

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

To: Members of the Combined Fire Authority

Mr. N. Bannister CC
Councillor Susan Barton
Councillor S Harvey
Mr B. Harrison-Rushton CC
Mr. S. L. Bray CC
Mr. B. Champion CC
Councillor Melissa March
Mr. K. Ghattoraya CC

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

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority** which will be held on **WEDNESDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2023** at **10.00am** at **Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, 12 Geoff Monk Way, Birstall** for the transaction of business set out on the attached Agenda.

Yours Faithfully



Lauren Haslam
Monitoring Officer



Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service

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

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LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Date/Time **Wednesday, 29 November 2023 at 10.00 am**

Location **Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, 12 Geoff Monk Way, Birstall, Leicester, LE4 3BU**

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

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

AGENDA

<u>Item</u>		<u>Report by</u>
1.	Apologies for absence.	
2.	To receive declarations by members of interests in respect of items on this Agenda.	
3.	To advise of any other items which the Chair has decided to take as urgent.	
4.	Chairman's Announcements.	
5.	Public Participation/ CFA Rules of Procedure Rule 9 - Member Questions.	
6.	To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Combined Fire Authority held on 4 October 2023.	(Pages 5 - 12)
7.	To consider the minutes of the Corporate Governance Committee meeting held on 20 September 2023.	(Pages 13 - 18)
8.	Service Delivery Update.	The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer (Pages 19 - 24)
9.	Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 and External Audit Update.	The Treasurer (Pages 25 - 38)
10.	Review and Revision of the Constitution of the Combined Fire Authority.	The Solicitor and Monitoring Officer (Pages 39 - 40)
11.	Urgent items.	
12.	Date of Next Meeting.	

The next meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 14 February 2024 at 10.00am at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters.

13. Exclusion of the Press and Public.

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

- Mobilising System Progress Update

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

14. Mobilising System Progress Update. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer (Pages 41 - 48)

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Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 4 October 2023.

PRESENT

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

Mr. R. G. Allen CC

Cllr. S. Barton

Mr. S. L. Bray CC

Mr. B. Champion CC

Mr. J. G. Coxon CC

Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC

Mr. D. J. Grimley CC

Mr. B. Harrison-Rushton CC

Cllr. S. Harvey

Cllr. M. March

Ms. Betty Newton CC

Mrs B. Seaton CC

In attendance

Paul Weston, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

Judi Beresford, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

Lauren Haslam, Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Amy Oliver, Treasurer

Gemma Duckworth, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Matt Cane, Area Manager

37. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Mr. N. Bannister CC, Mr. K. Ghattoraya CC, Councillor A Osman and Councillor H Rae Bhatia.

38. 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.

39. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items.

40. 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:

- Direct Entry Programme – it was noted that LFRS was an early adopter of this scheme, with the intention of attracting a greater diversity of people joining the Service. Two individuals had been identified to be appointed at Station Manager level; these were due to start in post in the near future and would undertake a three year programme before becoming part of the middle management cohort.

- Establishment of Whole-time Firefighting Staff – a recruitment campaign was currently underway to employ more wholetime staff. This was largely as a result of the move away from Day Crewing Plus and it was the aim to have the appropriate number of staff in post by April 2025.
- Deployment to Morocco – two members of LFRS had been deployed to Morocco as part of the international search and rescue team. It was noted that, due to the recent retirement of the dog handler, no search and rescue dog had been deployed on this occasion. A recruitment process was currently being undertaken for a new dog handler and dog; once they were in post, it was requested that they attend a meeting of the CFA.
- Western Fire Station – the official opening of the station was due to take place on 24 October. Members of the CFA were invited to attend.
- Road Traffic Collisions – there was concern at the increase in fatal collisions in LLR over recent weeks. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated that the Road Safety Team was being challenged to undertake work around this.

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

It was reported that no questions had been received.

42. Minutes.

The minutes of the CFA meeting held on 26 July 2023 were considered.

It was moved by Mr. N. Rushton CC and seconded by Mrs. M. E. Newton CC that the minutes of the CFA meeting held on 26 July 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 26 July 2023 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

43. Minutes of the Corporate Governance Committee.

The minutes of the Corporate Governance Committee meeting held on 13 July 2023 were considered.

It was moved by Mrs. M. E. Newton CC and seconded by Mr. R. Allen CC that the minutes of the Corporate Governance meeting held on 13 July 2023 be noted.

The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Corporate Governance meeting held on 13 July 2023 be noted.

