



20 May 2011

- (1) **MEMBERS OF THE AVON FIRE AUTHORITY**
Councillors appointed by Bristol City Council, Bath and North East Somerset Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council.
- (2) **APPROPRIATE OFFICERS**
- (3) **PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Dear Member

You are invited to attend the Annual Meeting of the Fire Authority being held at **2.00pm Friday 27 May 2011**. The meeting will be held in the Conference Meeting 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



Clerk to Avon Fire Authority – Geraldine Gee LL.M FRSA, Solicitor
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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 Helen Howells, who is available by telephoning 0117 926 2061 ext. 283 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 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE COMING YEAR**
- 2 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR FOR THE COMING YEAR**
- 3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** (Members are reminded there is no power to appoint substitutes on the Avon Fire Authority)
- 4 MEMBERSHIP AND POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF THE AUTHORITY**
- 5 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.
- 6 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.
- 7 MINUTES OF AVON FIRE AUTHORITY HELD ON 1 APRIL 2011**
- 8 PUBLIC ACCESS** (Time Limit – 30 minutes)
Under Standing Order 21 and providing 2 clear working days notice has been given to the Clerk, to enable any resident of Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset or North Somerset Council to address the Avon Fire Authority (for no more than 5 minutes) to present a petition, make a statement, ask a question of the Chair or Spokespersons, or as leader of a deputation.
- 9 MINUTES OF SPECIAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 APRIL 2011**
- 10 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES FOR 2011/12**
- 11 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES**
- 12 GOVERNANCE REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**
- 13 GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO FIRE FUTURES**
- 14 EUROPEAN ROAD SAFETY CHARTER**
- 15 RISK PLANNING UPDATE**
- 16 COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE**
- 17 SICKNESS ABSENCE UPDATE**
- 18 FIRES & OTHER INCIDENTS – MARCH & APRIL 2011**
- 19 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC** To resolve:

"That the public be excluded from the meeting during the following item 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 this item there will be a disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100 I and Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972."
- 20 EVALUATION OF QUOTATIONS FOR AIR SUPPORT SERVICES**

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY**1 APRIL 2011**

PRESENT: Councillors Abraham, Alexander, Barrett (C), Barrett (N), Cole, Comer, Cook, Cranney, Curran, Dando, Davies, Drew, Gregor, Pickup, Hugill, Porter, Roberts, Walker, Willis, Wollacott and Wood

MEMBER BRIEFING: Members were updated on the events of a fire which occurred in Merryweather Close, Bradley Stoke on Saturday 19 March.

Members commended the work of all involved in the incident. The Chair gave particular thanks to officers in Service Control, who maintained communications during a very difficult time during the incident.

Members supported proposals in changing legislations and recommended MPs to be lobbied to support the Bill.

NOTE OF THANKS: Members joined the Chair and Cllr Cook to give special thanks to Councillors Howard Roberts and Gordon Wood, who retire this month after many years of council service and dedication to the Authority.

104 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Brown, Clark, McGall and Patel.

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

106 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Cllr Barrett (N) declared an interest in item 122.

107 MINUTES OF AVON FIRE AUTHORITY HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2011

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

108 MINUTES OF SPECIAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD 1 MARCH 2011

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

109 CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND REVENUE BUDGET MONITOR 2010-2011

The Treasurer gave an overview of the third monitoring report for 2010-2011 and highlighted the income reported for the Firefighters' Pension Fund

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

110 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2011-2015, PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS & TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY & PLAN 2011-2015

The Treasurer gave an overview of the report which confirms Plans for the next four years and went on to highlight the estimated Capital Programme 2011-2015 and the Prudential Indicators on IRFS basis.

Members thanks the Treasurer for his work under such difficult budgetary constraints.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Capital Programme 2011/12 and proposed funding be approved.
- ii) The Prudential Code indicators be approved.
- iii) The Treasury Management Policy Statement be approved.
- iv) The Treasury Management Strategy Plan 2011-2015 and relevant indicators be approved.

111 REVIEW OF CHARGES

Members considered an annual update on charges applied by the Authority.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The charging structure as detailed in the report be approved with effect from 1 April 2011.
- ii) The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive be authorised to remit charges if he considers appropriate.

112 PERFORMANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Members considered an update on performance and risk management. The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive highlighted that automatic fire

alarms remain a challenge. Members also noted that changes in risk status for the Regional Control Project and potential staff unrest.

Cllr Wood thanks Lorraine Houghton, Chair of the Performance and Risk Management Forum and all officers involved in the progress made over recent years.

RESOLVED that the report be noted

113 AUDIT PLAN 2010/2011

Members considered the Audit Plan 2010/2011, which had previously been presented to Group Leaders.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

114 RISK PLANNING UPDATE

Members considered an update on risk planning and the work undertaken in providing a common communication link between the emergency services – FireLink.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

115 COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE

Members considered an update on community safety initiatives and noted the changes being introduced to prioritise home fire safety visits.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

116 EQUALITIES & DIVERSITY FRAMEWORK & INTERVENTIONS

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive gave an overview of the new legislation coming into effect and which extends to public bodies. The legislation will see equality impact assessments being required for each decision made by the Authority and Service.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

117 LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME – REVIEW OF EMPLOYER DISCRETIONS

Members considered the review of employer discretions and options for early and flexible retirements.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The current policy be revised as set out in the report.
- ii) The Scheme of Delegations be amended as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

118 GREAT WESTERN AMBULANCE AND AVON FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive gave an overview of the proposed partnership with Great Western Ambulance.

RESOLVED that the pilot of the scheme be approved and reviewed in 12 months.

119 SICKNESS ABSENCE UPDATE

Members considered an update on sickness absence.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

120 FEASIBILITY STUDY: AIR SUPPORT FOR AVON FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Members received an update on the feasibility study to provide air support for Avon Fire & Rescue Service.

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive confirmed that the business case was being developed and tenders were currently out to establish costs.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

121 FIRES & OTHER INCIDENTS – JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2011

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

122 PROVISION OF INSURANCE

The Treasurer gave an overview of the outcome of tenders for the provision of insurance.

RESOLVED that the provision of insurance be awarded to AON Risk Solutions for a 5 year period, commencing 1 April 2011.

123 INTEGRATED CLOTHING PROJECT UPDATE

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive gave an overview of the options set out in the report for the provision of personal protective equipment.

RESOLVED that the signing and sealing of the Purchase with Managed Services Agreement for personal protective equipment from September 2012, be approved.

The meeting closed at 3.55pm.

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Chair

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY**SPECIAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE****1 APRIL 2011****PRESENT:** Councillors Cook, Curran and Walker.**1. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

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

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

3. MINUTES OF SPECIAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD 1 MARCH 2011

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

4. AMENDMENT TO ITEM 8 OF SPECIAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 MARCH 2011

Members considered deferring the date of implementation of item 8 of Special Purposes Committee and approved on 1 March 2011.

RESOLVED that the recommendation be approved.

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Chair

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
MEETING DATE:	27 May 2011
REPORT OF:	Clerk to the Fire Authority
SUBJECT:	Appointment of Committees for 2011/12

SUMMARY

To appoint Members to the Committees of the Fire Authority and to certain other bodies for 2011/12.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) That the Authority confirms the powers delegated to the Appointments Committee, Standards Committee and the Disciplinary Committee, and to the Special Purposes Committee subject to the proposed amendment in the later report of the Monitoring Officer on Governance.
 - ii) That the Authority determines the membership of the Special Purposes and Appointments Committees respectively for 2011/12.
 - iii) That the Authority appoints Members to the Standards Committee for 2011/12.
 - iv) That the constitution of the Disciplinary Committee be confirmed.
 - v) That the Authority appoints one Member from each political group to the Performance & Risk Management Forum.
 - vi) That the Authority appoints one Member from each political group to the Equality & Fairness Forum.
 - vii) That the Authority appoints one Member from each political group to the Health, Safety & Welfare Forum.
 - viii) That the Authority appoints one Member to the Joint Development Forum.
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CONTENTS

BACKGROUND

The standing Committees of the Fire Authority are the Special Purposes Committee, the Standards Committee and the Appointments Committee.

From time to time Members may be required to deal with disciplinary hearings and appeals. The Special Purposes Committee's Terms of Reference provide for it "to determine appeals under disciplinary or grievance procedures." Thus that Committee deals with any appeal (or final appeal) to Members.

In some cases, however, it may be necessary for a matter to come before Members on two possible occasions. In these cases a separate Disciplinary Committee comprising of those Members of the Appointments Committee who are not also Members of the Special Purposes Committee would hear the case with any subsequent appeal being determined by the Special Purposes Committee.

REVIEW OF REPRESENTATIVE OF POLITICAL GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

Under the provisions of Part I of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 (as amended) the Authority is required to review the number of seats on Committees etc required to be allocated to political parties and to make appointments in accordance with the requirements of the Act and Regulations.

Based on the provisional political representation on the Authority at the time this report was written, the allocation of seats on current Committees to each political group on the Authority is set below. The final allocation of seats and the names of the Members appointed to the Authority will be confirmed at the meeting. Members will recall that both Bristol and North Somerset Councils make annual appointments to the Authority and BANES and South Gloucestershire Council have hitherto made appointments for four years.

The 1989 Act generally requires appointments to Committees to be such that the number of seats allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the proportion on the Authority itself. Under Section 17 of the Act the Authority may adopt alternative arrangements in relation to these appointments (and may wish to consider such at this meeting) but any such alternative arrangements have to be passed by the Authority without any Member voting against.

COMMITTEES FOR 2011/12

The Authority is requested to appoint Members to the Appointments Committee and the Special Purposes Committee for 2011/12.

Seats allocated to each political group on the basis of the provisional assessment of political representation is as follows:-

	Special Purposes Committee	Appointments Committee
Conservative Group	1	4
Liberal Democrat Group	1	3
Labour Group	1	1

Membership of the Committees for 2010/11 were as follows:

Special Purposes Committee

Councillor T Walker

Councillor S Cook

Councillor G Curran

Standards Committee

Councillor Ken Dando

Councillor Steve Comer

Councillor Brenda Hugill

Councillor Howard Roberts

Councillor Keith Cranney

Mr Williams)

Ms Roberts) Lay members

Mr Hendy)

Appointments Committee

Councillor G Curran

Councillor T Walker

Councillor S Cook

Councillor H Roberts

Councillor I Porter

Councillor G Wood

Councillor TBA

Councillor TBA

Performance & Risk Management Forum

The Performance & Risk Management Forum covers both performance related issues and the development and progression of Integrated Risk Management Plan.

The agreed representation is one Member from each of the three political groups. Membership of the Forum in 2010/11 was:

Councillor G Curran
Councillor G Wood
Councillor D Pickup

Equality and Fairness Forum

The Authority has created a Member/officer Working Group to work with representatives of the Trade Unions and others to ensure that equality and fairness is maintained throughout the Service.

The agreed representation is one Member from each of the three political groups. Membership of the Forum in 2010/11 was:

Councillor G Curran
Councillor B Hugill
Councillor N Barrett

Health, Safety and Welfare Forum

The Health, Safety and Welfare Forum assists the Authority in the performance of its statutory functions in these areas, to measure performance against targets, to encourage improvements and to address and inform on priorities.

The Forum comprises of Members and Officers and other stakeholders. The agreed representation is one Member from each of the three political parties. Membership of the Forum in 2010/11 was:

Councillor M Drew
Councillor M Wollacott
Councillor R Willis

Joint Development Forum

The Joint Development Forum provides an information exchange on Learning & Development matters throughout the organisation in partnership with Union Learning Funds. As part of its pledge, the Authority agreed that one Elected Member would champion the work undertaken by the Forum. For 2010/11, the Members appointed to the Forum was Cllr R Willis.

Terms of Reference

Copies of Terms of Reference of the various Committees and Forums are available on the staff internet.

CONSIDERATIONS

CONTRIBUTION TO KEY POLICY PRIORITIES

None

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The main legal implications are set out on page 2 of the report.

DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT

None

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None

HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

List of background documents:
Report Contact: Geraldine Gee, Clerk to the Fire Authority (Extension 347#)

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
MEETING DATE:	27 May 2011
REPORT OF:	Clerk to the Fire Authority
SUBJECT:	Appointment of Representatives on Other Bodies

SUMMARY

To consider the Fire Authority's representation on the Local Government Association, South West Provincial Council, the South West Council and the Annual General Meeting of the South West Fire Control Limited.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- i) That the Authority appoints its representative on the Local Government Association for the forthcoming year.
- ii) That the Authority appoints its representative on the South West Provincial Council for the forthcoming year.
- iii) That the Authority appoints its representative on the South West Council for the forthcoming year.
- iv) That the Authority appoints a Director to South West Fire Control Service Limited and notes and approves a substitute.
- v) That the Authority appoints its representative for the Annual Meeting of the South West Fire Control Limited.

