

**LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND COMBINED FIRE  
AUTHORITY**

**To: Members of the Combined Fire Authority**

Mr. N. Bannister CC  
Councillor Susan Barton  
Councillor Samantha Harvey  
Mr. D. Gamble CC  
Mr. S. L. Bray CC  
Mr. B. Champion CC  
Councillor Melissa March  
Mr. K. Ghattoraya CC

Mr. R. Allen CC  
Mr. J. Coxon CC  
Ms Betty Newton CC  
Mr. B. Harrison-Rushton CC  
Councillor Abdul Osman  
Councillor Hemant Rae Bhatia  
Mr Nicholas Rushton CC  
Mr. D. Grimley CC

Copies to: Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officers, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service.

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority** which will be held on **WEDNESDAY 4 OCTOBER 2023 at 10.00am at County Hall, Glenfield** for the transaction of business set out on the attached Agenda.

Yours Faithfully



Lauren Haslam  
Monitoring Officer



**Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service**

Headquarters, 12 Geoff Monk Way, Birstall, Leicester LE4 3BU

Tel 0116 2105555

Fax 0116 2271330

Email [info@leics-fire.gov.uk](mailto:info@leics-fire.gov.uk)

[leics-fire.gov.uk](http://leics-fire.gov.uk)

Follow @LeicsFireRescue



# LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

*Date/Time*            **Wednesday, 4 October 2023 at 10.00 am**

*Location*            **Sparkenhoe Committee Room, County Hall, Glenfield**

*Officer to contact* **Gemma Duckworth (Tel. (0116 305 2583))**

*E-Mail*                **gemma.duckworth@leics.gov.uk**

## **AGENDA**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Report by</u>
1. Apologies for absence.	
2. To receive declarations by members of interests in respect of items on this Agenda.	
3. To advise of any other items which the Chair has decided to take as urgent.	
4. Chairman's Announcements.	
5. Public Participation/ CFA Rules of Procedure Rule 9 - Member Questions.	
6. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Combined Fire Authority held on 26 July 2023.	(Pages 5 - 10)
7. To consider the minutes of the Corporate Governance Committee meeting held on 13 July 2023.	(Pages 11 - 18)
8. Service Delivery Update.	The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer (Pages 19 - 22)
9. Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Home Office Fire Statistics 2022-23.	The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer (Pages 23 - 26)
10. Members' Allowance Scheme.	The Solicitor and Monitoring Officer (Pages 27 - 34)
11. Appointment of Independent Members of the Corporate Governance Committee.	The Solicitor and Monitoring Officer (Pages 35 - 40)
12. Urgent items.	
13. Date of Next Meeting.	

The next meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority will be held on 29 November 2023 at 10am at County Hall, Glenfield.

14. Exclusion of the Press and Public.

The public are likely to be excluded during the following item of business in accordance with Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972:

- Forge Health Limited Closure.

(Exempt under Paragraphs 3 and 10 of Schedule 12A).

15. Forge Health Limited Closure.

The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer (Pages 41 - 44)

This page is intentionally left blank



Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 26 July 2023.

PRESENT

Ms. Betty Newton CC (in the Chair)

Mr. R. G. Allen CC	Mr. K. Ghattoraya CC
Cllr. S. Barton	Mr. B. Harrison-Rushton CC
Mr. S. L. Bray CC	Cllr. S. Harvey
Mr. B. Champion CC	Mrs. H. Fryer CC
Mr. J. G. Coxon CC	Cllr. Abdul Osman
Mr. D. A. Gamble CC	Mr. C. Smith CC
Cllr. M. Sood	Cllr. H. Orton

In attendance

Callum Faint, Chief Fire and Rescue Officer  
 Paul Weston, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer  
 Judi Beresford, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer  
 Lauren Haslam, Monitoring Officer  
 Amy Oliver, Treasurer

27. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Mr. N. Bannister CC, Councillor A Byrne, Mr. D. Grimley CC, Councillor H Rae Bhatia, and Mr. N. Rushton CC.

28. Declarations of Interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare an interest in respect of items on the agenda.

No declarations were made.

29. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items.

30. Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman's announcements were circulated in advance of the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes. The announcements covered the following matters:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Mobilising System.

31. Public Participation/ CFA Rules of Procedure Rule 9 - Member Questions.

It was reported that no questions had been received.

32. Minutes.

The minutes of the CFA meeting held on 21 June 2023 were considered.

It was moved by Mrs. M. E. Newton CC and seconded by Mr. B. Champion CC that the minutes of the CFA meeting held on 21 June 2023 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the CFA meeting held on 21 June 2023 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

33. Community Risk Management Plan 2024-28.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented the approach for the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-28. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 7' is filed with these minutes.

The Fire Standards Board Fire Standard for Community Risk Management Planning stated that a fire and rescue service must assess foreseeable community related risks and use the knowledge to decide how the risks would be mitigated. The planning needed to consider the use of data and business intelligence, ensure that all activities had the appropriate equality impact assessments in place and that there was suitable stakeholder and public engagement on the Plan.

The approach was to consult on the complete 'Our Plan' document, which included the hazards to communities and the main activities being undertaken to mitigate these. One particular element for public consultation related to Day Crewing Plus, particularly at Castle Donnington fire station, where the proposal was to make this day time crew only with staff and equipment from other stations being used in the evenings. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated that this was the most suitable option as it was not possible to maintain the current position. However, assurance was given that this would not result in a reduction in service delivery.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were made:

- i) The current attendance time target of 10 minutes was becoming more challenging and it was likely that this would need to be reviewed. It was stated that this was largely due to a greater number of road traffic collisions in more rural locations, which took longer for crews to reach. Roadworks and increased traffic, particularly in more urban areas, were also an issue. It was reported that the new Variable Response Vehicles were due to arrive in the coming weeks; these would have a positive impact on the CFA's commitment to climate change and this would be publicised.
- ii) A member raised a comment that fire engines often struggled to get to incidents through town centres due to vehicles being parked on the roads. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated that officers had leaflets which looked like

fixed penalty notices, and these would be placed on vehicles where there had been an issue. Assurance was given that the Service was very proactive in raising awareness in local communities and on social media of the importance in keeping areas clear. Where there was a particular issue, the Service would work with the Police to improve the situation.