44. 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 - June 2023. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) The Service had attended over 2000 incidents during the period, a significant proportion of which were non-fire incidents and false alarms. Work was being undertaken through prevention, protection and education to address this.
- ii) Attendance times to life critical incidents was above the 10 minute target time. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated this was primarily due to road traffic collisions in rural locations. As part of the Community Risk Management Plan, consultation would take place around increasing the attendance time to 12 minutes. The consultation period ended in November, after which the findings would be presented to the CFA.
- iii) A query was raised as to whether it was possible to have attendance times for both urban and rural areas. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer indicated that this had been considered but was not an option. The attendance time for fires and road traffic collisions already differed and it was the intention to keep the time to 10 minutes for house fires.
- iv) It was noted that the initial call was included in the Service's attendance time. The current call handling time was around 2 minutes, but it was anticipated that this would reduce once the new mobilising system was in place. This would potentially reduce the total attendance time.
- v) It was reported that safety campaigns were being undertaken in rural locations and work was taking place with partners around enforcement.

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 be noted.

45. Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Home Office Fire Statistics 2022-23.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented an update on the performance of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service compared with all Fire and Rescue Authorities in England for the period 2022/23. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) The analysis provided showed the performance of LFRS compared against other services in England, including total incidents, Home Safety Checks and Fire Safety Audits. It was pleasing to note that LFRS compared extremely well when benchmarked against all Services nationally and was ranked seventh highest out of 44 services for the number of Homes Safety Checks completed per member of staff. Since 2014/15, there had been a 251% increase in the number of Home

Safety Checks completed per member of staff, which placed LFRS in the top three in England for the largest percentage increase per member of staff over that period. When compared against significantly rural services, LFRS was ranked second highest out of 17 services for Home Safety Checks completed per member of staff.

- ii) The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer reported that the total number of fire safety audits in England increased from 48,018 in 2021/22 to 50,424 in 2022/23. LFRS had increased from 877 in 2021/22 to 1,217 in 2022/23. In terms of the number completed, LFRS was ranked twelfth out of 44 services, and when compared against significantly rural services, it was ranked fourth out of the 17 services.
- iii) The CFA congratulated the Service on the work in prevention, protection, Home Safety Checks and fire safety audits. It was suggested that this should be publicised and would provide an opportunity to raise awareness of the work being undertaken.

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 performance of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service for the period 2022/23 be noted.

46. Members' Allowance Scheme.

The CFA considered a report of the Solicitor and Monitoring Officer which presented an update in relation to the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority's Members' Allowance Scheme and proposals for a voluntary Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to review the allowances. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

The position of the CFA constituent members was reported. As there was no consistent approach between these, it was recommended that the issue be referred to an IRP on a voluntary basis and the Panel to report its recommendation to the CFA. The Panel would comprise of the three Chairmen of the IRPs in each of the constituent authorities of the CFA and was content to receive any comments that members of the CFA may wish to make on the scope of the review.

Arising from the discussion, the following comments were made:

- i) A member queried the representation on the IRP and suggested that it be widened to include at least one female representative. The Solicitor and Monitoring Officer confirmed that arrangements would be made to contact female representatives on the constituent authorities IRPs to check whether they would be willing to sit on the Review Panel.
- ii) It was also suggested that consideration be given to reviewing allowances such as the Dependent Carers' Allowance, as it was felt that if this was capped, it could be a barrier to single parents becoming a member. This would be fed to the IRP to take into account. As a result of this, it was agreed that there be a full review of Members' Allowances, rather than just considering the link to indexation.

- iii) Members were encouraged to feed their views into the review, and details were provided on how to comment.

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

RESOLVED:

That:

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

47. Appointment of Independent Members of the Corporate Governance Committee.

The Committee considered a report of the Solicitor and Monitoring Officer to seek approval for the appointment of Independent Members to the Corporate Governance Committee. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

The Corporate Governance Committee, at its meeting on 13 July 2023, had resolved to identify if two (one from Leicestershire County Council and one from Leicester City Council) of the Independent Members appointed would be willing and available to sit on the CFA Corporate Governance Committee in rotation. The County Council had two Independent Members and both had expressed an interest in sitting on the Corporate Governance Committee for the CFA. It was therefore proposed that these each serve for a consecutive two-year term of office alongside the Independent Member from the City Council.

It was noted that the appointment of the Independent Members would require an amendment to Article 5 of the CFA's Constitution.

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

RESOLVED:

That:

- a) Mr. G. Grimes, Mr. A. Maxfield and Mr. B. Bhakri be appointed to serve as Independent Members of the Corporate Governance Committee up to the Annual Meeting of the Combined Fire Authority in 2027, noting that Mr. G. Grimes and Mr. A. Maxfield will serve, in rotation, consecutive two-year terms as follows:
 - i. From appointment to the date of the Annual Meeting in May 2025 Mr. A. Maxfield; and

ii. From the date of the Annual Meeting in May 2025 to the date of the Annual Meeting in May 2027 Mr. G. Grimes;

- b) the Terms of Reference of the Corporate Governance Committee, as set out in the Constitution of the Combined Fire Authority, be revised as set out in the report to reflect these appointments.