CONTENTS**BACKGROUND****Local Government Association – Fire Forum**

The Authority is invited to appoint one representative to the LGA (including the Fire Service Forum) for the forthcoming year. The Authority's current representative is Councillor Peter Abraham.

South West Provincial Council

The Authority is invited to appoint one representative to the South West Provincial Council for the forthcoming year, which meets twice a year. The Authority's current representative is Councillor Ian Porter.

South West Council

The Authority is invited to appoint one representative to the South West Council for the forthcoming year, which meets twice a year. The Authority's current representative is Councillor Hugh Gregor.

South West Fire Control Limited

Following the dissolving of the Regional Control Centre project, the company is also in the process of being dissolved, but in order to complete this work, an appointed Board is required for 2011/12. Accordingly the Authority should appoint a Director to see through the work to conclusion, and as before note and approve the substitute Director appointed by the Director, acting from time to time as an alternative director on South West Fire Control Ltd, and that this constitutes approval for the purpose of the Authority's indemnity of Members policy.

Current Membership from Avon to the Board is:

Councillor P Abraham
Councillor C Barrett (substitute)

The Authority is also invited to appoint a representative to attend the Annual Meeting of South West Fire Control Limited. The Authority's current representative is Councillor Terry Walker.

CONSIDERATIONS

The main impact of this report is to ensure that the Authority is properly represented on these bodies. The normal rules of political proportionality do not apply, but equalities should be borne in mind.

CONTRIBUTION TO KEY POLICY PRIORITIES

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT

None

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None

HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

List of background documents:
Report Contact: Geraldine Gee, Clerk to the Fire Authority (Extension 347#)

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
MEETING DATE:	27 May 2011
REPORT OF:	Clerk to the Authority
SUBJECT:	Governance Report of the Monitoring Officer

SUMMARY

To report to members on key governance arrangements within the Authority, and to recommend any actions which need to be taken.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That 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
 - (ii) Standards Committee
 - (iii) Appointments & Disciplinary Committee
6. The following Policies Guidance and Strategy be approved and adopted by the 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 any required action to implement the recommendations.

CONTENTS

BACKGROUND

The Authority is required to have in place a proper and robust system of governance. Whilst all Authority matters must be conducted against a background of governance compliance, there are key areas. The Authority is audited against criteria in relation to these key areas.

This report to Members addresses issue of compliance, and highlights any need for change.

Key Governance Areas

Standing Orders & Financial Regulations

These have been reviewed and meet the governance needs of the Authority, and meet the needs of the Authority.

Committee Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference to the committees of the Authority, have been reviewed.

The Terms of Reference for the Appointments and Disciplinary Committees have been reviewed and meet the governance requirements of the Authority.

The Terms of Reference for the Special Purposes Committee have been reviewed and meet the governance requirements of the Authority

The Terms of Reference for the Standards Committee remain the same, However substantial changes in relation to the Standards regime are proposed by the Government. Members will be aware that there is currently in place a local standards regime. This has been overseen by the Standards Board for England. However with the demise of the Board, legislation is now proposed to allow a local discretion as to how Standards will be delivered. Until the legislation is in place it is recommended that the current committee set up remains in place pending enactment and a further decision of the Authority.

Scheme of delegations

These have been reviewed and meet the governance needs of the Authority. Amendment has taken place during the year 2010/2011 as approved by the Authority.

Procurement / Tender/ Contracting Governance Compliance

Contract documentation contains a compulsory clause relating to corruption.

Procurement and Contracting is undertaken in accordance with the requirements set out in Financial regulations

There have been nil complaints to the Monitoring Officer of any breaches in relation to the procurement process.

Policies, Guidance, Protocols and Plans

The following suite of documents, provide a structure and guidance for the proper governance arrangements as approved and adopted by the Authority

Policies are brought to the attention of staff on induction, and by way of an annual reminder from the Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive on Governance, Conduct and Probity matters.

New Members receive an induction which includes policy information.

The policies are as follows:-

(i) Conduct & Probity in the Public Service Guidance

The Guidance has been reviewed and meets the needs of the Authority. A copy of the Guidance is available to Members on the staff intranet under Documents and Forms / Governance documents.

(ii) Anti-fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy & Response Plan

The Strategy has been reviewed and meets the needs of the Authority. A copy of the Strategy is available to Members on the staff intranet under Documents and Forms / Governance documents.

(iii) Confidential Reporting Policy “ Whistleblower Policy”

The Policy has been reviewed and meets the governance needs of the Authority. A copy of the Policy is available to Members on the staff intranet under Documents and Forms / Governance documents.

There have been nil reports to the Monitoring Officer in accordance with this policy in the year 2010/11.

(iv) Protocol for Member / Officer Relations

The protocol has been reviewed and meets the needs of the Authority. A copy of the protocol is available to Members on the staff intranet under Documents and Forms / Governance documents.

(v) Indemnities for Members and Officers

The Policy has been reviewed and meets the governance needs of the Authority. A copy of the Policy is available to Members on the staff intranet under Documents and Forms / Governance documents. There has been nil call on the indemnity for 2010/2011.

(vi) Risk Management – General Guidance for Members

Members are asked to note the guidance for Authority use. A copy of the guidance is available to Members on the staff intranet under Departments and Units / Avon Fire Authority / Members Area / Documents.

Standards Committee

The Code of Conduct has been reviewed and meets the governance needs of the Authority and complies with the present statutory requirements.

There have been nil complaints received under the Code, and with the demise of the Standards for England there has been no requirement to submit Quarterly Returns or an Annual Return for the year 2010/2011.

Pending the complete revision of the Standards Regime, the Standards Committee have suspended their monitoring of statistics. However the following are made directly available to the Authority for consideration and monitoring purposes.

The following are attached as an Appendix:

- Members allowances and expenses paid 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011
- Members attendance to committee meetings 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011
- Member training and development 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011

South West Regional Management Board

The South West Regional Management Board has been disbanded, and has been partly replaced by the South West Fire Forum which is attended by all Chairs of Authorities and Chief Fire Officers.

South West Fire Control Limited

The company is in the process of being dissolved, but in order to complete this work, will still required a Board to be appointed for 2011/2012 to undertake the run off work. it is anticipated that this will be concluded within year 2011/2012.

IMPLICATIONS

CONTRIBUTION TO KEY POLICY PRIORITIES

Robust and transparent governance arrangements are key to service delivery and meeting policy priorities

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Proper financial accounting and auditing procedures must be in place. Failure to comply could result in censure of the Authority and/or financial losses.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Authority is under a statutory duty to put in place and maintain proper governance arrangements.

DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

Equality Impact Assessments have been carried out

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT

Failure to implement proper governance arrangements could result in challenge to the Authority and in censure for any breaches.

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None

CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

None

HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

List of background documents: None
Report Contact: Geraldine Gee, Clerk and Monitoring Officer (Extension 347#)

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
MEMBERS ALLOWANCES PAID
1 APRIL 2010 – 31 MARCH 2011

Recipient	Basic Allowance £	Special Responsibility Allowance £	Travelling and Subsistence Allowance £	Cooptees Allowance £
Councillor P Abraham	1453.00	2569.03	1085.83	
Councillor L Alexander	1226.42			
Councillor C Barrett	1453.00		238.41	
Councillor N Barrett	1453.00			
Councillor S Brown	1453.00			
Councillor J Clark	964.74			
Councillor M Cole	1453.00			
Councillor S Comer	1453.00			
Councillor S Cook	1453.00	1755.96		
Councillor C Davies	1453.00			
Councillor K Cranney	1453.00			
Councillor G Curran	1453.00	1755.96		
Councillor K Dando	1453.00			
Councillor M Drew	1453.00			
Councillor H Gregor	1453.00			
Councillor B Hugill	1453.00			
Councillor S McGall	1453.00		77.00	
Councillor A Patel	1453.00			
Councillor D Pickup	1453.00			
Councillor I Porter	1453.00			
Councillor H Roberts	1453.00			
Councillor T Walker	1453.00	8601.00		
Councillor R Willis	1453.00		113.60	
Councillor M Wollacott	1453.00			
Councillor G Wood	1453.00			
Councillor S Crew	121.08			
Councillor T Kent	482.82			
Councillor M Kerry	240.66			
Councillor D Kitson	240.66			
Councillor A Murphy	240.66			
Mr C Williams			10.00	241.50
Ms P Roberts				240.00
Mr W Hendy				120.00

**Member Attendance to Committee Meetings
1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011**

Avon Fire Authority

	28.05.10	30.07.10	24.09.10	17.12.10	05.01.11	11.02.11	01.04.11
Conservative (11 members)	8	10	10	7	9	7	10
Liberal Democrat (10 members)	6	7	6	6	5	6	6
Labour (4 members)	4	2	3	4	4	2	4
Independent (1 member)	1	1	1	0	1	0	1

Special Purposes Committee

	25.06.10	20.07.10	30.07.10	24.09.10	01.03.11	01.04.11
Conservative (1 member)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Liberal Democrat (1 member)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Labour (1 member)	1	1	1	1	1	1

Standards Committee

	18.11.10
Conservative (2 members)	1
Liberal Democrat (2 members)	2
Labour (1 member)	1
Independent Members (3 members)	3

Appointments Committee – no meetings held

**Member Training & Development
Provided by Avon Fire Authority
1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011**

Courses & Conferences	Date	Number Attending
Equalities Training	17.06.10	11
	– 17.12.10	
Fire & Rescue Conference	29.06.10	1
LGA Annual Fire Conference	07.03.11	4

Note: Details of Member training and development provided by unitary authorities, during this period will be supplied in June 2011 and therefore available after that date.

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
MEETING DATE:	27 May 2011
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Government Response to Fire Futures

SUMMARY

This report advises Members of the publication of the Government response to the Fire Futures reports presented to the Fire Minister in December 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to

- i) Note the Governments response.
- ii) Consider any issues within the reports and the response and to advise officers accordingly.

CONTENTS**BACKGROUND**

A covering letter from Bob Neill MP, together with the response document, are attached for Members information and consideration.

CONSIDERATIONS**CONTRIBUTION TO KEY POLICY PRIORITIES**

None

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT

None

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None

HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

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



Bob Neill MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

Department for Communities and Local Government

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12th April 2011

Dear Colleague,

Today I have published the Government Response to the Fire Futures reports presented to me by the fire and rescue sector in December 2010.

From the start of the Fire Futures Review I was clear that I wanted it to be conducted with the sector in the lead. The review, for the first time, provided the sector with a real opportunity to identify ideas on the future of the Fire and Rescue Service and present those ideas directly to me.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to and supported the Review. Much time and effort was afforded to the process and this is indeed reflected in the array of ideas that were presented to me.

I would also like to thank those who wrote to me and my Officials. Your comments on the reports were very helpful in deciding how to proceed going forward.

My aim for the response to the review was to reflect how we intend to take forward with the sector the public service reform agenda in the context of fire and rescue services at local level and in terms of national resilience. Within our response the key principles are:

- Restoring a focus on local communities instead of national targets;
- Ensuring local decision making on local services;
- Letting the Service and the wider sector – not Whitehall - manage its cross sector functions collaboratively;
- Providing clarity on national and local roles in resilience and ensuring the right structure is there to support it.

As you would expect, in line with the Government's priorities on localism and decentralisation the majority of the ideas in the Fire Futures reports fall to the sector to progress dependent on local needs and priorities.

I have every confidence that you will rise to the challenge, drawing on ideas in the “ideas bank” to help you to deliver the reforms alongside value for money and reduction in public spending.

The Government will now focus on providing the right framework for national resilience and to enable local Fire and Rescue Authorities and the wider sector to deliver the reform agenda, increasing accountability to local communities for the delivery of their services. We will use the local government resource review and development of the next National Framework for the Fire and Rescue Service as a context for further work to create the right structure to enable you to deliver.

