

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

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

**Leicestershire County Council**

Mr. Nicholas Rushton CC  
Mr. Neil Bannister CC  
Mr. Richard Allen CC  
Mr. Kamal Ghattoraya CC  
Mr. Barry Champion CC  
Mr. Stuart Bray CC

Mr. John Coxon CC  
Mr. Bertie Harrison-Rushton CC  
Ms Betty Newton CC  
Mr. Daniel Grimley CC  
Mr. Dean Gamble CC

**Leicester City Council**

Councillor Susan Barton  
Councillor Abdul Osman

Councillor Melissa March

**Rutland Council**

Councillor Samantha Harvey

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 **MONDAY 24 JUNE 2024** at **10.00am** at **County Hall, Glenfield, LE3 8RA** for the transaction of business set out on the attached Agenda.



**Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service**

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Follow @LeicsFireRescue



Yours Faithfully



Lauren Haslam  
Monitoring Officer



**Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service**

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

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# LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

*Date/Time*            **Monday, 24 June 2024 at 10.00 am**

*Location*            **Sparkenhoe Committee Room, County Hall, Glenfield, LE3 8RA**

*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. Election of Chairman.		
2. Election of Vice Chairman.		
3. Apologies for absence.		
4. To receive declarations by members of interests in respect of items on this Agenda.		
5. To advise of any other items which the Chair has decided to take as urgent.		
6. Chairman's Announcements.		
7. Public Participation/ CFA Rules of Procedure Rule 9 - Member Questions.		
8. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Combined Fire Authority held on 14 February 2024.		(Pages 5 - 12)
9. Schedule of Nominations and Appointments for the Municipal Year 2024/25.	The Solicitor and Monitoring Officer	(Pages 13 - 16)
10. Service Delivery Update.	The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer	(Pages 17 - 22)
11. Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service - Strategic Workforce Plan.	The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer	(Pages 23 - 42)
12. External Audit - Annual Report for the Year Ending 31 March 2023.	The Treasurer	(Pages 43 - 72)

13. Urgent items.

14. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority will be held on 24 July 2024 at 10am at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters.

15. Exclusion of the Press and Public.

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

- Appointment Process – Head of Corporate Financial Services/Treasurer (Section 112 Officer)
- Mobile Telephone Masts on Service Property
- Employment Tribunal Outcome
- People Programme of Work and Equalities Plan 2024-27

(Exempt under Paragraphs 1, 3 and 10 of Schedule 12A).

16.	Appointment Process - Head of Corporate Financial Services/Treasurer (Section 112 Officer).	The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer	(Pages 73 - 78)
17.	Mobile Telephone Masts on Service Property.	The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer	(Pages 79 - 94)
18.	Employment Tribunal Outcome.	The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer	(Pages 95 - 100)
19.	People Programme of Work and Equalities Plan 2024-27.	The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer	(Pages 101 - 108)



Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 14 February 2024.

PRESENT

Mr. N. J. Rushton CC (in the Chair)

Mr. R. G. Allen CC	Mr. D. A. Gamble CC
Mr. N. D. Bannister CC	Mr. K. Ghattoraya CC
Cllr. S. Barton	Mr. D. J. Grimley CC
Cllr. Hemant Rae Bhatia	Mr. B. Harrison-Rushton CC
Mr. B. Champion CC	Cllr. S. Harvey
Mr. J. G. Coxon CC	Ms. Betty Newton CC
Cllr. M. March	

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, Solicitor and Monitoring Officer  
 Katerina Herrgott-Penter, Finance Manager, LFRS  
 Gemma Duckworth, Senior Democratic Services Officer

65. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Mr. S. Bray CC.

66. 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.

67. Urgent Items.

The Chairman reported that there would be one urgent item to receive an update from the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer on two serious incidents which Firefighters had recently had to attend. Due to the sensitive nature of these incidents, it was agreed that these would be discussed as an exempt update at the end of the meeting.

68. 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:

- Variable Response Vehicles
- Flooding across Leicestershire

- Digital Transformation Project
- New Member of Staff

The CFA wished to record its thanks to Jane Moore, Director of Children and Family Services at Leicestershire County Council, who led the Local Resilience Forum response to the flooding across Leicestershire.

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

It was reported that no questions had been received.

70. Minutes.

The minutes of the CFA meeting held on 29 November 2023 were considered.

It was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Mrs. M. E. Newton CC that the minutes of the CFA meeting held on 29 November 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 29 November 2023 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

71. Budget Strategy 2024/25 to 2026/27.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer and the Treasurer which sought approval of the budget for 2024/25, and the proposed budget strategy and capital programme for the period to 2026/27. The formal technical resolution was presented at the meeting for approval. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 7', is filed with these minutes.

The Treasurer reported that, whilst a balanced revenue budget could be set for 2024/25, the medium term outlook was difficult, partly due to service growth which had been included in the budget. This principally arose from the dismantling of the Day Crewing Plus system and the implementation of the new mobilisation system. It was anticipated that reserves would need to be used to support the budget in 2025/26 and 2026/27. There would be a significant transformation and efficiency programme over the next 18 months.

A three year capital programme was proposed for Fleet, ICT and Equipment, with a one year programme for estates. A revised estates strategy plan was currently being produced and would be presented to the CFA later in the year. Borrowing to fund the long-term estates strategy plan would be considered as part of this.

The CFA was reminded that the Authority's Council Tax remained amongst the lowest of all Combined Fire Authorities, even after the £5 increase at Council Tax Band D. Following the final local government finance settlement for 2024/25, FRAs could not increase Band D taxes by 3% or more in 2024/25 without a referendum. It was proposed to set the full increase of just less than 3% in order to make the financial position more sustainable.

The CFA had a number of earmarked reserves, including to fund the future capital programme of £10.8m and the budget strategy reserve of £1.3m.

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

**RESOLVED:**

- a) That the budget for 2024/25, and the budget strategy described in the report be approved, subject to changes which reflect final rates figures notified by billing authorities, as now reported by the Treasurer (and which are reflected in this resolution);
- b) To note that the final position is now showing a budget surplus of £161,000 following the notification of increased rates estimates for 2024/25 and a council tax collection surplus from billing authorities. It is proposed that this overall surplus be added to the Capital Fund in 2024/25;
- c) That the capital programme described at paragraphs 23-30 be approved, and the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer be authorised to commit expenditure on schemes;
- d) To note that no comments have been received from stakeholders on the draft budget;
- e) To note that the aggregate of the taxbases communicated by billing authorities for 2024/25 is 344,283.88. [Item T in the formula in Section 42B of the Act];
- f) To agree the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Section 42A and Section 42B of the Act:
  - (i) £51,142,229 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 42A(2) of the Act;
  - (ii) £23,030,486 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 42A(3) of the Act;
  - (iii) £28,111,743 being the amount by which (a) above exceeds (b) above, calculated by the Authority in accordance with Section 42A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax Requirement for the year. [Item R in the formula in Section 42B of the Act];
  - (iv) £81.6528 being the amount at (c) above (Item R) divided by the amount at 2.5 above (Item T), calculated by the Authority in accordance with Section 42B of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year;
- g) To agree that the Authority, in accordance with section 40 of the Act, issues precepts to each billing authority stating:-
  - (i) the amounts shown in the appendix to this resolution as the tax payable for each band;
  - (ii) the amounts shown in the appendix as the precept payable by each authority;

- h) To note the view of the Treasurer that reserves are adequate during 2024/25, and that estimates used to prepare the budget are robust;
- i) To note the medium-term financial outlook and forecasts presented at Appendix Six, and the financial challenges ahead;
- j) To approve the treasury strategy and prudential indicators described in paragraphs 60-62 of the report, and Appendices 3 and 4, including that the new upper threshold for locally held bank accounts shall take immediate effect;
- k) To approve the proposed capital strategy described in paragraphs 63-65 of the report and Appendix 4, and confirm that the CFA would not wish to undertake commercial investment;
- l) To note the equality implications arising from the budget, as described at paragraph 66-73;
- m) To approve the scheme of virement described at Appendix 5 to the report;
- n) To determine under Section 52ZB of the Act, that the relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 is not excessive in accordance with principles issued under section 52ZC of the Act and approved by Parliament on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (being an increase of less than 5%).

72. Pay Policy Statement 2024-25.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service's Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25, for subsequent publication on the CFA's website. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

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

**RESOLVED:**

That the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 be approved, for subsequent publication on the CFA's website.

73. Service Delivery Update.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which gave an update on the key service delivery performance for the period April to December 2023. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) There had been a continued increase in the number of home safety checks, with a significant number of referrals from partner agencies. During the period, the Service had also installed over 4,000 alarms, including for those with hearing impairments. Individuals were now being targeted who had previously been missed.
- ii) There had been a 67% increase in enforcement action, following the completion of Fire Safety Audits. This underscored the effectiveness of the risk based inspection



programme in focussing on the appropriate premises as part of the Service's commitment to achieving Safer People, Safer Places.

- iii) The Service had attended over 7,000 incidents during the period, of which 2,782 were non-fire incidents, 2,570 were fire false alarms and 1,674 were fire incidents. This was an increase in incidents attended and could be explained by an 84% increase in the number of occurrences that the Service responded to, specifically related to gaining entry to premises.
- iv) The Service had introduced two Variable Response Vehicles into operation and this had resulted in increased availability, rising to 90% in November and December.

Members commended the excellent performance over the period.

The recommendation in the report was moved by Mr Rushton CC and seconded by Mrs Newton CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the excellent performance in the report be noted.