48. Urgent items.

The CFA was reminded that consultation was currently underway on the Community Risk Management Plan. Members were asked to promote the consultation and encourage the public to respond, particularly in areas where public engagement was usually poor.

49. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority will be held on 29 November 2023 at 10am at a venue to be confirmed.

50. 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:

- Forge Health Limited Closure.

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:

- Forge Health Limited Closure, as defined in Paragraph 3 and 10; and

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

51. Forge Health Limited Closure.

The CFA considered an exempt report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which informed of the progress made in closing Forge Health Limited and associated costs.

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

RESOLVED:

That the update and closure of Forge Health Limited be noted.

10.00 - 10.42 am
04 October 2023

CHAIRMAN

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Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland CFA - Corporate Governance Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 20 September 2023.

PRESENT

Ms. Betty Newton CC (in the Chair)

Mr. N. D. Bannister CC
Cllr. S. Barton

Mr. D. J. Grimley CC
Cllr. Hemant Rae Bhatia

In attendance

Callum Faint, Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
Paul Weston, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
Stuart McAvoy, Head of Finance, Leicester City Council
Matt Davis, Audit Manager, Leicestershire County Council
Gemma Duckworth, Senior Democratic Services Officer

46. Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. R. Allen CC, Mr. D. Gamble CC, Mr. K. Ghattoraya and Councillor S Harvey.

47. 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.

48. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items.

49. Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman made her announcements which covered the following matters:

- Variable Response Vehicles
- Performance
- CRMP

50. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2023 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

51. Financial Monitoring to the end of July 2023.

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer which presented the financial monitoring to the end of July 2023, including the key issues arising from the revenue budget and capital programme. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 6' is filed with these minutes.

It was noted that the revenue position currently showed an overall forecast overspend of £341,000; this was planned to be funded from the budget strategy reserve. The capital programme was reporting spend of £506,000 to date. Slippage of £3,626,000 had been identified and was being kept under review. Due to favourable interest rates compared to budget interest receivable, this was forecast to be £340,000 more than budget.

Shortages in staffing levels had led to some delays in progressing the estates capital programme, with the majority of the slippage relating to the procurement exercise for the Eastern and Southern Fire station refurbishment projects. It was reported that slippage of £244,000 was also forecast for the Fire Control Project.

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

RESOLVED:

That the revenue budget and capital programme position at the end of July 2023 be noted.

52. Performance Monitoring April - August 2023.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented an update on the performance of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service for the period April 2023 to August 2023. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 7' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) The total number of incidents attended in the period was higher than anticipated. However, there had been a decrease in the number of secondary fire incidents attended. There had been a significant increase in the number of special service incidents attended; this continued to be a challenging area of work due to the type of incidents and the locations in which they occurred. For example, road traffic collisions and support for the Police and Ambulance Service tended to be required in more rural locations. There had also been an increase in the number of responses to flooding incidents, but this was largely out of the control of the Service.
- ii) The current average response time for life threatening incidents was 11 minutes 15 seconds, which was significantly outside the target of 10 minutes. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer recognised that this target was currently unattainable and a number of initiatives were being considered to address the issue. As part of the CRMP, there was a proposal to increase the target response time for life threatening incidents to 12 minutes (including the call handline time), except for primary domestic dwelling fires.
- iii) A contributing factor to the increased response time was the fact that many incidents were in more rural locations. Consideration had previously been given to relocating some fire stations, but this would not improve the situation. It was also not possible to

increase resources to such an extent that it would have a long lasting impact. It was the intention to focus community prevention work in more rural areas.

iv) In relation to Home Fire Safety Checks (KCI4) and Fire Protection and Enforcement (KCI5), the Service continued to improve its performance and was now in the top five best performing FRS in the country. A more detailed report around this performance was being presented to the CFA at its meeting on 4 October.

v) In response to a query around support for officers attending suicides, the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated that crews were very supportive of one another after incidents, and a number of staff had undertaken mental health fire aid training. The service also used the TRIM system whereby officers who had attended or dealt with a fatal incident were referred to see a TRIM practitioner. Where required, external practitioners were utilised and staff had access to external counselling.

vi) It was noted that the new mobilising system was very sophisticated and data was based on real time information which could identify the location of an incident very quickly. The new vehicles had live tracking equipment, and it was hoped that this would reduce the current response time.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mrs Newton CC and seconded by Councillor Rae Bhatia. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