- iii) The potential fire safety risks arising from festivals and the importance of raising awareness of these was highlighted. There had previously been opportunities to engage with communities but this would be reconsidered.
- iv) In relation to public consultation on the CRMP, it was agreed that there should be hard copies available in certain locations as not everyone had access to respond online. Public consultation would commence in September and the final CRMP would be presented to the CFA at its meeting in February 2024.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mr Bray CC and seconded by Mr Champion CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the following approach for public consultation be approved, which concentrates on delivering the 'Aims' of the Service which support the five Service Strategies:

- Safer Communities Strategy Aim – fewer incidents with reduced consequences
- Response Strategy Aim – respond effectively to incidents
- Finance and Resources Strategy Aim – deliver value for money quality services
- People Strategy Aim – an engaged and productive workforce
- Governance Strategy Aim – provide assurance.

#### 34. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme Update.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which provided an update on progress against the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2022-2027 and presented the Annual Equalities Report 2022-2023. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were made:

- i) The appointment of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager would provide an opportunity to review the current Equalities Scheme and how reporting could be improved. The recommendations from the HMICFRS report and independent cultural review would be reviewed and consolidated into one action plan. The Corporate Governance Committee would have oversight of this plan.
- ii) A breakdown of the current LFRS workforce showed that the number of female staff in the Service had increased. Lots of recruitment activity had taken place over recent months and it was encouraging to note that applicants were now more willing to disclose their characteristics. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer commented that the cultural report had not highlighted any significant issues within LFRS, but nevertheless the Service continued to be proactive in its approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

- iii) In response to a query around whether disability data included hidden disabilities, it was stated that this only included the information which staff chose to disclose. However, there appeared to be a greater disclosure around neurodiversity. The introduction of a health passport would assist in ensuring that people did not have to disclose their disabilities each time they applied for a different job.
- iv) The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer commented that it was necessary to have a balance between meeting the requirements of equality, diversity and inclusion against the operational needs of the Service. It would not be possible to accommodate some people with certain disabilities due to the nature of the role. As a result, people would recruited who could meet the statutory needs of the Service, even if this meant that the diversity of the workforce did not increase. Assurance was given that the entry criteria to be a Firefighter had been made as diverse as possible without compromising the necessary skills required.
- v) Work was taking place around what the Service could do as a whole to encourage equality, diversity and inclusion. A new recruitment campaign was due to commence shortly and it was hoped that the learning from reports would help with this. It was, however, acknowledged that some communities would not see being a Firefighter as a career. It was the intention to work with schools to ensure that young people had a greater understanding of the Service. Elected members also had an important role to play in promoting the Service in their local communities as a good career. Lots of work still needed to be undertaken, but it was hoped that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager would put the ambitions of the Service into practice.

The recommendations contained within the report were moved by Mr Allen CC and seconded by Mr Champion CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- a) The progress made against the EDI Action Plan over the reporting period be noted;
- b) The consolidation of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion related actions detailed in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2022-2027, HMICFRS Spotlight Report, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service HMICFRS Inspection Report and the Internal Cultural Survey Findings report be approved; and
- c) The content of the Annual Equalities Report 2022-2023 be noted.

35. Variable Response Vehicles.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which provided an update on the introduction of Variable Response Vehicles (VRVs). A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.



The introduction of VRVs aimed to enhance operational efficiency, resource allocation, and overall service delivery. A twelve month trial period was due to take place across four stations, following which feedback would be sought from officers using the VRVs. It was hoped that the introduction of VRVs would increase appliance availability and would also contribute positively to the FRS's commitment to climate change.

In response to a query, the VRVs would be utilised in as many operational scenarios as possible. However, trials would take place in certain instances, for example, flooding.

The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated that there could be savings from VRVs; these would be included in the report following the trial.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mrs Fryer CC and seconded by Councillor Barton. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

36. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority will be held on 4 October 2023 at 10.00am at County Hall, Glenfield.

10.00 - 11.15 am  
26 July 2023

CHAIRMAN

This page is intentionally left blank



Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland CFA - Corporate Governance Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday, 13 July 2023.

PRESENT

Mr. R. G. Allen CC	Mr. K. Ghattoraya CC
Mr. N. D. Bannister CC	Mr. D. J. Grimley CC
Cllr. Hemant Rae Bhatia	Cllr. S. Harvey
Mr. D. A. Gamble CC	Ms. Betty Newton CC

In attendance

Callum Faint, Chief Fire and Rescue Officer  
 Paul Weston, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer  
 Judi Beresford, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer  
 Amy Oliver, Treasurer  
 Lauren Haslam, Monitoring Officer  
 Neil Jones, Head of Internal Audit Services, Leicestershire County Council  
 Matt Davis, Audit Manager, Leicestershire County Council  
 Manjora Bisla, Finance Manager, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service  
 Matt Cane, Area Manager Response  
 Gemma Duckworth, Senior Democratic Services Officer

27. Appointment of Chairman.

It was moved by Mr N Bannister CC and seconded by Mr D Grimley CC that Mr R Allen CC be appointed Chairman of the CFA's Corporate Governance Committee for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the CFA in 2024.

**RESOLVED:**

That Mr R Allen CC be appointed Chairman of the CFA's Corporate Governance Committee for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the CFA in 2024.

Mr R Allen CC in the Chair

28. Election of Vice Chairman.

The Chairman sought nominations for the position of Vice Chairman of the CFA's Corporate Governance Committee.

It was moved by Mr Allen CC and seconded by Councillor S Harvey that Mrs. M. E. Newton CC be appointed Vice Chairman of the CFA's Corporate Governance Committee for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the CFA in 2024. There being no other nominations, the Chairman declared Mrs. M. E. Newton CC be appointed Vice Chairman of the CFA's Corporate Governance Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

That Mrs. M. E. Newton CC be appointed Vice Chairman of the CFA's Corporate Governance Committee for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the CFA in 2024.

29. Apologies for absence.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S Barton.

30. Declarations of Interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare an interest in respect of items on the agenda.

No declarations were made.

31. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items.

32. Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman made his announcements which covered the following matters:

- Paragon Fire, Wigston
- Supervisory Management Development Courses
- Networking Women in the Fire Service

33. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2023 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

34. External Audit Strategy Memorandum 2022/23.

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer which presented the Audit Strategy Memorandum for the year ended 31 March 2023. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes. The CFA's external auditor, Mazars LLP, gave a brief presentation on the findings within the Audit Strategy Memorandum.