#### 74. Community Risk Management Plan Public Consultation Results.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented the final results of the public consultation in relation to the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-28. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

It was noted that the most significant changes to the Plan were the completion of the Day Crewing Plus system, an uplift in the provision of water rescue, and a change in the response time to 12 minutes for life-critical related incidents.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) It was noted that there was somewhat of a changing role for Firefighters, for example, water rescue. There would be an expectation that significant training would be required in certain areas to enable Firefighters to deal with the incidents appropriately.
- ii) Firefighters were now also attending incidents which were not part of the FRS's statutory duties. However, the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated that, currently, the Service had capacity to respond to issues in the local community and felt that it was important to assist where possible. It was acknowledged that Firefighters were now exposed to more, but there was confidence that the current welfare support was good. However, this was a situation that would continue to be monitored.
- iii) The relatively low response rate to the consultation was noted, and it was suggested that this was something which could be promoted by elected members and at parish council meetings. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated that Parish Clerks did receive details of the consultation, but this would be looked at again for the next review.

- iv) A query was raised around the interaction with the voluntary sector in relation to the response to flooding incidents. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer reported that when the FRS was responding to an incident, he was responsible for everything and everyone within the inner cordon. There was often a reluctance to bring volunteers into this due to safety. Once the Multi-Agency Local Resilience Forum became involved, the use of volunteers would be determined.

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

**RESOLVED:**

That the report and the supporting appendices be noted, and the 2024-2028 CRMP be approved.

75. Attendance at "Special Service" Incidents.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which provided an update on the number and type on non-fire (Special Service) incidents that were attended by Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service along with a breakdown of the impact of the incidents attended. The report also provided details of Leicestershire Police's 'Most Appropriate Agency' initiative, which could impact on call demand placed upon the Service. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

In response to a query around how discussions were being managed around the Most Appropriate Agency approach, the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer confirmed that LFRS had not changed its approach in terms of attending incidents. No impact had yet been seen from Leicestershire Police's change of approach, but this would continue to be monitored, particularly from the potential increase in staff exposure to traumatic incidents.

It was noted that, in the event of spate conditions and/or a major incident, the decision may be taken by the Chief or Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer to cease any non-statutory functions to ensure that resources were appropriately focussed to discharge functions appropriately. The CFA had a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees and to conduct its business in such a way as to ensure that its employees were not exposed to risks to their health and safety.

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

**RESOLVED:**

That the update be noted and the Most Appropriate Agency initiative being deployed by Leicestershire Police be acknowledged.

76. Review of Members' Allowance Scheme - Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

The CFA considered a report of the Solicitor and Monitoring Officer which presented the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, established to review the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority's Members' Allowance Scheme.

Approval of the recommendations made by the Panel was sought. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 12' is filed with these minutes.

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

**RESOLVED:**

That the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, established to review the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority's Members' Allowance Scheme, be noted.

77. Calendar of Meetings 2024/25.

The CFA considered a report of the Solicitor and Monitoring Officer seeking approval for the proposed dates for meetings of the Combined Fire Authority, Corporate Governance Committee and the Local Pension Board for 2024-25. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 13' is filed with these minutes.

It was noted that the date of the next meeting of the Combined Fire Authority would need to be changed. Members would be advised of the revised date.

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

**RESOLVED:**

That the calendar of meetings for 2024-25, which sets out the dates for meetings of the Combined Fire Authority, Corporate Governance Committee and the Local Pension Board be approved, subject to the change of date for the next meeting of the Combined Fire Authority.

78. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority will be held on the *revised* date of Monday 24 June 2024 at 10am at County Hall, Glenfield.

79. Exclusion of the Press and Public.

It was moved by Mr Rushton CC and seconded by Mrs Newton CC that under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that it will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information during consideration of the following item of business as defined in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Act detailed below:

- Urgent Item – Recent Incidents attended by LFRS

That in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that it will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information during consideration of the following item of business as defined in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Act detailed below:

- Urgent Item – Recent Incidents attended by LFRS

That in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**80. Urgent item - Recent Incidents Attended by LFRS.**

The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer provided a verbal update on two serious incidents which LFRS had recently attended.

**RESOLVED:**

That the update be noted.

10.00 - 11.15 am  
14 February 2024

CHAIRMAN

**Status of Report: Public**

**Meeting: Combined Fire Authority.**

**Date: 24 June 2024**

**Subject: Schedule of Nominations and Appointments for the Municipal Year 2024/25.**

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

**Author: Lauren Haslam, The Solicitor and Monitoring Officer**

**For: Decision**

### **Purpose**

1. To agree the Nominations and Appointments to the Committees of the Combined Fire Authority set out in the Appendix to this report for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

### **Recommendation**

2. That the Nominations and Appointments to the Committees of the Combined Fire Authority (set out in the Appendix to this report) for the Municipal Year 2024/25 be approved.

### **Executive Summary**

3. The proposed Nominations and Appointments to the Committees of the Combined Fire Authority are set out at the Appendix. These appointments will take effect from Monday 24 June 2024 and remain in place until the next Annual Meeting of the Combined Fire Authority scheduled for June 2025.

### **Report Implications/Impact**

4. Legal (including crime and disorder)

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

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

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

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

There are no risks arising from this report.

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

There are no staff, service users and stakeholder implications arising from this report.

8. Environmental

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

9. Impact upon "Our Plan" Objectives

None.

**Background Papers**

None.

**Appendix**

Schedule of Nominations and Appointments for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

**Officers to Contact**

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

**Schedule of Nominations and Appointments for the Municipal Year 2024/25**

Corporate Governance Committee

**5 Conservative (4 County and 1 City) 2 Labour (1 County and 1 City)  
1 Liberal Democrat (1 County) and 1 Independent (Rutland)**

(Chairman and Vice Chairman to be appointed)

Mr. N. Bannister CC

Mr. R. Allen CC

Mr. D. Grimley CC

Mr. K. Ghattoraya CC

Cllr. A. Osman

Ms. B. Newton CC

Vacancy

\*\* 1 Labour Member is yet to be confirmed\*\*

Mr. D. Gamble CC

Cllr. S. Harvey

Employment Committee

**5 Conservative (4 County and 1 City) 2 Labour (1 County and 1 City)  
1 Liberal Democrat (1 County) and 1 Independent (Rutland)**

Mr. B. Champion CC

Mr. N. Bannister CC

Mr. R. Allen CC

Mr. J. Coxon CC

Cllr. A. Osman

Ms. B. Newton CC

Vacancy

\*\* 1 Labour Member is yet to be confirmed\*\*

Mr. S. Bray CC

Cllr. S. Harvey

Local Pension Board

Mr. N. Bannister CC

Vacancy

\*\* 1 Labour Member is yet to be confirmed\*\*

Equality Champion 2024/25

Ms. B. Newton CC

**Outside Bodies**

Leicestershire Safer Communities Strategy Board 2024/25

Mr. N. Bannister CC

LGA Fire Services Commission 2024/25

Mr. N. Bannister CC



**Status of Report: Public**

**Meeting: Combined Fire Authority**

**Date: 24 June 2024**

**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 provide an update on the key Service Delivery performance for the previous year, April 2023 to March 2024.

### **Recommendation**

2. The Combined Fire Authority (CFA) is requested to note the contents of this report and the key achievements over the period.

### **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 – March 2024 inclusive. The subject matter areas that are covered in this report include:
  - Prevention;
  - Protection;
  - Response;
  - Performance.

### **Background**

#### Prevention

4. As part of the prevention strategy, the Service undertakes Home Safety Checks (HSC) with the intent 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.
5. Special attention is given to vulnerable groups such as the elderly, people with disabilities, and families with young children, as they may have higher risks or specific needs in case of a fire.
6. 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 prioritised.

7. Between April 2023 and March 2024, a total of 14,824 successful home safety checks were completed. This is compared to 13,674 the previous year and 2,954 more than the 3-yearly average.
8. In the past year, the Service actively engaged in 1,226 Community Safety events across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland, during which officers have delivered comprehensive fire and road safety advice to the local community. This aimed to educate the community on best practices for staying safe in various situations, raise awareness about potential hazards, and promote a culture of safety and prevention throughout the region.
9. During April 2023 – March 2024, the Service attended 259 schools to deliver the schools program. This is offered to all state and independent primary schools in the Service area, targeting Year 1 (5/6-year olds) and Year 5 (9/10-year olds).
10. The program is designed to ensure that every child within the service area receives comprehensive fire safety education at least twice during their school years, typically at different educational stages to reinforce and build upon previous knowledge. This initiative not only equips children with essential fire safety skills but also serves as an effective way to reach families.
11. By encouraging children to share what they have learned with their parents and guardians, the program extends its impact beyond the classroom, fostering a community-wide culture of safety and preparedness. Through this approach, the Service aims to create a well-informed community that prioritises fire safety and prevention.

### Protection

12. Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service is responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
13. 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.
14. 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).
15. Fire Safety Inspectors completed 1,596 Fire Safety Audits (FSAs), of which 1,097 were within the risk-based inspection program for 2023/24. This is compared to 1,216 FSA's the previous year.
16. Fire Safety Planning and Consultation: During 2022/23, Fire Protection teams assisted in developing and reviewing 962 building regulations and licensing consultations. They have provided guidance on emergency evacuation

procedures, fire safety protocols, and the design and placement of fire safety equipment.

17. **Fire Safety Enquiries:** Fire Protection teams have also provided consultation services to businesses, organisations, and individuals seeking advice on fire safety measures on 510 occasions over the last 12 months. This included reviewing building plans, recommending fire protection solutions and suggesting appropriate fire safety strategies. They have also addressed 771 fire safety concerns raised.
18. **Partnership and Collaboration:** Fire Safety teams have fostered partnerships and collaboration with businesses, industry associations, and trade organisations in promoting fire safety during 2023/24. They have engaged in joint initiatives, such as Better Business for All (BBFA) and the Primary Authority Scheme (PAS) as well as providing engagement events to support businesses in working together to address fire safety challenges specific to certain industries or sectors.
19. **Feedback:** During the reporting period, the Service collected feedback from a total of 253 businesses. An overwhelming 99% of these reported that they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the level of service they received. This indicates a strong positive response and suggests that the Service is effectively meeting the needs and expectations of local businesses. The feedback highlights the quality and reliability of the Service, reinforcing its reputation and trustworthiness among the business community.