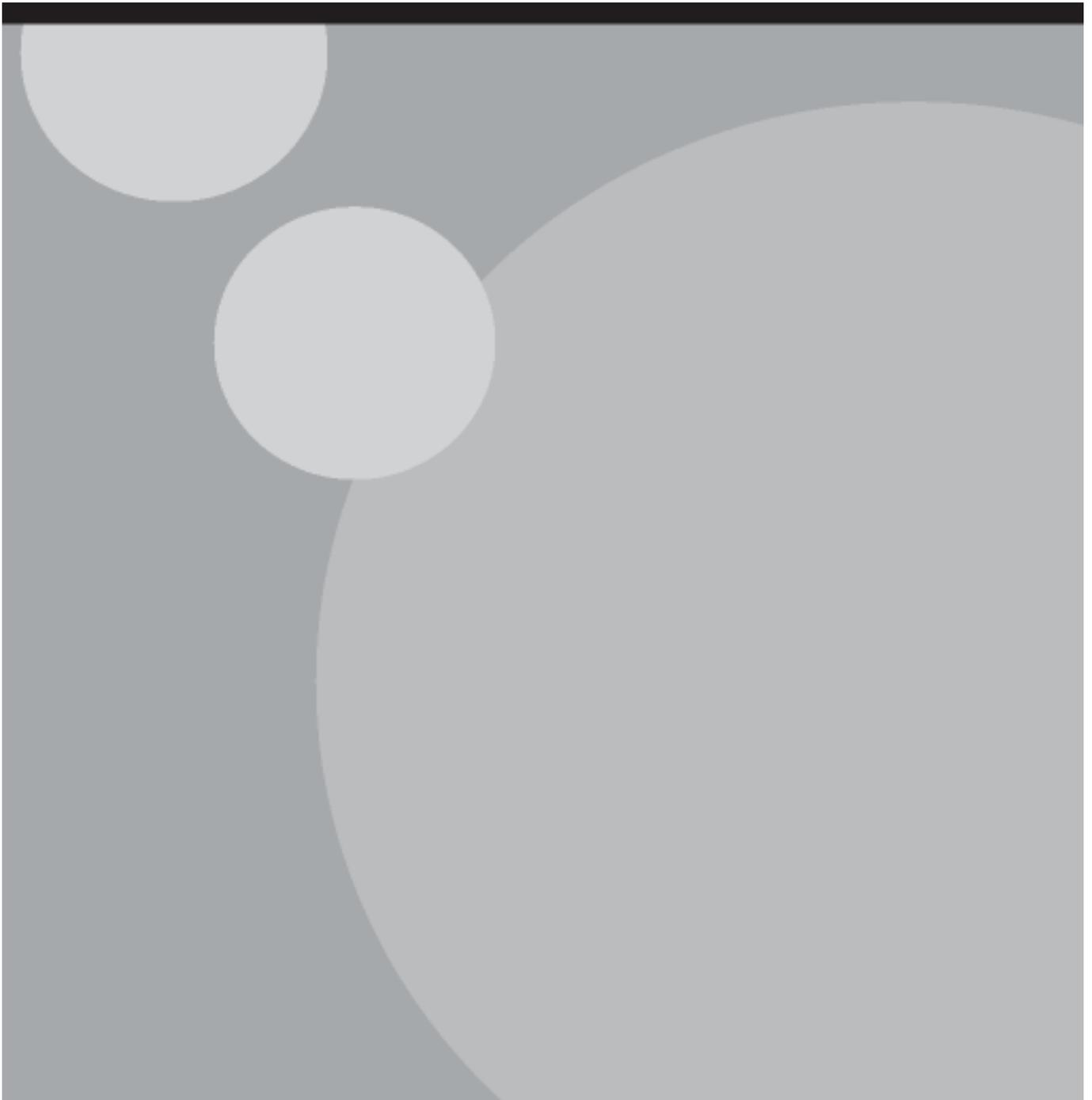
The Government response to Fire Futures can be found at:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/firefuturesresponse>

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Neill', with a large, stylized initial 'B' and a long, sweeping tail.

BOB NEILL MP
Minister for the Fire and Rescue Service



Fire Futures Reports
Government response



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Introduction by the Minister for the Fire and Rescue Service, Bob Neill MP

Today's Fire and Rescue Service has evolved from its historic roots in fire fighting to become central to UK public safety through its roles in prevention and protection as well as in responding to emergencies of all kinds. The Service is rightly held in high regard by the public. It is at the heart of all of our communities working with other front line services to protect the vulnerable.

The Fire Futures review has provided those working within the fire sector with an exceptional opportunity to influence thinking about the future. Contributors provided a wide range of ideas and proposals on behalf of the sector and participants included the fire safety industry, building control bodies, design specialists, architects, professional bodies, insurance, British Standards Institution, testing and research organisations. I am very grateful to all who took part and those who led the process, and I was impressed by the determination of contributors to respond positively to the Government's public service reform agenda.

The Fire and Rescue Service has been distracted from a primary focus on local communities by the previous Government's:

- management from the centre
- agenda to regionalise the Service
- confusion instead of clarity in central and local roles and in national resilience.

The Coalition Government intends to address this through:

- restoring a focus on local communities instead of national targets and monitoring
- ensuring local decision making on local services
- letting the Service and the wider sector – not Whitehall - manage its cross-sector functions collaboratively
- providing clarity on national and local roles in resilience and ensuring the right structure and funding is there to support it.

Some of the thinking in the Fire Futures reports reflects an expectation that the former Government's culture of control and direction over the way Fire and Rescue Services are delivered might continue. This Government does not intend to do this. The majority of Fire Futures proposals provide an ideas bank which can be drawn upon by Fire and Rescue Authorities and the wider sector individually and collectively to help deliver more accountable, effective and cost efficient services. Government will focus on enabling, facilitating and removing barriers.

These are the principles that have shaped the Government response to the Fire Futures reports and how we intend to do this is discussed in more detail in the relevant sections of the response document.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Neill', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Bob Neill MP
Minister for the Fire and Rescue Service

The context

1. Fire deaths have halved since the 1980s. The work of the Fire and Rescue Service and the wider fire sector has been significant in driving change in individual and community behaviour, in product design and the built environment that have reduced risks to the public and helped achieve this outcome. The current environment in which the Service functions will be influenced over time by factors such as changing demographics and the need to meet risks arising from climate change and terrorist threat. Equally developments in areas like new technology will bring positive benefits and provide new solutions.
2. The Fire and Rescue Service needs to be able to adapt to meet the demands of a continually evolving delivery environment; it needs to respond to the challenges of greater expectations from citizens of public services and to do so with reduced public funding. To meet these challenges the Service needs strong local leadership and the ability to work effectively in collaboration at different spatial levels and with a wide range of other public services.
3. Decision making in local services needs to deliver better and more responsive services to local people, and local leaders must be able to put the right structures in place for this to happen. In a public spending climate where savings must be made this will include involving communities in tough decisions on priorities and change in the way things have been done in the past.
4. The Department for Communities and Local Government is committed to working with the whole fire sector to enable and to remove barriers to delivering these objectives. The Department's business plan underlines its commitment and leading role within government to ensure the right structures are in place to deliver localism and accountability, de-centralisation, transparency and the Big Society. The Government's de-centralisation commitment will likewise inform decision making for the residual elements of the FiReControl,¹ Firelink and New Dimension projects through the current work with the sector.

¹ See FiReControl consultation at:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/fireandrescuecontrolservices>

5. The annex to this document indicates how the Government considered each of the Fire Futures options and proposals and where it believes further follow-up action would most appropriately lie. In a small minority of cases the Government has ruled out taking forward options put forward in the reports and these are listed in the annex ²

² See press release at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/fire/1804267>

A community focussed Fire and Rescue Service

6. If this is to be achieved it will be essential to reverse a 14 year culture in which accounting to central government was the priority and instead ensure the Service is truly locally accountable to the communities they serve. Sector public surveys³ have underlined this by identifying that while the public attaches great importance to rapid and effective fire response services, they have low awareness and understanding of (a) what the Service spends money on; and (b) of the prevention, protection and wider roles the Service undertakes.
7. The sector has already started to address this and the Local Government Group has already made a commitment on driving service improvement. The sector's ownership of its own improvement agenda will be key to making de-centralisation a reality for the Fire and Rescue Service and enabling it to play an effective role in building the Big Society. At the heart of the drive to ensure services are focused on the needs of communities is a re-setting of the relationship between central Government and the Fire and Rescue Service and between the Service and local citizens.
8. To preface this change in relationship we will build on some of the thinking in Fire Futures to consider with the sector how best to reflect what the public should expect of its Fire and Rescue Service in a new National Framework to give this relationship structure. These citizen rights and expectations might, among other issues, encompass the role of citizens in decision making and the Service committing to the provision of transparency and assurance information to local communities.
9. The Fire and Rescue Service will have complete freedom to develop the tools to deliver against these expectations and demonstrate to their communities that they are doing so.

³ e.g. Public perceptions of the Fire and Rescue Service and home fire safety issues regional graphical report Prepared by Opinion Research Services for the South East Fire Improvement Partnership June 2009.

Local decision making

10. It is vital that decisions on priorities and spending are made locally with institutions providing as strong a level of democratic accountability in the decision making process as possible.
11. The Government will consider how the overall funding mechanisms for the Fire and Rescue Service can most effectively support local decision making, and look at the appropriate basis for national resilience functions to be funded. The Government will also consider the associated governance structures.
12. These changes will be considered in the context of the Local Government Resource Review. The Review is considering wider reforms of the local government finance system which aim to help set free many local councils from dependency on central funding, and provide incentives, through the business rates system, for them to promote economic growth.
13. The Efficiency, Effectiveness and Productivity report included a series of areas which it recommended should be explored by the sector. This report rightly focuses on the scope for Fire and Rescue Authorities to deliver public spending savings at a local level but also on the importance of collaborative action at various spatial levels. The sector must rise to this challenge to avoid the trap of silo thinking. The report encompassed the seven areas identified in the Fire Minister's letter to authorities on the Spending Review outcome⁴ which indicated where we consider potential savings could be achieved:
 - flexible staffing arrangements
 - improved sickness management
 - pay restraint and recruitment freezes
 - shared services/back office functions
 - improved procurement
 - sharing Chief Officers and other senior staff
 - voluntary amalgamations between Fire and Rescue Authorities.

⁴ Letter from Bob Neill MP to Fire and Rescue Authorities, sent 20 October 2010, <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/fire/pdf/1746318.pdf>

14. It also considered others as diverse as utilising staff resource to take on other local service roles, better asset management, the use of volunteers and developing a value for money benchmarking and peer review model.
15. Some of the proposals within Fire Futures would require Government to impose national re-organisation. We do not intend to do this but will support the development of local alternatives which improve efficiency and value for money to taxpayers. This includes developing the range of service providers, of competition and commissioning in service delivery, and the development of mutuals by Fire and Rescue Service staff.
16. Local services may wish to explore and develop their own models for more collaborative working with others, such as the Ambulance Service, which can deliver joint benefits and cost savings. There is a new opportunity for Fire and Rescue Authorities themselves to seek opportunities and to deliver solutions suitable for local circumstances and responding to the needs and views of communities.

Cross-sector collaboration

17. Reflecting the public trust in the Service it is right that sector professionals should take on delivery of functions it believes are required at a higher than local level, or at a national level, wherever possible. Central Government has already stopped delivering functions that the sector is better able to deliver for itself, either locally at authority level, or collectively, for example developing the skills and role of firefighters and on setting its safety standards. Fire Futures showed that there is a clear appetite for this work, and central Government will take further steps to end its direct involvement in other functions that the sector is better placed to deliver for itself.
18. The sector has already begun to show leadership in this area and can build on initiatives such as:
 - the new Fire Community Partnership, which is taking on a national role on the built environment and knowledge management
 - the work undertaken by the Chief Fire Officers' Association and the Local Government Association on national functions
 - the work of the Fire Risk Assessment Competency Council which is developing an agreed competency standard for those offering commercial fire risk assessment services.

19. There will however be areas where it is right for the sector to lead but where government will have a strong interest in the outcomes. These include:
- the development by the sector of appropriate processes to provide assurance to local communities on performance and to provide mutual learning/good practice and performance support (building on the work already undertaken by the Local Government Association and the Chief Fire Officers' Association)
 - measures to address serious service failure
 - the maintenance and development of interoperability capabilities
 - the development and interaction between local and national risk
 - the development of operational guidance
 - research
 - national safety campaigns.

The Fire Service College

20. We recognise that the provision of high quality training and development for Fire and Rescue Service staff is vital to ensure that the Service can respond effectively to the needs of their local communities and to major incidents like floods and chemical spillages.
21. We have noted with interest the sector view that there is no appetite within the Fire Service to lose the resource that is the Fire Service College – a fact borne out by the recent formation of a Local Government Group cross party action group to help secure the future of the College by considering, amongst other things, its current ownership and management structure. We very much welcome the leadership and commitment they are showing.
22. The strong value of a national college for Fire and Rescue Service training is recognised. The Fire Service College has unique facilities especially in relation to national resilience, multi agency and interoperability training and development. However, we believe that the College can only achieve its full potential if there is greater involvement from other sectors (whether private, public or voluntary) in its ownership, operation and governance. We will explore with the sector and other organisations options to secure the future of the College.