The audit was presently expected to complete by the end of November 2023, allowing for the separate completion of the audit of the Leicestershire Local Government Pension Scheme accounts. The CFA would then be asked to approve the audited accounts at the next available meeting.

Mazars had proposed an audit fee of £35,178 – this was in line with 2021/22 fees and the national position.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mr Allen CC and seconded by Mr Bannister CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the External Audit Strategy Memorandum for the year ended 31 March 2023 be noted.

35. After the Incident Survey Annual Report 2022/23.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented the outcomes of the After the Incident Survey 2022/23. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following comments were raised:

- i) Overall, there was a very high degree of satisfaction with the Service. There was an aspiration for a higher response rate, although the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer acknowledged that officers understood why people did not wish to complete the survey. It was suggested that there could be a higher response rate if comments were asked for once a greater period of time had elapsed after an incident. However, assurance was given that where there had been a significant incident, for example a house fire, officers would return to speak to those involved at a later date.
- ii) In response to a query around whether there were any themes in the negative comments, the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated that the main issue related to excessive waiting times, but attendance times in getting to an incident was a known issue. There did not appear to be any obvious themes, but the Service continued to listen and learn from any comments received.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mr Allen CC and seconded by Mrs Newton CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the summary findings be noted.

36. Performance Monitoring April 2022 to March 2023 and April to May 2023.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented an update on the performance of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service for the period April 2022 to March 2023 and April to May 2023. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) Attention was drawn to the performance of LFRS against other Fire and Rescue Services. It was noted that in many categories, LFRS had improved its performance when compared against the 'three-year' change figures, despite the challenging weather during the summer and the increased incident and call volumes last year.
- ii) There had been an increase in the number of special service incidents attended. Road traffic collisions were at slightly higher levels compared to previous years and more suicide and suicide attempt incidents were being attended than ever before. The Service now had a greater provision of support to officers attending these incidents.

- iii) Attendance times at life risk incidents were exceeding the set target. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer acknowledged that the target (which was set by the Service itself) was very challenging and it was possible that this would need to be reconsidered in the next CRMP. A significant factor was the rural location of some of the incidents, which meant that it took longer for officers to arrive.
- iv) A query was raised around the number of malicious false fire alarm incidents. There had been an increase in the first two months of 2023/24, although it was noted that the numbers were relatively low. There was currently no identifiable trend but this would continue to be monitored. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer gave assurance that every malicious call received would be traced and action taken where possible.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mr Allen CC and seconded by Mrs Newton CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the performance of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service for the period April 2022 to March 2023 and April to May 2023 be noted.

37. Service Development Programme and 'Our Plan 2020-24' - Appendix A Tasks.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented the progress made since March 2023 in the delivery of projects within the Service Development Programme and the tasks included in Appendix A of Our Plan 2020-24. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following comments were raised:

- i) It was reported that the refurbishment of Western Station had now been completed and this would be the blueprint for future station refurbishments across Leicestershire. Arrangements were being made for members of the CFA to visit the station.
- ii) There had been an increased number of fire safety audits and home safety checks. The right people were being targeted through referral from partner organisations.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mr Allen CC and seconded by Councillor Harvey. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the progress made since March 2023 in the delivery of projects within the Service Development Programme and the tasks that are included in Our Plan 2020-24 be noted.

38. Draft Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement 2022/23.

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer which presented the draft Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 before they were submitted

to the CFA for formal approval following the external audit. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 12' is filed with these minutes.

The draft accounts were subject to ongoing review by Mazars before they conclude their audit opinion and Value for Money assessment. However, the accounts audit work could not be completed until the Leicestershire County Council Pension Fund had been audited. It was unlikely that this would be completed by 30 September 2023 which would impact the conclusion of the CFA audit. Mazars was aiming to complete the audit by the end of November. Assurance was given that this was a national issue and there would be no penalty for missing the deadline.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mr Allen CC and seconded by Mrs Newton CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the draft Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23, which may be subject to amendment following the external audit, be noted.

39. Progress Against the Internal Audit Plan 2022/23.

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer which gave an update of progress against the Internal Audit Plans for 2022/23 and 2023/24. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 13' is filed with these minutes.

In respect of the 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan, of the 14 individual pieces of work, all three prior year reports had been completed, ten 2022/23 financial year audits had been finalised and one audit had been agreed to be deferred into the 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan. Three legacy partial assurance reports containing high importance recommendations remained in the Committee's domain and a further update would be presented to the next meeting.

With regard to 2023/24, of the 18 individual pieces of work, eight prior year reports had been completed, three current year audits were at draft report stage, five were at various stages of work in progress, one current year audit had not yet started, and one was likely to be deferred with a replacement audit currently being discussed.

The recommendations contained within the report were moved by Mr Allen CC and seconded by Mr Bannister CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted, in particular that:

- a) All audits due to be completed within the financial year 2022/23 have now been finalised;
- b) Three other legacy partial assurance report ratings containing high importance recommendations remain outstanding and this has been reflected in the Head of Internal Audit Services Opinion;
- c) Work is ongoing with the Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer – Service Support – to bring more timely resolutions to these outstanding concerns;
- d) Work is progressing well with the 2023/24 audit plan; and

- e) The audit related to Learning and Development (24/10) in the 2023/24 Plan has been deferred and will be replaced with an alternative audit of the Risk Based Inspection Programme.

40. Head of Internal Audit Services Annual Report 2022/23.

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer which provided the opportunity to review the Head of Internal Audit Service Annual Report for 2022/23. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 14' is filed with these minutes.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mr Allen CC and seconded by Mrs Newton CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Head of Internal Audit Service Annual Report 2022/23 be noted.

41. Procurement and Waivers Annual Report.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which provided details of procurement related activity and compliance for the financial year 2022/23. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 15' is filed with these minutes.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mr Allen CC and seconded by Mr Grimley CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the summary of procurement activity in 2022/23, as required by Rule 19.2 of the Contracts Procedure Rules 2018, be noted.

42. Staff Engagement and Culture Survey - Action Plan.

The Committee received a presentation from the Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer – Service Support – on the Staff Engagement and Culture Survey – Action Plan. A copy of the presentation is filed with these minutes.

