Headquarters complex.

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.

A G E N D A

- 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** (Members are reminded there is no power to appoint substitutes on the Avon Fire Authority)
- 2 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES** – The Chair will draw attention to the emergency evacuation procedures as set out in Note 4 appearing on page 2 of this release.
- 3 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**
The Chair will draw attention to the requirements of the Code of Conduct as set out in note 5 appearing on page 2 of this release.
- 4 MINUTES OF AVON FIRE AUTHORITY HELD ON 27 MAY 2011**
- 5 PUBLIC ACCESS** (Time Limit – 30 minutes)
Under Standing Order 21 and providing 2 clear working days notice has been given to the Clerk, any resident of Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset or North Somerset Council may address the Avon Fire Authority (for no more than 5 minutes) to present a petition, make a statement, or as leader of a deputation.
- 6 MINUTES OF SPECIAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD 24 JUNE 2011**
- 7 GAMBIA & AVON FIRE SERVICES IN PARTNERSHIP (GAFSIP) UPDATE**
- 8 POTENTIAL REFORM OF FIRE PENSIONS**
- 9 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY INTERVENTIONS**
- 10 JOINT TRAINING CENTRE - EQUALISATION FUND**
- 11 PERFORMANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE**
- 12 SICKNESS ABSENCE UPDATE – 31 MAY 2011**
- 13 AIR SUPPORT EVALUATION REPORT**
- 14 FIRES & OTHER INCIDENTS – MAY & JUNE 2011**
- 15 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC** To resolve:

“That the public be excluded from the meeting during the following items of business on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public are present during these items there will be a disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100 (I) and Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.”
- 16 EVALUATION OF TENDERS FOR RESCUE PUMPING APPLIANCES**

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY**27 MAY 2011**

PRESENT: Councillors Abraham, Ann, Alexander, Ball, Barrett (C), Barrett (N), Bell, Comer, Cranney, Davies, Hale, Hugill, Jackson, Judd, Marter, Martin, Sandry, Stone, Townsend and Walker

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE COMING YEAR

RESOLVED that Councillor Terry Walker be elected Chair for the current year.

Cllr Walker expressed his appreciation to the hard work and dedication of the Vice Chairs for the previous year.

2 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR FOR THE COMING YEAR

RESOLVED that the position of Vice Chair be held jointly in the current year and that Councillors Sheila Cook and Christopher Davies be elected to that position.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Cave, Comer, Cook, Drew.

The Chair advised that Cllr Drew had also been appointed Chair of Council at South Gloucestershire and had nominated GAFSIP as his charity for the year.

4 MEMBERSHIP AND POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF THE AUTHORITY

The Chair welcomed the new Members to the meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that the political composition of the Authority is as follows:-

Conservative Group	-	10 Members
Liberal Democrat Group	-	10 Members
Labour Group	-	4 Members
Independent	-	1 Member

5 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES – The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedures as set out in the Agenda.

6 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS** – The Chair drew attention to the requirements of the Code of Conduct as set out in the Agenda.

7 **MINUTES OF AVON FIRE AUTHORITY HELD ON 1 APRIL 2011**

RESOLVED that the minutes be agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

8 **MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 APRIL 2011**

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

9 **APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES FOR 2011/12**

RESOLVED that:

(1) Powers be delegated to the Appointments Committee, Standards Committee and the Disciplinary Committee, and to the Special Purposes Committee in accordance with the Monitoring Officers report on Governance, following later on the Agenda.

(2) the Appointments Committee, comprise of seven Members, and that the following Members be appointed to that Committee for the current year (3:3:1)

Councillor S Cook	}	Conservative
Councillor A Hale	}	Group
Councillor C Barrett	}	

Councillor C Davies	}	Liberal
Councillor W Sandry	}	Democrat
Councillor S Townsend	}	Group

Councillor T Walker	}	Labour Group
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(3) the Special Purposes Committee comprise of three Members, one from each political group, and that the following Members be appointed to the Special Purposes Committee for the current year:-

Councillor S Cook	Conservative Group
Councillor C Davies	Liberal Democrat Group
Councillor T Walker	Labour Group

- (4) the following Members be appointed to the Standards Committee for the current year:

Councillor T Marter	Conservative Group
Councillor L Alexander	Conservative Group
Councillor W Sandry	Liberal Democrat Group
Councillor S Townsend	Liberal Democrat Group
Councillor B Hugill	Labour Group

- (5) the constitution of the Disciplinary Committee be confirmed.

- (6) the following Members be appointed to the Performance & Risk Management Forum for the current year:-

Councillor T Marter	Conservative Group
Councillor M Bell	Liberal Democrat Group
Councillor C Jackson	Labour Group

- (7) the following Members be appointed to the Equalities and Fairness Forum for the current year:-

Councillor N Barrett	Conservative Group
Councillor C Martin	Liberal Democrat Group
Councillor B Hugill	Labour Group

- (8) the following Members be appointed to the Health, Safety & Welfare Forum for the current year:-

Councillor P Judd	Conservative Group
Councillor W Sandry	Liberal Democrat Group
Councillor R Stone	Labour Group

- (9) Councillor S Comer be appointed to the Joint Development Forum for the current year.

10 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES FOR 2011/12

RESOLVED that:-

- 1) Councillor P Abraham be appointed as the Authority's representative on the Local Government Association (including the Fire Forum) for the current year.
- 2) Councillor T Marter be appointed as the Authority's representative on the South West Provincial Council for the current year.

- 3) Councillor H Gregor be appointed to the South West Council for the current year.
- 4) Councillor P Abraham be appointed as Director to South West Fire Control Limited for the current year and to nominate one substitute, which was Councillor C Barrett.
- 5) Councillor T Walker be appointed representative for the Annual Meeting on the South West Fire Control Limited.

11 GOVERNANCE REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer gave an overview of the report and advised Members that she was still awaiting confirmation from Standards for England in relation to the future of Standards Committees.

RESOLVED that

1. the report be noted
2. Standing Orders be approved and adopted
3. Financial Regulations be approved and adopted
4. (i) The Scheme of delegations to Officers be approved
(ii) Powers be delegated to officers in accordance with the Scheme
5. The Committee Terms of Reference be approved for the following committees:
 - (i) Special Purposes Committee as amended
 - (ii) Standards Committee
 - (iii) Appointments & Disciplinary Committee
6. The following Policies Guidance and Strategy be approved and adopted Authority
 - (i) Conduct & Probity in the Public Service Guidance
 - (ii) Anti-fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy & Response Plan
 - (iii) Confidential Reporting Code and Guidance
 - (iv) Protocol for Member / Officer Relations
 - (v) Indemnities for Members and Officers
7. The Guidance on Risk Management be noted.
8. That the Clerk and Monitoring Officer be authorised to take the required action to implement the recommendations.

12 GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO FIRE FUTURES

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive have an overview of the report, including the ideas government were ruling out; government action to free the sector and national resilience sector in the lead. He added that government had recognised that the review undertaken had not been as significant as planned.

Members considered some of the government's responses and discussed how some of the suggestions could impact the Authority. Members discussed how officers could be better involved at partnership meetings at strategic and local levels and how the profile for sprinklers could be raised.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

13 EUROPEAN ROAD SAFETY CHARTER

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive gave an overview of the report and the Road Safety Charter which had been awarded to Avon Fire & Rescue Service.

Members viewed a film being used to raise awareness with the public in how to act while driving with emergency vehicles travelling under blue lights.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

14 RISK PLANNING UPDATE

Members considered an update report on current developments taking place in relation to risk planning. The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive highlighted the recent exercises undertaken.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

15 COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE

Members considered an update on current developments and initiatives in relation to community safety and discussed the changing prioritising structure for home fire safety visits.

Members requested that numbers of visits to high risk properties be reported and agreed how valuable the community work was.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

16 SICKNESS ABSENCE UPDATE

Members considered an update on sickness absence.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

17 FIRES & OTHER INCIDENTS – MARCH & APRIL 2011

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

18 EVALUATION OF QUOTATIONS FOR AIR SUPPORT SERVICES

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive gave an overview of the feasibility study which was agreed by the Authority in 2009 and Members watched a DVD on the tests undertaken in Munich in 2010.

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive confirmed that Eurocopter had not charged the Authority for tests run in Munich, nor would they for the forthcoming trials.

Cllr Marter requested that the usability of air support be considered as weather factors and pilot hours could be problematic.

Members suggested that a Member Working Group be considered if the project were to continue beyond the trials. In addition, it was not agreed to extend the trial if required.

RESOLVED that:

- i) the basis of the evaluation be approved.
- ii) the contract for the provision of air support services to Eurocopter (UK) Ltd from 3 June to 11 June 2011, be approved.

The meeting closed at 4.55pm

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Chair

**AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
SPECIAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

24 JUNE 2011

PRESENT: Councillors Barrett (C), Davies and Walker.

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor Terry Walker be appointed Chair for the coming year.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Cook with substitute of Cllr Barrett

3. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

The Chair drew attention to the Emergency Evacuation Procedure as set out in the Agenda.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Chair drew attention to the requirements of the Code of Conduct as set out in the Agenda.

5. MINUTES OF SPECIAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD 1 APRIL 2011

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2011-12

The Clerk confirmed that the Standards Committee remains in place pending legislative changes. Report noted and approved for signature.

7. INTERNAL AUDIT – ANNUAL REPORT 2010-11

The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that additional work was required and that this was being addressed. Staff training has taken place to address deficiencies. Report noted.

8. CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND REVENUE OUTTURN AND ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2010-11

Treasurer reported on the budget with emphasis on reserves. The Chief Fire Officer reported on the proposed changes to the FireFighters Pension Scheme and its impact. An austerity reserve has been created. The Statement of Accounts was noted and approved. The final Revenue and Outturn position were noted.

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Chair

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
MEETING DATE:	22 July 2011
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Gambia and Avon Fire Services in Partnership (GAFSIP) Update

SUMMARY

To update Members on the activities of the GAFSIP Trust and on our partnership which now marks 20 years.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- i) That Members note the ongoing work of the GAFSIP Trust.
- ii) That Members continue to support the partnership.

CONTENTS

The attached paper provides an update on the activities. David Hutchings will be attending the meeting to present his report.

Councillor Mike Drew, a Trustee of the Charity, has been elected Chair of South Gloucestershire Council and has kindly nominated GAFSIP as his charity for the year.

The website for GAFSIP is being redesigned and updated.

IMPLICATIONS**CONTRIBUTION TO KEY POLICY PRIORITIES**

None

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

Fire Authority support in developing country assisting in sustainable development

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT

Completed

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Supporting a new dimension in environmental issues with re-cycling

HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

List of background documents: None

Report Contact(s): Kevin Pearson Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive (Extension 233#) David Hutchings, Patron



Celebrating 20 years February 1991 to 2011

Gambia visit February 2011

This whole venture started in February 1991 when I flew The Gambia for a winter break. I visited The Gambia Fire & Ambulance Service, as it was called at the time and with Roger Bakurin now the Chief Fire Officer saw both their only fire stations for the whole country.

Whilst there a road traffic accident occurred on the main route from Banjul the Capital to Serrekunda, the largest town in the country, over 300,000 population which, incidentally at that time, had no fire cover. I witnessed the tragic loss of life in a car trapped under a lorry which had broken down and was propped up on stones on an unlit road.

At that time Divisional Commander on the then A Division of Avon Fire Brigade and on my return, sought support from Pat Aris, who was the Chief and Terry Walker, Chair of the Avon Fire Authority.

Fortunately full support was given for my request for a redundant fire appliance and rescue kit, this being forthcoming from Angus and a number of suppliers to Avon.

We held an Industrial open day at Avonmouth fire station where we appealed for financial support to get the appliances and kit to The Gambia. On that day the amazing sum of £11,000 was raised.

This was the start of an incredible journey which we celebrated this February with a formal Charity GAFSIP, Gambia and Avon Fire Services in Partnership.