### Response

20. The Service attended 9,345 incidents April 2023 to March 2024, of which, 3,869 (41%) were non-fire incidents, 3,389 (36%) were fire false alarms and 2,087 (23%) were fire incidents. This is an increase of 999 more incidents than the 3-yearly average of 8,444.
21. It should be noted that the benchmark figure was adversely affected by several factors. The national lockdown restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic led to a significant decrease in the number of incidents attended.
22. Additionally, over the last 12 months, extreme weather conditions further influenced these figures, compounding the overall impact on the benchmark data. These unique circumstances should be considered when evaluating the benchmark figure.
23. As previously reported to the CFA, the Service has experienced a significant increase in the number of non-fire related incidents. This increase is particularly evident in the growing number of instances where the Service provides crucial support to partner agencies, such as the Police and East Midlands Ambulance Service.
24. One of the key areas of support involves gaining entry into premises to assist in accessing casualties. This vital collaboration ensures that emergency services can respond more effectively to various situations, highlighting the expanding role and adaptability of the Service in addressing a broader range of community needs.

25. Between April 2023 and March 2024 inclusive, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service attended 93 fatalities at a variety of incidents, to include:
- a) 5 x Fire related;
  - b) 20 x Road Traffic Collisions;
  - c) 68 x Special Services (*assisting partner agencies/gaining entry/suicide*).

### Performance

26. On-Call availability for 2023/24 has risen by 1.6%, increasing from 63.5% to 65.1% over the past year. As previously noted, On-Call availability is a widespread issue affecting the sector across and can be attributed to several factors:
- a. **Changing Demographics:** The demographics of the population have changed over time, with more people working non-traditional hours or having commitments that make it challenging for them to be On-Call firefighters. This has resulted in a smaller pool of potential applicants.
  - b. **Increased Employment Commitments:** Many individuals have taken on full-time employment or multiple jobs, making it difficult for them to commit to On-Call availability. The demands of their primary occupations may not allow them to be readily available for emergency response.
  - c. **Lifestyle Changes:** Modern lifestyles have become increasingly busy and demanding, leaving less time for individuals to commit to On-Call availability. People often have multiple personal and family responsibilities, limiting their ability to respond to emergencies at a moment's notice.
  - d. **Training and Commitment:** The training and commitment required to become an On-Call firefighter can be extensive, requiring individuals to balance their regular occupations, personal lives, and the demands of the fire service. This can discourage some potential recruits from pursuing this role.
27. The Service has recognised these issues and is developing several strategies to address these challenges and maintain an effective level of On-Call availability including:
- a. Flexible contracts;
  - b. Revised initial basic training;
  - c. Employer recognition events;
  - d. Introduction of Variable Response Vehicles (VRV's).
28. Whole-time availability for 2023/24 has remained in line with the previous year at around 98%.
29. The response time to life-critical incidents has been slightly above the 10-minute target, averaging 11 minutes and 43 seconds. A significant contributing

factor to these delays is road traffic incidents in districts such as Rutland, Melton, and Harborough.

30. Upon closer examination, there are two primary reasons for this higher response time. First, the travel distance from the station to the incident site can be considerable, particularly in more remote or rural areas. Second, the time taken during call handling to accurately establish the exact location of the incident can also add to the delay. These factors combined result in longer response times.

### **Report Implications/Impact**

31. Legal (including crime and disorder)

None identified at this time.

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

There are no direct financial implications from this report.

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

None arising from this report.

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

None identified at this time.

35. Environmental

None identified at this time.

36. 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

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**Status of Report: Public**

**Meeting: Combined Fire Authority**

**Date: 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

**Subject: Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service – Strategic Workforce Plan**

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

**Author: ACFO Judi Beresford**

**For: Information**

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of the report is to present the new Strategic Workforce Plan document, which supports the implementation of the Service's People Strategy and Corporate Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

### **Recommendation**

2. It is recommended to note:
  - a. the positive progress in the Service's approach to workforce planning;
  - b. the areas of focus for the Service in relation to workforce planning, namely operational skills such as incident command, blue light driving and essential technical skills in support services.

### **Executive Summary**

3. Workforce planning is becoming increasingly necessary as the Service works to understand its priorities for people and skills. This has become increasingly challenging as it is difficult to predict the retirement profile of the operational workforce due to changes in normal retirement age (NRA), the Fire Fighters Pension Scheme and fluctuations in the workforce demographics nationally.
4. Typically, profiling shows that employees are more transient and willing to make changes to move career direction.

### **Background**

5. Integral to the implementation of the CRMP and its associated strategy documents is the need to have the people and skills to deliver against ambitions and to provide the very best service to local communities.

6. The workforce plan, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, has been developed in collaboration with several departments across the Service to establish key areas of skills and identify potential skills shortage. This approach will continue to be enhanced in forthcoming activities and is used in planning.
7. Officers are making better use of information gained from across the Service and captured in the new reporting tool (Power Bi) to give an even better understanding of the skills needed, in particular, across the range of operational skills, to ensure that recruitment and training activity can be planned effectively.
8. Anticipating the attrition levels across the Service has changed following changes to the Pension Schemes, making it more difficult to predict the number of staff leaving. This is exacerbated by changes in the national picture of a workforce whereby people are far more likely to make career choices and move jobs, rather than viewing the Fire Service as a long term career that has been the case in the past.
9. Other factors impact workforce planning and there is a need to further develop talent management and succession planning activities, although this will not take place until there is assurance that other associated factors are in place and embedded. It is likely that schemes such as these will form part of a third year plan and will not be undertaken in the first year of activity.

### **Report Implications/Impact**

10. Legal (including crime and disorder)

There are no legal impacts arising directly from the report or the workforce plan document.

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

It is vital that the Service progresses the relationship of finances to the overall workforce planning of the organisation. Work will be done as systems and processes are improved to make greater awareness and alignment of people to the service budget and with that financial management training and development for managers at all levels.

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

None directly arising from the report.

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

None directly from the report

14. Environmental



None specific to the report

15. Impact upon “Our Plan” Objectives

The Workforce Plan contributes to the CRMP and to the implementation of the People Strategy.

16. Background Papers

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service – Corporate Risk Management Plan and People Strategy.

**Appendices**

Strategic Workforce Plan

**Officers to Contact**

Chief Fire & Rescue Officer, Callum Faint [callum.faint@leics-fire.gov.uk](mailto:callum.faint@leics-fire.gov.uk)

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Learning and Development Manager, Greg Garner [greg.garner@leics-fire.gov.uk](mailto:greg.garner@leics-fire.gov.uk)

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

## Strategic Workforce Plan 2024-2025

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### Introduction

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) Strategic Workforce Plan flows directly from our Community Risk Management Plan and is linked to meeting the aims and objectives of our People Strategy.

The strategic workforce plan must be part of a holistic organisational development approach that encompasses People, Process, and Systems/Tools, ensuring that LFRS operates efficiently and effectively to meet the changing needs of the diverse communities it serves.

As we start to embed Fire Standards, there will be requirement to introduce various competency frameworks and codes of conduct for all our workforce, which may see changes to current ways of working as we align with the requirements to meet the desired outcomes.

Our strategic workforce plan helps us ensure the supply of a workforce with the skills and competence to meet our current and future resourcing requirements. The plan is delivered through a range of processes and tools which include effective leadership, talent and change management process and robust governance and risk management when exploring workforce planning opportunities and solutions.

The Strategic Workforce Plan is monitored and revised frequently (2-monthly) by Workforce Planning Group to ensure it correctly reflects our current and future requirements.

Our aspiration is to attract and maintain a competent and diverse workforce, which is representative of the community we serve, inspired to reach their potential, and engaged through clear leadership, flexible and equipped to respond to change with competence and confidence.

### Approach to workforce planning at LFRS

1. The approach to Workforce Planning is set out within Service Policy and Procedure
2. The principles of the workforce planning process at LFRS are:
  - Our workforce plan supports our understanding of the need to link our strategic outcomes and the workforce required to deliver them.
  - We ensure that our workforce plan is sustainable and affordable.
  - We understand the synergy of People, Process, and Systems, with developing an efficient and effective workforce.
  - We understand where we can augment the effectiveness and efficiency of our workforce through the use of technology, and improved processes.
  - We focus on the skills and competencies needed to ensure we can deliver our strategic objectives.
  - Our plan is based on evidence and information which illustrates our current workforce and how it could look in the future through workforce diagnostics.

- We are committed to developing our existing workforce and supporting internal career progression based on the clear understanding of our future workforce needs.
  - Our workforce planning will explore flexible and adaptable ways of delivering our services.
3. The overview of agreed workforce planning activities and actions at LFRS can be found in **appendix 1**. The recording/evidencing against each action is housed within the [POD Plan 2024/27](#).
  4. The agreed workforce recruitment plan can be found in **appendix 2**.
  5. Workforce roles and responsibilities are set out in the Service Workforce Planning Procedure.

## Risks and challenges

6. The risks identified here should be entered onto the Corporate Risk Register if they are to be considered as a Service priority.
7. There are a number of key themes emerging for the 2024-2025 workforce plan including:

## Cultural/Leadership transformation

8. Following the initial introduction to the Core Code of Ethics, there is a need for embedding the principles across everything our workforce does in their day-to-day activities, supported by continued organisational development intervention.
9. The Service has committed to a move away from our current SHL competencies framework to the NFCC Leadership Framework. This will set the leadership behavioural expectations of staff at every level of the workforce, meeting the requirements of the Core Code of Ethics. This will be a significant piece of work, and aligning what we do with the requirements of Leading the Service Fire Standard.

## EDI

10. The Service will currently be unable to meet its Public Sector Equality Duty requirements due to out-of-date equality monitoring data. There is a potential that this could negatively impact upon making informed decisions.
11. The timely completion of Equality Impact Assessments is required to ensure informed decisions are made, however, there are times when some business decisions are being made without an EIA, or the EIA is written post decision, which may mean that we are not showing due regard for our Public Sector Equality Duties.