A cultural survey of the Service had been undertaken in October 2022 and although the findings had been generally positive, the Service was not complacent and had sought to undertake further work. There were some short term actions and mid/long term plans:

- To develop communications, including engagement
- Leadership and Management development programmes
- To review and improve processes, including around promotions
- To update the current people related policies and procedures
- To undertake a review of culture and develop a single 'Service Plan'.

A range of work was already underway around communication and staff engagement, the Leadership development programme, holding focus groups, reviewing current promotion success, commissioning an independent review of culture in the Service, seeking independent advice and guidance to redesign processes, and the procurement of an external confidential reporting line.



A member commented that frontline officers could often feel remote from management. In response to a query about improving this, the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer reported that 'back to the floor days' had been restarted, where senior management visited fire stations and officers had the opportunity to raise any issues. As a commitment to engagement, a scheme had also been launched which gave operational staff the chance to shadow the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer for a day.

In order to fully embed the recommendations from the survey and Spotlight report, a formal action plan would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

The recommendation to note the presentation was moved by Mr Allen CC and seconded by Mrs Newton CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the presentation be noted.

43. Sickness Analysis April 2022 to March 2023.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer on sickness analysis for Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service for the period April 2022 to March 2023. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 17' is filed with these minutes.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mr Allen CC and seconded by Councillor Harvey. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the sickness analysis for the period April 2022 to March 2023 be noted.

44. Governance Update.

The Committee considered a report of the Monitoring Officer which provided an update and assurance on governance and ethical issues. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 18' is filed with these minutes.

Attention was drawn to Appendix B of the report – Politically Restricted Posts. It was noted that there had been some personnel changes to the list which had been circulated:

Area Manager Community Risk – Ben Bee  
Area Manager Service Assurance (temporary) – Chris Moir  
Area Manager People and Organisational Development – Karl Bowden

The constitution would be updated to reflect these changes.

The Monitoring Officer highlighted future arrangements, in particular in relation to local audit requirements. The Government was encouraging Fire and Rescue Authorities to establish arrangements in line with CIPFA's Audit Committees to include co-opted independent members, although this had not yet been mandated. Both Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council had recently recruited independent members to sit on each of their respective committees with audit functions.

The options available to the CFA were:

- a) To identify if two (one from each local authority) of the independent members appointed by Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council would be willing and available to sit on the CFA Corporate Governance Committee in rotation;
- b) To undertake a separate recruitment exercise to appoint independent members;
- c) To await the introduction of the legislation to mandate the appointment of independent members.

The Committee agreed that Option A was preferred and the Monitoring Officer would contact the independent members appointed by Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council. It would be necessary to amend the constitution to revise the Terms of Reference for this Committee to allow the Independent Member appointment.

The recommendations contained within the report were moved by Mr Allen CC and seconded by Mrs Newton CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- a) The update provided on governance and ethical issues be noted;
- b) The Committee confirms it wishes to appoint independent members of the Committee from those already appointed by Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council (option A);
- c) The Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy be approved and the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make any minor amendments to the Policy as may be required following consultation with the recognised Trade Unions; and
- d) The CFA be asked to approve the changes to the Constitution which flow from the adoption of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy.

45. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the CFA Corporate Governance Committee will be held on 20 September 2023 at 2.00pm.

10.00 - 11.55 am  
13 July 2023

CHAIRMAN

**Status of Report: Public**

**Meeting: Combined Fire Authority**

**Date: 4 October 2023**

**Subject: Service Delivery Update**

**Report by: Callum Faint – Chief Fire and Rescue Officer**

**Author: Paul Weston – Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer**

**For: Information**

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of the report is to present the Service Delivery Performance Report for the first quarter of the fiscal year 2023/24, covering the period from April to June.

### **Recommendation**

2. The CFA is requested to note the contents of this report.

### **Executive Summary**

3. This report sets out the progress, or otherwise, that has been achieved in relation to Service Delivery and provides an overview of the previous year April 2023 – June 2023 inclusive. The subject matter areas that are covered in this report include:
  - Prevention;
  - Protection;
  - Response;
  - Performance;
  - Incidents of note.

### **Background**

#### Prevention

4. Between April and June, a total of 4,034 successful home safety checks were completed, this is compared to 3,515 the previous year and 1,141 more than the 3-yearly average for the same period.
5. During the first quarter, the Service also installed 1,426 alarms, comprising of 1,354 standard smoke alarms, 29 Carbon Monoxide alarms and 43 smoke alarms for those individuals with hearing impairments.
6. The intent of the Home Safety Check (HSC) is to identify potential hazards, educate homeowners or occupants about fire safety measures, and provide recommendations to minimise the risk of fires and enhance overall fire safety.

7. The Service utilises a risk matrix to identify those who are at a greater risk of fire as well as working with partner agencies to ensure that the most vulnerable members of the community are targeted prioritised.
8. Of the 4,034 successful home safety checks, 1,006 visits were made via partner referrals including:
  - o East Midlands Ambulance Service;
  - o Leicestershire Police;
  - o Adult Social Services;
  - o First Contact Plus.

### Protection

9. Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service is responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
10. The order applies to all non-domestic premises, including common areas of residential buildings and aims to simplify and consolidate fire safety regulations into a single piece of legislation. It places the responsibility for fire safety on the "responsible person," who is typically the employer, owner, or occupier of the premises. This person is required to carry out a fire risk assessment, implement appropriate fire safety measures, and maintain them.
11. In order to fulfil its duty to manage risk within the communities it serves, Fire Protection Team staff will carry out fire safety audits on premises that the legislation applies to as part of a risk-based inspection program (RBIP).
12. Fire Safety Inspectors completed 339 Fire Safety Audits (FSAs), of which 293 were within the risk-based inspection program for the first quarter. This is compared to 314 the previous year.
13. Audit Outcomes: Among the 339 Fire Safety Audits that were carried out, findings have indicated that 52 of these audits have brought to light various fire safety concerns that require attention. In response to these concerns, prohibition notices have been served in two instances to ensure compliance with fire safety regulations.
14. Fire Safety Planning and Consultation: Fire protection teams assisted in developing and reviewing 146 building regulations. They have provided guidance on emergency evacuation procedures, fire safety protocols, and the design and placement of fire safety equipment.
15. Fire Safety Enquiries: Fire Protection teams have also provided consultation services to businesses, organisations, and individuals seeking advice on fire safety measures. In the first quarter of 2023/24, Fire Safety advisors have addressed 94 fire safety concerns raised.