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

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

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented the progress made since July 2023 in the delivery of projects within the Service Development Programme and the tasks included in Appendix A of Our Plan 2020-24. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

i) It was pleasing to note that the replacement mobilising system project was ahead of schedule, and the first stage of the project was due to be implemented by December 2023. Training for staff was beginning to take place and discussions were being undertaken with partners to ensure that there was an appropriate back up if there was an issue with the system.

ii) In relation to attendance at life threatening incidents, it was stated that District Managers were engaging with Community Safety Partnerships around rural road traffic collisions. Work was also taking place with Leicestershire Police to undertake co-enforcement and education events.

iii) Lots of positive work was taking place around equality and inclusion. A query was raised around whether LFRS was better at capturing complaints and being aware of what was happening across the Service. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated that lots had been undertaken to create an environment where staff felt comfortable to report any issues. The Service had subscribed to the 'Say So' phone service and had promoted its

whistleblowing policy to staff. Where required, it was felt that staff were dealt with effectively and a number of networks were in place to cover protected characteristics. The recommendations from the Spotlight report continued to be worked through to ensure further improvements were being made. A more detailed report would be provided to the exempt part of the next meeting.

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

RESOLVED

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

54. Progress against the Internal Audit Plan 2023/24.

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer which gave an update of progress against the Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

i) Work was progressing well with the 2023/24 audit plan and was at the stage anticipated for this time of year. Of the ten pieces of work for the 2023/24 internal audit plan, all prior year audits had been completed, two current year audits had been finalised and reported, one current year audit was at draft report stage, six current year audits were at various stages of work in progress, and one current year audit had not yet stated. It was the intention that this would be undertaken in parallel with another piece of work.

ii) It had been agreed that one audit, relating to Learning and Development, would be replaced by an audit of the Risk Based Inspection Programme.

iii) There were three partial assurance reports and associated high importance recommendations and progress against these was reported.

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

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted, in particular that:

a) three legacy partial assurance report ratings containing high importance recommendations remain outstanding and the ACFO (Service Support) continues to work to bring timely resolutions to these outstanding actions; and

b) work is progressing well with the 2023/24 audit plan and is at the stage anticipated for this time of year.

55. Organisational Risk Register.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented the progress made in the identification, documentation and management of

organisational risk through the Organisational Risk Register. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

The overall level of assessed risk had remained steady due to the implementation of planned control measures. Failure of the mobilising system and inability to receive 999 calls remained the two most significant risks on the Register. The global pandemic continued to be a risk, along with cyber security. However, lots of work had been undertaken to ensure control measures were in place.

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

RESOLVED:

That the report and the Organisational Risk Register be noted.

56. People Programme of Work.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which provided an update on the actions arising from the Cultural Survey and other people related plans, including the HMICFRS 'Spotlight' report and the Service's external cultural review. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer gave assurance that work was in hand across the Service to ensure relevant recommendations from the Spotlight report were acted on and to move forward positively as an organisation. It was acknowledged that there was more work to do to develop the Service, but there was an absolute commitment to ensure improvement and ultimately, it would be the responsibility of everyone. Further detail would be included in the exempt report around the level of comfort in reporting issues.

It was noted that the People Plan would be signposted in the CRMP.

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

RESOLVED:

That the People Plan and programme of work being implemented across the Service be noted.

57. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the CFA Corporate Governance Committee will be held on 22 November 2023 at 2.00pm.

2.00 - 2.56 pm
20 September 2023

CHAIRMAN

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Status of Report: Public

Meeting: Combined Fire Authority

Date: 29 November 2023

Subject: Service Delivery Update

Report by: Callum Faint – Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

Author: Paul Weston – Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

For: Information

Purpose

1. The purpose of the report is to update the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) on key Service Delivery performance for the first two quarters of 2023/24, April to September 2023 inclusive.

Recommendation

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

Executive Summary

3. This report sets out the progress, or otherwise, that has been achieved in relation to Service Delivery and provides an overview of the performance and activities within the first two quarters of 2023. The subject matter areas that are covered in this report include:
 - Prevention;
 - Protection;
 - Response;
 - Performance;
 - Incidents of note.

Background

Prevention

4. Prevention refers to a proactive approach the Service takes, aimed at minimising the risk of fires and other emergencies before they occur. Fire prevention involves a range of activities and initiatives designed to educate the public and communities about fire safety and to implement measures that reduce the likelihood of fires, including areas such as:
 - Home Safety Checks;
 - Community Safety Events;
 - Schools Educational Programme.
5. 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, and prevention activities are targeted accordingly.