## Significant loss of operational experience and changes to crewing model

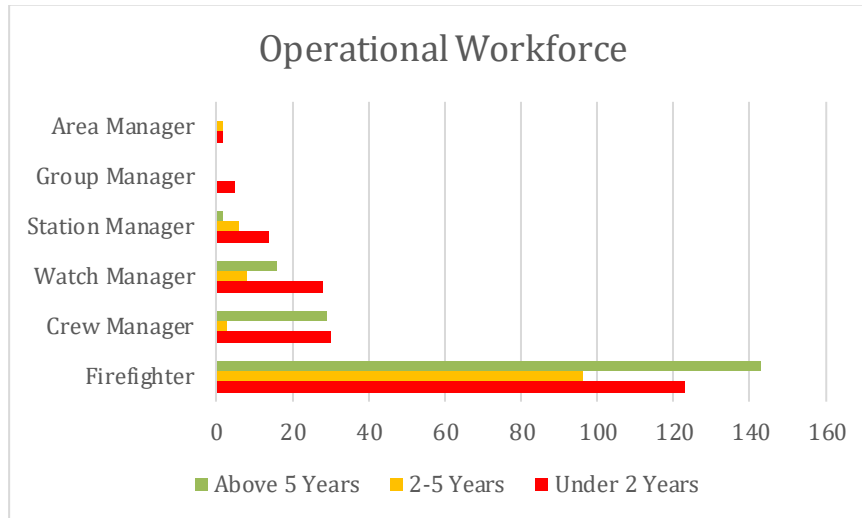
12. Over the last few years, the Service has seen a high rate of retirees and leavers from its operational workforce from Firefighter to Area Manager, which has created a significant loss of experience across the Service.

LFRS are currently in the process of removing Day Crewing Plus from its shift pattern, which has seen the need for the recruitment of additional firefighters to meet the crewing demands in the change of shift pattern, adding to the already above average numbers of operational staff working towards competence.

A change in On-Call contracted hours has led to a greater number of people required to meet the established number of hours required to ensure appliance availability, which in turn reduces the exposure to operational incidents across purely On-Call employees.

There remains a challenge in the number of firefighters across the Service with the level of qualification to ensure an effective response, namely Emergency Fire Appliance Driver, Level 1 Incident Command, and Breathing Apparatus Team Leaders (BA1).

Years in role as of February 2024.



## Succession Planning

13. In order to identify and ensure we have the right people in the right roles at all times, local discussions should take place around an individual's career aspirations as well as where they are in their career i.e. are there any intentions for promotion, cross functional movement, retirement etc. Currently these discussions do not take place, so we are unable to plan effectively.

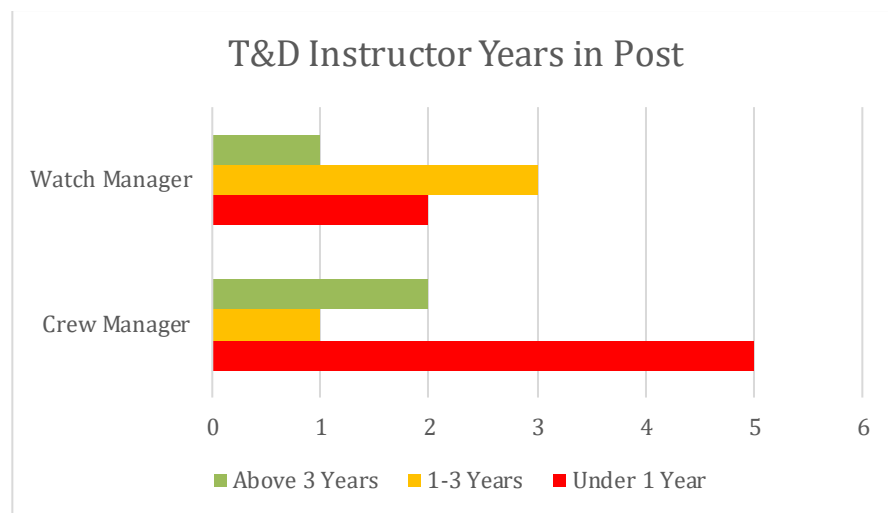
The long term aim for succession planning is to harness an environment where we openly look at key roles within the Service and identify potential successors. This method is used currently for operational roles from Crew Manager to Group Manager and should also be used for Green Book staff where their role is seen to be a key role within the Service. True succession planning requires a high level of maturity within the organisation – it is not a democracy. We will continue to shape our approaches to succession and talent in a fair, transparent and planned way.

There are multiple areas of success for progression with our non operational staff where we can demonstrate that there are potential career pathways – albeit not always as an upwards promotion but with opportunities for development and movement into other careers. We will continue to support this.

## Training and Development resourcing

14. With the identified risk of loss of skills and experience within the operational workforce, combined with an uplift of specialist water and rope rescue stations, and a significant increase in the portfolio of required training/course provision, there is a higher demand upon Training and Development to deliver an increased programme with the same level of resource.

There are challenges with recruitment and retention of instructors in Training and Development, which has led to challenges with experience of qualified full-time instructors.



BA Workplace Trainers are not up to date, having not had any refresher training.

### Fire Protection Resource

15. Unknown future of the funding received as part of the Premises Uplift Grant from 2025/26 onward, which currently funds 2 Fire Protection Inspecting Officer posts and 1 Fire Safety Auditor on fixed term contracts. If the Service is unable to pick up the costs post grant funding, this could impact upon the future number of fire safety audits undertaken.
16. The Premises Uplift Grant also funds a dedicated Corporate Communications Officer post on fixed term contract.
17. Funding from the New Burden Grant funds 1.5 Building Safety Regulator posts. The future of this funding is unknown.

### Leadership development

18. In mid to late 2023, we started to invest in leadership development, providing new knowledge, skills and behaviours, linked to the gaps identified in the Core Code of Ethics Report. This is a key area of development for the organisation, and every effort should be made to provide opportunity for all managers to embed the new learning.
19. Whilst the initial take up has been encouraging, there is a need to build upon and embed development pathways for our leaders. The current trial of both Supervisory and Middle Manager development pathways will need to be thoroughly evaluated and where required further developed, ready to be rolled out in support of a talent management programme. Evaluation of the programme provides strong evidence and support for our S&MLP's

### Professional development opportunities.

20. With limited development opportunity for Green Book staff identified nationally, it is important that we recognise the challenges this brings to the Service in being able to attract and maintain a diverse and talented workforce.
21. Educating line managers on the importance of identifying development opportunities for the members of their team(s) is essential. As is encouraging those team members to actively look for development opportunities.

22. The use of apprenticeships is currently underutilised and is a valuable source of development opportunities for existing employees; however, the Service must be prepared for the 20% off the job training hours that come with all apprenticeships.

### Efficiency savings

23. We need to develop more effective and efficient ways of working, leading to cost reduction as part of our culture, focusing on creativity and innovation to work smarter for example by automating processes, digitalisation of paper based forms, reducing administration, and removing repetitive tasks. Where possible we will invest in developing the thinking and skills of our managers to consider process efficiencies using a produce once use often approach.

### Purpose of the Workforce Plan

24. The aims of this plan are to address the key problems and opportunities we are facing, which include the following needs:

- To become more proactive in collating and using information, to predict our immediate and future resourcing needs and solutions.
- To create and embed a structured succession planning process.
- To create and embed a structured talent management process.
- To implement a robust workforce planning process, amalgamating the existing elements.
- To become more responsive to the external factors impacting on our workforce.

This will be achieved through the realisation of the following objectives:

- Integrating our strategic objectives with our resourcing and financial plans.
- Dynamically and proactively use information and data to identify our future workforce requirements in terms of capability, size, shape, location and cost.
- Creating a coherent process for succession planning.
- Creating a coherent process for talent management.
- Meeting our resourcing needs through agile deployment of our workforce.

### Scope of the plan

25. The strategic direction for the Workforce Planning Group is to align the workforce to achieve the key priorities set out in the LFRS strategies. Key outcomes we want to deliver in each strategy are attached as **Appendix 3**.

- Safer Communities
- Response
- Finance and Resources
- People
- Governance

26. It is recognised that our workforce is key to the efficient and effective delivery of our strategic objectives, therefore the appropriate workforce planning and People Strategy are critical to the development and support of professional, skilled, engaged, agile, and healthy workforce.

### Our workforce – key information

**Appendix 4** provides a summary of key workforce information for 2024, further workforce data can be accessed via the Workforce Planning Data Dashboard.

## The future workforce – workforce projections 2024/2025

27. Our ambition is to create an approach to staffing that enables the Service to supply, provide, support, and develop the workforce.

As outlined above, there are significant risks and challenges ahead that require a range of solutions. The challenges, risks, and solutions throughout this plan, are owned by everyone with the vision to provide a better aligned, supported and sustainable workforce for the future, able to deliver our strategic commitments.

The commitments outlined throughout this plan support the changes required, to develop the workforce and mitigate the risks and challenges faced in 2024/2025 and beyond.

**In this section we describe the changes we anticipate to the principal employee groups and the reasons for these changes.**

### Community Risk

- 28. Currently all Watch Managers are undertaking Fire Protection courses, however, is there a need for adding to the number of people doing FP courses? (e.g. WM's on stations). We will need to consider the additional training costs for the additional 9 Watch Managers to be trained in Fire Protection, post move from DCP.
- 29. Recruiting to the Hydrant Maintenance technician role and the lack of extant staff
- 30. Managing Fixed-Term Contracts within the current Premises uplift Grant money and the insecurity of those monies from 25/26 period.

### Operational Response

- 31. Recruitment to fill 50 operational roles to meet the establishment changes between April 2024 and March 2025, as we move away from DCP. (38 Firefighter, 8 Crew Manager, 4 Watch Manager).
- 32. Recruitment and promotion processes to meet the demand of operational retirement profile.
  - On-going recruitment of On-Call firefighters to meet Service needs.
  - Upskilling of Operational workforce to meet the demand of skills shortage.
  - Updating knowledge of BA Workplace Trainers.