It was with immense pride that I visited this year and The Gambia Fire & Rescue Service now employs 1,200 firefighters operating out of 13 Fire Stations, provision of sea and river rescue out of 5 water rescue stations and 8 clinics on fire stations offering free medical services to their communities. On the 20 year anniversary a new station has been opened in Farafenni, central upper river Division on the north Bank with the second busiest river crossing.



Farafenni fire station with trainers and community leaders. A local artist painted the GAFSIP logo to mark our 20 years of working together

The station is a credit to The Gambia Government which has supported the development of Gambia Fire and Rescue with the building of fire stations and employing the fire fighters. The GAFSIP logo is proudly displayed on the station perimeter wall adjacent to the main North Bank Road. This characterises the esteem built up over many years of the partnership, a station built by the Gambian Government, planned by the local community with fire engine & rescue vehicles and rescue equipment supplied by GAFSIP.

The stations are truly integrated with their communities offering a range of services in addition to fire, including well and latrine pit rescue and the delivery of drinking water at time of need.

This is the first time these communities in the provinces have received any services and support from a government department, "The Fire Service."

In 2009 I proudly received the Honour as Commander of the Republic of The Gambia, the first time this award has ever been awarded to a non national. In this year the partnership became a formal charity with the creation of GAFSIP. This placed the future on a much firmer footing. Whilst our focus is fire and rescue the additional benefits have been that 50 schools have been helped with furniture and books plus IT where appropriate, two hospitals benefit from medical kit donation, drugs dressings, including fire service clinics. The Fire Service in the communities identify the needs and address where possible with the donated items, this further cements the bonds with the community fire service.

Banjul national library has also received hundreds of books from our libraries. A further significant development of which we have directly support is that of the development of Women's Support Groups, initially starting with Fire Fighter's Wives. These groups have immense needs to aid families at times of need as there are no benefit systems in the country.

A key factor for our success has been that the foundations were built on friendships as well as a professional relationship. In addition to the donation of the tools of trade, a sustained training programme on all aspect of fire rescue and maintenance has been in place.

Who would have thought that this initiative would survive for 20 years. This has only been possible due to the commitment and support from the Avon Fire Authority and Terry Walker in particular, whose support has been absolute to me as the Patron, Avon Fire & Rescue Service with again special mention of Kevin Pearson, the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive.

Funding For GAFSIP

The charity only raises money for shipping and occasionally emergency spare parts and we survive on a hand to mouth basis with a small and very loyal band of supporters and a number of local businesses In all 20 years we have achieved our goals without accumulating money, remaining in the black. Many mad initiatives have been undertaken to raise money from drives from Bristol to Banjul with all manner of vehicles from 50 year old Land Rovers to Ambulances, and Deputy Chief Fire Officer Jerry O'Brien running cycling and canoeing the length of The Gambia in 40+ degrees.

Volunteers & Training

Before talking of volunteers an essential element to our survival is AFRS Fleet Maintenance and equipment department, without whose support and patience we would not have survived

We maintain a healthy list of volunteer trainers who fund their own visits, which in itself demonstrates commitment and, to date 60 plus members of Avon Fire and Rescue supported by volunteers from Devon & Somerset and Gloucestershire. Airfield crash crew training has been carried out by volunteers from Serco at Airbus Filton.

A special mention of Chris Millard has to be made as Chris and his wife, Mary, have provided unstinting support to the project with Chris coordinating all training visits and have shared their home with all our Gambian colleagues visiting Avon. Mary has been a motivator and instrumental in the extension in health support and the Womens' group. Chris and Mary have visited the Gambia many times all at their own expense in order to aid the development of their service.



Fire Fighter Dave Price has visited 8 times over the years supporting training, demonstrating outstanding commitment. Seen here meeting the nation's President

The Training Department has grown and now has a complement of 18 motivated trainers led by a senior trainer and Training Manager in line with the Avon F&RS model. The Dept is capable of training up to 120 recruits in basic & BA Training. Over the many visits subjects such as Train the Trainers, Station Management, BA, Boat Handling skills and vehicle maintenance, have been provided. Many of the visits have included personnel from Airbus Filton providing Airfield Crash & Rescue training at Banjul International Airport. During the time of the partnership the Airport FRS has become stand alone from GFRS with many of the staff transferring across to the new organisation. Through the long term friendships made trainers meet with staff that have been part of the many specialist training visits over the years.

The GAFSIP trainers were honoured to be asked to provide the hotel, sea and road safety training for an African Union Heads of States summit.

We are in difficult financial times yet the support is still received from so many to experience training and working in a totally different culture and climate in a developing country. Once again, without the trainers the project would never have achieved the standards that now exist, whilst being less than we would expect in the UK this is service saves lives and serves their communities at times of need.

Sandra Connolly is a foundation stone of GAFSIP and over the 20 years Sandra has given her time and support to every aspect of the venture. On her first visit to the Gambia in 2001 Sandra was awarded the status of Honorary Gambian Fire Fighter.

February 2011 Visit

During the course of the visit the trainers met with local Chiefs, District Commissioners and Governors of various Divisions in the Country, all of whom expressed appreciation for the work of GAFSIP and what it meant to their respective communities. Trainers met The President of the Republic of The Gambia His Excellency Sheikh Professor Alhaji Dr. Yahya Jammeh, at the Independence celebrations reception at The State House. A formal visit was also made to the newest station at Farrafenni.

A training visit was also made in November last year where the CFO, Kevin Pearson and Councillor Colin Barrett received the insignia of Commander of The Republic of The Gambia at the National Fire Service day event in Farafenni. This is the highest award that can be made and Avon Fire and Rescue Service is only the second organisation to be awarded this recognition.



**The Ferry from Banjul to Barra demonstrates the need for Rescue services
We are a small charity that has had an impact on the country's total population**

Without GAFSIP there would not be a Fire and Rescue Services in this country with a population of 1.5 million people



Redundant Airbus working at height kit and a Breathing Air Compressor now serving the people of The Gambia

Summary of achievements

GFRS developing from 2 to 13 stations covering all divisions of The Gambia
5 Water Rescue stations serving the fishing industry and tourist areas
50 Schools equipped with books furniture and IT
6 womens centres created
5 Fire service clinics achieved to date each with qualified nurses and paramedic.
Royal Victoria Hospital supplied with equipment
Bansang Hospital supplied with equipment
Various clinics within communities supported
Banjul Library supplied with books and IT
9 senior officers received training in the UK

How achieved:

Avon Fire & Rescue Service
North Bristol Health Trust
British Red Cross
City of Bristol
City of Bristol College
South Gloucestershire Council
North Somerset Council
Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service
Dorset Fire & Rescue Service
Nuffield Hospitals
Serco
Airbus
Aztec Rotary Club
Bristol Rotary Club
Airbus UK
All in addition to many loyal private supporters.

An amazing project that has achieved so much, a sincere thank you to all supporters from myself and Trustees. More importantly a thank you from the people of the Gambia.

David Hutchings QFSM CRG Grad I Fire E



This picture summarises friendship trust and respect in supporting friends and colleagues which is the aim of GAFSIP.

MEETING:	AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
MEETING DATE:	22 JULY 2011
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	POTENTIAL REFORM OF FIRE PENSIONS

SUMMARY

To update Members on current discussions regarding the future of fire pensions.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That Members note the report
2. That Members consider any views that they would wish to forward to DCLG as part of the consultation on pensions reform.

CONTENTS

BACKGROUND

Members may be aware that Lord Hutton’s final report was issued on 10 March 2011 and set out 27 recommendations for public sector pension reform, including protection of accrued rights, the retention of a form of defined benefit, a normal pension age of 60 for the uniformed services, and the fairer sharing of risk between taxpayers and scheme members.

At the Budget the Chancellor accepted lord Hutton’s final recommendations as a basis for consultation with public sector workers, trades unions and others, recognizing that the position of the uniformed services will require particularly careful consideration.

The Government has also announced the intention to implement progressive changes to the level of public service employee pension contributions, equivalent to three percentage points on average, across the Spending Review period.

An Executive summary of Lord Hutton’s report is attached at Appendix A.

DCLG has commenced consultation with the Fire Service on pension reform and contribution increases. They are inviting views to help inform the Government on its thinking in response to Lord Hutton's report and for future proposals for pension reform to be set out in the Autumn.

Initial proposals for employee pension contribution increases are attached as Appendix B.

CONSIDERATIONS

CONTRIBUTION TO KEY POLICY PRIORITIES

None.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

Fire Minister Bob Neill MP has stated that there are currently no proposals to increase employer contribution rates. Any changes to this position could have significant financial implications.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Authority will be required to abide by and implement any changes to the Schemes.

DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT

Applying pension contribution increases at the same time as pay freezes could have an adverse impact on industrial relations.

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None.

List of background documents:
Report Contact(s): Kevin Pearson, Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive #233

Executive Summary

The case for reform revisited

Ex.1 In its interim report the Independent Public Service Pensions Commission found that the current public service pensions structure has been unable to respond flexibly to workforce and demographic changes in the past few decades. This has led to:

- rising value of benefits due to increasing longevity;
- unequal treatment of members within the same profession;
- unfair sharing of costs between the employee, the employer and taxpayers; and
- barriers to increasing the range of providers of public services.

Ex.2 The interim report recommended long-term structural reform as the issues could not, in the Commission's view, be dealt with through traditional final salary defined benefit schemes. But neither could they be dealt with appropriately through a funded, individual account, defined contribution model for all employees. The Government accepted the report's conclusions and affirmed its commitment to maintaining some form of defined benefit pension provision for public service employees.

Ex.3 The Commission takes as given the recent changes to public service pension schemes, including the use of the Consumer Prices Index as the measure of inflation and an imminent rise in employee contributions. These changes have reduced cost pressures, but have not addressed fundamental longer-term structural problems.

Ex.4 Since the interim report the wider pensions landscape has continued to evolve. Of particular relevance to the Commission's work is the 2011 Pensions Bill, which proposes accelerating the planned increases in the State Pension Age. The State Pension Age is now planned to be 66 for both men and women by 2020.

Ex.5 When considering the possible reform options for public service pensions the Commission used its framework of principles outlined in the interim report. Public service pensions should, in the Commission's view, be:

- affordable and sustainable;
- adequate and fair;

- supporting productivity; and
- transparent and simple.

Ex.6 In the light of these principles, the Commission has concluded that public service pension schemes should aim to ensure adequate incomes in retirement for those who have worked a full career in the public service. Pensions are also an important part of the reward package and can therefore help public service employers to recruit and retain staff. But they are an inflexible tool for workforce management; a task in which they are unlikely to provide value for money.

Recommendation 1: The Government should make clear its assessment of **the role of public service pension schemes**. Based on its framework of principles, the Commission believes that the primary purpose is to ensure adequate levels of retirement income for public service pensioners.

Recommendation 2: Pensions will continue to be an important element of **remuneration**. The Commission recommends that public service employers take greater account of public service pensions when constructing remuneration packages and designing workforce strategies. The Government should make clear in its remits for pay review bodies that they should consider how public service pensions affect total reward when making pay recommendations.

The deal

Ex.7 The package of reforms recommended by the Commission is a balanced deal that will deliver fair outcomes for public service workers and for taxpayers and build trust and confidence in the system. Public service workers should receive a good pension in retirement and their accrued rights must be protected. They must also be involved in the process of change and they have a right to expect schemes to be well-run with greater transparency. And taxpayers must be able to feel confident that risks and costs are shared fairly: in particular that the cost of increasing longevity is being managed and that there are safety valves in place to control future cost. There also needs to be independent assurance on the sustainability of public service pensions. The deal set out by the Commission is designed to meet these objectives.

Ex.8 In the interim report the Commission set out its view that public service pensions must deliver adequate pension levels. In the final report we have defined this further to provide a clear benchmark for the minimum level of benefit required.