6. The intent of the Home Safety Check (HSC) is to identify potential hazards, educate homeowners or occupants about fire safety measures, and provide recommendations to minimise the risk of fires and enhance overall fire safety.
7. Between April and September 2023, a total of 8,074 successful home safety checks were completed, compared to 6,467 the previous year. Among these, 1,898 were referrals from partner agencies.
8. During the reporting period, the Service also installed 2,834 alarms, comprising of 2,679 standard smoke alarms, 49 Carbon Monoxide alarms and 106 smoke alarms for those individuals with hearing impairments.
9. The Service has also attended 603 Community Safety events during the period, delivering both fire and road safety advice to the local communities of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
10. As part of its prevention strategy, the Service, along with its partners, actively supports the Warning Zone centre. The program educates Year 6 pupils across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland about the risks and consequences associated with certain types of behaviour. The centre reinforces the key messages delivered by the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service's schools education programme by using fun, engaging and life-like scenarios in interactive zones to deliver important safety advice on areas including fire risk in the home and arson.
11. In addition to supporting Warning Zone, the Service has also attended 15 schools to deliver its own schools' programme. This is offered to all state and independent primary schools in the Service area, targeting years Year 1 (5/6-year olds) and Year 5 (9/10-year olds). The programme is designed to ensure that all children in the service area have consistent fire safety education at least twice in their school lives. It is also an effective way to educate families, as children are encouraged to share what they have learned with their parents.

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. 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.
13. 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).
14. Fire Safety Inspectors have completed 749 Fire Safety Audits (FSAs), of which 532 were within the risk-based inspection programme for 2022/23. This is compared to 738 the previous year.

15. Fire Safety Planning and Consultation: So far this year, Fire protection teams assisted in developing and reviewing 326 building regulations. They have provided guidance on emergency evacuation procedures, fire safety protocols, and the design and placement of fire safety equipment.
16. Fire Safety Enquiries: Fire Protection teams have also provided consultation services to businesses, organisations, and individuals seeking advice on fire safety measures on 255 occasions. This included reviewing building plans, recommending fire protection solutions and suggesting appropriate fire safety strategies. They have also addressed 366 fire safety concerns raised.
17. Partnership and Collaboration: Fire safety teams continue collaboration with businesses, industry associations, and trade organisations in promoting fire safety. They have engaged in joint initiatives, such as Better Business for All as well as providing engagement events to support businesses in working together to address fire safety challenges specific to certain industries or sectors.

Response

18. The Service attended 4,782 incidents between April and September, of which, 1,814 (39%) were non-fire incidents, 1,695 (35%) were fire false alarms and 1,273 (26%) were fire incidents. This is an increase of 399 more incidents than the 3-year average of 4,383.
19. Regrettably, during the reporting period, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue has attended 39 fatalities at a variety of incidents, including:
 - a) 3 x Fire related;
 - b) 9 x Road Traffic Collisions;
 - c) 24 x Special Services (*assisting partner agencies/gaining entry/suicide*).
20. Since the last report, the Service has worked with its blue light partners to deliver Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) training to its Incident Commanders.
21. Ensuring the safety of the public relies on responses that are both timely and well-coordinated. JESIP training is instrumental in securing smooth collaboration among emergency services, thereby mitigating the risks of delays or communication breakdowns that could compromise the well-being of individuals in emergency situations.

Performance

22. On-Call availability for April to September 2023 has seen a slight increase from 63.5% to 64.5% compared to the previous year. However, On Call availability remains an issue that is being experienced nationally and can be attributed to several factors:
 - a. Changing Demographics: The demographic of the population has 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 shift in demographics 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.
23. 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:
- Flexible contracts;
 - Revised initial basic training;
 - Employer recognition events.
24. Whole-time availability has seen an increase on the previous year from 98.3% to 97.8% for the reporting period.
25. Attendance times to life critical incidents was slightly above the 10-minute attendance time at 11 minutes 17 seconds. Road traffic incidents within Rutland, Melton and Harborough District are detrimentally impacting attendance times mainly due to the rurality and travel distance in these areas.
26. The Community Risk Management Plan, currently out for public consultation, is reassessing the 10-minute response time for all life-risk incidents, which also encompasses call handling time. Through an analysis that integrates the historical incident and travel time data with academic research, the Service is confident that maintaining the 10-minute target is appropriate for Primary Domestic Dwelling fires. For "other types" of life-risk incidents, such as road traffic collisions, the Service will aim for an average response time of 12 minutes, a target deemed attainable and relative for the majority of such incidents.

Incidents of Note

27. The following are incidents of note during for the period July – September 2023:

July 2023

Building Fire, Whetstone – 6 appliances plus specials. Cause – Accidental ignition.

Highrise Fire, Leicester – 6 appliances plus specials. Cause - Accidental

August 2023

Domestic Dwelling, Leicester – 5 appliances. 2 rescues. Cause – Accidental

Commercial Building, Loughborough – 5 appliances. Cause - Accidental

September 2023

Building Fire, Leicester – 5 appliances plus specials. Cause – Accidental ignition.