### People and Organisational Development

- 33. Creation of Workforce Planning dashboard to house data that supports effective Workforce Planning activities. This is built on the 7 Rights model, (Capability, Size, Shape, Location, Time, Risk, and Cost).
- 34. Review and development of the people processes to ensure they are simple, effective and customer focussed. This will be aligned with the NFCC Maturity Model and reviewed on a frequent basis.
- 35. Introduction and embedding of the NFCC Leadership Framework (replacing the current SHL framework), to support the Core Code of Ethics and underpin the two Leadership related Fire Standards.
- 36. Rewrite of the EDI scheme 2022 to 2027 is being undertaken, which will lead to a more targeted approach to meeting the EDI challenge.
- 37. Delivery of EIA Strategic and Practitioner Training.
- 38. Continue to offer apprenticeships as development opportunities.



## Business Support

39. With a Service wide digital transformation initiative, Business Support are currently working on a 3-year resource plan to meet the potential peaks and troughs, as well as introducing generic roles to try and reduce the number of single points of competence, providing a more agile solution to their workforce need.

## Supplying the required workforce

40. This section informs on how we intend to meet the ongoing demand, overcome the challenges, and reduce the risks identified in the above sections.
41. The NFCC Maturity Model framework will be used to self-assess our current practice. The insights gained from self-assessment are used to identify our current maturity level and support our development towards a best practice approach towards meeting the identified workforce needs of the Service.

## Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

42. The rewrite of the EDI scheme 2024 to 2027 sets out how we aim to meet the challenges highlighted.
43. An up-to-date EDI data set will be created and added to the Workforce Planning dashboard. This will allow the Service to report against its Public Sector Equality Duties and inform how we address building on our diverse workforce needs through targeted recruitment intervention.
44. Our detailed EDI plan can be viewed by following the link [xxxx](#)

## Candidate attraction

44. Our goal is to attract a diverse pool of candidates while optimising cost-effectiveness through thorough analysis of data, financial considerations, adherence to best practices, and legal requirements. To achieve this objective, our Diversity Community Engagement Officer collaborates with both operational and non-operational teams, actively participating in numerous recruitment and community events across LLR. They interact with various stakeholders including educational institutions, job centres and organisations dedicated to supporting underrepresented groups, ensuring comprehensive engagement and representation.
45. Our Diversity Community Engagement Officer uses their external network of community stakeholders to frequently distribute information regarding new vacancies, volunteering opportunities, and Fire Service recruitment events (i.e. Have a Go Days, online workshops).
46. Recruitment materials are continuously reviewed to incorporate up-to date information regarding all career opportunities at LFRS.
47. Our workforce strategy prioritises fostering an inclusive and engaging candidate experience throughout the recruitment process, ensuring each applicant feels valued and supported.
48. We are dedicated to enhancing the experience for candidates, administrative personnel, and hiring managers alike. In order to achieve this goal, we have procured a new applicant tracking system that will introduce positive and advantageous improvements to our recruitment process.
49. As part of our ongoing workforce planning strategy, we are developing a comprehensive positive action evaluation plan aimed at systematically assessing the effectiveness of our initiatives. This plan will include regular reviews to evaluate the impact of the efforts led by our community engagement officer and their contributions towards our organisational goals.

## Recruitment

50. At Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, we recognise that our greatest asset is our people. Our success is built on the talent, dedication, and diversity of our workforce. Therefore, we are committed to attracting, selecting, and retaining the best candidates who represent our values and contribute to our collective success. Our Recruitment Policy outlines our principles in ensuring fair and transparent recruitment practices. By adhering to this policy, we aim to foster a culture that embodies our core values of professionalism, positivity and honesty, while upholding legal and ethical standards in all our recruitment efforts.

## Retention

51. Our intent is to prioritise the retention of our organisation's valuable talent through a strategic workforce planning approach. By assessing current needs, forecasting future requirements, and implementing tailored initiatives from our workforce planning strategy, we aim to cultivate an environment where employees feel valued, supported, and empowered, fostering long-term commitment.

## Talent development

### Leadership development

52. Our leadership development provision covers 3 specific areas, Command, Leadership, and Management, developing rounded knowledge, skills, and behaviours.

Operational managers are put through the relevant level of incident command training.

We offer three Leadership Development programmes (Supervisory Leaders, Middle Leadership, and Executive Leadership Programme), dependant on the development needs and aspirations of our leaders.

Management modules are based on the core requirements of people, process and systems, required for supervisory roles, and whereas middle manager modules cover elements such as budgets, report writing, project management, resource forecasting and planning.

53. We are developing dedicated leadership toolkits for our Supervisory and Middle Manager cohorts, where they can access course dates, learning material and self-development resources. Our programme is open to operational and non-operational staff.

54. We have introduced the NFCC Supervisory Leadership Development Programme, and Middle Leader Programme to our portfolio. These are self-study programmes, which are linked to the NFCC Leadership Framework and are CMI certified.

55. Review the provision of Level 3 Team Leader/Supervisor and Level 5 Department/Operations Manager apprenticeships as an alternative, making better use of available funding and resource.

## Professional development

The Service supports and encourages professional development

### Career paths

56. We plan to develop career pathways outlining development opportunities for our workforce.

Career paths will suggest ways in which colleagues could develop their careers. Focus will be upon individual ownership and self-directed development with the differentiation between transferable skills and specialist elements to support flexibility within our workforce and aid movement to different roles. Career will focus upon continued development; this could include but is not exclusive to promotion.

**Apprenticeships**

57. Provide greater information and support for managers to understand the availability of apprenticeships, which can be discussed with their teams as part of the PDD process.
58. L&OD Advisor will continue to highlight Apprenticeships as a viable option as part of their on-going planning meetings with Department Managers.
59. See para 43, Leadership and Management Apprenticeships.

**Coaching and mentoring**

60. Implement and embed the use of the NFCC Coaching and Mentoring Portal.
61. Provide support and guidance to managers on how to guide members of their team to access coaching and/or mentoring via the NFCC Portal, as part of the PDD process.
62. Identify internal coaches and mentors and sign them up to NFCC Portal as internal providers only.

**On the job training**

63. Where possible, development activities draw on the knowledge and skills of existing LFRS colleagues. This has the advantage of allowing advice, guidance, and on-the-job training to be given in a way that is directly applicable to the work context, and highly relevant to the individual. Development by these means may take many forms, including, for example, one-to-one discussions, secondments, hands-on demonstrations, team meetings, mentoring and coaching.
64. Action Learning will be utilised as a model to develop and embed the new knowledge, skills and behaviours of leaders, whilst addressing organisational challenges and problems.

**Succession planning**

65. Effective local workforce planning is essential to succession planning, to achieve this we will work with line managers to coach them on having effective conversations and also communicate more widely why succession planning is important for future proofing the Service.

**Flexible Duty System officers' development rota**

66. We implement a succession management approach to the Officer rota and specialisms, through a development rota.

## Appendix 1

### Strategic Workforce Plan Objectives

Area	Objective	Actions	Timeframe	Comments
Cultural Transformation	Implementation and embedding of NFCC Leadership Framework	Utilise Action Learning Model to grow  Develop our approaches to employee engagement	April 24	Direct links to CCE and Leading the Service Fire Standards.
Workforce Planning Data	Create a Power Bi dashboard to host the relevant strategic WFP data.	Identify data sets that inform on shape, size, capability, skills, location, cost, and risk.  Establish how to extract the data from current location.  Build dashboard to house the data.	Stage 1 March 24  Stage 2 May 24  Stage 3 June 24	Staged approach.  1. Shape, size, location, skill.  2. Cost.  3. Capability  Risk will be identified at each stage.
Implement and embed NFCC Coaching and Mentoring	Provide coaching and mentoring opportunities as part of on-going workforce development.	Identify the process for requesting and provision of coaching and mentoring, linked to the NFCC Coaching Portal.  Provide guidance to support access to coaching and mentoring.  Communicate the provision via The Portal, and add to	Aug 24	See Transformational Leadership timeline

		Service Procedure. Identify internal mentors/coaches and sign them up to the portal.		

## Appendix 2

### Strategic workforce recruitment plan – February 2024 – March 2025

Key:

Complete
High Priority
Medium Priority
Low Priority
Not yet scoped/started

Identified needs and priorities	Which of the corporate strategies does this address?	What specific actions are needed to deliver the priority?	Risks/issues	Costs and On Costs	What are the timeframes for delivery?	When was this priority approved by the WFP Group?	Current status for monitoring
To meet the aims of abc.	Finance and Resource	Recruitment of xyz	The impact of not recruiting to this role will be ...	Recruitment costs Salary On-costs	In role by xxxx		Recruitment pack being created

38

## Appendix 3 Key strategic outcomes 2024– 2028

### Safer Communities

Fewer incidents with reduced consequences

- Targeted prevention, protection, and resilience activities.
- Manage business and community risk effectively.
- Effective partnership working

### Response

Respond effectively to incidents

- Manage calls to fires and other emergency incidents.
- Provide 24/7 response to local, regional and international incidents.
- Supply the appropriate resources and attend incidents to meet the needs of our communities.
- Meet our communities' expectations in resolving emergencies.

### Finance and Resource

Deliver value for money quality services

- A well-managed and transparent budget.
- Robust and effective procurement activities.
- Reliable, secure, and effective ICT systems.
- Fit for purpose estate, vehicles, and operational equipment People

### People

An engaged and productive workforce

- Striving to improve the service we deliver.
- Listening and engaging with our employees and our communities.
- Ensuring our people. Know that their health and well-being is important to us.
- Being uncompromising in our commitment to diversity and an inclusive. Cohesive workforce.

### Governance

Provide Assurance

- Well-informed communities.
- Well-informed staff.
- We'll know what our communities think.
- We'll know what our staff think.