Local and national resilience

23. Securing national resilience and ensuring public safety against identified national risks is the primary focus of central Government in its ongoing relationship with the Fire and Rescue Service.
24. The appropriate basis for national resilience functions to be funded will be considered in the context of the Local Government Resource Review.
25. We will also work with the sector to properly define national and local resilience roles, including issues arising in the context of cross-border working, intraoperability, and multi-agency interoperability, and reflect them in a new National Framework. It may be that national resilience could, for example, be taken to encompass those functions and resources required to meet the national risk assessment that are above and beyond those properly covered by local Integrated Risk Management Plans. These might include response and operational guidance, over and above that within mutual aid agreements, to hazards and threats such as:
 - large scale natural disasters (or local with a national impact)
 - events with potential large scale casualty implications or requiring large scale response or specialist capability e.g. building collapse, aircraft crashes, terrorist activity etc
 - chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or explosive incidents.
26. The definition might also include ensuring a national communications capability and standards for data exchange. We will work with the sector to take this forward.
27. A further consideration is the assurance mechanism for national resilience. We will undertake work with the sector to consider how best to expand the current sector role to appropriately cover the management and assurance of national resilience.

Conclusion

28. The majority of proposals within the Fire Futures reports are for the sector to consider individually and collectively in responding to the public service reform agenda, focussing on increasing their accountability to local citizens and contributing to the delivery of reductions in public spending.
29. The primary focus for government is above all ensuring the safety of citizens and the delivery of national resilience. Secondly it is to ensure the legislative, financial and accountability frameworks are in place to re-set its relationship with the Service and enable authorities to create a new connection with their communities through the reform agenda.

Next steps

- We will work with the sector to develop and consult on a new National Framework that re-sets the relationship, enhances accountability, sets out citizens rights and expectations to be in place for 2012
- Where required we will work with the sector on barrier-busting to support the delivery of the public service reform agenda and improved cost effectiveness in service delivery
- We will work with the sector to define roles in resilience and in developing appropriate resilience assurance mechanisms, reflecting these in a new National Framework
- We will undertake a review of the funding mechanisms for the Fire and Rescue Service in the context of the local government resource review
- Central government will withdraw from functions that the sector is better able to deliver for itself
- We will explore with the sector and other organisations their views about and interest in taking a greater stake in the ownership and/or running of the Fire Service College, in ways which would secure the most advantageous delivery of the College's training mission.

Annex

Summary of Fire Futures Ideas

Introduction

The purpose of this annex is to summarise how the ideas put forward in the Fire Futures reports have been considered. It is intended to be read as a supplement to the formal government response to the review.

The ideas listed here are drawn from and in the language used in the Fire Futures reports. However, some have been amalgamated or summarised for greater clarity.

As highlighted in the Government response, our vision for fire and rescue provision in England is shaped by four principles:

- restoring a focus on local communities instead of national targets and monitoring
- ensuring local decision making on local services
- letting the Service and the wider sector – not Whitehall – manage its cross-sector functions collaboratively
- providing clarity on national and local roles in resilience and ensuring the right structure and funding is there to support it.

The ideas are presented in four categories.

Category A

“Ideas bank” the sector may want to draw on

The majority of the ideas offered in the Fire Futures reports provide an “ideas bank” which can be drawn upon by Fire and Rescue Services and the wider sector to help deliver more accountable, effective and cost efficient structures. The ideas in this section are not necessarily endorsed by government.

Category B

National Resilience – sector in the lead, supported by government

We believe sector partners should take the lead to develop ideas that will secure strong national resilience capacity, and we will work to help them achieve this aim.

Category C

Government action to free the sector

There are some ideas that need government action to implement. In the Government response we commit to progress some. For others, where there is an appetite for change, we will work with sector partners to consider how these ideas can be taken forward.

Category D

Ideas government has ruled out

Some ideas have been ruled out by government as they do not meet the public service reform agenda.

Category A

Ideas bank the sector may want to draw on

The majority of the ideas offered in the Fire Futures reports provide an “ideas bank” which can be drawn upon by Fire and Rescue Services and the wider sector to help deliver more accountable, effective and cost efficient structures.

Partners may choose to consider how these ideas meet with local needs and test them locally with partners where appropriate. If there is a compelling case for change but partners tell us they are constrained by barriers, we will consider whether government enabling action is appropriate. The ideas in this section are not necessarily endorsed by government.

Ideas which come under this category are as follows:

Localism, de-centralisation and the Big Society

- A.1 The Retained Duty System model exemplifies Big Society objectives and has significant potential for expansion, including within an urban environment and in providing, for example, night time cover
- A.2 To secure and expand the willingness of employers to allow their staff to participate [in the Retained Duty System], the Service must build stronger links with the business community both locally and collectively on a national basis
- A.3 There are issues which need to be addressed in the Service's reliance on the Retained Duty System in some localities [including staffing costs, recruitment/retention and managerial overheads]
- A.4 Options for expanding the role of volunteers within the Fire and Rescue Service should be pursued, on functions such as after the fire support. This should be done through building on existing good practice and effectively managing the risks involved
- A.5 Change driven through the desire of local communities for greater control over their fire and rescue services and by the ability of individuals to form their own mutuals to provide that service
- A.6 Governance arrangements of Fire and Rescue Authorities should be changed to strengthen the role of its members
- A.7 Citizen panels are a mechanism available to assist all forms of governing body structures

- A.8 Improve local democratic accountability of Fire and Rescue Authorities, e.g. enhance citizen participation in governance arrangements or spending decisions
- A.9 Strengthen local democratic accountability of Fire and Rescue Authorities - option 1: locally driven change
- A.10 Strengthen local democratic accountability of Fire and Rescue Authorities - option 2: supported locally driven change
- A.11 Further sector-led work to address the practical implications of decentralisation and the support needed to achieve the goal
- A.12 Integrated Risk Management Plans could be developed to become a core planning tool used in collective local public service planning to engage with local citizens and develop a 'place map' of community risks, aims and priorities. Could potentially incorporate/recognise specific rights for citizens and include service level agreements with communities
- A.13 The Service must consult with communities, potentially collectively with other public services, to consider the current nature of provision and determine whether it is still possible/desirable to offer the services they currently provide
- A.14 Engage local people by encouraging them to think beyond the provision of emergency response and how to reconcile what they want with what they need in an iterative process of engagement that facilitates public awareness of Fire and Rescue Service functions in a way that goes beyond passive consultation exercises
- A.15 Some portions of funding could be delegated to a locality or even station level with communities directly involved in decisions on its use
- A.16 Service delivery should consider what the public can reasonably expect – this means matching the roles of public safety organisations with community risks. Starting point for any change would be an understanding of public expectations about the service that is delivered to them
- A.17 Development of mutuals as an option for the Fire and Rescue Service
- A.18 Fire and Rescue Authorities should be required to consider commissioning their fire and rescue service from other providers
- A.19 Local Integrated Risk Management Plans should provide local users of services with an assurance that those services are equipped to address the range of risks

Local and national resilience and national functions

- A.20 A second stage of work should be undertaken by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the national interest workstream together with contributors to the Fire Futures National Framework Review. This will build upon the work to date and will develop further the extent and content of the next National Framework
- A.21 Maintenance of occupational standards and the development of a qualification framework, specifically focusing on risk critical activities
- A.22 A sector-led national training review should be undertaken encompassing efficient provision and options to ensure effective interoperability
- A.23 A unified scheme of accreditation and registration of Fire Risk Assessors
- A.24 Serious further consideration needs to be given within the Fire Futures review of the opportunity to recognise the need for effective sector funded national structures and arrangements that support Fire and Rescue Service improvement and delivery and the potential that exists to secure them
- A.25 Fire and Rescue Authorities should work together at an appropriate spatial level to deliver some savings and to maintain interoperability
- A.26 Revitalise Integrated Risk Management Plan process, including the contribution to national resilience requirements and the wider local community safety agenda
- A.27 High level committee to be formed, possibly based on the Integrated Risk Management Plan Steering Group, to link national to local risks
- A.28 Revised Integrated Risk Management Plan Steering Group could ensure national benchmarking, share and disseminate best practice and provide a gateway for the oversight and coordination of proposals to mitigate effects of national risks and threats. It would be essential to have a strategic presence from the Cabinet Office on this Group
- A.29 By expanding the role of the Fire and Rescue Service sector within a national Integrated Risk Management Plan Steering Group, there should also be greater scope to ensure local plans capture critical and cross border issues, risks and ensure effective tie-in of national risks to Integrated Risk Management Plans
- A.30 Integrated Risk Management Plans must be intelligence-based and led, and have appropriate mechanisms capturing national risks through better links to the Civil Contingencies Secretariat and Local Risk Assessment Guidance

- A.31 Local Integrated Risk Management Plans must recognise national threats and consideration must be given to the links between Local Resilience Forums and Integrated Risk Management Plans
- A.32 A national level body, led and funded by the sector, which interfaces with central government should be established to be responsible for the consistent delivery of the recommended set of national functions
- A.33 Set of national functions should be developed and provided nationally by an appropriate body for the collective benefit of not only all Fire and Rescue Services but other external partners
- A.34 In financing such an arrangement, funding issues need to be further evaluated/developed including establishment of private/public sector (joint ventures) commissioned functions
- A.35 There needs to be better collaborative working for connected fire safety from design to occupation of the building
- A.36 A national overview of the built environment is essential, translated to the local level through Integrated Risk Management Plans
- A.37 A national model should be developed for assessing premises risk
- A.38 In relation to reducing fire risk through the built environment, improvements can be made through better application of what is already known, and a better understanding of fire behaviour and building response to fire is required
- A.39 In relation to reducing risk through the built environment, there needs to be improved compliance with regulation, legislation and industry driven best practice
- A.40 Industry could take on responsibility for awareness of fire safety amongst building designers, constructors, owners and occupiers
- A.41 The Fire and Rescue Service continue to enforce the Fire Safety Order but may wish to delegate some aspects to private sector experts in the longer term
- A.42 Industry associations are ideally placed through their contacts with members to act as watchdogs on progress/problems in enforcement of Fire Safety Order regulations
- A.43 Building control should take a proactive co-ordinating role involving the Fire and Rescue Service. To facilitate that agreement it may be appropriate for a representative building control body to form a cooperative agreement with the Chief Fire Officers' Association
- A.44 Sector should lead on application of knowledge linked to competency, certification, data sharing and awareness programmes

- A.45 The sector should continue to disseminate information promoting awareness, education, training and competency accreditation programmes
- A.46 Critical to the sector knowledge base is to have a much better database
- A.47 Role for industry-endorsed third party certification schemes in the built environment, but they must be fit for stated purpose and properly accredited
- A.48 Programmed review of Approved Document B (Building Regulations 200 – Fire Safety) should continue, but with a view on new and emerging practices, as well as broader community needs and the wider dimensions of fire which are likely to become more prominent
- A.49 Absence of a national methodology and template for assessing premises risk and visits under 7(2)(d) of Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 is a key risk. Such a model should be developed as a priority for any new national policy group created and should operate in a similar way to the model established for the Regulatory Reform Order
- A.50 To address issues with guidance/expertise, sector has already committed to resource, review, codify, rewrite and where required publish guidance supporting existing legislation but encompassing the entire process from building design to end use; use its own resources and expertise to train, educate and disseminate its knowledge; committed to work directly with Fire and Rescue Services to support training and qualifications without the need to publicly fund intermediary Sector Skills Councils; provide a sector-led Independent Research Panel; and to provide a Fire Knowledge website
- A.51 A wider view on the impacts of fire in line with requirements to lower the costs of fire damage taking account of community needs is needed
- A.52 Take a holistic view of value for money and evaluate the cost to society of fires and emergency events to develop a better business case and improve fire protection to buildings and infrastructure
- A.53 Co-ordinated access to Integrated Risk Management Plans
- A.54 A working group should explore the scope for a sector led research panel and develop proposals for a shared work programme
- A.55 A working group should be set up to review the scope for setting up a national data function and review the feasibility of placing all Integrated Risk Management Plans online
- A.56 A sector-led Research Panel (not restricted to Fire and Rescue Services) should prioritise research
- A.57 Production and dissemination of operational doctrine should be co-ordinated by an appropriate organisation