Recommendation 3: The Government should ensure that public service schemes, along with a full state pension, deliver at least **adequate levels of income** (as defined by the Turner Commission benchmark replacement rates) for scheme members who work full careers in public service. Employers should seek to **maximise participation** in the schemes where this is appropriate. Adequate incomes and good participation rates are particularly important below median income levels.

Ex.9 Protecting accrued rights is a prerequisite for reform both to build trust and confidence and to protect current workers from a sudden change in their pension benefits or pension age. It is also right that those closest to retirement will be least affected by any changes to scheme design.

Recommendation 4: The Government must **honour in full the pension promises** that have been accrued by scheme members: their **accrued rights**. In doing so, the Commission recommends **maintaining the final salary link for past service** for current members.

Ex.10 The main risks within defined benefit schemes are: investment; inflation; salary; and longevity risk. While government, as a large employer, is capable of bearing the majority of the risk associated with pension saving efficiently, and should continue to do so through a defined benefit pension, present schemes involve too much risk for government and the taxpayer.

Ex.11 There should be a fairer sharing of risk between government (and ultimately taxpayers) and scheme members than exists within the present schemes. Achieving this will mean moving current members to new schemes. Allowing current members to continue to accrue further benefits in the present schemes for many decades would be unfair and inequitable to the new members coming behind them.

Recommendation 5: As soon as practical, **members of the current defined benefit public service pension schemes should be moved to the new schemes for future service**, but the Government should continue to provide a form of **defined benefit pension** as the core design.

Ex.12 But the taxpayer should also have confidence that public service pension costs are under control and are sustainable. That requires mechanisms in the scheme design to share cost and risk fairly and a fixed cost ceiling to assure cost control.

Ex.13 Transparency and effective oversight of public service schemes is required for public service workers and taxpayers to have confidence in the system and improve the quality of debate about the future of public service pensions. Currently there is inconsistency in what scheme data and assessments, such as valuations, are published and such information is often difficult to access. This lack of transparency prevents comparisons and hinders analysis.

Recommendation 6: All public service pension schemes should **regularly publish data which, as far as possible, is produced to common standards and methodologies and is then collated centrally**. This information should be of a quality that **allows simple comparisons to be made** across Government, between schemes and between individual Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Funds.

The design

Ex.14 The Commission's view is that defined benefit should continue to be the core design for public service pensions as an efficient design for a large employer to share risk with employees. But as set out in the interim report, and expanded further in this report, final salary does not provide the right design for future public service schemes. Final salary schemes unfairly benefit high flyers who can receive up to twice as much in pension payments per £100 of contributions. It exposes taxpayers to salary risk (the risk that higher than expected salary rises increase the cost of providing pensions), which should be borne by the scheme member who benefits from the salary rise. And final salary creates a barrier to employees moving from the public to private sector. These inherent problems of final salary schemes impact on fairness and sustainability and have led the Commission to conclude that an alternative model should be chosen for the future.

Ex.15 Career average schemes allow pension to be accrued on the basis of earnings in each year of service. In these schemes future earnings do not affect past years' pension accrual so mobility between sectors is easier, salary risk remains with members and the unfairness of big benefits to high flyers is removed. Career average benefits can be delivered through a cash balance scheme. Cash balance could provide greater flexibility to alter benefits in the light of changes in longevity.

Ex.16 So both career average and cash balance schemes could provide a good match against the Commission's principles and in terms of the distribution of risks between member and taxpayer. On balance, the Commission has decided to recommend career average as the option that provides more certainty for members, is better understood and will be more practical to implement. The Commission is not recommending specific levels for accrual rates, indexation and employee contributions as these determine cost, which is a matter for the Government. The Government will need to make a decision about these parameters after consultation with scheme members.

Recommendation 7: A new **career average revalued earnings (CARE) scheme** should be adopted for general use in the public service schemes.

Ex.17 In a career average scheme the level of indexation and the accrual rate determines how different types of members are impacted by the scheme. The Commission favours indexation by average earnings during the accrual phase to maintain the value of the benefits,

offset by lower accrual rates for a given cost. Up-rating benefits in line with average wage increases ensures that benefit accrual in early years is broadly linked to earnings increases and therefore better relates to a member's level of earnings at retirement. It is a better indexation measure than prices which unfairly benefits the years worked late in a career compared to the years worked at the start and is therefore unfair between younger and older members.

Recommendation 8: Pension benefits should be uprated in line with average earnings during the accrual phase for active scheme members. Post-retirement, pensions in payment should be indexed in line with prices to maintain their purchasing power and adequacy during retirement.

Ex.18 Regarding the indexation of deferred members' benefits, there is a trade-off to be made. If the indexation measure were the same as for active members this would favour mobility. If it were lower, for example, if active members' benefits were indexed by earnings and deferred members' benefits by prices, this would favour retention. The Government should decide on whether pre-retirement indexation for deferred members is on an earnings based measure or prices based measure, as this decision will need to be based on the explicit objectives that government has about recruitment and retention versus mobility.

Ex.19 Employee contribution rates across public service pensions schemes vary considerably, both in level and structure, as the result of historic developments and negotiations over a number of years at scheme-specific level. Contribution rates should be set so that members appreciate the value of their pensions but not so high that they lead to scheme members, especially at lower income levels, opting out of the pension scheme. Any transition to a more uniform structure for employee contribution rates will be complex and must be considered in the context of overall remuneration.

Ex.20 Higher earning individuals are better positioned than lower earners to bear some of the risks associated with pension provision. In addition, higher earners are likely to live longer than lower earners and so will derive more benefit from their scheme for the same level of pension. It is desirable for the design of public service pension schemes to recognise this.

Ex.21 However, the introduction of a cap on pensionable earnings or hybrid schemes (schemes which have both defined benefit and defined contribution features) does not seem attractive due to the complexity this introduces to the system, the significant transitional issue of the cash flow loss to government revenue and the Commission's view that there are advantages to having senior management and their staff in the same scheme. However, there is a case for tiered contribution rates to reflect the different characteristics of higher earners.

Recommendation 9: A single benefit design should apply across the whole income range. The differing characteristics of higher and lower earners should be addressed through **tiered contribution rates**. The Government should consider the trade off between affordability and the impact of opt outs on adequacy when setting member contribution levels.

Ex.22 More generally, if state pension benefits were to change in future the Government would need to consider the future benefit and contribution arrangements in public service pensions to ensure they are still fair.

Ex.23 Choice in pension schemes can have significant advantages for scheme members and government alike. However, choice should be limited within the core design of the schemes, because of the evidence of undersaving when choice is available and the need to avoid undue complexity. But members should be given choice over their ability to make additional contributions to their pensions in a simple and transparent manner: this will encourage greater provision for retirement. Choice over when to draw pension benefits could be facilitated by providing information on how retirement income would change with the age at which the pension was taken, with information starting to be provided perhaps 5 or 10 years before Normal Pension Age. Actuarial enhancement and reduction should be applied in the new schemes in response to late or early retirement, with caps on pension accrual either increased or lifted entirely.

Ex.24 At present, most public service pension schemes provide for abatement, where some people who return to work in a job covered by the same scheme from which they draw their pension receive a reduced pension as a result. This can have a significant negative impact on an employee's effective salary if he returns to work.

Recommendation 10: Members should have **greater choice** over when to start drawing their pension benefits, so they can choose to retire earlier or later than their Normal Pension Age and their pension would be adjusted accordingly on an actuarially fair basis. **Flexible retirement** should be encouraged and abatement of pensions in its current form for those who return to work after drawing their pensions should be eliminated. In addition, caps on pension accrual should be removed or significantly lifted.

Ex.25 Replacing or removing abatement of pensions and increasing or removing caps on pension accrual would have cost implications for pension schemes which will need to be considered as part of the wider package.

The controls

Ex.26 Whichever overall design for public service schemes is adopted, longevity risk is the principal risk that needs to be managed. Life expectancy has increased dramatically in the last few decades and future changes are uncertain. These changes have been recognised within

the State Pension system. Following that lead would be an appropriate way to help members bear pre-retirement longevity risk and will increase the chances of scheme members having adequate retirement incomes.

Recommendation 11: The Government should **increase the member's Normal Pension Age in the new schemes so that it is in line with their State Pension Age**. The link between the State Pension Age and Normal Pension Age should be regularly reviewed, to make sure it is still appropriate, with a preference for keeping the two pension ages linked.

Ex.27 The introduction of the link to the State Pension Age, which will initially move Normal Pension Ages to 65, will move the proportion of adult life in retirement for public service pension scheme members back to about a third: roughly where it was in the 1980s. The current State Pension Age of 65 is already the Normal Pension Age for most new entrants to public service pension schemes. Moving to this for future accrual will more fairly distribute the benefits between scheme members. In the long term, the timetabled increases in State Pension Age should help to keep the proportion of adult life in retirement for members around this level, on current life expectancy projections.

Ex.28 This measure and the other design features proposed by the Commission should achieve much of the Commission's aim regarding sharing risks and costs fairly between employees and the Government. However, an additional safety valve, a cost ceiling based on the proportion of their total pensionable pay bill, is needed in case costs within the new schemes increase due to factors not taken account of in the scheme design. This will ensure that public service pensions remain affordable and sustainable.

Recommendation 12: The Government, on behalf of the taxpayer, should set out a **fixed cost ceiling**: the proportion of pensionable pay that they will contribute, on average, to employees' pensions over the long term. If this is exceeded then there should be a consultation process to bring costs back within the ceiling, with an **automatic default** change if agreement cannot be reached.

Ex.29 What is included within this cost ceiling is a matter for the Government to determine in consultation with employees and their representatives. However, if the ceiling is exceeded measures will need to be taken to bring costs back down below it. There should be a default stabilising mechanism that could take the form of an increase in employee contributions or a decrease in accrual rates which would automatically reduce costs if negotiations between employers and scheme members were unsuccessful.

Applying the design

Ex.30 There are differences between the individual public service schemes in factors such as the distribution of pensionable pay, average career length and life expectancy. But, for most schemes, these differences are generally similar to, or smaller than, those seen within the schemes. The modernised schemes generally apply standard features to their members and this is accepted as an appropriate approach, as tailoring schemes to all the differences seen would create a complex and costly system and would be likely to reduce member understanding. This would seem to suggest that for most schemes variation in pension features is not the most appropriate way to deal with these differences where they are seen.

Recommendation 13: The Commission **is not proposing a single public service pension scheme**, but over time **public service pensions should move towards a common framework** for scheme design as set out in this report. However, in some cases, for example, the uniformed services, there may need to be limited adaptations to this framework.

Ex.31 The uniformed services (the armed forces, police and firefighters) are in a somewhat different position, given that the pension ages in the uniformed services schemes still generally reflect an assumption that pension for the majority of long-serving members should be payable from age 55 or less. This assumption may no longer match expectations, given the increases in life expectancy that have been seen since the 19th and first half of the 20th century when these pensions ages were set.

Ex.32 But this does not take away from the fact that the nature of the work the uniformed services perform is unique and that this needs to be reflected in their Normal Pension Ages. The modernised firefighters scheme has struck a balance between recognising these changes in life expectancy, but also recognising the unique nature of the service provided by scheme members. The Commission's view is that the Normal Pension Age in this scheme, 60, should be seen as setting a benchmark for the uniformed services as a whole. This position will need to be kept under regular review to make sure it is still appropriate, given future changes in life expectancy projections and experience of healthy life expectancy.

Recommendation 14: The key design features contained in this report should apply to all public service pension schemes. The **exception is in the case of the uniformed services** where the Normal Pension Age should be set to reflect the unique characteristics of the work involved. The Government should therefore consider setting **a new Normal Pension Age of 60 across the uniformed services**, where the Normal Pension Age is currently below this level in these schemes, and **keep this under regular review**.

Ex.33 The LGPS provides a set of final salary-based benefits similar to those in many of the unfunded schemes. The membership also shares characteristics with membership of very large unfunded schemes and there are overlaps in coverage with unfunded schemes. There

may be a higher proportion of part-time, lower-earning members in the LGPS, but there are also many such members in schemes like the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme and the National Health Service Pension Scheme.