### Response

16. The Service attended 2,320 incidents within the first quarter, of which, 902 (38%) were non-fire incidents, 781 (34%) were fire false alarms and 637 (28%)

were fire incidents. This is an increase of 221 more incidents than the 3-yearly average of 2,099.

17. Between April and June inclusive, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue has attended twelve fatalities at a variety of incidents, to include:
  - a) 1 x Fire related;
  - b) 2 x Road Traffic Collisions;
  - c) 9 x Special Services (*assisting partner agencies/gaining entry/suicide*).
  
18. In order to guarantee that the Service is well-equipped to handle the diverse range of incidents it responds to, both Whole-time and On-Call personnel engage in training drills and exercises throughout the year. These exercises encompass:
  - Service exercises for high-rise and basement fires;
  - Over the border exercises with neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services;
  - Multi-agency exercises;
  - District Exercises testing the risk plans of the building.

### Performance

19. Due to an issue within the Systel database, the Service is currently facing challenges in generating reports related to the availability status of both full-time and on-call appliances. However, it is important to note that this database issue does not affect the Service's ability to mobilise appliances promptly when needed. The Service is actively working to resolve this problem to ensure seamless reporting as it moves forward.
  
20. Attendance times to life critical incidents was above the 10-minute attendance time at 11 minutes 25 seconds. This is broken down into three distinct areas; call handling time (2 minutes 17 seconds), appliance mobilising time (1 minute 28 seconds) and drive time (7 minutes 40 seconds).
  
21. By analysing incident data for those occasions where the Service falls outside its 10-minute target, it is apparent that response times for attending road traffic collision incidents are being adversely affected, particularly in Rutland, Melton, and Harborough Districts. This is mainly due to the rural nature of these areas and the extended travel distances involved.

### Incidents of Note

22. The following are incidents of note during the first quarter 2023/24:

#### **April**

Building Fire, Leicester – 6 appliances plus specials  
Cause – Accidental ignition

Building Fire, Leicester – 6 appliances plus specials  
Cause – Accidental ignition

**May**

Fire Fatality, Wigston – 2 appliances  
Cause – Suicide by deliberate ignition

High Rise Fire, Leicester – 5 appliances  
Cause – Accidental ignition

**June**

Boat Fire, Loughborough – 5 appliances plus specials  
Cause – Accidental ignition

Recycling Factory, Leicester – 8 appliances plus specials  
Cause – Accidental Ignition

**Report Implications/Impact**23. Legal (including crime and disorder)

None identified at this time.

24. Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)

There are no direct financial implications from this report.

25. Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of Service delivery)

None arising from this report.

26. Staff, Service Users and Stakeholders (including the Equality Impact Assessment)

None identified at this time.

27. Environmental

None identified at this time.

28. Impact upon “Our Plan” Objectives

This report sets out relevant developments and performance achieved by the Service Delivery Directorate in pursuance of the objectives set out in Our Plan.

**Officers to Contact**

Callum Faint – Chief Fire and Rescue Officer  
[callum.faint@leics-fire.gov.uk](mailto:callum.faint@leics-fire.gov.uk)  
07800 709922

Paul Weston – Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer  
[paul.weston@leics-fire.gov.uk](mailto:paul.weston@leics-fire.gov.uk)  
07966 111253

**Status of Report: Public**

**Meeting: Combined Fire Authority**

**Date: 4 October 2023**

**Subject: Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Home Office Fire Statistics 2022-23**

**Report by: Chief Fire and Rescue Officer**

**Author: Mark Wilkinson, Performance Co-ordinator**

**For: Information Only**

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) with an update on the performance of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) compared with all Fire and Rescue Authorities in England for the period 2022/23.

### **Recommendation**

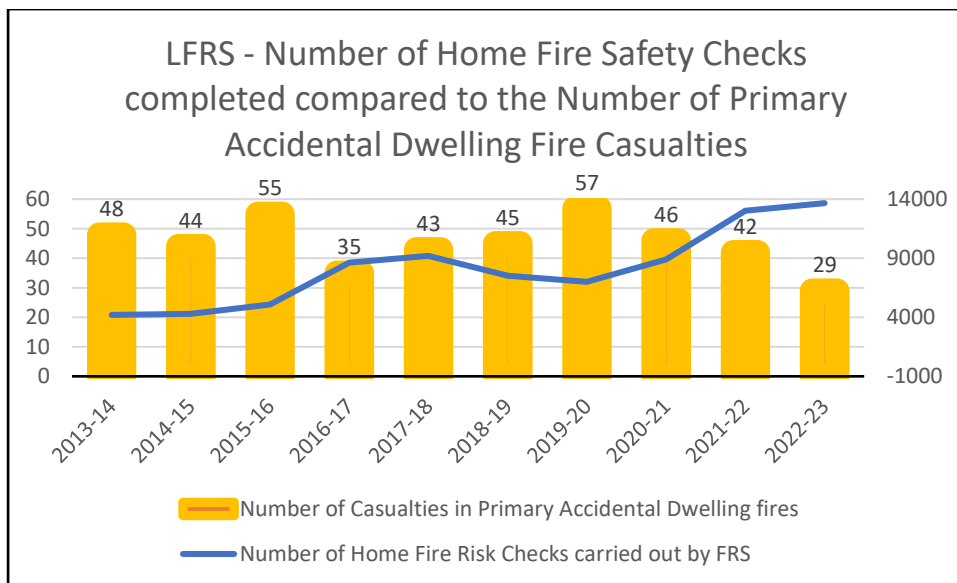
2. The CFA is asked to note the performance of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service for the period 2022/23.

### **Executive Summary**

3. The analysis provided shows the performance of LFRS compared against other services in England in 2022/23. This includes total incidents, Home Safety Checks (HSCs), and Fire Safety Audits. A more comprehensive report is available on request which compares the Home Office Fire Statistics for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England - 2014/15 to 2022/23.
4. The total number of incidents in England increased from 577,147 in 2021/22 to 622,173 in 2022/23 which is a 7.80% increase. This is the largest number of incidents in a year in England since 2010/11, when there were 647,360 incidents attended.
5. LFRS total incidents increased from 8,264 in 2021/22 to 9,445 in 2022/23 (an increase of 14.29%). Only Suffolk, South Yorkshire, Norfolk, and Warwickshire saw bigger percentage increases in incidents from 2021/22. There were only five services that experienced a reduction in the number of incidents for the same period (Isle of Scilly, Lincolnshire, Cornwall, East Sussex, and Northumberland).
6. These increases are predominantly driven by increases in secondary fires following the hot, dry summer in 2022. Secondary fire incidents in England increased from 86,527 in 2021/22 to 109,444 in 2022/23, which is a 26.49% increase.