- A.58 Technical and operational guidance should be written by experts in the Fire and Rescue Service
- A.59 Collectively, the Chief Fire Officers' Association, the Fire Service College, the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser as well as partners in the fire industry might be able to provide a more effective lead in developing national operational doctrine as well as other functions as part of a national hub
- A.60 The most appropriate central point for a national hub would be the Fire Service College
- A.61 The Institute of Fire Engineers should provide the academic qualification and accreditation mechanism to support the role of the national hub and the wider training agenda
- A.62 Formation of a sector led hub for the dissemination of sector knowledge
- A.63 Partnership arrangement between government, private sector and third sector should be established with a view to sharing data and research
- A.64 Fire industry needs to come together and engage in better dialogue, in particular with those outside the core specialist fire safety sector who are not fire specialists but in practice are responsible for delivering fire safety
- A.65 Government should allow districts and boroughs to form their own Fire and Rescue Authorities subject to whatever safeguards the Secretary of State wishes to put in place
- A.66 The Department for Communities and Local Government may wish to consider putting pilots in place with willing district or borough councils. It will be important to ensure that the appropriate funding architecture is put in place to support this
- A.67 Build on the Local Government Group/Chief Fire Officers' Association sector-led framework for assurance and transparency
- A.68 Role for consumer based involvement in the assurance process, similar to HealthWatch
- A.69 National Performance Measures to deliver transparency in the costs and outcomes of Fire and Rescue Services should be an integral part of the sector-led transparency/assurance framework and should be high level, drive outcomes and be adaptable to local context
- A.70 Develop and apply mechanisms to robustly identify and support those at risk of failure in meeting local community and national expectations. A model of assurance would also need to provide appropriate assurance on resilience capabilities, interoperability and value for money in functions where this is best served through collective action at a spatial level above that of an individual Fire and Rescue Authority

A.71 Assurance mechanisms should be in place for full range of Fire and Rescue Service roles

Fire and Rescue Service role, funding and efficiency

A.72 Districts or boroughs should have a greater say in funding and other decision making in the provision of local Fire and Rescue Services

A.73 Full scale, structured collaboration between Fire and Rescue Authorities can drive out much of the duplication that exists currently whilst maintaining local identity and democratic control

A.74 There are a range of activities that should be examined by individual Fire and Rescue Authorities with neighbouring authorities in considering scope for local savings, including streamlining management teams and training

A.75 Other support functions such as finance, human resources and IT could also be shared or sourced externally

A.76 Sector should develop new and effective collaborative mechanisms to deliver objectives better without central government direction and to reshape political institutions/engagement processes wherever necessary

A.77 Sector should develop collective structures to look at making some of the changes to drive out existing inefficiency and duplication that exists across the Service, principally through looking at meaningful collaboration locally. An overarching approach to delivering work that would be much better done collectively (but are not necessarily national functions) should be considered

A.78 There is a strong case that research and development capacity would be better delivered on a collective basis

A.79 The Service's principle constituent bodies, supported by government, must generate the will and create the necessary structures for the Service to act together when it needs to do so

A.80 Incentivise more consistent/larger scale change by addressing issues cooperatively with partners and by addressing issues collectively at a national level

A.81 Those for whom the Spending Review outcome is less challenging must be incentivised to act collectively

A.82 A sector-owned joint procurement process should be developed. Fire and Rescue Authorities will need to act together effectively to agree common specifications and new joint procurement mechanisms

- A.83 A catalyst [for a sector-owned joint procurement process] could well be the collective development of operational procedures
- A.84 Service itself owning the agenda to incentivise change
- A.85 Service should develop a value for money benchmarking and peer review model drawing on existing examples in other local government services
- A.86 Peer review model should offer challenge in the area of adoption of the leaner staffing models which are already tested within the Service
- A.87 The Fire and Rescue Service should fully engage with the Local Government Group Productivity Programme
- A.88 The latent resource capacity of the Fire and Rescue Service should be maximised and used to extend the productivity of the Service - either through local models or enabling national change. Latent resource capability could potentially be expanded to facilitate new roles by better evaluation of current activities and alternative approaches to provision of prevention/protection services
- A.89 Greater accuracy and commonality in costing as a first step in developing a robust model for benchmarking of costs and outcomes which can be used within a peer review process
- A.90 Investment in new stations could be looked at cross service and from a locality perspective
- A.91 New types of vehicles, in particular combined aerial/pumping appliances can enable the Service to operate with a smaller workforce. There is significant scope for more sharing of specialist vehicles and to utilise smaller, bespoke vehicles to address specific risks and to harness new technology
- A.92 Each Fire and Rescue Authority should ensure an Asset Management Strategy is clearly defined in the strategic responsibility of the authority and in principle management
- A.93 Asset Management Strategies should draw appropriately on private sector expertise
- A.94 The Fire and Rescue Service should ensure all fixed assets are included in wider strategic cross service reviews
- A.95 Fire stations provide in many instances a valuable community asset that could be used more widely. Properly developed asset management strategies are needed to support this

- A.96 A further sector-led study should be undertaken to assess how well the Fire and Rescue Service meets the principles suggested by Sir Michael Lyons in 2004 and in Audit Commission reports, and the potential benefit of encouraging a cross border, more collaborative view of property and other assets
- A.97 The Fire and Rescue Service should actively use the Office of Government Commerce Benchmarking Tool and establish some norms on building performance
- A.98 Opportunities for Fire and Rescue Authorities to extend trading activities should be explored more fully with the wider sector. This should be done in a way which carefully manages risks around conflict of interest and the possibility of unfair competitive advantage
- A.99 A collective funding mechanism for the work of the Skills for Justice programme should be retained
- A.100 Change in the current National Joint Council mechanism would most appropriately be driven by change in the way Fire and Rescue Authorities function
- A.101 National Joint Council to adopt a framework approach to conditions that can be adapted to fit the needs of local Integrated Risk Management Plans and to industrial relations
- A.102 An invest to save fund for the Fire and Rescue Service should be considered
- A.103 For fire and rescue services to receive funding directly they need to have the functions transferred to them, which can be achieved under the Sustainable Communities Act 2007
- A.104 Attendance at flood and water rescue incidents should be a statutory duty of the Fire and Rescue Services, funded through New Burdens; and the Fire and Rescue Service should be granted statutory power to control the inner cordon at these events
- A.105 Break the link between commissioning and service delivery
- A.106 Review legislative and other barriers to local cost-saving solutions, including through integration or merger to ensure all potential barriers/obstacles to local solutions are removed
- A.107 Alternatives in direct delivery of Fire and Rescue Service local services should be explored further
- A.108 Subject to local choice, local integration and/or shared services between Fire and Rescue Service and the Emergency Ambulance Service

- A.109 In the short term, the extension of existing co-responding schemes is an obvious first step to Fire and Rescue Service/Emergency Medical Service integration
- A.110 Need for close working between Fire and Rescue Service and Emergency Medical Service at all levels, and a thorough mutual understanding of operational procedures
- A.111 Better use should be made of commercial support options for deployment
- A.112 Greater scope exists to involve private sector suppliers in the provision of logistics support to Fire and Rescue Services
- A.113 Implications of area based funding should be fully explored for fully or part funding local Fire and Rescue Services in the longer term. Some funding could be pooled into area based funding streams; the level of pooled funding could be set by local engagement.

Category B

National Resilience – sector in the lead, supported by government

Securing national resilience and ensuring public safety against identified national risks is the primary focus of central government in its ongoing relationship with the Fire and Rescue Service and the wider sector. We believe sector partners should take the lead to develop ideas that will secure strong national resilience capacity, and we will work to help them achieve this aim.

Local and national resilience and national functions

- B.1 The links between risk at every level and resulting resolution capabilities should be entirely transparent and demonstrable to the public
- B.2 What is currently delivered to ministers by the National Resilience Board should be sought for all aspects of interoperability
- B.3 Government will need to maintain an independent light touch assurance mechanism, particularly in relation to interoperability and national resilience, and the ability to intervene in the case of service failure. Would make sense to have this placed with the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser, supported by a regime of self assessment and peer review led by the sector
- B.4 Some headline assurance levels should be established to ensure interoperability throughout the UK
- B.5 Development of the National Risk Assessment process, underpinned by National Framework requirements. To take forward, it is recommended should be a common risk assessment protocol applied to national, local and generic risks
- B.6 Integrated Risk Management Plan Committee should look at the feasibility of creating a national Integrated Risk Management Plan based on national risks
- B.7 National plan will be created by lifting the most relevant and critical elements of Integrated Risk Management Plans relating to national threats and risks and holding such information centrally.

Category C

Government action to free the sector

There are some ideas that need government action to implement. In the Government response we commit to progress some. For others, where there is an appetite for change, we will work with sector partners to consider how these ideas can be taken forward.

Localism, de-centralisation and the Big Society

- C1 Give governmental power to lowest possible level through elimination of central targets and heavy touch central control mechanisms, cutting back on reporting requirements/inspection and eliminating direct intervention in all but the most exceptional circumstances
- C2 Government should dismantle the components of a centrally controlled performance management system for the Fire and Rescue Service and remove legislative or other obstacles to local innovation and delivery

The drive of government policy is away from top down performance management systems. Measures within the Localism Bill will de-centralise power, free Fire and Rescue Authorities from constraints and provide any new powers required.

- C3 Alternative mechanisms for appointing members to a new governing body are worthy of consideration, for example directly elected bodies or commissioners
- C4 Strengthen local democratic accountability of Fire and Rescue Authorities – option 3 (from Localism and Accountability Report), new structural parameters

The Government does not intend to impose reorganisation of the Fire and Rescue Service within a single governance model. However, if authorities indicate there are barriers to delivering alternative mechanisms they wish to adopt locally we will seek to enable change where it is appropriate to do so.

- C5 In decentralising power from Whitehall to local councils, it is imperative to clearly define the respective roles of central government and local Fire and Rescue Authorities

We strongly support this approach, and will work with sector partners to clearly define national and local roles in the new National Framework.

Local and national resilience and national functions

- C6 Lack of reliable or consistent data is a limitation on developing the funding formula as a mirror image of the risk assessment process. There may be scope to develop the Fire Service Emergency Cover model in this direction

This will be considered in the context of the Local Government Resource Review.

- C7 A new National Framework should be developed which removes prescribed tasks, determines the physical contribution to national responsibilities/services undertaken by Fire and Rescue Authorities and sets out unequivocal government expectations on interoperability
- C8 Strong case for retaining the National Framework and the national and government roles should be more about enabling public accountability through better local leadership, well designed public engagement and integration of effort with other local public services and the private sector

A new National Framework will be developed with the sector.

- C9 Government should clarify its expectations of what local services should do to ensure the security and resilience of the UK, and ensure the appropriate mechanisms for national resilience are maintained
- C10 Establish a time-limited working group to look at interoperability issues, including feasibility of Fire and Rescue Authorities drawing more easily upon military resources
- C11 Mechanism by which the sector itself can redirect resources in support of the national interest

We will work with the sector to define national and local resilience roles and reflect them in the new National Framework.

- C12 A national risk assessment, looking at risks facing the nation but not providing a national standard for emergency cover might provide the basis for a review of aggregate funding provision, from which authorities could then build local services through local choice

This will be considered in the context of the Local Government Resource Review.

- C13 Government should have a role working with the sector to identify signs of service failure, working with the sector to intervene only as required

We will work with the sector as it develops local performance assurance and transparency measures, and to consider how best to expand the current sector role to appropriately cover the management and assurance of all aspects of national resilience.

- C14 Government should set in train an immediate assessment of the potential of the Fire Service College with a view to ensuring its long term survival and stability by means of a joint venture arrangement. If there were a demonstrable success with this joint venture, this would facilitate consideration of whether the model was applicable elsewhere in the sector
- C15 Greater commercial freedom of manoeuvre would be of significant benefit whilst transforming the Fire Service College's operation
- C16 The footprint of the Fire Service College could be potentially reduced and the sale of some of its assets could improve its financial viability. Large capital investment facilities such as real fire training units and other specialist training could be provided by the private sector
- C17 There may be a greater role for the Fire and Rescue Services in facilitating joint operability with other services and the College could be developed to fulfil this function

We will explore with the sector and other organisations their views about and interest in taking a greater stake in the ownership and/or running of the Fire Service College, in ways which would secure the most advantageous delivery of the College's training mission.

- C18 Power of General Competence (currently restricted to county council Fire and Rescue Authorities) be extended to all Fire and Rescue Authorities

The Government has proposed within the Localism Bill an appropriate equivalent power.

Fire and Rescue Service role, funding and efficiency

- C19 Review of funding architecture for Fire and Rescue Authorities to place fairness and choice at the heart of commissioning services that meet the needs of all communities
- C20 Some further explicit linkage to Fire and Rescue Service funding through business rates could be explored
- C21 Funding sources to be transparent so local communities aware of where it comes from and how it can be used

This will be considered in the context of the Local Government Resource Review.

- C22 The Department for Communities and Local Government must be prepared to fully share the Incident Recording System data sets. There is also the potential to allow public access to some of the data (subject to data protection issues)

As part of the Government's Transparency agenda, we are working to make all data as widely available as possible, within the bounds of data protection and security.

Category D

Ideas government has ruled out

Some of the ideas within Fire Futures would require Government to impose national re-organisation. We do not intend to do this but will support the development of local alternatives which improve efficiency and value for money to taxpayers. Others have been ruled out by Government as they do not meet the needs of the public service reform agenda.