## Appendix 4

### Workforce profile in March 2024

**Number of employees** – 663

Permanent posts – 658

Agency contract - 5

#### Gender

Male – 501 (75.6%)

Female – 157 (23.7%)

Not Known – 5 (0.7%)

Male	Number of people	% of workforce
Support	56	34.8
Fire Control	9	32.2
On-Call	197	93.2
Whole-time	355	90.8

Female	Number of people	% of workforce
Support	95	65.2
Fire Control	19	67.8
On-Call	14	6.8
Whole-time	36	9.2

**Registered Disabled** – 33 (5%)

#### Ethnic Origin

Ethnic origin	Number of people	% of workforce
White/White British	556	83.8
Black/Black British	5	0.7
Asian/Asian British	18	2.7
Mixed/Multi Ethnic	23	3.5
Not Stated	61	6.2

#### Age Profile

Operational Workforce



Age Band	Number of people	% of workforce
17 - 24	30	4.5
25 - 35	128	19.3
36 - 45	179	27
46 - 55	132	19.9
56 - 65	25	3.8
66 and over	0	0

#### Non-Operational Workforce (Including Fire Control)

Age Band	Number of people	% of workforce
17 - 24	7	1
25 - 35	30	4.5
36 - 45	46	6.9
46 - 55	50	7.5
56 - 65	42	6.3
66 and over	8	1.2

#### Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	Number of people	% of workforce
Straight or Heterosexual	534	80.6
Bisexual	15	2.3
Gay/Lesbian	12	1.8
Not Answered	102	15.4

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<b>Status of Report:</b>	<b><i>Public</i></b>
<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Combined Fire Authority</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>24 June 2024</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>External Audit – Annual Report for the Year Ending 31 March 2023</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>The Treasurer</b>
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Amy Oliver, Director of Finance, Leicester City Council</b>
<b>For:</b>	<b>Discussion</b>

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to present the External Auditor's (Mazars) Annual Report 2022/23.

### **Recommendation**

2. It is recommended that the Combined Fire Authority notes the External Auditor's Annual Report 2022/23.

### **Executive Summary**

3. The External Auditor's Annual Report (attached at the Appendix) summarises the audit work for the year ended 31 March 2023. Although this report is addressed to the Authority, it is designed to be read by a wider audience including members of the public and other external stakeholders.

### **Background**

4. The Annual Report (attached at the Appendix) summarises the findings of the 2020/23 audit.
5. The External Auditor issued an unqualified opinion on the financial statements in December 2023.
6. The work on the Value for Money conclusion is now complete and the Report provides commentary on the Authority's arrangements. No significant weaknesses in arrangements were identified and there are no recommendations arising.

### **Report Implications/Impact**

7. Legal (including crime and disorder)

None

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

The total audit fee was £43,678 (page 21 of the appendix).

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

The External Auditor provides reassurance to the CFA and general public that the CFA is meeting its statutory obligations. They also work with Internal Audit and the Treasurer in ensuring that effective internal control procedures are in place.

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

None.

11. Environmental

None.

12. Impact upon "Our Plan" Objectives

The Finance and Resources strategic aim of demonstrating value for money is supported by the External Auditor's opinion on the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts and Value for Money conclusion.

### **Background Papers**

None.

### **Appendices**

External Auditor's Annual Report 2022/23

### **Officers to Contact**

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# Auditor's Annual Report

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland  
Combined Fire Authority – year ended 31  
March 2023

April 2024



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## [Appendix A: Further information on our audit of the financial statements](#)

Our reports are prepared in the context of the 'Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies' issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd. Reports and letters prepared by appointed auditors and addressed to members or officers are prepared for the sole use of the Authority. No responsibility is accepted to any member or officer in their individual capacity or to any third party.

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# 01

## Section 01: **Introduction**

# 1. Introduction

## Purpose of the Auditor's Annual Report

Our Auditor's Annual Report (AAR) summarises the work we have undertaken as the auditor for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority ('the Authority') for the year ended 31 March 2023. Although this report is addressed to the Authority, it is designed to be read by a wider audience including members of the public and other external stakeholders.

Our responsibilities are defined by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice ('the Code') issued by the National Audit Office ('the NAO'). The remaining sections of the AAR outline how we have discharged these responsibilities and the findings from our work. These are summarised below.



### Opinion on the financial statements

We issued our audit report on 26 April 2024. Our opinion on the financial statements was unqualified.



### Value for Money arrangements

In our audit report issued on 26 April 2024 we reported that we had not completed our work on the Authority's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and, on the basis of work to date, had not identified significant weaknesses in those arrangements at the time of reporting. Section 3 confirms that we have now completed this work and provides our commentary on the Authority's arrangements.



### Wider reporting responsibilities

In line with group audit instructions issued by the NAO, on 28 April 2024 we completed our work on the Authority's Whole of Government Accounts return and reported to the group auditor in line with their instructions.



# 02

Section 02:

**Audit of the financial statements**

# 2. Audit of the financial statements

## The scope of our audit and the results of our opinion

Our audit was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code, and International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). The purpose of our audit is to provide reasonable assurance to users that the financial statements are free from material error. We do this by expressing an opinion on whether the statements are prepared, in all material respects, in line with the financial reporting framework applicable to the Authority and whether they give a true and fair view of the Authority’s financial position as at 31 March 2023 and of its financial performance for the year then ended. Our audit report, issued on 26 April 2024 gave an unqualified opinion on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

A summary of the significant risks we identified when undertaking our audit of the financial statements and the conclusions we reached on each of these is outlined in Appendix A. In this appendix we also outline the uncorrected misstatements we identified and any internal control recommendations we made.

Reporting responsibility	Outcome
Annual Report	We did not identify significant inconsistencies between the content of the annual report and our knowledge of the Authority.
Annual Governance Statement	We did not identify any matters where, in our opinion, the governance statement did not comply with the guidance issued by CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

# 03

Section 03:

**Commentary on VFM arrangements**

# 3. Commentary on VFM arrangements

## Overall summary



# 3. VFM arrangements – Overall summary

## Approach to Value for Money arrangements work

We are required to consider whether the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The NAO issues guidance to auditors that underpins the work we are required to carry out and sets out the reporting criteria that we are required to consider. The reporting criteria are:



**Financial sustainability** - How the Authority plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services



**Governance** - How the Authority ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks



**Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness** - How the Authority uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services

Our work is carried out in three main phases.

### Phase 1 - Planning and risk assessment

At the planning stage of the audit, we undertake work so we can understand the arrangements that the Authority has in place under each of the reporting criteria; as part of this work we may identify risks of significant weaknesses in those arrangements.

We obtain our understanding of arrangements for each of the specified reporting criteria using a variety of information sources which may include:

- NAO guidance and supporting information
- Information from internal and external sources including regulators
- Knowledge from previous audits and other audit work undertaken in the year
- Interviews and discussions with staff and directors

Although we describe this work as planning work, we keep our understanding of arrangements under review and update our risk assessment throughout the audit to reflect emerging issues that may suggest there are further risks of significant weaknesses.

### Phase 2 - Additional risk-based procedures and evaluation

Where we identify risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements, we design a programme of work to enable us to decide whether there are actual significant weaknesses in arrangements. We use our professional judgement and have regard to guidance issued by the NAO in determining the extent to which an identified weakness is significant.

We outline the risks that we have identified and the work we have done to address those risks on page 10.

### Phase 3 - Reporting the outcomes of our work and our recommendations

We are required to provide a summary of the work we have undertaken and the judgments we have reached against each of the specified reporting criteria in this Auditor's Annual Report. We do this as part of our Commentary on VFM arrangements which we set out for each criteria later in this section.

We also make recommendations where we identify weaknesses in arrangements or other matters that require attention from the Authority. We refer to two distinct types of recommendation through the remainder of this report:

- **Recommendations arising from significant weaknesses in arrangements**

We make these recommendations for improvement where we have identified a significant weakness in the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Where such significant weaknesses in arrangements are identified, we report these (and our associated recommendations) at any point during the course of the audit.



- **Other recommendations**

We make other recommendations when we identify areas for potential improvement or weaknesses in arrangements which we do not consider to be significant but which still require action to be taken

The table on the following page summarises the outcomes of our work against each reporting criteria, including whether we have identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements or made other recommendations.

# 3. VFM arrangements – Overall summary

## Overall summary by reporting criteria

Reporting criteria	Commentary page reference	Identified risks of significant weakness?	Actual significant weaknesses identified?	Other recommendations made?
 <b>Financial sustainability</b>	11	No	No	No
 <b>Governance</b>	14	No	No	No
 <b>Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness</b>	16	No	No	No

### 3. Commentary on VFM arrangements

#### Financial Sustainability

How the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services



# 3. VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

## Overall commentary on the Financial Sustainability reporting criteria

### Overall responsibilities for financial governance

We have reviewed the Authority's overall governance framework, including Authority and committee reports, the Annual Governance Statement, and Statement of Accounts for 2022/23. These confirm the Authority undertook its responsibility to define the strategic aims and objectives, approve budgets and monitor financial performance against budgets and plans to best meet the needs of the Authority's service users.

### The Authority's financial planning and monitoring arrangements

Through our review of Authority and committee reports, meetings with management and relevant work performed on the financial statements, we are satisfied that the Authority's arrangements for budget monitoring remain appropriate, including quarterly reporting to Members and well-established arrangements for year-end financial reporting.

We reviewed the Revenue and Capital Outturn Position for 2022/23, and the report set out the Authority's year end outturn position for the revenue and capital budgets for the 2022/23 financial year. The Authority set a capital programme for 2022/23 of £8.168m of which £2.797m was spent and the remaining £5.171m was taken as slippage to 2023/24. At 31 March 2023, total useable reserves for the Authority sat at £22.494m with the general reserve increasing to £3.408m. The Authority set and achieved a balanced revenue budget for the year with actual outturn being a £395k overspend.

### Financial Statement performance 2022/23

We have carried out a high-level analysis of the audited financial statements, including the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet and Movement in Reserves Statement. The Authority's balance sheet position does not highlight any concerns. The Authority's useable reserves have increased from £22.2m to £22.5m in 2022/23, with:

- General Fund Reserves of £3.408m, up from £2.987m in the prior year; and
- Earmarked Reserves of £19.087m, down from £19.167m in the prior year.