Ex.34 There are good reasons for Government to fund pensions from future taxation and finance them on an unfunded basis if this is done in a transparent way and taken account of within fiscal planning in an appropriate manner. The Commission has therefore concluded that the funding boundary, with the LGPS funded and other major schemes unfunded, should remain where it is. This will continue the mixed approach to the funding of public service pension schemes.

Recommendation 15: The **common design features laid out in this report should also apply to the LGPS**. However, it remains appropriate for the Government to **maintain the different financing arrangements for the LGPS** in future, so the LGPS remains funded and the other major schemes remain unfunded.

Ex.35 As for the categories of people who should in future be entitled to join public service pension schemes, it is ultimately for the Government to decide how much pensions risk it is willing to bear in order to meet its wider policy objectives. While continuing access to public service pension schemes helps to remove the pensions barrier for external contractors, there are good reasons for the Government to limit access, including the increased long term risk government would bear in relation to those schemes.

Ex.36 In addition, since the publication of the Commission's interim report the Government has announced reviews of the Fair Deal policy and the discount rate, which are relevant to many of the issues around access to schemes. The Commission expects that the outcome of these reviews would, at least in part, help to facilitate the Government's aim for increased plurality of provision for public services. And a move to a new public service pension scheme design, as laid out in this report, should also help to remove some of the barriers to plurality of service provision.

Recommendation 16: It is in principle **undesirable for future non-public service workers to have access to public service pension schemes**, given the increased long-term risk this places on the Government and taxpayers.

A transparent and effective system

Ex.37 Currently in the public service pension schemes there is not always a clear separation of duties between those responsible for the governance of public service pension schemes and those delivering the benefits to scheme members. This can lead to a lack of transparency and of clarity as to who is responsible for what. And members of public service pension schemes

are sometimes not formally represented in the existing governance arrangements, which can lead to a lack of adequate member involvement in analysis and decisions.

Recommendation 17: Every public service pension scheme (and individual LGPS Fund) should have a **properly constituted, trained and competent Pension Board, with member nominees, responsible for meeting good standards of governance including effective and efficient administration.** There should also be a **pension policy group** for each scheme at national level for considering major changes to scheme rules.

Ex.38 Not all public service pension schemes communicate with members on a regular basis. Currently it is a requirement of defined contribution schemes in the private sector that they provide members with an annual benefit statement: this is not the case for defined benefit schemes (the great majority of public service pension schemes), which only have to provide a statement if requested. Yet the provision of information supports the general requirement to improve awareness of pensions and to assist members taking ownership of their pension requirements.

Recommendation 18: All public service pension schemes should issue regular benefit statements to active scheme members, at least annually and without being requested and **promote the use of information technology** for providing information to members and employers.

Ex.39 Public service pension schemes are not subject to external independent regulation in the way that private sector schemes are. While this full regulatory system would not be appropriate for public service schemes it seems reasonable that members of all pension schemes should be clear about how their scheme is run and by whom and be confident that their interests are being protected.

Recommendation 19: Governance and the availability and transparency of information would be improved by government establishing **a framework that ensures independent oversight of the governance, administration and data transparency of public service pension schemes.** Government should consider which body or bodies, including, for example, The Pensions Regulator, is most suitable to undertake this role.

Ex.40 While the recommendations in this report on scheme features aim to create a sustainable public service pensions system for the future, it is important that given the implications for long-term public finances this is monitored by an independent body to make sure it is achieved. Given its role to provide independent advice on the public finances the Office for Budget Responsibility is best placed to play this role.

Recommendation 20: When assessing the long term sustainability of the public finances, the **Office for Budget Responsibility should provide a regular published analysis of the long term fiscal impact of the main public service pension schemes** (including the funded LGPS).

Ex.41 Management of investment funds is an additional aspect of pension scheme governance for the funded public service pension schemes, most notably for the LGPS. While there are many areas of good practice around the management of these funds there are also areas that could be improved around publication of comparable Fund data and assessment of sustainability.

Recommendation 21: **Centrally collated comprehensive data, covering all LGPS Funds, should be published including Fund comparisons**, which, for example, clarify and compare key assumptions about investment growth and differences in deficit recovery plans.

Ex.42 Good administration is a key enabler in the delivery of accurate and timely pension payments. Currently a clear definition of what good administration (and governance) looks like in public service pension schemes is not readily available.

Recommendation 22: Government should set **what good standards of administration should consist of in the public service pension schemes based on independent expert advice**. The Pensions Regulator might have a role, building on its objective to promote good administration. **A benchmarking exercise should then be conducted across all the schemes** to assist in the raising of standards where appropriate.

Ex.43 A number of commentators have also suggested that public service pension schemes offer scope for the streamlining their administration functions and more shared arrangements. This is relevant to all schemes, but particularly for the administration of the locally run schemes. A number of local authorities have already begun to explore opportunities to share administrative services and contracts and the Commission's view is that this should be encouraged.

Recommendation 23: Central and local government should **closely monitor the benefits associated with the current co-operative projects within the LGPS, with a view to encouraging the extension of this approach, if appropriate**, across all local authorities. Government should also examine closely the potential for the unfunded public service schemes to **realise greater efficiencies in the administration of pensions** by sharing contracts and combining support services, including considering outsourcing.

Ex.44 There is a complex and inconsistent overall legal architecture that has developed piecemeal over the last 100 years or more. There is a strong case for introducing new, overarching, primary legislation to set the new public service pension scheme framework. This would provide greater transparency, simplicity and certainty that the reforms would satisfy common basic principles.

Recommendation 24: The Government should introduce **primary legislation to adopt a new common UK legal framework** for public service schemes.

Delivering the change

Ex.45 Implementation is key: the first stage will require the detailed development of proposals by the Government including the Government's decision on affordability issues while applying the common set of design principles.

Recommendation 25: The **consultation process itself should be centrally co-ordinated**: to set the cost ceilings and timetables for consultation and overall implementation. However, the **consultation on details should be conducted scheme by scheme involving employees and their representatives**.

Ex.46 This will avoid a cumbersome process while permitting any necessary variation in timetables between schemes. It will also provide for standardisation while allowing individual schemes to enter into negotiations. Each consultation, as required by law, will need to be accompanied by a full equality impact assessment to allow for deeper consideration of issues the reforms may pose for various groups. And there should be early upfront communication with scheme members, to encourage their participation in the consultation process.

Ex.47 The Commission recognises that these reforms cannot be achieved overnight. There are several steps that will need to be taken before the necessary legislative process can be started and the consequent administrative changes made. And these steps are crucial in ensuring that the reforms are a success and deliver sustainable public service pension schemes for the foreseeable future.

Recommendation 26: The Commission's view is that even allowing for the necessary processes it should be possible to **introduce the new schemes before the end of this Parliament** and we would encourage the Government to aim for implementation within this timeframe.

Ex.48 Meeting the implementation timetable would be facilitated by considering delivery issues, particularly scheme administration, at an early stage. And there needs to be a clear

governance structure for the implementation plan. This is important for several reasons. First, it increases transparency in the process. Second, it allows the monitoring of delivery against targets and gives early warning if it looks like the timetable is slipping. Third, it allows individuals responsible for delivering the reforms to be held to account.

Recommendation 27: Best practice governance arrangements should be followed for **both business as usual and the transformation process**, for each scheme. And there will also **need to be the right resource**, on top of business as usual, to drive the reforms; particularly given the challenging timescale and scope of the reforms.

Ex.49 An important part of delivering this change and managing the transition is protecting existing members. Members will of course have their past service rights protected. The Commission has also noted in the evidence submitted to it the widespread expectations among public servants that the final salary link would be maintained. The Commission is sympathetic to the argument that this would be in line with the principle of accrued rights. And given the major transition involved in moving to the reformed schemes it would also be fair.

Ex.50 The Commission's expectation is that existing members who are currently in their 50s should, by and large, experience fairly limited change to the benefit which they would otherwise have expected to accrue by the time they reach their current scheme normal pension age. This would particularly be the case if the final salary link is protected for past service, as the Commission recommends.

Ex.51 The reforms proposed by the Commission should, as a whole, deliver a framework for public service pensions that is affordable and sustainable, adequate and fair, supports productivity and is transparent and simple. It represents a balanced deal for public service workers and taxpayers that should deliver a long-lasting settlement in which they can have trust and confidence.

SAMPLE TARIFF FOR FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEMES TO MEET £33M

By Band:

Savings achieved: £33m

	Pensionable pay band		% Increase				Revised total % contribution			
	Lower	Upper	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
1	NFPS (to be tiered)		0.0%	1.5%	2.5%	3.0%	8.5%	10.0%	11.0%	11.5%
	FPS									
2	-	£30,000	3.4%	3.2%	3.1%	3.0%	14.4%	14.2%	14.1%	14.0%
3	£30,001	£40,000	3.8%	3.5%	3.3%	3.2%	14.8%	14.5%	14.3%	14.2%
4	£40,001	£50,000	4.6%	4.0%	3.6%	3.6%	15.6%	15.0%	14.6%	14.6%
5	£50,001	£60,000	5.0%	4.6%	4.2%	4.0%	16.0%	15.6%	15.2%	15.0%
6	£60,001	£100,000	5.5%	5.0%	4.4%	4.3%	16.5%	16.0%	15.4%	15.3%
7	£100,001	£120,000	6.0%	5.6%	4.6%	4.5%	17.0%	16.6%	15.6%	15.5%
8	£120,001	-	6.5%	6.2%	5.0%	5.0%	17.5%	17.2%	16.0%	16.0%

Tariffs:

Profile A
Profile B

Full protection to NFPS
Substantial protection to NFPS (1.5%)

Profile C
Profile D

Limited protection to NFPS (2.5%)
No protection to NFPS

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
MEETING DATE:	22 nd July 2011
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Equality and Diversity interventions

SUMMARY

The report highlights the work of the Equality & Diversity unit, within the context of the Equality Act 2010 and the Authority's Single Equality Scheme.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. To note the ongoing work of the Equality and Diversity Unit
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BACKGROUND

The Equality Act received Royal Assent in April 2010. It aimed to strengthen existing legal protection, advance equality and harmonise the law. It has:

- Introduced a new Equality Duty for the Public Sector, bringing together the three existing Duties (race, gender and disability) and extend them to include gender reassignment, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief;
- From 2011, introduced a new duty to consider socio-economic disadvantage;
- Outlawed discrimination in the provision of goods and services;
- Required public bodies to report on important inequalities such as gender pay, ethnic minority employment and disability employment;
- Widened the scope of positive action;
- Increased the powers of Employment Tribunals.

Government Ministers have stated they intend to table the secondary legislation necessary to enact most of the provisions of the legislation with the exception of those that relate to the socio-economic duty and equal pay.

In 2010 The Conservative-Liberal Democratic Government carried out a consultation exercise on the specific duties on public bodies arising from the Equality Duty. The Equality & Human Rights Commission recently published guidance on the new Public Sector Equality Duty. This duty comes into force in April 6th and significantly expands the existing duties relating to race, disability and gender so it covers eight "protected characteristics": age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Legislation update

The Equality Act 2010 was implemented on 5th April, strengthening and harmonising existing equality law and this was brought to the Fire Authority's attention in April 2011. Since the initial publication it has been decided that some elements are no longer to be implemented such as the duty to promote socio economic equality. The dual discrimination provision is *not* to be brought into effect, nor compulsory gender pay gap reporting.

The Act introduced a general duty to promote equal opportunity, challenge discrimination and promote good relations between different groups. This is backed up by specific duties on how it is to be implemented. The government consultation on the specific duties has now ended, and we await the amendments made to the Act.

It is important for the Fire Authority to note that in order for AF&RS to be able to demonstrate compliance to the General Duty (to which there is no change), it may still be necessary for us to adopt the principles of the specific duty as the only viable option to satisfy the evidencing of the Authorities arrangements under the Act.