Highrise Fire, Leicester – 6 appliances plus specials. Cause - Deliberate

Report Implications/Impact28. Legal (including crime and disorder)

None identified at this time.

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

There are no direct financial implications from this report.

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

None arising from this report.

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

None identified at this time.

32. Environmental

None identified at this time.

33. 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

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Paul Weston – Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

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Status of Report: Public**Meeting: Combined Fire Authority****Date: 29 November 2023****Subject: Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 and External Audit update****Report by: The Treasurer****Author: Manjora Bisla (Finance Manager)****For: Decision****Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to the Authority's Annual Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement 2022/23, and to provide the Audit Completion Report from the External Auditor (Mazars) which details their audit work and recommendations.

Recommendation

2. The CFA is asked to:
 - a) Note the External Auditor's Audit Completion Report (ISA 260 Report) to those charged with Governance and the recommendations contained within it,
 - b) Approve the Statement of Accounts 2022/23, subject to any technical changes that may be required following the complete of outstanding audit work.
 - c) Approve the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23;
 - d) Approve the letter of representation submitted by the Treasurer;
 - e) Authorise the Treasurer to make any technical changes including those that relate to the updated pension figures. Such changes will be reported back to the CFA.

Executive Summary

3. The external audit of the financial statements has progressed well. A supplementary report to this report is being produced by officers and this will include the Audit Completion Report, Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 which will be circulated prior to the meeting.
4. This report presents the final accounts and associated audit documentation for approval by the CFA. The CFA is asked to authorise the Treasurer to make any technical changes that may be required as

the outstanding audit work is completed, such changes to be reported back.

5. At the time of the CFA receiving this report the main outstanding item is relating to the updated firefighter pension figures. This report proposes to delegate to the Treasurer to authorise these changes.

Background

5. The statutory accounts are prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK. The draft 2022/23 statement of accounts was signed by the Treasurer on 31 May 2023 and submitted to the external auditor (Mazars) and published on the website (<https://leics-fire.gov.uk/your-fire-service/what-we-spend/actualexpenditure/>).
6. The draft Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement was considered by the Corporate Governance Committee on 13 July 2023.
7. The Statement of Accounts shows the in-year performance in a standard format adopted by all authorities, including a balance sheet showing the financial position at 31 March 2023. The CFA will also recall receiving the separate management accounts, which set out the revenue and capital outturn.
8. Despite the wide variations in the way the position is presented, the key point is that both the outturn reports and the statutory accounts are consistent.
9. The Audit Completion Report (ISA 260 Report) is to those charged with Governance. It details the conclusions of the external audit and makes recommendations.
10. The auditor reports that the draft financial statements were produced in accordance with the statutory timetable and the statements were of good quality. A small number of disclosure amendments to the accounts were identified, none of which are considered significant or needing to be reported to Members. The auditor received positive co-operation from management during the audit.
11. The Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2015 state that the accounts must be published with the audit opinion and certificate and be approved by Members by 31 July. For 2022/23, this deadline was extended to 30 September 2023, due to issues being experienced in the local authority audit sector. The extended deadline will continue until the 2027/28 accounts are completed.

12. The Annual Governance Statement will also be presented for approval. When approved will be signed by the Treasurer and the Chairman and published with the Statement of Accounts. This statement should assure taxpayers that the Authority operates in accordance with the law and has due regard to proper standards of behaviour and that it safeguards the public purse.
13. The format of the Annual Governance Statement to a large extent is dictated by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)/Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'.
14. The Letter of Representation is signed by the Treasurer and approved by the CFA. It is designed to give the external auditor assurance on the information included in the Statement of Accounts and to affirm that the primary responsibility for the content of the Statement of Accounts remains with the CFA.
15. The Audit Certificate would also usually be presented with this report. This confirms that the auditor has discharged all of their audit responsibilities and that the audit is formally 'closed'. However, this year it is again delayed for two reasons:
 - The auditor's work in respect of value for money arrangements is not yet complete. The auditor anticipates however there being no significant weaknesses in arrangements to report in relation to the arrangements that the Authority has in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.
 - A delay in Whole of Government Accounts work. The auditor has received group instructions from the National Audit Office in respect of work on the WGA submission but are unable to report on WGA until they have issued their audit opinion.

Report Implications/Impact

17. Legal (including crime and disorder)

The Authority is required to approve and publish the documents referred to in this report.

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

This report is concerned exclusively with financial issues.

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

There are no specific risks arising from this report.

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

The arrangements and changes for the posts of Treasurer, Monitoring Officer and Chief Fire Officer are reflected within the Annual Governance Statement.