These reserves are sufficient to cover the deficit in the provision of services. Overall, the Authority's reserves position does not indicate a risk of significant weakness in VFM arrangements for financial sustainability, provide some mitigation against future financial challenges, and will assist in addressing future volatility and

support savings and efficiencies plans. The Authority will need to continue to ensure that any use of reserves to smooth the financial position over the next few years is properly planned and the use of reserves cannot be relied on to provide a long-term solution to funding gaps.

The Authority have a Treasury and Capital Strategy that is updated on a regular basis and sets out how the Authority manages risks and benefits associated with cash-flow, treasury management and borrowing. The strategy sets out how the Authority can fund a multi-year capital programme in a financially sustainable way using a series of prudential indicators to monitor the position. These plans and strategies are considered and approved by the Authority alongside the Medium Term Financial Outlook (MTFO) and budget decisions each year.

Other operational planning and its impact on the MTFO is also considered, together with the impact of working with other public bodies. Risk management is also considered in terms of financial plans and risk-registers are regularly updated and reported to the Corporate Governance Committee throughout the year.

The Authority consider the updated financial position at various stages throughout the year and this allows for Member scrutiny and challenge. The MTFO update was considered by the Authority at the February 2023 budget setting meeting.

The annual MTFO process includes reviewing the Authority's earmarked reserves. We confirmed a review was completed in 2022/23 to ensure funding set aside remains in line with strategic and statutory priorities of the Authority. This is evidenced in the outturn reports presented to the Authority during the financial year.

For the 2022/23 budget, the Authority set a balanced budget, and from the forecasts identified the Authority will not require the use of reserves to fund budget gaps until 2025/26.

As noted above, the Authority does not expect to have a shortfall in income until 2025/26 with the budget gap expected to be £461,000. This gap is expected to be funded by budget strategy reserves. The Authority states that the gap is manageable initially by using the budget reserve which will enable time to plan the best approach to save money without making budget cuts. We believe that this is an area to be challenged by officers and Members to ensure appropriate action is taken to maintain service levels under increasing cost pressures beyond 2023/24.



# 3. VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

## Overall commentary on the Financial Sustainability reporting criteria - continued

### The Authority's arrangements and approach to financial planning 2023/24

We reviewed the Medium Term Financial Outlook (MTFO) set from 2022/23 to 2024/25 and confirmed it supports the Authority's priorities communicated in its strategy "Safer People, Safer Places". We also reviewed the 2023/24 MTFO which adequately identifies the financial implications from 2023/24 to 2025/26, noting that the key assumptions underpinning expenditure budgets through the MTFO including price increases for which a provision of £0.6m is made for pay increases in 2022/23, the revised pay award of 5% was not agreed with firefighters, and support staff pay was greater than the 3% budgeted. A provision of £1.2m was proposed for the 2023/24 pay awards and the budget notes the difficulty in predicting the outcome of pay settlements. The provision made would equate to a 4% increase, with a 3% pay award then budgeted for in 2024/25 and 2025/26. Price inflation provision of £1.1m was proposed, rising to £1.3m in 2024/25, £0.6m of this relating to energy with the electricity bill doubling and gas expected to quadruple.

We supplemented our review of the 2023/24 budget and MTFS by reviewing the report of the Finance Manager to the Combined Fire Authority on 22 November 2023 regarding the revenue outturn and forecast position at the end of September 2023. The revenue position showed a forecast overspend of £482k for the year, which is planned to be funded from the budget strategy reserve. The forecast position reflects the pressures being faced as a consequence of general inflation and recent pay awards. The overspends have been partially offset by the On Call service being below establishment, underspends in staffing in support services, savings in transport costs and interest income.

**We have not identified any significant weaknesses in the Authority's arrangements in relation to financial sustainability for the year ended 31 March 2023.**

### 3. Commentary on VFM arrangements

#### Governance

How the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks



# 3. VFM arrangements – Governance

## Overall commentary on the Governance reporting criteria

### The Authority's governance structure

Based on our work, we are satisfied that the Authority has established governance arrangements, consistent with previous years, in place. These are detailed in the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement. We have considered both documents against our understanding of the Authority as part of our audit.

Our review of corporate governance arrangements confirms the Authority has an agreed Constitution, setting out how it operates, how decisions are reached and what procedures are followed to ensure that these are transparent and accountable to local people. Any recommendations for amendments to the Constitution need to be approved by the Combined Fire Authority.

Our review of Authority and Committee papers confirms that a template covering report is used for all reports, ensuring the purpose, strategic context, and recommendations are clear. Minutes are published and reviewed by Committees to evidence the matters discussed, challenge and decisions made.

### Risk management and internal control

The Authority has an established risk management framework in the form of an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), this sits within the Corporate Plan. The IRMP assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks to the communities the Authority services it also covers arrangements to respond and deal with risks. The Corporate Plan and IRMP covers the period from 2020-2024 and we have confirmed it has been approved by the CFA, the document includes details the Authority's approach to managing risk, guidance, the Authority's risk appetite and roles and responsibilities. An updated Community Risk Management Plan covering the period 2024 to 2028 is now in place.

The Corporate Governance Committee is responsible for overseeing the effectiveness of the Authority's risk management arrangements, and challenging risk information. The Committee is presented with the risk register on a regular basis and provides challenge as part of the process. Based on the view being taken at CGC the appropriate risk appetite, risks and opportunities can be determined by the Authority. These arrangements are consistent with what we would expect at a local authority and are adequate for the Authority's purposes.

The Annual Governance Statement is a critical component of the Authority's governance arrangements. It is an evidenced self-assessment by the Authority on the Authority's governance, assurance and internal control frameworks for the financial year. No significant weaknesses in internal control have been identified from our work to date and Internal Audit have not identified or raised any significant concerns. We reviewed the Annual Governance Statements as part of our work on the financial statements with no significant issues arising.

We have reviewed minutes of the Corporate Governance Committee meetings and reviewed supporting documents and are satisfied that the programme of work is appropriate for the Authority's requirements.

### Arrangements for budget setting and budgetary control

The MTFO recognises the risks and uncertainties facing the Authority in terms of future cost pressures, funding arrangements, volatile income levels and potential variations in the costs of the delivery of demand led services in particular. We have reviewed the budget setting arrangements through review of minutes and discussions with officers. No matters have been identified indicating a significant weakness in arrangements.

There is a performance management system in place and quarterly reports on performance are presented to the Senior Leadership Team, the Corporate Governance Committee, and the CFA.

We have reviewed the Authority's minutes and confirmed there was regular reporting of the financial position during the 2022/23 financial year. This included detail of movements in the budget and forecast outturn between quarters. The reports detailed the in-year pressures as well as planned mitigations. The outturn position was not significantly different to that reported to Members during the year. The Authority has a good record of delivering against its budget and this is evidence of effective arrangements for budgetary control.

Our audit of the financial statements did not identify any matters to indicate a significant weakness in the accuracy of the financial information reported or the process for preparing the accounts. It is our experience that management takes action to address audit matters in a timely and appropriate manner.

We also reviewed the capital strategy as included within the Council's 2023/24 approved budget, noting that the on average around 50% of the expenditure is funded from the capital fund.

General Fund	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
<b>Proposed capital programme (£'000)</b>	<b>3,860</b>	<b>4,761</b>	<b>4,267</b>
Funded by:			
Capital Fund	2,155	2,583	3,035
Estate Strategy Reserve	1,705	2,178	1,232
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>3,860</b>	<b>4,761</b>	<b>4,267</b>

**We have not identified any significant weaknesses in the Authority's arrangements relating to the governance for the year ended 31 March 2023.**

### 3. Commentary on VFM arrangements

#### Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

How the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services



# 3. VFM arrangements – Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness

## Overall commentary on the Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness reporting criteria

The Authority’s Corporate Plan with the purpose of “Safer people, safer places” sets out the Authority’s priorities and objectives for the period covered by the Plan, including the values which underpin the overarching vision. We reviewed the Corporate Plan (2020-2024), which included five corporate strategies that are in place to enable the Authority to achieve their overall aims. The strategies fall into the following areas:

- Safer Communities;
- Response;
- Finance and Resources;
- People; and
- Governance

Delivery of this plan and the five strategies is facilitated by annual department and district level plans which will link to the development needs and prioritises for all of the Authority’s staff. The action plan is reviewed on an annual basis and published with information on performance and progress against priorities. There are 20 individual tasks that are monitored.

We reviewed the report to Corporate Governance Committee on 22 November 2023 and noted detailed updates are provided on all 20 tasks in the Corporate Plan. A progress update is also provided in respect of 13 projects that are currently in various stages of development or implementation.

We identified no significant changes in arrangements regarding partnership working and are satisfied the Authority continues to have arrangements for standing financial instructions, purchase order controls and our work on the financial statements has not identified any significant internal control deficiencies regarding purchasing controls.

The Authority is subject to review by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The 2021/22 report was published in January 2023 and covered the following criteria:

- Effectiveness - How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?;

- Efficiency – How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?; and
- People - How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?

<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<b>Requires Improvement</b>
<b>People</b>	<b>Good</b>

There were 3 area identified out of 14 which ‘required improvement’ in relation to:

- “Preventing fires and other risks” which falls under the effectiveness area. The report noted that the Authority have no effective plan to deal with home safety check referral backlog, and there is a lack of evaluation and quality assurance over prevention activity;
- “Making best use of resources” which falls under the efficiency area. The report noted that the service has plans to support objectives, but resources can be used better, some performance processes need to be reviewed and testing of business continuity arrangements requires improvement.
- Efficiency as an overall area; The report noted that the Fire Service has made some progress in efficiency since the last inspection, however, the service should consider how resources in prevention, protection and response could be used more effectively to achieve its outcomes.

‘The other areas were all rated as ‘GOOD’. The report noted that overall, the service has improved since the last inspection, which is reflected in the gradings. Although the report does indicate there are improvements to be made in the intervening years we believe the Authority has shown they are willing and able to enact change based on the movement in results over the last few years.