Local and national resilience and national functions

- D1 Responsibility for Operational Doctrine should remain with the Government

Operational Doctrine should be determined by the sector, although government will retain a central role in relation to national resilience and interoperability.

Fire and Rescue Service role, funding and efficiency

- D2 Evaluate merits of applying charging in areas such as response to road traffic collisions
- D3 The potential of revenue raising through a levy on home and/or motor insurance should be explored more fully
- D4 Enable differential precepting as an option open to Fire and Rescue Authorities

In the news release of 20 December 2010, ministers signalled that these ideas do not reflect the views of ministers and will not be taken forward.⁵

⁵ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/fire/1804267>

- D5 Fire and Rescue Services be granted the power to request direct military assistance

The implications of this proposal will remove power and responsibility from Fire and Rescue Authorities, and run counter to the localism agenda. There are existing mechanisms for Fire and Rescue Authorities (and other public bodies) to seek assistance in some circumstances from the Ministry of Defence via a central government department.

- D6 An alternative for all types of Fire and Rescue Authorities would be to create a single form of governance within which they can work together in the national interest whilst also meeting the localism agenda. This could incorporate better representation of all tiers of local government and the private, third sector and even service management or the representative bodies
- D7 Potential dissolution of existing ambulance trusts in order to enable (for example) a Community Protection Authority to be set up

The Government does not intend to impose reorganisation of the Fire and Rescue Service within a single governance model.

- D8 Adaptation of the Civil Contingencies Secretariat to adopt a role similar to that of Federal Emergency Management Agency in the USA

We do not envisage the Civil Contingencies Secretariat adopting an operational role, which would be a prerequisite for them to adopt a role similar to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

- D9 Government should endorse the sector lead on application of knowledge and ask the sector for a formal plan of action

The application of knowledge should be a matter determined by the sector, not one driven by government.

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
MEETING DATE:	27 May 2011
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	European Road Safety Charter

SUMMARY

To advise Members that Avon Fire & Rescue Service has been accepted as a signatory to the European Road Safety Charter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to

- i) Note the report.
- ii) Continue to support the work of Avon Fire & Rescue Service in road safety issues.

CONTENTS**BACKGROUND**

Avon Fire & Rescue Service has been taking an increasingly pro-active role in the promotion of road safety across our geographical area. Staff have developed a road safety strategy that is closely linked to the fire safety strategy that has been applied for a number of years.

Staff have committed to working to reduce the number of deaths and injuries on our roads through preventing, protecting and responding, in conjunction with partner agencies including the Unitary Authorities.

The European Road Safety Charter is a European participatory platform made up of enterprises, associations, research institutions and public authorities. The aim is to share good practices in order to resolve the road safety problems that we encounter in our day-to-day environments. The objective of the Charter is to help reduce the number of road fatalities. Currently the Charter has more than 2.000 signatories and each signatory is considered to be road safety role model.

There are multiple advantages to signing a commitment to the European Road Safety Charter. Traffic accidents and injuries are preventable if decisive action is taken. By signing the European Road Safety Charter AF&RS can positively influence one or more of the following vital road safety issues that form a backbone to an integrated approach to road safety:

- **Vehicle Safety:** Innovation, safety devices, vehicle regulation policies.
- **Infrastructure Safety:** Safer road infrastructures, road safety impact assessment.
- **User behaviour:** Increased understanding, improved skills, strengthened attitudes.

Our commitment is set out in the charter document and states:

1. Avon Fire & Rescue Service will take an active role in the community in helping to reduce the number of road traffic collisions through a road safety educational programme. They have already identified four key strategically located fire stations (one located in each local authority) to deliver AF&RS road safety educational presentations into local schools. To date AF&RS has engaged with over 7,500 young people, enhancing their knowledge and understanding towards the consequences of a road traffic collision.
2. AF&RS will produce a Managing Occupational Road Risk policy as it is equally important to that they scrutinize their own skills in road safety and ensure that they proactively reduce this risk in relation to vehicles driven for business activities. This occupational road risk procedure is intended to keep staff and other road users safe from harm, to reduce the number of vehicle related accidents at work and so reduce associated costs.
3. AF&RS will take road safety one step further by prohibiting the use of both hand-held and hands-free mobile devices (except operational radios) whilst driving for work purposes. This includes making or receiving both business and personal calls whilst driving in relation to work.

This recognition will allow Avon Fire & Rescue Service to display the ERS Charter logo on all documentation, as well as accessing EU wide best practice on road safety matters.

KEY POLICY PRIORITIES

Commitment to reducing deaths and injuries on our roads is a key component of Integrated Risk Management Plan.

CONSIDERATIONS

CONTRIBUTION TO KEY POLICY PRIORITIES

None

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT

None

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None

HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

List of background documents:

Further information on this subject can be found at www.erscharter.eu

Report Contact: Kevin Pearson, Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (ext 233#)

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
MEETING DATE:	27 May 2011
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Risk planning (including civil contingencies) update

SUMMARY

A paper to update Members on current developments and initiatives taking place in relation to risk planning and civil contingencies.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Members:

- a) note the content of this report
- b) receive further progress reports on the issues identified in due course; and
- c) endorse and support the work being developed in the risk planning arena within Avon Fire & Rescue Service.

CONTENTS**BACKGROUND**

Members will be aware that the Fire Authority has specific responsibilities for resilience under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and also as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This report provides an update on the work of the Risk Planning Unit to ensure that the statutory expectations placed on the Authority are met and delivered, and focuses on the following areas:

- a) the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2008/11;
- b) FiRe Alert! notices and standard operating procedures;
- c) Severnside off-site COMAH emergency plan; and
- d) multi-agency partnerships and training.

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK 2008/11

Members will be aware that under the *Fire and Rescue National Framework 2008/11* the Fire Authority has specific responsibilities for developing resilience under the statutory framework for civil contingencies and as part of the department for Communities and Local Government's (CLG) Fire and Resilience programme.

The work of the Risk Planning Unit has general regard to the requirements of paras. 1.20/1.21 (which relate to the fire and rescue service's statutory resilience duties) and Chapter 2 ('Resilience') of the *Fire and Rescue National Framework 2008/11*.

FIRE ALERT! NOTICES AND STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Further to Section 4 of the *Risk Planning Update* tabled at the Authority's meeting held on 30 Mar 07, a list of the latest SOPs and FiRe Alert! Notices issued in the current reporting period is included at Annex 1.

A list of the Service Delivery memos and risk cards issued since the last meeting of the Authority is also included in Annex 1.

SEVERNSIDE OFF-SITE COMAH EMERGENCY PLAN

Members will be aware that the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations 1999¹ (as amended) apply to a number of industrial and commercial premises within the Avon Fire & Rescue Service area, particularly around the Avonmouth area where a number of COMAH sites have been developed in the proximity of the Port of Bristol.

The COMAH Regulations place a legislative duty on local authorities to prepare a multi-agency emergency plan for sites falling under the remit of the legislation and which therefore have the potential to cause a major accident. Within this geographical area, many of the responsibilities defined under the Regulations are discharged via a collaborative group known as the Severnside Emergency Planning Forum (SEPF) which includes site operators, the emergency services, local authorities and the Competent Authorities² (CAs). This group provides the forum for interested parties to come together and plan an integrated response to the consequences of potential major accidents and has been promoted as a model of good practice throughout Great Britain by the CAs.

Regulation 10(1) of the COMAH Regulations 1999 states that:

“The local authority, in whose area there is an establishment, shall prepare an emergency plan (in these Regulations referred to as an “off-site emergency plan”) in respect of that establishment, and such a plan shall be adequate for securing the objectives specified in Part 1 of Schedule 5 and shall contain the information specified in Part 3 of that Schedule.”

¹ SI 1999 No. 743

² in England and Wales, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Environment Agency (EA)

Members will be interested to note that the Severnside off-site emergency plan has recently been revised³ and has now been published jointly by Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council. The new edition continues to detail the roles to be carried out by the emergency services, local authorities and other external organisations in the event of an emergency, including the arrangements established to help with the emergency response on site. It also contains individual site-specific appendices detailing information to assist with emergency planning and response.

The revision incorporates lessons learned from our schedule of regular training and exercising of our COMAH response, as well as those identified during actual emergencies such as that at BOC Ltd. in January 2010.⁴ Further exercises are already planned including a national multi-site high volume pumping exercise (Ex. AVONMOUTH) on 20/21 May 11 and a multi-agency notification exercise (Ex. ALERT) in the week commencing 23 May 11.

The next scheduled revision is due in three years time.

MULTI-AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS AND TRAINING

Multi-agency liaison continues to be maintained with a wide range of public, industrial, commercial and voluntary organisations in reviewing our response to various risks across the Authority's area. Since the last meeting of the Authority these meetings have included:

- a) meetings of the Severn Tunnel Contingency Planning Group and STCPG 'Blue Light' Training Sub-Group (31 Mar 11);
- b) a meeting of the Avon & Somerset Local Resilience Forum (A&S LRF) Business Management Group (BMG) (31 Mar 11);
- c) a routine quarterly Inter-Agency Liaison Officer (ILO) update meeting (12 Apr 11);
- d) the Counter-Terror Expo (Olympia, London) (19 Apr 11);
- e) a meeting of the A&S LRF Flooding Sub-Group (21 Apr 11);
- f) the Oldbury Power Station emergency planning consultative committee (04 May 11);
- g) a meeting of the A&S LRF Risk Assessment Sub-Group (11 May 11);
- h) a meeting of the A&S LRF Search and Recue Sub-Group (25 May 11).

Additionally, the Head of Risk Planning attended the annual conference of the Institute of Civil Protection and Emergency Management – “National security in an age of uncertainty” – at the Kettering Conference Centre on 08 Apr 11.

³ now Issue 4.1 (dated February 2011)

⁴ see also the *Risk Planning (including Civil Contingencies) Update* tabled to the Fire Authority at its meeting held on 12 Feb 10

IMPLICATIONS

CONTRIBUTION TO KEY POLICY PRIORITIES

Resilience is a key policy priority under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the *Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008/11* and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (and associated Regulations, statutory and non-statutory guidance).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Authority has specific responsibilities for resilience under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and also as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk planning contributes towards contingency plans.

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Risk planning meets the Authority's obligation as an employer.

List of background documents:
DETR, EA, HSE, Scottish Executive and SEPA (1999) <i>A guide to the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1999</i> . pp 1-128. Sudbury: HSE Books. ISBN 0 7176 1604 5.
Environment Agency, HSE and SEPA (1999) <i>Emergency Planning for major accidents: Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1999</i> . pp 1-28. Sudbury: HSE Books. ISBN 0 7176 1695 9.
Report Contact(s): Name, Position, Extension no. Dave Salmon, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Director of Risk Reduction (Ext 283#) Marc Anderson, Area Manager – Risk Reduction (Ext. 386#) Peter Davis, Head of Risk Planning (Ext. 378#)

ANNEX 1

(a) Standard operating procedures (SOPs) issued under the Quality System (between 15 Feb 11 and 18 Apr 11)

Ref.	Date	Title
B5	28 Feb 11	Bristol Airport (V5.1 – Feb 11) (amended pages only)
D30	28 Feb 11	Rescues from lifts and escalators (V1.0 – Jan 11)
C15	07 Apr 11	Asbestos at operational incidents (V1.0 – Mar 11)
D6	07 Apr 11	Positive pressure ventilation fans (V2.0 – Mar 11)
E15	11 Apr 11	Unwanted fire signals (UwFS) in commercial and industrial premises (V2.0 – Aug 10)

(b) FiRe Alerts! issued under the Quality System (between 15 Feb 11 and 18 Apr 11)

Ref.	Date	Title
05/2011	18 Feb 11	Equipment and appliance bollarding
06/2011	18 Feb 11	Alarmer and pager batteries
07/2011	02 Mar 11	Near miss: BA training at Stn. 09 Temple's training building
08/2011	04 Mar 11	Incidents concerning burnt food
09/2011	11 Mar 11	Failure of cable fixings in fires
10/2011	30 Mar 11	Environmental protection and EA 'grab packs'
11/2011	31 Mar 11	Metal thefts in North Somerset
12/2011	01 Apr 11	Use of ear defenders / ear plugs when working near noisy machinery
13/2011	12 Apr 11	Breathing apparatus (BA) emergencies
14/2011	07 Apr 11	Unwanted fire signals (UwFS) in commercial and industrial buildings

(c) Service Delivery memos issued under the Quality System (between 15 Feb 11 and 18 Apr 11)

Ref.	Date	Title
07/2011	07 Mar 11	Community safety activities by RDS staff
08/2011	07 Mar 11	Service Control overtime
09/2011	09 Mar 11	Service crewing and confidence levels (<i>in preparation</i>)
10/2011	11 Mar 11	Service crewing arrangements (<i>in preparation</i>)
11/2011	17 Mar 11	Maintenance of retained duty system (RDS) crewing levels
12/2011	21 Mar 11	Local government elections 2011: Purdah

Ref.	Date	Title
13/2011	04 Apr 11	Royal Wedding: Public holiday – Friday, 29 Apr 11
14/2011	05 Apr 11	Health and safety management – incident command
15/2011	06 Apr 11	Opportunities to return to operations – Watch and Crew Managers
16/2011	08 Apr 11	Home fire safety visit (HFSV) – New risk rating system
17/2011	11 Apr 11	Revision to arrangements for personnel conditioned to Station 25
18/2010	12 Apr 11	Public holiday (PH) and 'hours in the book' audit 2011
19/2011	15 Apr 11	Analytical risk assessment (ARA) at incidents involving alarms
20/2011	29 Apr 11	Air support trials – expression of interest

(d) Risk cards issued under the Quality System (between 15 Feb 11 and 18 Apr 11)

Ref.	Date	Title
		N/A

MEETING:	Avon Fire Authority
MEETING DATE:	27 May 2011
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Community Safety Update

SUMMARY

A paper to update Members on current developments and initiatives taking place in relation to Community Safety.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Members:

- a) note the content of this report
- b) receive further progress reports on the issues identified in due course; and
- c) endorse and support the work being developed in the Community Safety Unit within Avon Fire & Rescue Service.