Work Update and Equality Impact Assessments

The main priorities for the Unit are: the work-streams that have emerged in response to the changes required by the Equality Act 2010, the Equality Impact Assessment process attached to organisational transformation, and maintaining progress towards achieving "Excellent" through the Equality Framework for Local Government.

This is important to AF&RS because: -

- An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a way of finding out if our services and employment opportunities are accessible for our communities and employees.
- They help us ensure that our policies/initiatives and services do not discriminate in any way.

- An EIA will help us to understand how our policies/initiatives or services could discriminate against members of the community on grounds of race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief.
- It allows us to look forward to see that customers and employees can access our services, instead of reacting to any complaints or concerns about service delivery.

Because of this new work has emerged of sizable proportion especially from the Transformation and Change Project, which has seen the average EIA numbers increase (pre-transformation) from 2-6 per quarter to 16-20 per quarter. EIA's in the last quarter have included and have ranged from Day Duty transfer, the Corporate Plan, to Home Fire Safety Visit Risk Matrix.

It is important to note that currently a high proportion of the Unit's productivity is supporting the Equality Impact Assessment process attached to organisational transformation. As this new work emerges it will be necessary to balance the priorities for the Service and that of progress against the gap analysis for achieving "Excellence". It may be necessary to postpone or even halt other work-streams not seen as a priority.

Bullying and harassment on line training

Following the review of the Harassment & Bullying policy, the Service's online bullying and harassment training for all staff commenced on 16th May. Due to technical difficulties the training facility was suspended and is due to go live again on 11th July. The six week completion period for Whole-time and Support personnel will commence again from this date, followed by an eight week period by personnel on the RD system.

Equal Pay

Work continues on analysis and data collection in readiness for a report for SMB and the Fire Authority.

External groups

We have continued to co-ordinate the Equality Consultation group, and are in the process of holding review meetings with individual member agencies looking at the structure, process and impact of the group. The ECG continues to be held as a good practice model across equality groups.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION S

None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Public sector Equality Duty as created by the Equality Act

DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

The report is solely concerned with Equality and Diversity issues.

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT

High. Possibility of legal challenge if we do not comply with our legal Duties.

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None

HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

List of background documents:
Report Contact(s): Dave Salmon, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Director of Risk Reduction (ex 234)

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	FIRE AUTHORITY
MEETING DATE:	22nd July 2011
REPORT OF:	Treasurer to the Fire Authority Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Joint Training Centre - Equalisation Fund

SUMMARY

The report provides Members with an update on the long term financial position of the Equalisation Fund, managed by Gloucestershire County Council to finance the Joint Training Centre. The report identifies an estimated deficit on the fund of £2.281m and suggested options to correct this over the remaining life of the project. Avon Fire Authority contributes 50% of the Authorities contributions, the other 2 Authorities contributing 25% each.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Members are requested to:

1. Note the contents of the Report and the identified options.
2. Agree to implement Recommendation no 7.

BACKGROUND

The Authority entered into a Private Finance Initiative arrangement in partnership with Somerset County Council and Gloucestershire County Council for the provision of a Joint Training Centre, located in Avonmouth. The contract was awarded to Vosper Thorneycroft and training commenced in 2003. Substantial PFI credits were provided to assist with the funding of the Project. Gloucestershire County Council were appointed the lead for the project, undertaking responsibility for monitoring the financial arrangements.

At the onset of the contract a financial model was formulated, calculating future cash flows associated for the 25 year life of the training centre. The model calculated the:-

- Annual charge from the contractor
- Annual support from the Government in the form of PFI credits
- Annual return on cash balances
- Administration costs
- The Authorities annual contribution.

The PFI funding was initially front loaded, with more income being received in the early years than was needed to fund the annual charge from the contractor. This led to the formation of an Equalisation Fund. The fund was due to increase over the period until it peaked in year 13 before reducing to zero in year 25 when the final payment was made.

It was decided that the Authorities annual contribution would increase in line with inflation to ensure that costs could be contained within annual budget increases. Chart 2 in Appendix 1 details the original model.

Subsequently the government changed its PFI funding model in the 3rd year of the project. It was decided that PFI grants would be paid on an annuity model for the life of the project. The cash flows were remodelled, the outcome being a reduction in the Authorities charge of £90k per annum.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

As already identified payments made to Severn Park (The Contractor) are supported by an Equalisation Fund which is jointly owned by the three Fire & Rescue Services. This fund was designed to balance back to zero at the end of the 25 year period of the contract. However, at the end of March 2011, following a review by Gloucestershire the fund is forecasting a deficit of £2.3m at the end of the 25 years.

This has occurred due to adverse market conditions such as the RPIX and AEI indices adversely differing from the rate forecast, and also interest rates staying lower than predicted for a prolonged period of time. There is also the effect of a reduction in contributions to the fund from 1st April 2006. At the time this took place the fund was forecasting a large surplus and the services agreed to a reduction of £90k per annum (plus inflation).

Over time both indices and interest rates can move both adversely or in favour of the fund, and Gloucestershire make assumptions on the future forecast based on current conditions. However it should be noted that if the factors used in the calculations change in our favour, this may radically change the forecast.

The model has now been reworked. Future rates for both the AWE (Average Weekly Earnings) and RPIX (Retail Price Index excluding Mortgage Interest) are based on the estimates used in the original model. Interest assumptions follow a modified profile and have been made using information from the Treasury Management Team at Gloucestershire, which they have produced using information from their advisors. The assumed interest rates for the next five years have been made using this profile and then for the remainder of the contract it reverts back to the estimated uplift in the financial model.

OPTIONS

The following options have been identified by Gloucestershire County Council:-

1. Do nothing and review again in up to 3 years time.
2. Annual payment (plus indexation) of £90k to be added in from 2012/13.
3. Annual payment (plus indexation) of £100k to be added in from 2013/14.
4. Annual payment (plus indexation) of £110k to be added in from 2014/15.
5. Annual payment (plus indexation) of £120k to be added in from 2015/16.
6. Accumulating £20k every year based on previous years payment for 6 years from 2012/13 to 2017/18 (e.g. £20k extra in first year, £40k extra in second year, etc).
7. Accumulating £10k every year based on previous years payment for 12 years from 2012/13 to 2023/24 (e.g. £10k extra in first year, £20k extra in second year).
8. Pay additional amounts into the fund in years 23-25 which are the three years that the fund has run out of cash. The amounts required would be: year 23 (2025/6) £430k, year 24 (2026/7) £805k and year 25 (2027/8) £906k.
9. A further option to help reduce the forecast balance is dependant on all three services having available funds. If the services have surplus funds (in the agreed split of 50:25:25) they can opt to make a payment in to the fund at any time. This would have the effect of reducing the outstanding balance and gaining interest on the account.

All additional payments into the fund become subject to annual inflation at the original contract rate of 2.8%.

CONSIDERATIONS

All options require the Authority to contribute additional resources to fund the JTC over the remaining life of the contract. Avon is responsible for 50% of the deficit, £1.140m of future cash flows.

Options 3, 4, 5 and 6 will require additional revenue resources of between £45k and £60k to be found from the existing revenue budget with the near term.

Options 6, 7 and 8 effectively delay increasing contributions to future years, but contributions are then accelerated at a faster rate.

Option 9 is unattractive due to the level of interest currently being earned. Additionally it would be prudent for the Authority to retain balances to assist with the medium term budget situation.

All options produce a very similar Net Present Value when analysed under discounted cash flow.

At this stage it is recommended that option 7 is selected. This will mean the Service has an additional budgetary pressure in 2012/13, but the increase in funding will be spread over a 12 year period, reducing the increase in year 1.

The Finance team will review the options further in the near future, one possible option would be to utilise Avon's share of the existing balance to defer borrowing and the associate costs.

**IMPLICATIONS
CONTRIBUTION TO KEY POLICIES**

None.

FINANCIAL

The estimated deficit is substantial at this stage. The Authority needs to take action to rectify the situation. The long term cost of balancing the fund is estimate to be £1.140m for Avon.

LEGAL

The Authority is committed to paying 50% of the contribution to the fund and ensuring that the contractor is paid the Unitary Charge in accordance with the contractual documentation.

DIVERSITY

None

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT

The difficulty in forecasting future interest and inflation rates means the model is subject to wide ranging changes in assumptions that predict the end deficit. However at this stage it appears likely that there will be a sizable deficit on current assumptions. It would be prudent to address the issue as soon as is affordable in order to delay the need for larger contributions in the future..

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY

None

HEALTH & SAFETY

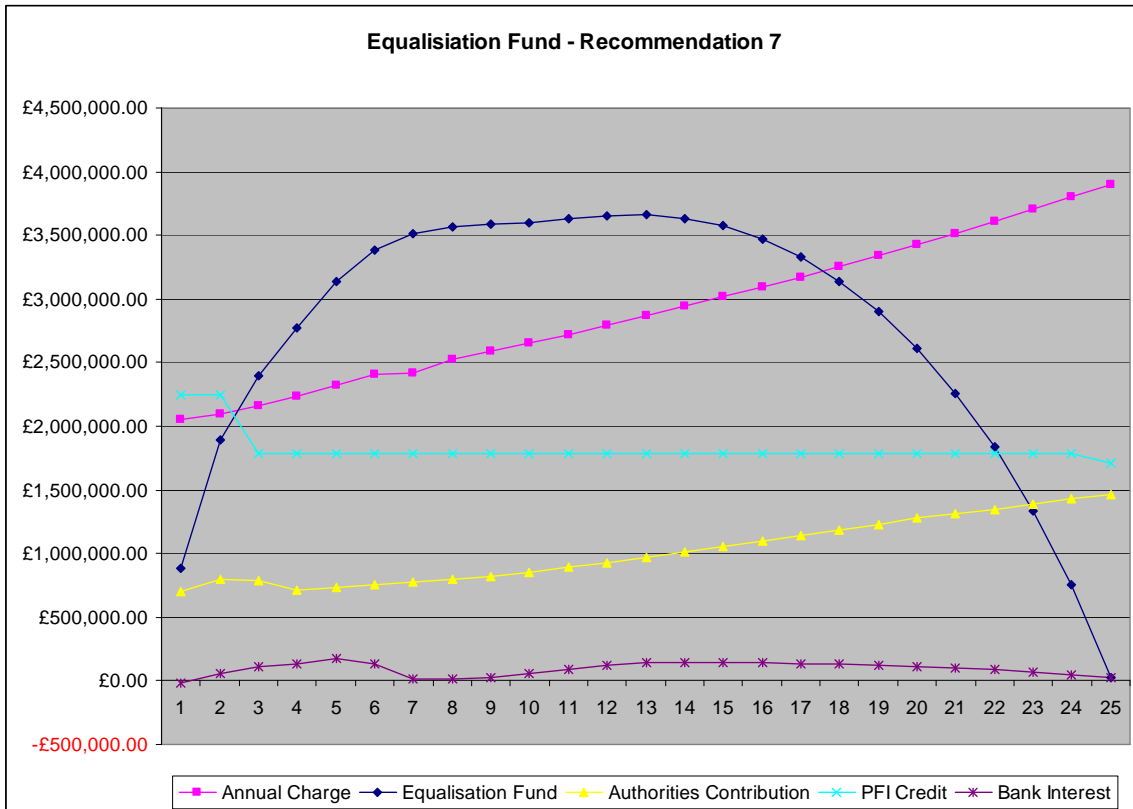
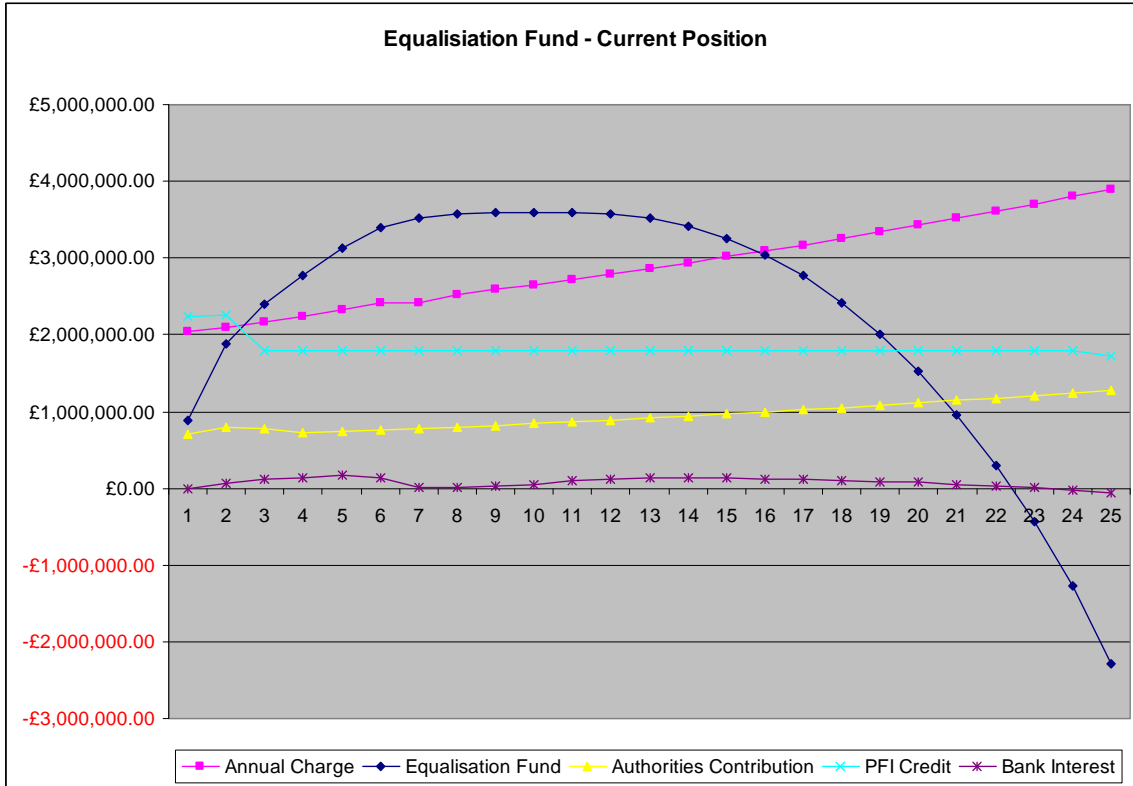
None

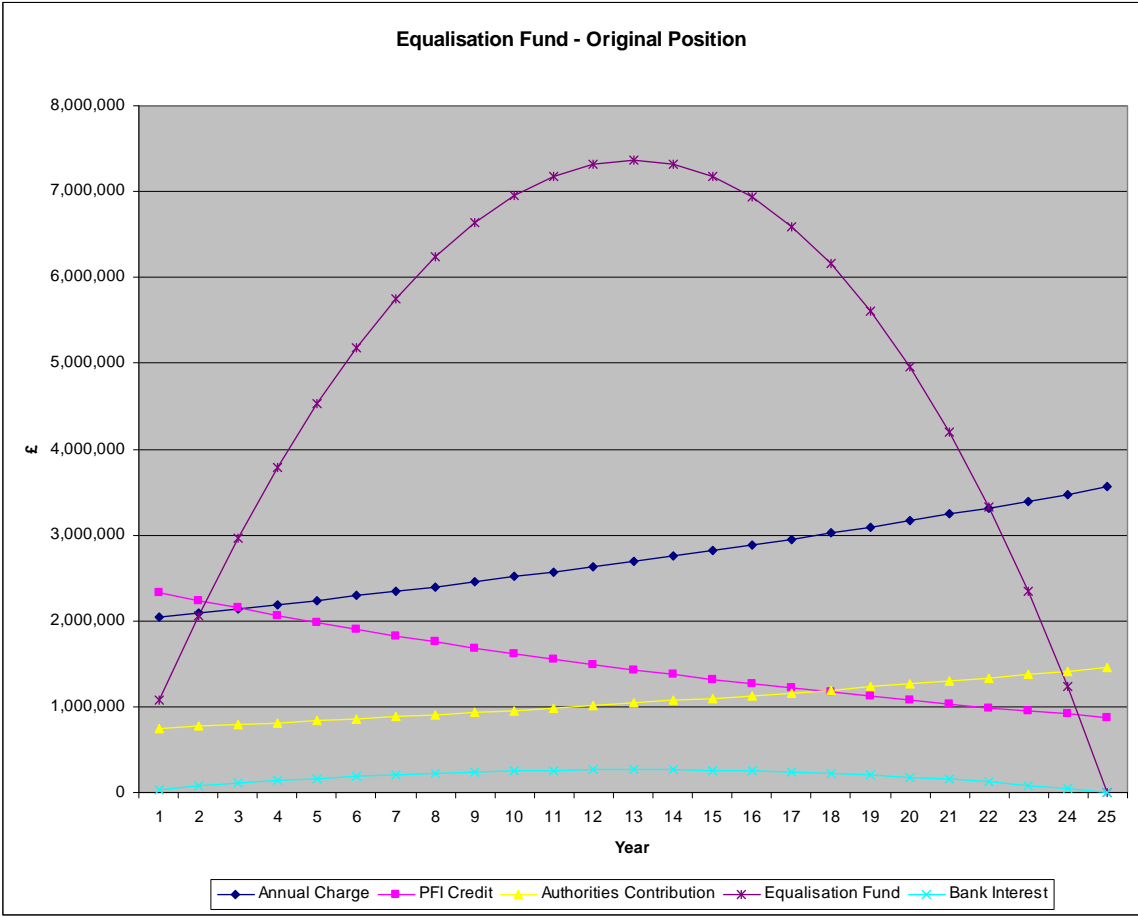
APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Equalisation Fund Charts

List of background documents: Held within the Treasurer and Director of Finance and Asset Management's Unit
Report Contact(s): James Dack, Treasurer and Director of Finance and Asset Management (Extension 235#)

Appendix 1 – Fund Charts





AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
MEETING DATE:	22 July 2011
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Performance and Risk Management Update

SUMMARY

The intention of this report is to provide Elected Members with a regular update on the work being undertaken to manage the Services:

- Performance,
- Corporate risks,
- Community risks.

This report also includes copies of the end of year performance report and the Corporate Plan.

Members are involved in the 'Performance and Risk Management Forum' and are actively encouraged to scrutinise performance and engage with Officers. The intended outcome from this report is to ensure continuous improvement and risk mitigation is evidenced in all areas of Service activity.

It is envisaged that the Fire Authority will receive a regular summary of activities in these important areas and in the case of Corporate and Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) and will receive more detailed reports as and when required.

Elected members who are not members of the Forum are invited to submit questions or challenges directly to the Forum.

It should be noted that since the last report, no meeting of the Performance and Risk management Forum has been held, but these are now scheduled throughout the year on a quarterly basis.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members note the contents of this report, the end of year report and endorse the Corporate Plan.

CONTENTS

This report primarily focuses on:

- The end of year performance report
- The Corporate Plan
- The Performance Scorecard

BACKGROUND

End of year performance report (Appendix 1)

Each year a report is produced detailing performance against target for the previous financial year. This report is for Members information as Members will already have had this information previously reported to them throughout the year. The performance information has been scrutinised on their behalf through the Performance and Risk Management Forum. This report is included as Appendix 1.

This report was previously known as the Best Value Report when there was a statutory duty to publish by the end of June. As Best Value legislation was abolished in March 2008 the report will now be known as the Performance Report and will continue to be published in June each year.

The Corporate Plan (Appendix 2)

The Corporate Plan 2011-15 sets out the Fire Authority's strategic, corporate level objectives and acts as a point of reference for staff and communities to identify the areas that are important in enabling us to improve and evolve. It also acts as a source of information for our partners and the public by highlighting our achievements during the past year. This is included as Appendix 2.

Members should note that this plan forms the basis of all other Service plans, including the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) which is the more detailed tactical plan of how the Service intends to reduce Community Risk. This is currently being produced and will be presented to the Performance and Risk Management Forum in the near future.

Each year the Authority will be given an update of progress for each of the objectives set within the Corporate Plan. Performance information and details of initiatives will also be included, thereby enabling the Fire Authority to gain assurance that the strategic aims are being met. This is more closely monitored throughout the year by the Performance and Risk Management Forum.

The Plan has been produced following consultation with the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive and the Service Management Board. Following input from various sources, the strategic aims and objectives for the forthcoming four years have been developed. The sources of input included:

- The Chief Fire Officer and Service Management Board
- Feedback from the staff survey
- A review of the latest budgetary information, performance figures and community safety initiatives.

In previous years wider consultation has taken place, with copies of the Corporate Plan being placed in libraries and local amenities; however, the response from the public was low in number and of poor quality. A decision was made not to carry out wider consultation for subsequent issues of the plan as it did not provide value for money. However, other specific plans such as the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) will be fully consulted on using a range of approaches.

Summary of the Performance Scorecard April 2011 (Appendix 3)

It should be noted that the scorecard demonstrates progress in the first month of the performance year only and therefore provides progress for that month only. Further updates will be contained within Fire Authority reports throughout this year.

Fires

Accidental dwelling fires (ADF's) and deliberate secondary fires have both seen more incidents recorded than April last year. However, for 43% of the ADF's in April, no fire fighting was required. This is an indication of the success of our prevention work.

Alarms

Attendance at Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA's) are 8% down on last year, which is a good start to this reporting year. 43% of the AFA's in April were successfully call challenged by Fire Control, saving attendance to 121 incidents.

There is a problem with a particular caller making malicious calls and this continues. This means that the number of False Alarm Malicious (FAM) calls has increased by 78% on last year. However, these calls are not actually attended and therefore the % of the calls of this nature, which are challenged, has increased to 78%. Officers are examining ways to deal with calls from this know person.

Deaths, injuries and escapes

There was one fire fatality recorded in April. This was a late call to an accidental dwelling fatality believed to be smoking related. There were six recorded injuries in primary fires in April.

Response

Two of the eight response indicators have not achieved targets in this month. However, because this is for only one month into the year the numbers are low and at this stage there is no concern over meeting end of year targets.

The targets for call handling were achieved.

Resources and Value for Money

The IT helpdesk is on target. The indicator for the payment of invoices cannot be reported yet due to problems with getting the data from Bristol City Council. It should be noted that there is a new environmental target for reducing business miles travelled.

People

The previous reporting year ended with 7.02 shifts lost to sickness per person and the target for this year has been set at 7.0 to assist with continuing this reduction. The individual target set for sickness levels for all Operational staff and the one set for all staff is being achieved. The Return To Work Interview (RTWI) completion target for this year was set at 100% however this failed to be achieved because two interviews were not carried out on time in April.

Health and Safety

There is a new strategy for this area, with some new proposed targets that are under consideration. This will be more closely monitored by the Health and Safety Committee and Forum.

IMPLICATIONS

CONTRIBUTION TO KEY POLICY PRIORITIES

It is recognised that effective Performance and Risk Management are key to achieving all the objectives and targets of the organisation. In particular:

- Avon Fire and Rescue Service - Corporate Plan, 2011 – 2015
- Avon Fire and Rescue Service – IRMP, 2008 - 2011
- Avon Fire and Rescue Services Corporate Risk Register
- AF&RS Health and Safety Strategy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is acknowledged that proficient, robust and effective planning, performance and risk management will result in economic efficiencies and evidence that the Service is providing its communities with good value for money services.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Mitigation under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other employment and equalities related legislation.

The end of year performance report was previously known as the Best Value Report when there was a statutory duty to publish by the end of June. As Best Value legislation was abolished in March 2008 the report will now be known as the Performance Report and will continue to be published in June each year.

There is no legal requirement to produce a Corporate Plan; however the production of this plan will demonstrate to the public the Authority's commitment to provide value for money and accountability when setting its objectives.

DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

Equality impact assessments are carried out in all aspects of the Service. These are monitored and reviewed as part of the performance management framework. We have a number of Local Performance Indicators that we monitor to measure our progress in equality and diversity:

- E&D1, progress in the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework,
- E&D2, the duty to promote equality
- 16a i&ii, The percentage of staff with a disability
- HR2 recruitment of BME staff
- HR3 recruitment of female operational staff

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT

Providing evidence of outcomes in this area is a key control measure in reducing the Corporate Risks for the Authority. Corporate Risk assessments are regularly scrutinised by the Service Management Team and is regularly reported to the Fire Authority.

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

It should be noted that the Performance and Risk Management Forum has agreed to monitor progress against targets and objectives in this area.

CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

Targets and objectives are set to contribute to making improvement in this area. Progress and improvement is monitored closely at the Performance and Risk Management Forum.

Local Performance Indicators - 206i, Number of deliberate primary fires (Arson), 206Veh, Number of deliberate vehicle fires, 206iii, deliberate secondary fires, 206iv, Total number of malicious fire alarms, number of education visits undertaken, Number of on and off station community events attended to deliver fire safety messages, number of groups visiting community safety centers.

HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Whilst progress in this area is monitored by Members of the Health and Safety Forum, Performance and Risk Management contribute to progress and 'risk mitigation' in this priority area

List of background documents:
Corporate Plan (2008 -2011 and 2011-2015), AF&RS Health and Safety Strategy, IRMP 2008 -2011
Report Contact(s): Lorraine Houghton, Director of Corporate Services, Ext 231.

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
MEETING DATE:	22 July 2011
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Sickness Absence Update – as at 31 May 2011

SUMMARY

The Service ended the financial year 2010/11 on 7.02 days/shifts lost to sickness all staff (against a target of 7.5) and achieving a completion rate of 96% for Return to Work interviews (against a target of 90%).

The targets for 2011/12 are 7 days/shifts lost to sickness for all staff and wholetime uniformed staff and 100% completion rate for Return to Work interviews (RTWI).

Reviewing our performance against the year to date targets, the Service is on track for both operational and all staff sickness. However we are likely to narrowly miss our 100% RTWI completion for 11/12 because of a small number (1) of non/late completions in March-April. We will keep this under review.

As we remain on target for shifts lost due to sickness this is a shortened, overview report for the Fire Authority.

Overview of sickness absence data*Wholetime uniformed*

There is a continued reduction in total sickness levels. Therefore we should remain on track to meet our targets if we can sustain our achievements in reducing long term sickness (figures leveling off to a fairly consistent 5-10 uniformed staff off long term at any one time) and make further progress in reducing short term sickness, including addressing the seasonal peaks at holiday times (March/April, July/August, October and December). On the latter, 46 wholetime uniformed staff are currently being attendance managed because of their high level of short term sickness and/or the pattern (e.g. sickness before/after leave, during school holidays). April and May data reflects the usual reasons for the majority of shifts lost - musculo skeletal injuries (non-work), cold, flu and gastro-intestinal sickness.

Support

As with uniformed staff the overall trend is a reduction in sickness levels. Therefore we should remain on track if we can sustain our achievements on long term sickness (leveled off to 1-2 support staff long term sick at any one time) and make further

sustained progress on reducing short term sickness. On the latter, 8 support staff are currently being attendance managed for high levels of sickness absence but we are not seeing the same trends with reference to patterns - no support staff currently under review for sickness before/after leave, school holidays. April and May data reflects the usual reasons for the majority of shifts lost - musculo skeletal injuries (non-work) and cold, flu.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

This HR led work is aimed at producing savings for the Authority (in sick pay and detached duties cover) and maintaining crewing levels of frontline pumps. While policies are in place to enable managers to support staff back to work after illness, these provisions and the resources available in terms of HR practitioners, will inevitably come under strain in the coming months. In addition, it is important to monitor sickness absence through stress and anxiety across the Service during this period of change and resourcing pressures, ensuring reasonable support is provided. Therefore we recommend report is noted and that Members continue to receive this shortened overview report until further notice.

BACKGROUND

Following unsatisfactory attendance levels recorded in years 2003/04 and 2004/05, Members agreed to receive updates on the progress made to improve these levels. This report provides the position as at 31 May 2011.

IMPLICATIONS

Achieving maximum staff attendance increases productivity and impacts on all areas of the Authority's role.

CONTRIBUTION TO KEY POLICY PRIORITIES

Managing absence remains a key priority in all main policy documents.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Absence has a significant cost to all employers - thus Attendance Management policies are a key part of achieving financial efficiencies.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Employment law is continuously evolving through the decisions of Employment Tribunals and through the publication of key documents such as the Equality Act. Such decisions influence changes to our own policies and approaches.

DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

We remain committed to assisting those with disabilities to enjoy a full working life. We also recognise that particular illnesses and medical conditions can adversely affect particular groups.

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT

Attendance Management remains one of the top six corporate risks and, as such, has a full intervention programme in place.

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None

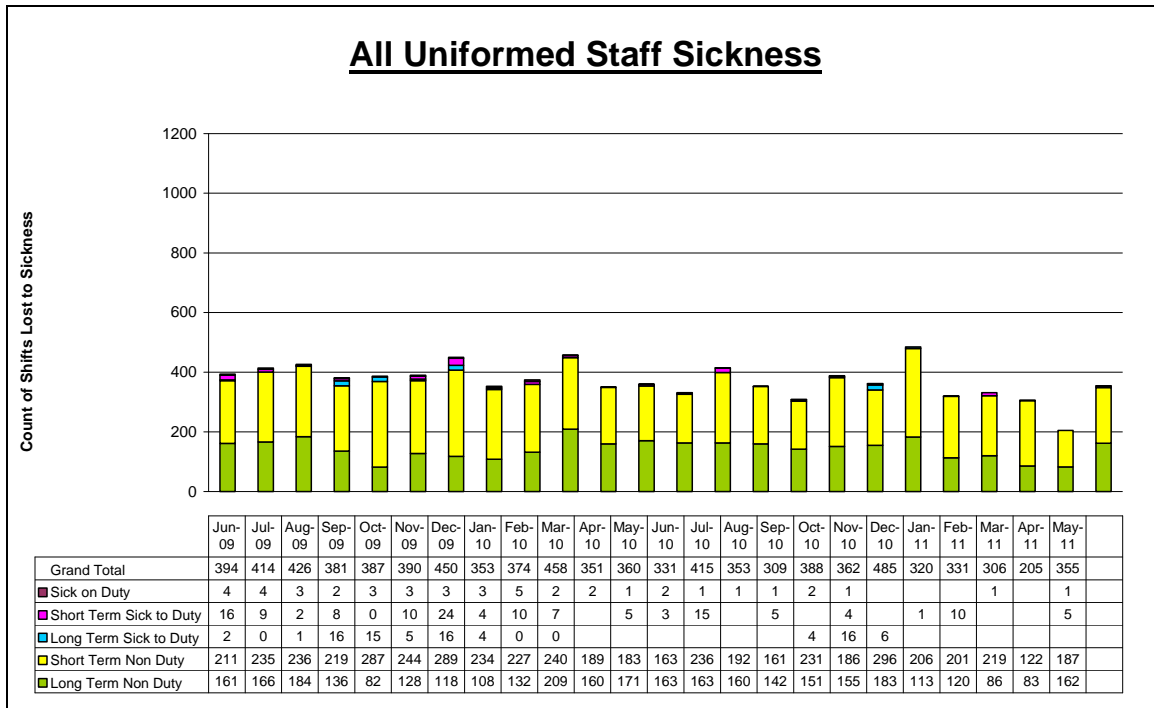
HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

A safe and supportive workplace will assist in maximising attendance and thus is part of the intervention programme mentioned above.

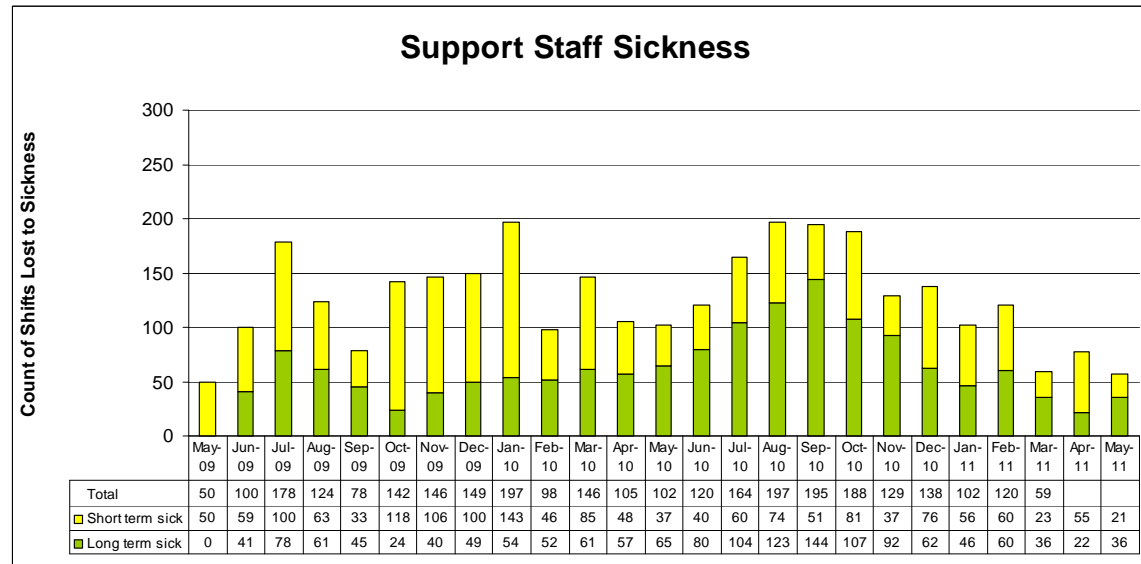
List of background documents:
The attached graphs detail the shifts lost due to sickness absence, for whole-time uniformed and support staff, separated by month and duration of absence up to and including 31 May 2011.
Report Contact(s): Angie Feeney, Human Resources Manager ext 284

Graphs

The total shifts lost in May 2011 to uniformed sickness.



The total shifts lost in May 2011 to support staff sickness.



AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
MEETING DATE:	22 July 2011
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	AIR SUPPORT EVALUATION REPORT

SUMMARY

Members will be aware that Avon Fire & Rescue Service recently carried out trials and exercises to assess the viability of utilising air support to aid our operations.

The trials were conducted during the period 4-10 June 2011.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 1 That Members note the outcome of the recent trials.
- 2 That Members consider moving the project to the next stage. To authorise Officers to seek quotes from potential providers to provide an operational response capability using air support for a limited period. Any such quotes to be brought back to the Combined Fire Authority for further consideration.

CONTENTS

A presentation will be made by Officers at the meeting detailing the outcome of the recent trials.

Whilst a helicopter has been used in trials and exercises, to-date it has not been used to attend actual incidents. Members will be asked to consider taking steps to determine if this can be achieved. This will also involve determining the costs involved.

Members are not being asked to commit to anything at this stage – merely to agree to find out further information.

BACKGROUND

Members of the Fire Authority agreed to a feasibility study in December 2009. This was presented to the Authority in September 2010, at which time Members gave approval for operational trials to be undertaken. The outcome of the evaluation of tenders to undertake the trials was presented to Members at the meeting of the Fire Authority held in May 2011.

CONSIDERATIONS

CONTRIBUTION TO KEY POLICY PRIORITIES

Contribution to key policy priorities: The feasibility study and trials have been conducted to determine whether air support (ie a helicopter) could add value to the services we provide to our communities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

These will be subject to commitment by the Fire Authority should any options be supported. At this stage the options are known, but the costs associated with those options are not. A detailed financial assessment will be presented to Members for consideration should approval be given to “test the market”.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Approval will be required by the Civil Aviation Authority for a helicopter to be used operationally by a Fire & Rescue Service.

DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT

None.

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

To be included within any final business case.

CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

None.

HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

The trials were also conducted to ascertain whether using air support could improve firefighter health and safety at high risk rescue incidents. This will be included in the Officers' presentation.

List of background documents: CFA Reports – December 2009, September 2010 and May 2011.
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Report Contact(s): Kevin Pearson, Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive. Ext 233#
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AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
MEETING DATE:	22 JULY 2011
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Fires and Other Incidents: May and June 2011

SUMMARY

To report on fires and other significant incidents that occurred during the months of May and June 2011.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be noted.

BACKGROUND

Details of fires and other significant incidents are attached as an Appendix.

IMPLICATIONS

Legislation confers powers and obligations. This report is provided for information.

List of background documents: None
Report Contact(s): Kevin Pearson, Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive, Ext 233#

1. Incidents of note in May

Injured climber rescued by crews

Tuesday 3 May

19.58 Avon Gorge, Circular Road, Bristol

An injured climber was rescued by firefighters following a fall at the Avon Gorge in Bristol.

Avon Fire & Rescue Service's rope rescue team was alerted after a man in his 20s was out climbing with another person. Crews from Temple and Southmead fire stations were sent to the scene to rescue the injured man from the rock face.

Using line rescue equipment two firefighters were able to abseil down the gorge. They provided first aid to the climber who is believed to have suffered a dislocated shoulder in the fall. He was conscious throughout the incident. The rescuers were joined by two further firefighters who then helped the injured man into a rescue sling, before safely assisting him to the ground.

The man was then transferred to a waiting ambulance and taken to hospital.

HFSV saves the day

Thursday 12 May

09.07 Botham Drive, Brislington, Bristol: Blue Watch Brislington and Temple

An elderly woman has had a lucky escape after a fire at her home. It appears the 94 year-old left a pan on the hob unattended, which caught light.

When firefighters arrived they found a small fire in the kitchen.

Fortunately just last month firefighters had visited the premises to carry out a free Home Fire Safety Visit, fitting smoke detectors and offering fire safety advice.

So when the smoke alarms activated the woman quickly closed the door to the kitchen to prevent the fire spreading, before leaving the house and dialing 999 for the fire service.

In following the advice given by firefighters during the visit the fire was confined to the kitchen, with very little damage to the property.

Grill pan catches light sparking fire

Friday 13 May

09.17 Stones Court, Redland Road, Redland, Bristol

Firefighters have tackled a fire in the kitchen of a house after fat on a grill pan caught light.

When crews arrived they found a woman in her 20s already out of the property unharmed.

Two firefighters wearing breathing apparatus entered the three-storey town house and found a fire in the kitchen on the first floor. They used a high pressure hose reel to extinguish the fire and a positive pressure ventilation fan was used to clear the smoke.

On becoming aware of the fire the woman acted quickly, closing the kitchen door before leaving the house and dialing 999. This undoubtedly helped to prevent any further spread of the fire.

Overheating chip pan sparks fire

Friday 20 May

20.01 Homefield Drive, Stapleton, Bristol

Two women have been given oxygen therapy after the chip pan they were using caught light.

When firefighters arrived they found the 42 and 35 year-olds suffering from smoke inhalation.

Two firefighters wearing breathing apparatus used one high pressure hose reel to extinguish the fire and the women were left in the hands of paramedics.

It appears the chip pan had been left unattended and had caught fire. The women had attempted to tackle the fire with a damp tea towel, but had been affected by the smoke.

Bonfire sparks roof fire

Saturday 21 May

11.57 Old Sneed Avenue, Sneyd Park, Bristol

A house has been left badly damaged by fire after a spark from a garden bonfire spread to the property.

When crews arrived they found smoke pouring from the property. Two firefighters wearing breathing apparatus found the roof space engulfed in fire but with the help of other crews were able to limit the spread of the fire.

The turntable ladder from Temple Fire Station was used as a water tower to tackle the fire from above.

Fortunately no one was hurt but crews remained on scene for some time damping down.

Balcony fire triggers multiple 999 calls

Monday 23 May

18.32 Freemantle House, Dove Street, Kingsdown, Bristol

A fire on the balcony of a high-rise block of flats sparked numerous calls to the AF&RS Control room.

When crews arrived they could see smoke and flames pouring from the third floor. Crews had to gain access to the flat in order to tackle the fire and two firefighters wearing breathing apparatus dealt with the fire using one high pressure hose reel and one jet.

The occupant, a man in his 20s, had been out at the time of the fire, and was unharmed. Much of the damage caused by fire and smoke was confined to the balcony, window and door leading into the flat, but the flat was not affected.

It's thought the fire started accidentally, but the exact cause is not known.

Woman rescued from RTC

Tuesday 24 May

10.15 Old Church Road, Clevedon

An elderly woman has been rescued by firefighters after a road traffic collision which left her car on its passenger side against a wall.

When crews arrived on the scene they found the woman in her 80s inside the Vauxhall Corsa unable to get out.

Firefighters quickly stabilised the vehicle and then removed the windscreen of the car. Working alongside paramedics the woman was assisted on to a spinal board and lifted out of the car via the rear of the vehicle. She was taken to hospital, but her injuries are not thought to be life-threatening.

Crews tackle scaffolding lorry blaze

Tuesday 24 May

11.00 Gloucester Road, Bishopston, Bristol, at the junction with Muller Road

Firefighters have been called to tackle a scaffolding lorry on fire.

When crews arrived they found the cab of the vehicle well alight. Using one high pressure hose reel and foam, two firefighters wearing breathing apparatus fought the fire.

It appears the driver was alerted to the fire by other motorists and managed to escape the vehicle unharmed, before calling 999.

It's thought the fire started accidentally as a result of an electrical fault. The cab of the lorry was left badly damaged by the fire, but fortunately no one was hurt.

Horse rescued from water-filled ditch

Wednesday 25 May

08.04 Clapton Court, Clevedon Lane, Clapton-in-Gordano

A two year-old female horse has been rescued by firefighters after getting stuck in a water-filled ditch.

When crews arrived on the scene they found Zuri in approximately four feet of water, shivering and very cold. It's thought she may have been there for several hours. Previous attempts to rescue her by her owners had failed.

Firefighters, including the specialist animal rescue team from Bath Fire Station, worked alongside the owner and a vet to assist the horse. The animal was sedated by the vet while firefighters placed strops around it.

The strops were then attached to the Hiab of Temple Fire Station's rescue tender and the animal was lifted out of the ditch. After being given some food and being checked over by the vet, the horse walked around the field and appeared to be unharmed by the ordeal.

Woman rescued from house fire

Thursday 26 May

16.23 New Cheltenham Road, Kingswood

A woman has been rescued from her flat by firefighters.

Crews were called to the property after a neighbour heard the smoke alarms activating and called 999.

They forced their way in and two firefighters wearing breathing apparatus searched the premises where they found a woman in her 40s in bed. She was rescued by firefighters and taken to safety, where she was given oxygen therapy. She was then taken to hospital.

Firefighters tackled the fire using one high pressure hose reel. A positive pressure ventilation fan was used to ventilate the flat.

It appears the fire started accidentally after the woman had been smoking in bed and fallen asleep. An ashtray had fallen on to the floor and caught light.

Much of the smoke and fire damage was confined to the bedroom of the flat.

Man rescued from high building

Friday 27 May

08.48 Avon Way, Horfield, Bristol

A man has been rescued by firefighters after injuring his head while working on a building approximately five metres up.

When crews arrived the 50 year-old was complaining of neck injuries and firefighters used the hydraulic platform from Speedwell Fire Station to get access to the high floor.

Working alongside paramedics, the man was assisted on to a spinal board. The hydraulic platform was then used to lower the man to the ground, where he was taken to hospital by ambulance.

Crews tackle nightclub fire

Friday 27 May

15.25 Oceana, Anchor Lane, Canons Marsh, Bristol

Firefighters have been called to deal with a fire at a Bristol nightclub.

The Avon Fire & Rescue Service Control room received multiple calls to the incident from members of the public in Millennium Square.

When crews arrived on the scene they found a fire on a balcony of the third floor of the building, an area used by staff to smoke.

Using the Aerial Rescue Pump (ARP), crews tackled the fire from the outside of the premises using a high pressure hose reel and a covering jet.

Crews also entered the premises to ensure the fire had not spread inside. As some smoke from the fire had spread under the door inside the premises, firefighters ventilated the building.

Fortunately only a small number of staff were inside at the time and when the fire alarm activated they all left the premises safely. No one was hurt.

It's thought the fire started accidentally after a cigarette wasn't fully extinguished after use. It smoldered for some time before catching fire, spreading to a nearby chair and then to the outside of the building.

The balcony area suffered smoke and fire damage, along with some of the tiles on the outside of the building. There was no damage to the club inside and opened as usual that night.

2. Incidents of note in June

Three rescued following motorway RTC

Thursday 2 June

08.34 M4 junctions 20 to 19 eastbound

Three people were rescued by firefighters following a multi-vehicle collision.

Five fire engines from Temple and Patchway fire stations, including a rescue tender, were called to the scene. The incident involving at least four vehicles left three people trapped.

Using hydraulic cutting equipment, firefighters removed the roof of a Ford Focus to rescue two people. A male driver and his female passenger, both thought to be aged in their 40s, were taken to hospital with various injuries.

A second car and two light goods vehicles (LGVs) were also involved in the collision, leaving the driver of one of the LGVs trapped. Although he suffered only minor injuries, the impact of the collision damaged the door, trapping the driver in the cab. Firefighters used cutting equipment to release the door, allowing him to be freed and treated by paramedics.

All three rescued by fire crews were taken to hospital by ambulance.

Man rescued following RTC

Wednesday 15 June

01.40 Bond Street, Bristol

The male passenger of a car involved in a road traffic collision was rescued by firefighters.

Crews from Temple Fire Station were called to the incident just a short distance from the station. Once on scene they found one vehicle, a Ford Mondeo, had been in collision with a central reservation. Although the driver was unhurt, his passenger, a man aged in his 40s, suffered injuries to his arm.

Firefighters used hydraulic cutting equipment to remove the rear door of the vehicle so the man could be rescued. He was then treated by paramedics before being taken to hospital.

Crews returned to the scene of the incident around an hour later to assist the Highways Agency in making safe a traffic light damaged in the collision.

Hovercraft comes to the aid of trapped man

Friday 17 June

00.36 Weston-super-Mare beach

A man stuck in mud on Weston-super-Mare beach has been rescued by crews on Avon Fire & Rescue Service's hovercraft.

Firefighters were called after reports that a man was missing on the beach at the seaside town. Firefighters from Weston-super-Mare and Avonmouth fire stations joined members of the police, HM Coastguard and the ambulance service in a search for the missing man.

Crews launched the rescue hovercraft, based at Weston-super-Mare Fire Station, to assist in the operation. Firefighters on board the craft then used a thermal imaging camera in an effort to locate the man, aged in his 30s, in the darkness. Following a search lasting around 45 minutes the missing male was found, partially trapped in mud, around a quarter of a mile offshore from the Grand Pier.

Firefighters then used sand lances, to inject air into the mud around the trapped casualty allowing him to be freed. He was immediately wrapped in thermal blankets and brought back to the shore where he was treated by paramedics for the effects of hypothermia. Fortunately the tide was out at the time of the incident.

Woman released from RTC by firefighters

Sunday 19 June

11.00 M4 junctions 18 to 19 westbound

A woman has been taken to hospital after a road traffic collision involving a Land Rover which was towing a caravan.

Three people had been travelling in the vehicle when it overturned. Two people were already out when crews arrived on the scene, however a female was trapped.

Firefighters worked quickly to stabilise the vehicle and then using hydraulic cutting equipment they removed the roof of the Land Rover.

The woman was then assisted on to a spinal board by paramedics and firefighters and taken to hospital along with the two other casualties.

The road was closed while the incident was ongoing.