7. LFRS secondary fire incidents increased from 861 in 2021/22 to 1,517 in 2022/23, which is an increase of 76.19%. Only Cumbria saw decreases in secondary fire incidents and only Norfolk and Warwickshire saw bigger increases.
8. Overall England last year saw the most incidents attended by Fire and Rescue Services for over 10 years, in what was a particularly challenging year. LFRS had the fifth highest increase in incidents out of 44 services, despite only ranking 25th largest out of 44 services in terms of headcount.
9. The Home Office splits Services into three categories: predominantly urban, predominantly rural, and significantly rural. LFRS is grouped with 16 other services as significantly rural. LFRS had the second largest increase in incidents when compared against the other 16 other services in this category.
10. The total number of HSCs in England increased from 440,624 in 2021/22 to 537,081 in 2022/23. 2021/22 was affected by Covid restrictions, since then numbers have increased as expected, but still not to the pre-pandemic levels (588,666 completed in 2019/20).
11. LFRS increased from 12,939 in 2021/22 to 13,659 in 2022/23. This increase was despite what was the Service's busiest year for incidents since 2009/10.
12. LFRS compares extremely well when benchmarked against all Services nationally. The Service is ranked seventh highest out of 44 services for the number of HSCs completed per member of staff. Based purely on the number of HSCs undertaken, LFRS is ranked 15th highest out of 44 services.
13. In 2014/15, LFRS completed 5.26 HSCs per member of staff, compared to 18.48 in 2022/23. That equates to a 251% increase and places the Service in the top three in England for the largest percentage increase per member of staff over that period.
14. When compared against significantly rural services, the Service is ranked second highest out of 17 services for HSCs completed per member of staff, and fourth of 17 based purely on numbers.
15. Fire and Rescue Services undertake domestic fire prevention activities, which provide information and advice to households to encourage better fire safety behaviour. The education is designed to prevent the occurrence of a fire and reduce the risk of serious injury or death in a fire. One measure to see if completing more HSCs is working is to look at how many casualties are occurring in primary accidental dwelling fires. This can be a little unpredictable as the numbers have come down substantially and several casualties can occur in one incident; however the graph below shows the increase in HSCs corresponding with the lowest number of casualties recorded in 2022/23.





16. The total number of fire safety audits in England increased from 48,018 in 2021/22 to 50,424 in 2022/23. LFRS increased from 877 in 2021/22 to 1,217 in 2022/23. In terms of number completed LFRS was ranked twelfth out of 44 services in 2022/23. When compared against significantly rural services LFRS is ranked fourth highest out of the 17 services.

### Background

17. The full set of fire statistics releases, tables and guidance are national statistics and are available publicly on the Government Collections Fire Statistics website.
18. The statistics provided are sourced from the Home Office Operational Statistics Data Collections, the figures are supplied by fire and rescue authorities twice a year.

### Report Implications/Impact

19. Legal (including crime and disorder)

The timely production of relevant performance information and the achievement of continuous improvement is a statutory duty as described in the Local Government Act 1999.

20. Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

21. Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of service delivery)

Effective performance management including the reporting, monitoring and analysis of performance indicators enables proactive control measures to be implemented to reduce risk and demand.

22. Staff, Service Users and Stakeholders (including the Equality Impact Assessment)

Any identified action plans will be developed and delivered by relevant managers and staff.

23. Environmental

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

24. Impact upon Our Plan Objectives

Active monitoring of performance indicators allows the Service to assess the effectiveness of delivering corporate objectives, influencing changes to strategies and policies where necessary. It also meets the Governance Strategy outcomes of well-informed communities and well-informed staff and the objective of 'monitor and report on our performance so everyone knows how we are doing'.

### **Background Papers**

None.

### **Appendix**

None

### **Officers to Contact**

Callum Faint, Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

[callum.faint@leics-fire.gov.uk](mailto:callum.faint@leics-fire.gov.uk)

0116 2105555

Mark Wilkinson, Performance Co-ordinator

[mark.wilkinson@leics-fire.gov.uk](mailto:mark.wilkinson@leics-fire.gov.uk)

0116 2105555

**Status of Report: Public**

**Meeting: Combined Fire Authority**

**Date: 4 October 2023**

**Subject: Members' Allowance Scheme**

**Report by: The Solicitor and Monitoring Officer**

**Author: Lauren Haslam**

**For: Decision**

### **Purpose**

1. This report presents an update in relation to the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority's Members' Allowance Scheme and proposals for a voluntary Independent Remuneration Panel to review the allowances.

### **Recommendation**

2. It is recommended that:
  - a) the Members' Allowance Schemes of the constituent members of the Combined Fire Authority be noted;
  - b) an Independent Remuneration Panel be constituted to review the arrangement for the CFA Members' Allowances to include:
    - i) Members' allowances rates and the arrangement for indexation;
    - ii) Roles which should receive the Special Responsibility Allowances;
    - iii) Travel and Subsistence Allowances.

### **Executive Summary**

3. At its meeting on 8 February 2023 the existing Member Allowance scheme (as approved by the Combined Fire Authority in December 2021), following review by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), was approved without change for 2022/23. This followed the final pay offer to local government employees made in July 2022 by the National Joint Council (NJC) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Unusually that offer was for a flat rate increase on all spinal column points of £1,925, to be implemented from 1 April 2022 (i.e. payment to be backdated to that date). That offer was accepted by the recognised Trade Unions on 2 November 2022.
4. The impact of applying the flat rate award to the CFA Member Allowances would have resulted in a disproportionate uplift in allowances and it was also

noted that the three constituent members of the CFA had resolved to make no change or increase in their Member Allowance scheme for 2022/23.

5. The CFA Member Allowance scheme has therefore remained the same as when agreed with effect 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and is attached as Appendix A. It is timely to review the scheme.