CONTENTS

Community safety interventions and initiatives

Children and young people

Child Safety Week: Currently the Youth Engagement Support Team is finalising arrangements and activities to support Child Safety Week commencing 20th June 2011. In particular, this will be used as an opportunity to pilot the new Key Stage 1 Fire Awareness education package across 5 schools, 5 stations and the four Unitary Areas.

Home safety

We successfully implemented the new risk rating system for HFSV's on 13 April 2011. This will risk rate every HFSV to ensure that we respond in a more timely and appropriate manner, as follows:

Risk Category	Response target
Very High	HFSV within 24 hours
High	HFSV within 1 week
Medium	HFSV within 3 weeks
Low	HFSV within 6 weeks
Very Low	No HFSV. Send standard letter.*

* For those that fall into the Very Low category, AFRS will not carry out a HFSV. Instead, the occupier will be sent a standard letter explaining why we are not visiting them, the Fire Safety In The Home booklet and a check list to complete and guide them through some important aspects of staying safe.

Partnerships

We are developing a new partnership arrangement with Bristol Careline who visit people in Bristol who are, in the main, either elderly, disabled or both to supply and install assistive technology designed to provide them with a safety net and enable them to remain in their own homes for longer. With this arrangement, it is envisaged that the Bristol Careline staff are trained by us to fit smoke alarms and to make referrals to us to then complete Home Fire Safety Visits.

A similar partnership arrangement with BaNES Community Alarms Service has recently been added to our partnership register. The overall aim of this partnership is to reduce the risk of older and/or disabled residents being injured or killed in domestic fires in Bath and North East Somerset.

BACKGROUND

Members will be aware that community safety is a key element of our prevention work as part of the Integrated Risk Management Plan.

IMPLICATIONS

The activities detailed above demonstrate our increasing involvement in partner activities and the AFRS determination to place community safety at the top of our and our Partners' agendas.

CONTRIBUTION TO KEY POLICY PRIORITIES

Reducing community risk and contributing to the wider community well-being agenda.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Crime & Disorder Act 1988 Part I Chapter I (5), (6) outlines the arrangements for Authorities responsible for the formulation and implementation of Crime and Disorder (anti-social behaviour) strategies.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 Chapter 1, (s108) provides that, as a partner authority, we have due regard to local improvement targets specified in the Local Area Agreements.

DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

Improving outcomes for people who disproportionately experience fire: the elderly, people with limited mobility, people from BME backgrounds, lone parent homes, youth inclusion.

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT

Reducing the likelihood of the Service to be exposed to loss of life in the community or within the workforce. Time and resource directed in a more intelligence-led way will reduce risk in the community and potentially result in efficiency savings.

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Fewer incidents have the potential to reduce CO2 emissions due to fewer movements of vehicles and less fire generated emissions.

CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

Supporting the CDR Anti-Social Behaviour agenda and National Indicators where selected by LSP's.

HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS (state if none)

Increased levels of Health and Safety for Firefighters due to mitigated community risks. Partnership activities to be risk assessed prior to commencement.

List of background documents:
Report Contact(s): Dave Salmon, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Director of Risk Reduction (Ext 234) Rich Davis, Temp. Group Manager, Acting Head of Community Safety (Ext 379)

MEETING:	AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
MEETING DATE:	27 May 2011
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Sickness Absence Update – as at 31 March 2011

SUMMARY

The Service ended the financial year 2009/10 on 7.53 shifts lost (against a target of 8.5). As a percentage, this figure means the Service lost approximately 3.5% of total shifts in 09/10* due to sickness. The Service target for 2010/11 is 7.5 days/shifts lost to sickness. This report updates the Fire Authority with sickness absence data up to 31 March 2011.

At the end of the financial year 2010/11 the Service has met, and bettered, this target with 7.02 days/shifts lost to sickness. As a percentage, this figure means the Service has lost approximately 3% of total shifts* due to sickness in the financial year 10/11.

In 2003/04 the Service lost 18.13 shifts to sickness and therefore we have reduced shifts lost by 61%. This improvement reflects the progress the Service has made in reducing its overall sickness levels, and in particular the number of staff on long term sick. However short term sickness remains subject to fluctuations and spikes at certain times of year. Therefore improving the level of short term sickness, while maintaining our progress on long term sick, is the Services focus in 2011/12 and the target for 2011/12 is 7 day/shifts lost to sickness.

The Return to Work Interview completion rates remain positive with 96% completed against a target of 90% of all interviews to be completed within 15 days of the return date. The target for 2011/12 is 100% completed.

Sickness

Wholetime uniformed

The overall trend is a continued reduction in total sickness levels. The Service has significantly reduced the shifts lost to long term sickness (to duty and non duty) in recent years. While progress is leveling off (with the Service usually having around a small number of uniformed staff members on long term sick at any one time), the improvements made are significant and are being sustained.

* This percentage is approximate and calculates the shifts lost through sickness against total shifts in the relevant period. The total shifts figure does not exclude shifts where staff are unavailable due to training, leave etc.

March 2011 saw the lowest level of total shifts lost to long term sickness (duty plus non duty) for the last two years and the third consecutive month of no shifts lost to duty related long term sickness. The levels remain low due to Human Resources work with Occupational Health and managers to facilitate early returns to modified or full duties.

The Service has, overall, also reduced the total shifts lost to short term sickness in recent years but progress is less significant and there remains fluctuations and spikes at holiday periods (for example July and August, October and December). After the December high, short term sickness (non duty) fell again in January and February but increased slightly again in March 2011, mainly attributable to musculo-skeletal ailments, colds, flu, gastro-intestinal sickness.

Support

As with uniformed staff the overall trend is a reduction in sickness levels and the total shifts lost in March 2011 were 59, a significant improvement on March 2010 levels.

Progress on sustaining the reduction to shifts lost due to long term sickness slowed this June to November but this was due to a small number of staff with significant health issues which took some time to resolve. We are now back on track with only 36 shifts lost to long term sickness in March 2011, relating to two staff members.

Progress on reducing short term sickness remains steady for support staff although there are also some seasonal spikes. After an increase in short term sickness in December (mainly attributable to colds and flu), the levels have reduced again in March to the lowest levels in two years.

Sickness management figures

Progress in reducing long term sickness is mainly attributable to HR led improvements to the pay review process (applying pay reductions as per Green and Grey book terms and conditions) and HR work with staff, Occupational Health, managers and treating physicians to facilitate a return to work as soon as possible to full, or risk assessed, modified duties. As a result, as at 18 April 2011, only three staff are on long term sick (2 uniformed) and 14 staff (13 uniformed), who would otherwise be on long term sick due to their medical or fitness issues, are at work on modified duties. HR also continues to work with these modified duties staff to ensure they continue to progress back to normal duties.

With reference to short term sickness, when the amount of sickness absence in a 12 month period reaches a trigger (called a Bradford score) employees are managed through the attendance management process. This involves a series

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of review meetings, targets set for a reduction in sickness absence and, if there is a failure to improve, formal warnings. HR analyses the data to identify staff with frequent short sickness absence and works with the staff, managers and Occupational Health to review and improve their attendance and/or issue warnings. As at 18 April 2011, there are 40 members of staff under review for their frequent, short term sickness levels (33 uniformed). This number is expected to rise again next quarter. Of additional concern is staff with patterns of sickness (before and/or after leave, when time off has been refused and sickness at the same time each year - school holidays) which can be a contributory factor to the annual short term sickness highs in March/April, July/August, October and December. HR is identifying such cases through data analysis and the appropriate management intervention commenced.

All this HR led work is aimed at producing savings for the Authority (in sick pay and detached duties cover), maintaining crewing levels of frontline pumps.

Strategy for 2011/12

The Service remains focused on sustaining the reduction in long term absence and reducing the level of short term, intermittent absence. Human Resources are analysing short term sickness data (to identify any underlying causes for the spikes which occur in certain months each year) and revising processes and policies to further support managers and Occupational Health to take prompt and appropriate action to prevent short term sickness absence and/or aid recovery and return to work.

The medical intervention fund and counselling support services (managed by Human Resources) also provide support to staff with musculo-skeletal or mental health problems as it is proven that good quality, prompt intervention will support the employee to make a full recovery in a shorter period of time.

These provisions, as well as the resources available in terms of HR practitioners, will inevitably come under strain in the coming months. However policies are in place to enable managers to support staff back to work after illness.

Return to Work Interviews (RTWI)

The improvement on RTW interviews has been sustained. The target is for 90% of interviews to be completed within 15 days of the return date. The actual performance is 96%.

We report RTWI performance on Station Wall charts which enables stations to track their performance on a monthly basis and also remind managers when RTWIs are required. These actions are having a positive effect.

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RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the report is noted and that Members continue to receive progress reports 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 March 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

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HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

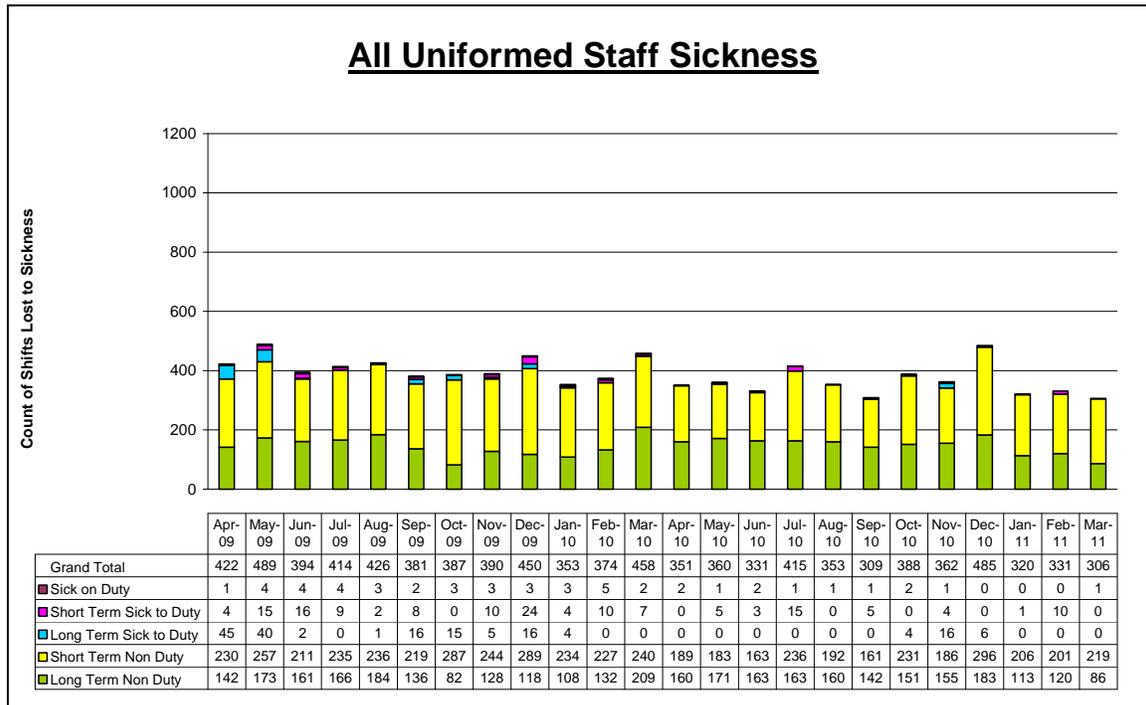
A safe and supportive workplace will assist in maximising attendance and thus is part of the intervention programme mentioned above.