# 3. VFM arrangements – Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness

## Overall commentary on the Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness reporting criteria - continued

**How the Authority ensures it delivers its role within significant partnerships, engages with stakeholders it has identified, monitors performance against expectations, and ensures action is taken where necessary to improve**

The Authority is a member of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Road Safety Partnership, and works with the partnership’s other organisations including Leicestershire Police and the local authorities. Services provided include taking the lead on young drivers’ education, offering interactive activities at schools, colleges and universities. Local operational teams also work with Leicestershire Police to promote anti-drink-driving campaigns.

The Authority supports a number of local projects and works alongside the police, health and local authorities to prevent fires in areas that have been identified as vulnerable. The service is also involved in the local Road Safety Partnership.

It was noted as part of the report by HMICFRS review that the Service has addressed the area for improvement that related to partnerships with local businesses. The report now notes that the services has built good links with business and the private rental sector, and there were good examples of effective collaboration this assists with promoting compliance with fire safety legislation.

**How the Authority commissions or procures services, how the Authority ensures this is done in accordance with relevant legislation, professional standards and internal policies, and how the Authority assesses whether it is realising the expected benefits**

Contract Procedure Rules provide the framework for procurement activity. All procurement activities are in line with the service’s standing orders and financial instructions, national legislation and European legislation as per Public Contract Regulations 2015 and procurement best practice.

There is evidence that the Authority has arrangements in place to ensure procurement is in accordance with relevant legislation, professional standards and internal policies.

During 2023/24, the Authority took forward the award of a contract for the provision of a new mobilising system. This procurement is important, both in terms of cost and as a critical system for operational performance. The implementation of the new mobilising system should be carefully monitored by officers and Members.

**We have not identified any significant weaknesses in the Authority’s arrangements relating to the improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness for the year ended 31 March 2023.**

# 04

Section 04:

**Other reporting responsibilities and  
our fees**

## 4. Other reporting responsibilities and our fees

### Matters we report by exception

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 provides auditors with specific powers where matters come to our attention that, in their judgement, require specific reporting action to be taken. Auditors have the power to:

- issue a report in the public interest;
- make statutory recommendations that must be considered and responded to publicly;
- apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to the law; and
- issue an advisory notice.

We have not exercised any of these statutory reporting powers.

The 2014 Act also gives rights to local electors and other parties, such as the right to ask questions of the auditor and the right to make an objection to an item of account. We did not receive any such objections or questions.

### Reporting to the NAO in respect of Whole of Government Accounts consolidation data

The NAO, as group auditor, requires us to complete the WGA Assurance Statement in respect of its consolidation data, and to carry out certain tests on the data. We reported to NAO on WGA on 28 April 2024.

As in previous years, we anticipate a significant delay before we will be able to issue our 2022/23 audit certificate, as we await NAO clearance on whether we will be required to undertake additional procedures as a sampled component.

The NAO timetable for 2022/23 WGA is for completion by the end of November 2024, so we anticipate receiving the clearance which will enable us to issue our audit certificate by this date.



## 4. Other reporting responsibilities and our fees

### Fees for work as the Authority's auditor

We reported our proposed fees for the delivery of our work under the Code of Audit Practice in our Audit Strategy Memorandum dated 27 June 2023. Now we have completed the 2022/23 audit, we can confirm our final fees, which include additional fees relating to issues arising this year. All additional fees are subject to Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA approval). All fees are exclusive of VAT.

Area of work	2021/22 fees	2022/23 fees
Planned fee in respect of our work under the Code of Audit Practice (scale audit fee published by PSAA)	£22,520	£27,106
Recurring increase in the base audit fee arising from regulatory pressures (as originally agreed in the 2019/20 audit); note that £4,586 of the fee in 2021/22 has been incorporated into the 2022/23 scale audit fee by PSAA	£5,758	£1,172
Additional recurring fees in respect of the new VFM approach (as agreed for the first time in the 2020/21 audit)	£5,000	£5,000
Additional recurring fees in respect of ISA 540 requirements in relation to accounting estimates and related disclosures (as agreed for the first time in the 2020/21 audit)	£1,900	£1,900
ISA 315 revised – additional work in relation to understanding the entity, including documenting risks, risk assessments, and an additional focus on IT general controls (new standard applied from 2022/23 for the first time)	£nil	£5,000
Additional work relating to Government Actuaries Department (GAD) revised pension disclosures and revisions arising in relation to the calculation of the LGPS pension asset ceiling calculation – not recurring	£nil	£3,500
<b>Total fees</b>	<b>£35,178</b>	<b>£43,678</b>

\* The 2022/23 fee is subject to a 5.2% inflationary increase, not included in the table above. As set out in the PSAA's 'Consultation on 2022/23 audit fee scale' published in August 2022, PSAA will fund the inflationary increase using "surplus funds not required for PSAA's operations, which would otherwise be distributed to opted-in bodies" (p8 of the consultation).

### Fees for other work

We confirm that we have not undertaken any non-audit services for the Authority in the year.

# A

## Appendix

# A. Further information on our audit of the financial statements

## Significant risks and audit findings

As part of our audit, we identified significant risks to our audit opinion during our risk assessment. The table below summarises these risks, how we responded and our findings.

Risk	Our audit response and findings
<p><b>Management override of controls</b></p> <p>In all entities, management at various levels within an organisation are in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of their ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. Due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur, we consider there to be a risk of material misstatement due to fraud and thus a significant risk on all audits.</p>	<p>We addressed this risk through performing audit work over: Accounting estimates impacting amounts included in the financial statements; Consideration of identified significant transactions outside the normal course of business; and Journals recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in preparation of the financial statements.</p> <p>We did not identify any significant transactions outside the normal course of business. We applied a combination of audit judgment and computer aided audit tools to analyse and perform tests over journal entries. No issues have been identified that need to be brought to the attention of Members.</p>
<p><b>Net defined benefit asset/liability valuation</b></p> <p>The defined benefit asset/liability relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme and the Firefighters Pension Scheme represent significant balances on the Authority's balance sheet. Asset and liability information disclosed in the notes to the accounts, represent significant estimates in the financial statements.</p> <p>The Authority uses actuaries for the two schemes to provide an annual valuation of these liabilities in line with the requirements of IAS 19 Employee Benefits.</p> <p>There is a high degree of estimation uncertainty associated with this estimate and it is highly sensitive to small adjustments to the assumptions used. We therefore determined there is a significant risk in this area.</p>	<p>We addressed this risk by: assessing the competency, objectivity and independence of the actuaries of each Pension Scheme; Liaising with the auditors of the Leicestershire Pension Fund to gain assurance over the design and implementation of controls in place. This included the processes and controls in place to ensure data provided to the actuary by the Pension Fund for the purposes of the IAS 19 valuation is complete and accurate; Reviewing the appropriateness of the Pension Asset and Liability valuation methodologies applied by the two Pension Fund Actuaries (as applicable), and the key assumptions included within the valuation. This included comparing them to expected ranges, utilising information by the consulting actuary engaged by the National Audit Office; and agreeing the data in the IAS 19 valuation reports provided by each actuary for accounting purposes to the pension accounting entries and disclosures in the Authority's financial statements.</p> <p>Our testing identified two significant misstatements which have been adjusted for. These misstatements arose from receiving updated actuarial reports for the GAD scheme and an updated calculation of the asset ceiling from the LGPS actuary and resulted in adjustments (increases) of £6,300k and £1,269k to remeasurement of the Net Defined Benefit Liability respectively.</p>

# A. Further information on our audit of the financial statements

## Significant risks and audit findings

As part of our audit, we identified significant risks to our audit opinion during our risk assessment. The table below summarises these risks, how we responded and our findings.

Risk	Our audit response and findings
<p><b>Valuation of land and buildings</b></p> <p>Property related assets are a significant balance on the Authority's balance sheet. The valuation of these properties is complex and is subject to a number of management assumptions and judgements. Due to the high degree of estimation uncertainty associated, we have determined there is a significant risk in this area.</p>	<p>We addressed this risk by: critically assessing the scope of work, qualifications, objectivity and independence of each of the Authority's valuers to carry out the required programme of revaluations; considering whether the overall revaluation methodologies used by the Authority's valuers are in line with industry practice, the CIPFA code of practice and the Authority's accounting policies; assessing whether valuation movements are in line with market expectations by considering valuation trends; critically assessing the approach that the Authority adopts to ensure that assets that were not subject to revaluation in 2022/23 are materially correct, including considering the robustness of that approach in light of the valuation information reported by the Authority's valuers; and considering engaging our own valuation expert to support our work.</p> <p>While our work on valuation did not identify any issues with the methodology used, we identified on review of the Fixed Asset Register (FAR) two assets held on operating leases which should not have been included in the FAR. This resulted in adjustments made to the financial statements to remove the assets from the Property, Plant and Equipment note and to adjust for the subsequent valuation movements. This removal also resulted in a prior period adjustment.</p>

# A. Further information on our audit of the financial statements

## Summary of uncorrected misstatements

		Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Balance Sheet	
		Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)	Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)
1	Dr: Accumulated Depreciation (Land and Buildings)			111	
	Cr: Depreciation (Expenditure)		(111)		
<p>Upon revaluation, a few assets in the Fixed Asset Register were not updated in Unit4. The reason for this was due to the revaluation value not changing from 2021/22, this caused depreciation to be incorrectly calculated for the 22/23 year.</p>					
<b>Total unadjusted misstatements</b>			(111)	111	

# A. Further information on our audit of the financial statements

## Internal control observations

### Description of deficiency – **fixed asset register**

We have identified deficiencies when confirming the existence and condition of assets in the fixed asset register (FAR) due to:

- Asset in FAR having a NBV of 0, yet upon challenge with management, were still in use.

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### Potential effects

The current situation in relation to the FAR does not easily allow identification of the existence of individual assets or obsolescence to individual assets, it may lead to an undervalue of PPE.

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### Recommendation

Ensure all assets are reviewed periodically to ensure their UEL is appropriate and up to date. We understand that work is already in progress to do this.

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