## **Background**

### The Regulations

6. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require the CFA to make a scheme which shall provide for the payment of the basic allowance in respect of each year to each member of the CFA and to pay that allowance only in accordance with that approved scheme.
7. The payment of allowances to members is governed by the Local Government (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003/1021. Briefly, these regulations cover the following:-
  - a) The amount of Basic Allowance which should be paid to Members;
  - b) The responsibilities or duties which roles should receive Special Responsibility Allowances and the amount of such allowances;
  - c) The amount of Child Care and Dependants Carers Allowances;
  - d) Travelling and Subsistence Allowances;
  - e) Independent and Co-opted members' allowances.
8. The Regulations contain a provision to increase allowances on an annual basis by reference to an index for no longer than a period of four years and states in Part 3 – 10 (4 and 5) that:
  - (4) A scheme may make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances by reference to such index as may be specified by the authority and where the only change made to a scheme in any year is that effected by such annual adjustment in accordance with such index the scheme shall be deemed not to have been amended.
  - (5) Where an authority has regard to an index for the purpose of annual adjustment of allowances it must not rely on that index for longer than a period of four years before seeking a further recommendation from the independent remuneration panel established in respect of that authority on the application of an index to its scheme.
9. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003/1021 require that the members basic allowance, special responsibility allowance and travel and subsistence allowance be set out in a scheme.

10. The constituent councils of the CFA may not make or amend their schemes unless they have first had regard to the recommendations made in relation to the issue by an Independent Remuneration Panel. This does not however apply to the CFA, who is instead required to have regard to the recommendations made by any Independent Remuneration Panels in relation to the local authorities which nominate members to the Fire and Rescue Authority. In the case of the CFA, therefore, this is Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council and Rutland Council. The Scheme in all constituent authorities had been historically index-linked to the NJC Pay Award.
11. Although there is no statutory requirement to have an Independent Remuneration Panel for CFA allowances, any review by the IRP may be regarded as simply reflective of good practice and helpful in achieving consistency with constituent member schemes.

CFA constituent Member Allowance schemes from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023

12. The position of the CFA constituent members is as follows:

Constituent Member	Position
Leicestershire County Council	IRP recommended to increase allowances by 3.88% from 1st April 2023 which was agreed and implemented following its Full Council meeting on 5 July 2023.
Leicester City Council	No change to allowances for 2023/34 . IRP to be established to review allowances from 2024/25.
Rutland County Council	Members' allowances to be index linked to the JNC award for Chief Officers with effect from 9 <sup>th</sup> May 2023. An uplift of 3.5% was therefore applied on 9 <sup>th</sup> May.

13. As there is no consistent approach between the three constituent members it is recommended that the issue be referred to an Independent Remuneration Panel on a voluntary basis and for the Panel to report its recommendation to the CFA.
14. It is recommended that (as in 2021 when the issue was last reviewed) the Panel comprise the Chairmen of the IRPs in each of the constituent authorities of the CFA. These are:
- Michael Pearson, Chairman of the Leicestershire IRP
  - Declan Hall, Chairman of the Leicester City IRP
  - John Cade, Chairman of the Rutland IRP

Subject to the CFA approval, the proposed IRP members referred to above have been consulted and have indicated that they are willing to undertake the review if that is the CFA's decision on this issue. The Panel is content to

receive any comments that members of the CFA may wish to make on the scope of the review and generally. Details will be provided on how to comment if the CFA resolves to proceed with a review as recommended.

## **Report Implications/Impact**

### Legal (including crime and disorder)

15. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003/1021 require that the members basic allowance, special responsibility allowance and travel and subsistence allowance be set out in a scheme. There is no statutory requirement to have an Independent Remuneration Panel for CFA allowances and any review therefore is simply reflective of good practice and to achieve consistency with constituent member schemes.

### Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)

16. The costs associated with the current Members' Allowances scheme are included in the budgeting for the CFA.

### Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of service delivery)

17. There are no risk implications arising from this report.

### Staff, Service Users and Stakeholders (including the Equality Impact Assessment)

18. There are no Staff, Service Users, Stakeholders or equality implications arising from this report.

### Environmental

19. There are no environmental impacts arising from this report.

### Impact upon "Our Plan" Objectives

20. There is no direct impact on "Our Plan" arising from this report.

## **Appendix**

CFA Allowance Scheme.

## **Background Papers**

Report to the CFA September 2022 – Review of Members' Allowances  
<https://leics-fire.gov.uk/your-fire-service/decision-making/cfa-meetings/>

Report to the CFA February 2023 - Review of Members' Allowances

<https://leics-fire.gov.uk/2023/02/combined-fire-authority-meeting-8th-february/>

**Officer to Contact**

Lauren Haslam

[Lauren.Haslam@leics.gov.uk](mailto:Lauren.Haslam@leics.gov.uk)

0116 305 6240

This page is intentionally left blank



**Members' Allowances 2021/22**

In accordance with the agreed arrangements for indexation shown in paragraph (e) below, the revised Scheme of Members' Allowances, is with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 as follows:

- a. The basic allowance for Members serving on the Authority is **£3,309**
- b. Subsistence and travelling expenses are paid in line with those received by Officers of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service but also to include a rate for subsistence incurred in an overnight stay at the rate allowed for dinner for Members of the Leicestershire County Council and to reflect future increases in this rate automatically.
- c. Special responsibility allowances are paid annually in addition to the basic allowances as follows:
  - (i) Chairman - **£9,965**
  - (ii) Vice-Chairman – **£3,350**
  - (iii) Group Leaders (not being Chairman or Vice-Chairman) - **£1,919**
  - (iv) Chairs of Committees - **£1,919**
- d. No member to receive more than one Special Responsibility Allowance.
- e. Indexation – Basic, Special Responsibility and Independent Members' Allowances to be increased from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 onwards annually by the pay award agreed by National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services or in default of an agreement the award set by the employers' side.
- f. Child Care and Dependent Carers' Allowance should be claimed from the Member's appointing County or District Council.

This page is intentionally left blank

**Status of Report: Public**

**Meeting: Combined Fire Authority**

**Date: 4 October 2023**

**Subject: Appointment of Independent Members of the Corporate Governance Committee**

**Report by: The Monitoring Officer**

**Author: Lauren Haslam, Monitoring Officer**

**For: Decision**

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the approval of the Combined Fire Authority to the appointment of Independent Members to the Corporate Governance Committee.