21 Environmental

Hard copies of the Annual Report (which will include the Statement of Accounts) are only produced on request. An electronic copy is available on the CFA's website.

22 Impact upon "Our Plan" Objectives

It is important to ensure that the budget set by the CFA reflects and enables progress to be made against the CFA's corporate objectives. The Medium Term Financial Plan reflects the CFA's strategic plan, "Our Plan". It also reflects national and regional strategies and policies at the time of issue.

One of the CFA's corporate aims is achieving excellence in managing our Service. This is underpinned by the objective of efficiency and provision of a Value for Money service. The production of the AGS supports both the aim and objective.

Background Papers

Reports to the CFA, 21st June 2023 – Revenue and Capital Outturn 2022/23

<https://leics-fire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/item-10-revenue-and-capital-outturn-202223.pdf>

Appendix

Appendix A – Audit Completion Report (ISA 260 Report) - to follow.

Appendix B – Statement of Accounts & Annual Governance Statement - to follow.

Appendix C – Letter of Representation

Officers to Contact

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Amy Oliver, Treasurer
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Management Representation Letter

To: Mr Gavin Barker
 Director
 Mazars LLP

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority - audit for year ended 31 March 2023

This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority ('the Authority') for the year ended 31 March 2023 for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 (the Code), the Code Update and applicable law.

I confirm that the following representations are made on the basis of enquiries of management and staff with relevant knowledge and experience (and, where appropriate, inspection of supporting documentation) sufficient to satisfy ourselves that I can properly make each of the following representations to you.

My responsibility for the financial statements and accounting information

I believe that I have fulfilled my responsibilities for the true and fair presentation and preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the Code and applicable law.

My responsibility to provide and disclose relevant information

I have provided you with:

- access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other material;
- additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
- unrestricted access to individuals within the Authority you determined it was necessary to contact in order to obtain audit evidence.

I confirm as Treasurer of the Combined Fire Authority that I have taken all the necessary steps to make me aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that you, as auditors, are aware of this information.

As far as I am aware there is no relevant audit information of which you, as auditors, are unaware.



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Accounting records

I confirm that all transactions that have a material effect on the financial statements have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements. All other records and related information, including minutes of all Authority and committee meetings, have been made available to you.

Accounting policies

I confirm that I have reviewed the accounting policies applied during the year in accordance with Code and International Accounting Standard 8 and consider these policies to faithfully represent the effects of transactions, other events or conditions on the Authority's financial position, financial performance and cash flows.

Accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value

I confirm that any significant assumptions used by the Authority in making accounting estimates are reasonable, including:

- those measured at current or fair value ; and
- Provision for Redress.

Contingencies

There are no material contingent losses including pending or potential litigation that should be accrued where:

- information presently available indicates that it is probable that an asset has been impaired, or a liability had been incurred at the balance sheet date; and
- the amount of the loss can be reasonably estimated.

There are no material contingent losses that should be disclosed where, although either or both the conditions specified above are not met, there is a reasonable possibility that a loss, or a loss greater than that accrued, may have been incurred at the balance sheet date.

There are no contingent gains which should be disclosed.

All material matters, including unasserted claims, that may result in litigation against the Authority have been brought to your attention. All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to you and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the Code and applicable law.



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Laws and regulations

I confirm that I have disclosed to you all those events of which I am aware which involve known or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations, together with the actual or contingent consequences which may arise therefrom.

The Authority has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that would have a material effect on the accounts in the event of non-compliance.

Fraud and error

I acknowledge my responsibility as Treasurer for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.

I have disclosed to you:

- all the results of my assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud;
- all knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the Authority involving:
 - management and those charged with governance;
 - employees who have significant roles in internal control; and
 - others where fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.

I have disclosed to you all information in relation to any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the Authority's financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

Related party transactions

I confirm that all related party relationships, transactions and balances, have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of the Code and applicable law.

I have disclosed to you the identity of the Authority's related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which I am aware.

Private Finance Initiative

I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, there have been no significant contract variations agreed during the year. There have also been no off-programme lifecycle expenditures.



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Impairment review

To the best of my knowledge, there is nothing to indicate that there is a permanent reduction in the recoverable amount of the property, plant and equipment below their carrying value at the balance sheet date. An impairment review is therefore not considered necessary.

Future commitments

I am not aware of any plans, intentions or commitments that may materially affect the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities or give rise to additional liabilities.

Group accounts

I confirm I consider where any of the Authority's subsidiary companies have not been included within the group accounts prepared, their inclusion would not have a material impact on the accounts.

Subsequent events

I confirm all events subsequent to the date of the financial statements and for which the Code and applicable law, require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed.

Should further material events occur after the date of this letter which may necessitate revision of the figures included in the financial statements or inclusion of a note thereto, I will advise you accordingly.

Going concern

To the best of my knowledge there is nothing to indicate that the Authority will not continue as a going concern in the foreseeable future. The period to which I have paid particular attention in assessing the appropriateness of the going concern basis is not less than twelve months from the date of approval of the accounts.

Annual Governance Statement

I am satisfied that the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) fairly reflects the Authority's risk assurance and governance framework and I confirm that I am not aware of any significant risks that are not disclosed within the AGS.

Narrative report

The disclosures within the Narrative Report fairly reflect my understanding of the Authority's financial and operating performance over the period covered by the financial statements.



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Unadjusted misstatements

I confirm that the effects of the uncorrected misstatements are immaterial, both individually and in aggregate, to the financial statements as a whole. All uncorrected misstatements are included in the Appendix 1 to this letter.

Other matters

I can confirm in relation to the following matters that:

- COVID-19 - I have assessed the impact of the COVID-19 Virus pandemic on the Authority and the financial statements, including the impact of mitigation measures and uncertainties, and are satisfied that the financial statements and supporting notes fairly reflect that assessment.
- I confirm that I have carried out an assessment of the potential impact of Russian Forces entering Ukraine on the business, including the impact of mitigation measures and uncertainties, and that the disclosure in the Narrative Report and the subsequent events note to the financial statements fairly reflects that assessment.
- We confirm that we have carried out an assessment of the potential impact of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union, including the impact of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, and that the disclosure in the Statement of Accounts fairly reflects that assessment.
- I confirm I have considered the treatment of items or probable and potential expenditure notified to us by external parties in line with the accounting standards for contingent liabilities and provisions.
- We confirm that we have assessed the impact on the Authority of the on-going Global Banking challenges, in particular whether there is any impact on the company's ability to continue as a going concern, and on the post balance sheet events disclosures.
- We confirm that our exposure (either direct cash exposure or direct / indirect through investments) with Silicon Valley Bank, Credit Suisse, Signature Bank or any other bank in a distress situation, is not material.
- I confirm the Authority has assessed the potential impact of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete on the Authority, and in particular, whether there are indications of a need for an impairment of the Authority's property, plant and equipment or investment property balances. I confirm there are no such indications of impairment in those assets.



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Appendix 1 – Unadjusted Misstatements

Yours sincerely

Amy Oliver

Treasurer of the Combined Fire Authority

Date:



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Appendix 1 – Unadjusted Misstatement

The table below outlines the misstatements that were identified during the course of our audit. The misstatements have not been adjusted for as they are assessed as not being material either individually or in aggregate to the financial statements.

Upon revaluation, a few assets in the Fixed Asset Register were not updated in the financial system 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 2022/23 year.

Unadjusted Misstatements	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Balance Sheet	
	Dr(£'000)	Cr(£'000)	Dr(£'000)	Cr(£'000)
Dr: Accumulated Depreciation (Land and Buildings)			111	
Cr: Depreciation (Expenditure)		(111)		
Total unadjusted misstatements		(111)	111	

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Status of Report: Public

Meeting: Combined Fire Authority

Date: 29 November 2023

Subject: Review and Revision of the Constitution of the Combined Fire Authority

Report by: The Monitoring Officer

Author: Lauren Haslam

For: Decision

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) for the proposed changes to the CFA's Constitution. A supplementary report will be circulated to members nearer to the meeting, following the Corporate Governance Committee meeting on 22 November 2023.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that the CFA has regard to the information in this and the subsequent supplementary report.

Executive Summary

3. Article 12 of the Constitution gives the Monitoring Officer a duty to monitor and review the operation of the Constitution to ensure that the aims and principles are given full effect and kept up to date.
4. Rule 30 of the Meeting Procedure Rules states that changes to the procedure rules may only be added to, varied or revoked by a motion passed at the meeting of the full CFA.
5. A supplementary report to this report is being produced by officers. This will detail the recommendations to the CFA of the Corporate Governance Committee following its meeting on 22 November 2023, which is after the agenda for this meeting was circulated to members.

Background

6. The Constitution requires that changes to the Constitution must be approved by the CFA after consideration of the recommendations of the Corporate Governance Committee.

Report Implications/Impact7. Legal (including crime and disorder)

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

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

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

9. 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.

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

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

11. Environmental

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Impact upon Our Plan Objectives

None.

Background Papers

Report to the Corporate Governance Committee 22 November 2023 – Review and Revision of the Constitution of the Combined Fire Authority
<https://leics-fire.gov.uk/your-fire-service/decision-making/cfa-meetings/>

Officers to Contact

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

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