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 March 2011.
Report Contact(s): Maggie Harte, Director of Human Resources and People Development (ext 234)

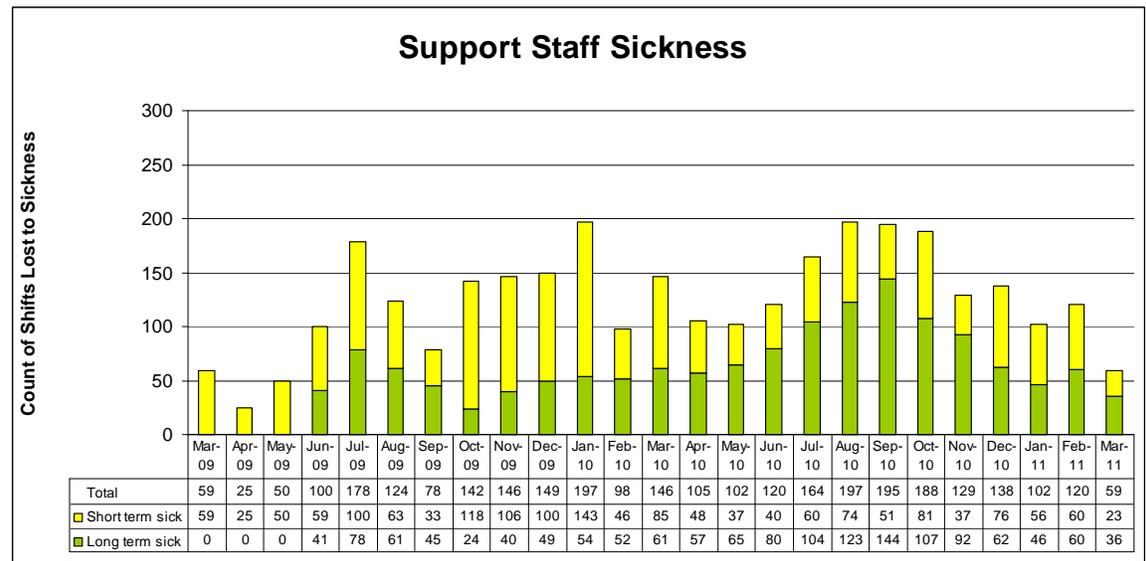
* This percentage is approximate and calculates the shifts lost through sickness against total shifts in the relevant period. The total shifts figure does not exclude shifts where staff are unavailable due to training, leave etc.

Graphs

The total shifts lost in March 2011 to uniformed sickness, represents 3% of the total shifts that month *.



The total shifts lost in March 2011 to support staff sickness, represents 2% of the total shifts that month *.



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AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	AVON FIRE AUTHORITY
MEETING DATE:	27 May 2011
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Fires and Other Incidents: March and April 2011

SUMMARY

To report on fires and other significant incidents that occurred during the months of March and April 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#

Incidents of note in March

Unattended cooking sparks fire

Tuesday 1 March

11.44 Wesley Drive, Worle, Weston-super-Mare

Firefighters have tackled a fire in the kitchen of a ground floor flat after cooking was left unattended.

When crews arrived on the scene they could hear the smoke alarms in the property activating, but could not raise the occupant.

Crews had to force entry to the flat and two firefighters wearing breathing apparatus carried out a thorough search of the premises. Fortunately no one was found inside.

Firefighters used a high pressure hose reel to extinguish the fire which was confined to the kitchen and caused smoke logging to the premises.

It appears the occupant had left cooking on the hob and gone out. The cooking had then caught fire.

Race against time to rescue man trapped in rocks

Tuesday 8 March

16.01 Birnbeck Road, Weston-super-Mare

A man trapped by rocks at Weston-super-Mare has been rescued during an incident involving all four emergency services.

Firefighters along with members of HM Coastguard, Great Western Ambulance Service and Avon and Somerset Constabulary were involved in a race against time to free the man before the advancing tide peaked.

Fire crews were alerted by HM Coastguard, which had been called to the man's aid. Specialist rescue appliances from Weston-super-Mare and Temple fire stations, including a line rescue team, were sent to the scene with a range of equipment which may have been required for the rescue. Avon Fire & Rescue Service's rescue hovercraft was also placed on standby.

The man, aged in his early 20s, is thought to have been walking on rocks below Birnbeck Road when his left leg became trapped in a crack in the cliff face. With high tide estimated around an hour and a half away, members of all the agencies had to work together to quickly establish a rescue plan.

After paramedics administered pain relief, firefighters used a solution to lubricate the man's leg. The lubricant is more commonly used to clear fuel spillages, but on this occasion worked effectively to allow rescuers to pull the man to safety.

He was then carried across the rocks by HM Coastguard and fire crews before being conveyed to hospital by ambulance. It's not thought he suffered any injury in the incident.

Avon Fire & Rescue Service Station Manager Steve Bagg said: "This was a great example of a number of agencies working together for a successful outcome.

"At the height of the incident we had eight appliances at the scene, bringing with them manpower and a range of specialist equipment. With the tide quickly coming in, it really was a race against time so it was vital to have any equipment we may need close at hand.

"Our backup plan was to use tools to break the rocks, which is why we had additional equipment on standby. We didn't want to take any chances as the tide would have left the man submerged, clearly placing him at severe risk."

Pensioner rescued from house fire

Tuesday 8 March

17.23 Turnberry Walk, Brislington, Bristol

A pensioner was rescued by firefighters after a fire broke out in her home.

Crews were called after a report of alarms activating at the bungalow. Once on scene crews could hear a smoke alarm and were told by neighbours that there may be someone in the property.

Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus broke down the door to begin a search. When they opened the door to a lounge they found a female unconscious in the heavily smoke logged room. She was immediately carried from the property where fire crews began emergency first aid.

Using trauma care equipment crews revived the woman, thought to be aged in her 70s. Once she had regained consciousness she was transported to hospital by paramedics who had also attended the scene.

During the course of the search a pet dog was also safely rescued.

The fire is believed to have been caused by smoking materials which had set light to the casualty's bed. Due to mobility issues it is thought the lady was unable to get out of the bed. She was able to raise the alarm by pressing a button to contact the emergency care provider Carelink. The operator heard the smoke alarm activating and immediately alerted Avon Fire & Rescue Service.

Crews tackle fire in bed store

Thursday 17 March

08.50 Brislington Retail Park, Brislington, Bristol

Firefighters have dealt with a fire in the front of a bed store on a retail park.

When crews arrived on the scene smoke and flames were billowing from the front of the Bensons for Beds store.

Six firefighters wearing breathing apparatus tackled the fire from the front of the building using two 45 mm jets and a high pressure hose reel. Crews searched a neighbouring shop to see if the fire had spread. Fortunately, the fire was contained to the bed shop and no one was hurt.

The Aerial Rescue Pump (ARP) from Patchway Fire Station was used to inspect the roof of the building, along with thermal imaging cameras, to determine if there was further fire spread into the premises.

It's thought the fire started accidentally after a light fitting overheated and the light dropped onto one of the beds and caught fire.

Teenager rescued from cave

Thursday 17 March

14.34 Burrington Combe, Burrington, Blagdon

A teenager has been rescued from a cave after dislocating her knee cap approximately 100 metres into the cavern.

On arrival at the incident firefighters found the 18 year-old inside Goatchurch Cavern. She had been taking part in an organised trip when she slipped and fell.

Because of the gradient of the cave and the outside terrain, paramedics treated the teenager inside the cave and then firefighters, paramedics and members of the cave rescue team assisted her out on a stretcher. She was then carried down the hill and taken to hospital by ambulance.

Incidents of note in April

Crews tackle fire in scrap yard

Monday 11 April

13.00hrs Hayward Industrial Estate, North View, Soundwell, Bristol

Three people have been treated for minor smoke inhalation after a fire at a scrap yard.

When crews arrived they found a fire affecting a vehicle and the inside of a steel framed building, used for the storage of car parts.

Ten firefighters wearing breathing apparatus tackled the fire using two high pressure hose reels and two 45 mm jets. The hydraulic platform from Speedwell Fire Station was used to tackle the fire from above and inspect the premises using a thermal imaging camera to check for hotspots.

The three people, who are believed to work at the premises, were not taken to hospital.

It's thought the fire started accidentally after a drill was used to drain a fuel tank in a vehicle.

Pub suffers kitchen fire

Monday 11 April

20.31 East Dundry Road, Whitchurch, Bristol

A pub kitchen has been left damaged by fire.

When firefighters arrived at the incident all customers and staff had already been evacuated but smoke was coming from the premises.

Two firefighters wearing breathing apparatus entered the pub and found a fire in the kitchen. They used one high pressure hose reel and one Co2 extinguisher to put the fire out.

Fortunately, no one was hurt.

It appears the fire started accidentally after a build up of grease on a griddle caught fire. The fire was confined to the kitchen but the rest of the premises suffered some smoke damage.

Man cut free from RTC

Thursday 14 April

15.21 Church Road, Frampton Cotterell

A man has been rescued by firefighters after his van was involved in a road traffic collision and ended up on its side.

When crews arrived they found a man in his 40s trapped.

Crews quickly stabilised the vehicle and they used hydraulic cutting equipment to remove the windscreen and part of the roof of the van to enable paramedics to access the casualty.

Working alongside paramedics the man was assisted on to a spinal board and taken to hospital. His injuries were not thought to be life-threatening.

The road was closed while the incident was ongoing.

Two females rescued after RTC

Friday 15 April

13.45 A367 Dunkerton Hill, Dunkerton, Peasedown St John

Two women have been taken to hospital after a road traffic collision involving four vehicles.

When crews arrived on the scene they found a 20 year old female trapped in a Vauxhall Corsa and a 51 year old woman trapped in a Ford Fiesta.

Firefighters quickly stabilised the vehicles and then using hydraulic cutting equipment they removed the roofs of both cars.

Working alongside paramedics the casualties were then assisted on to spinal boards and taken to hospital by ambulance. They were both suffering from suspected neck injuries, not thought to be life threatening.

Firefighters rescue fallen climber

Tuesday 19 April

15.07 Sea Walls, Durdham Downs, Bristol

A 15 year old climber has been rescued by firefighters after he slipped and fell approximately 10 metres.

Firefighters specially trained in rope rescue techniques used their safety at height and confined spaces (SHACS) equipment to reach the casualty, who was suffering from suspected neck and back injuries.

Working alongside paramedics the casualty was assisted on to a spinal board and lifted to safety. He was taken to hospital by ambulance.

Two in hospital after RTC

Wednesday 20 April

16.11 Station Road at the junction with Eggshill Lane, Yate

Two women have been taken to hospital after a road traffic collision involving three vehicles.

The male driver of a mini-bus was unharmed. However a woman in her 20s, who was in a Mazda car, was suffering from suspected neck injuries. She was assessed by a doctor, who arrived by air ambulance, but her injuries are not thought to be life-threatening. She was taken to hospital by road ambulance for a precautionary check up.

The second car involved was a Vauxhall. The male driver was unhurt, but the female passenger, a woman in her 50s, was suffering from suspected spinal injuries.

Firefighters used hydraulic cutting equipment to remove the roof of the Vauxhall and then worked with paramedics to assist the woman on to a spinal board. She was taken to hospital by ambulance and her injuries are not thought to be life-threatening.

Supermarket damaged by fire

Monday 25 April

11.55 Woodborough Road, Winscombe

A supermarket has been damaged following a blaze which broke out in a freezer unit.

A total of six firefighters wearing breathing apparatus entered the shop and used hose reels to bring the fire under control.

The blaze caused fire damage to roughly nine square metres of the store and caused severe smoke damage throughout. The fire also caused smoke to spread into a private flat above the store. Due to the actions of the crews the damage caused was limited.

After the fire was put out, firefighters worked to cut away parts of the ceiling of the store. A thermal imaging camera was also used to check for hotspots.

Both the store and flat above were safely evacuated before fire crews arrived on scene.

Rubbish collectors to the rescue

Wednesday 27 April

09.11 Channons Hill, Fishponds, Bristol

A woman was taken to hospital suffering from the effects of smoke inhalation following a kitchen fire.

Fire crews were alerted after the blaze broke out in the two storey property. On arrival they found a well developed fire in the kitchen, with smoke filling the rest of the property.

Thanks to the actions of dustbin collectors, the female occupant of the house was already outside when crews arrived. It's thought she was able to escape onto the flat roof of a bay window as the rubbish collectors were passing by. They were able to help her safely to the ground, before carrying on their round.

The woman, who was believed to be aged in her 50s, was later taken to hospital suffering from smoke inhalation.

The fire is thought to have started accidentally as a result of a fault involving the fridge. As there were no smoke alarms in the house, the occupier was only woken by the sounds of the fire. Doors upstairs and downstairs were also left open which allowed the smoke to spread more quickly.