### **Recommendation**

2. It is recommended that:
  - a. Mr G. Grimes, Mr A. Maxfield and Mr B.Bhakri be appointed to serve as Independent Members of the Corporate Governance Committee up to the Annual Meeting of the Combined Fire Authority in 2027 noting that Mr G. Grimes and Mr A. Maxfield will serve, in rotation, consecutive two-year terms as follows:
    - i. From appointment to the date of the Annual Meeting in May 2025 Mr A. Maxfield; and
    - ii. From the date of the Annual Meeting in May 2025 to the date of the Annual Meeting in May 2027 Mr G. Grimes.
  - b. The Terms of Reference of the Corporate Governance Committee, as set out in the Constitution of the Combined Fire Authority, be revised as set out in paragraph 12 below to reflect these appointments.

### **Executive Summary**

3. The appointment of Independent Members to the Corporate Governance Committee strengthens the governance framework and is compliant with best practice in local audit arrangements.

### **Background**

4. As part of the government's response to recommendations from '*The Independent review into the oversight of local audit and the transparency of local authority financial reporting*', (the Redmond Review), it is intended that

legislation will be enacted to make audit committees mandatory in the future and that there be a statutory requirement for FRA Audit committees to have at least one independent member as part of local audit reforms. The Corporate Governance Committee performs the functions of the audit committee for the CFA. At present, the timescale for the introduction of the relevant legislation is not clear.

5. In the interim, the government is encouraging FRAs (as well as LAs) to establish arrangements in line with CIPFA's Audit Committees: practical guidance for local authorities and police which was revised in 2022. In its revised position statement issued in May 2022 CIPFA advised:-

*'The audit committees of local authorities should include co-opted independent members in accordance with the appropriate legislation. Where there is no legislative direction to include co-opted independent members, CIPFA recommends that each authority audit committee should include at least two co-opted independent members to provide appropriate technical expertise.'*

6. This is intended to supplement the knowledge and experience of elected members in specific areas such as finance and audit, provide continuity outside the political cycle (this being of particular importance where members of the committee can change annually or because of elections) and to help achieve a non-political focus on governance, risk and control matters.
7. Both the Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council have recently recruited Independent Members (one in the case of the City Council and two in the case of the County Council) to sit on each of their respective committees with audit functions. Rutland County Council doesn't have an Independent Member on its Audit and Risk Committee.

### **Consideration by the Corporate Governance Committee**

8. At its meeting on 13 July 2023, the Corporate Governance Committee considered a number of options in relation to this issue and resolved to identify if two (one from each local authority) of the Independent Members appointed by Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council would be willing and available to sit on the CFA Corporate Governance Committee in rotation. This was considered preferable to undertaking a separate recruitment exercise or awaiting the introduction of the legislation to mandate the appointment of independent members.

### **The Independent Members**

9. The Independent members appointed by the relevant local authorities are:
  - (a) Leicestershire County Council
    - i. Mr G. Grimes

Mr Grimes is a former civil servant having specialised in operational management, corporate governance and change management and process re-engineering at both an operational and strategic level. Since the introduction of the revised standards regime following the 2011 Localism Act, he has also been appointed (and reappointed in most cases) as an independent person for 11 authorities in Leicestershire, Rutland and Lincolnshire.

ii. Mr A.Maxfield

Mr Maxfield is an experienced governance professional across public and private sector settings. He is currently Head of Governance and Assurance at the Manufacturing Technology Centre, setting corporate policy and providing advice on all matters of governance.

(b) Leicester City Council

Mr Bhakri is a Chartered Accountant and holds the role of Director of Finance and Resources at the National Space Centre . He has previous experience at a senior level with the Parliamentary and Health services Ombudsman and Nottingham City Council. He is independent member on the audit committee of the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board and Treasurer of a charity (Care after combat).

10. All three proposed Independent Members have been through a recruitment process as part of the appointment by the respective LAs referred to above. Since the County Council has two Independent Members and both have expressed an interest in sitting on the Corporate Governance Committee for the CFA, it is proposed that the County Council Independent Members each serve for a consecutive two-year term of office.
11. Independent Members are non-elected representatives that will not be able to vote on matters like elected members of the Committee but will be part of the Committee in an advisory and consultative capacity. They have been recruited based on the suitability of their qualifications and experience in the area of audit and/or governance to provide:
  - Specialist knowledge and insight to the workings and deliberations of the committee;
  - An effective, independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework;
  - An independent review of the Council's financial and non-financial performance;
  - Independent challenge to, and assurance over, the Council's internal control framework and wider governance processes.

## **The Constitution**

12. The appointment of the Independent Members will require an amendment to the Constitution as follows:

Current Article 5 –

5.1. Membership of the committee shall be determined by the CFA.

Proposed Article 5

5.1 Membership of the committee shall be determined by the CFA and shall include up to two Independent Members who shall be non-voting co-optees.

**Report Implications/Impact**

12. Legal (including crime and disorder)

The appointment of independent members reflects best practice. By virtue of section 13 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 members of Committees who are not themselves Elected Members of the Council shall be non-voting.

13. Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)

None.

14. Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of service delivery)

The role of the independent member will enhance the controls and measures which apply to the CFA to manage its risk in the areas identified.

15. Staff, Service Users and Stakeholders (including the Equality Impact Assessment)

None.

16. Environmental

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

17. Impact upon “Our Plan” Objectives

The CFA is responsible for delivering an effective fire and rescue service to Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and to provide clear leadership for residents and communities. The governance and ethical measures in place provide assurance that the Service operates with transparency and accountability and will be enhanced by the appointment of the Independent Members .

## Background Papers

<https://leics-fire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/18.-governance-update.pdf>

<https://www.cipfa.org/services/support-for-audit-committees>

## Appendices

None.

## Officers to Contact

Lauren Haslam  
Monitoring Officer  
[Lauren.haslam@leics.gov.uk](mailto:Lauren.haslam@leics.gov.uk)  
0116 305 6240

Neil Jones, Head of Internal Audit and Assurance Service,  
Leicestershire County Council  
[neil.jones@leics.gov.uk](mailto:neil.jones@leics.gov.uk)  
0116 305 7629

This page is intentionally left blank



By virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 10 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank