

# SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

12 SEPTEMBER 2022

PRESENT: Councillor C Hogarth (Chair)

Councillors: S Sansome, T Smith, S Ball, D Hutchinson,  
S Ayris, A Khayum, P Turpin, A Cherryholme, S Alston and  
Dr A Billings

CFO C Kirby, ACO A Strelczenie, DCFO T Carlin, S Slater and  
S Kelsey  
(South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service)

J Field, N Copley, M Bray, M Potter, A Shirt and D Thorpe  
(Barnsley MBC)

M Buttery  
(Office of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner)

A Bosmans (Chair, Fire Local Pension Board)

Apologies for absence were received from  
Councillor T Damms, Councillor B Johnson and S Norman

## 1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

## 2 ANNOUNCEMENTS

On behalf of the Authority and SYFR, Councillor Hogarth wished to formally record his deepest sorrow at the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. They stood together with the rest of the country in extending the most humble and heartfelt condolences to all of the Royal Family. Her Majesty had been a keen supporter of all that the emergency services stand for throughout her long and historic reign.

The Authority and SYFR honoured Her Majesty's passing, and reflected upon the legacy of an incredible life filled with patriotism, leadership and an unwavering duty to public services.

Members and officers observed a two minute silence.

## 3 URGENT ITEMS

CFO Kirby informed Members that following a recent meeting of the Executive Council of the Fire Brigade's Union (FBU), it was intended that they would ballot their members for strike action over pay. Notice had been given that the ballot would be held in approximately 4 weeks' time.

Members had previously been briefed on the contingency arrangements that were in place at the Service. The Service would hold further briefing sessions, subject to the outcome of a ballot, to ensure that Members were aware of how the Service would deliver its critical services to the public of South Yorkshire during any period of strike action.

4 ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That agenda item 23 entitled ‘Corporate Staff Pay Update’ be considered in the absence of the public and press.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS IN RELATION TO ANY ITEM OF BUSINESS ON THE AGENDA

None.

6 REPORTS BY MEMBERS

None.

7 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

None.

8 TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC, OR COMMUNICATIONS SUBMITTED BY THE CHAIR OR THE CLERK AND TO PASS SUCH RESOLUTIONS THEREON AS THE STANDING ORDERS PERMIT AND AS MAY BE DEEMED EXPEDIENT

None.

9 MINUTES OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 25 JULY 2022

In relation to Action No. 2 on the Actions Table, Dr Billings queried when a report would be presented to a future Authority meeting to outline the lessons learnt and the contingency plans to be put in place following the high volume of fires that had occurred during the extreme weather conditions on 19 July 2022.

CFO Kirby referred to the two debrief meetings that had been held with the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) since the events that had occurred on 19 July 2022. The lessons learnt continued to be captured from the operational crews and Control staff. It was envisaged that a report would be presented to the Members within the upcoming couple of Authority Meetings.

ACO Strelczenie confirmed that matters were on track to provide a report to the Authority within the specified timescale. The Service continued to collate information through its internal debriefing structure, which included a number of staff surveys to request information from those individuals that had been recalled into duty to assist with the crewing arrangements. A full internal debrief and a

multi-agency partner debrief would be undertaken with the LRF. The service and LRF partners have already conducted a 'hot debrief' which took place on 28 July 2022.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Authority Meeting held on 25 July 2022 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

10 STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE AND ANNUAL REPORT - 2021/22

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive/Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority was submitted which sought Authority approval for the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority Statement of Assurance and Annual Report for 2021/22.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, published in May 2018, stated that Fire and Rescue Authorities and their services remained free to operate in a way that enabled the most efficient and effective delivery of their services. The Statement of Assurance contained the Annual Report.

DCFO Carlin highlighted that many of the Service's documents, whilst in draft form, would be updated following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

In relation to a number of queries raised by Councillor Sansome, DCFO Carlin stated that the community risk modelling objectively captured the risks and the potential risks that the Service was required to deal with and respond to. The learning gained from previous events, including the events that had occurred on 19 July 2022, were included into the Service improvement functions which ascertained what was required to be undertaken at a local level, together with affordability.

The extreme weather conditions that had occurred on 19 July 2022 had been a step change for the fire and rescue services nationally. Conversations continued at a national level regarding how to progress matters forward. The Service required the necessary funding, learning, equipment and training to respond to such incidents that may occur in the future. The Service would shortly enter into difficult industrial relations and financial situation. The Service would always endeavour to provide the best and most appropriate service for South Yorkshire. All of the fire appliances had been made available during the period. At present, the Service had an approximate shortfall figure of 40 against a full establishment of 608 employees. A total of 100 firefighters were required at any one time to keep the fire appliances operational. Conversations would be held to ascertain how to access those 508 firefighters. The Service experienced high levels of sickness absence during the summer months and holiday periods. The Service required additional fire appliances that were targeted for wildfire firefighting, together with equipment and training that were specific to dealing with wildfires, and the appropriate staffing levels.

Councillor Smith referred to the Service achieving value for money following the events that had occurred over the last 18 month period. Following the recent extreme weather conditions, Councillor Smith had received a number of queries from his constituents regarding the number of fire appliances that had been made available on 19 July 2022.

Members noted that the firefighters were expected to attend training both on and off station at various times during the day, with community safety duties carried out during the afternoon. In relation to the events that had occurred on 19 July 2022, the Service did not have the required assets to respond to the demand. A total of 50 - 60 telephone calls had been received from across the county at one point during that day, which had been backed up. The firefighters had worked exceptionally hard during this period and the managers had ensured staff welfare. The Service had required assistance from neighbouring fire and rescue services, however the national resilience over the border support had been unavailable due to the similar events that had occurred nationally. On 19 July 2022, the Control Room had dealt with approximately 7,000 telephone calls during a short period of time. The staff within the Control Room had worked exceptionally well during such immense pressure. This was one of the first times that the Service had to deal with such demand and fire appliances were not always available. CFO Kirby had written to the MP's to highlight the position. Since 2010, the Service had accommodated a significant reduction in funding.

DCFO Carlin highlighted the need for CFO Kirby, the National Fire Chiefs Council, elected Members and MP's to lobby the Government to enable the issue to be resolved nationally whilst acknowledging climate change, to enable the fire and rescue services to meet future demands.

Councillor Smith queried whether additional funding would be made available to the Service over the next 2 – 3 years to cover such incidents in the future.

CFO Kirby referred to the financial challenges that had been presented to the Authority through the Medium Term Financial Plan. The most recent challenge is the pay award issue across the sector. Any increased pay awards that were not within budget would have to be funded through direct Government funding, local taxation to which the Government had set a limit for which was currently set at 2%, or to identify efficiencies within the organisation in order to fund an additional pay award. CFO Kirby also referred to the historical context of finance across the Service and how since 2010, SYFR had seen a 30% reduction in operational posts due to reductions in Government funding into the service. This has impacted not only on posts but several fire stations closures were made to accommodate the level of funding reductions over the period of austerity so it is a balance between resources and risk. The risks the Service faced in July changed due to the high level of demand and the local resources were stretched with no option of support from neighbouring services, or indeed further afield with all services experiencing similar demand levels. As such, the CFO wrote to MPs across South Yorkshire to highlight this.

In response to a query raised by Councillor Alston regarding whether there were any areas of concern that some of the criteria would not be met, DCFO Carlin commented that it was considered that the Service would comfortably meet each of the identified criteria within the timeframe.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Endorsed and signed off the Statement of Assurance and Annual Report.
- ii) Noted that the assessment of the Service's compliance against the Fire and Rescue National Framework was covered by the report.

11 ANNUAL EDI REPORT AND ANNUAL WORKFORCE PROFILE REPORT

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive/Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority was submitted to present the Annual EDI Report and the Annual Workforce Profile Report.

The Service produced two reports each year that were published externally and internally to support the Service's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy. The Annual EDI report captured and celebrated the work carried out across the organisation to support both the communities of South Yorkshire and its employees. The Annual Workforce Profile reported on the diversity profiles of the Service as at 31 March 2022, and aimed to provide the Service with a greater understanding on the diversity of its workforce to assess any trends and the key areas of focus going forward.

In relation to the Annual Workforce Profile Report, Councillor Ayris queried whether the Authority could be provided with an update report on the Operational Resource Team (ORT) duty system review.

The full establishment of ORT was 40 members of staff, however there were currently a number of vacancies. It was envisaged that the Service would reach its full establishment figure of 608 in 2023, which would enable the ORT to be fully staffed. ACO Strelczenie commented that a report would be presented to the Authority towards the end of 2023, when the Service had completed the recruitment phase and had reached its full establishment.

Councillor Turpin was pleased to observe the work undertaken to address diversity within the Service. He referred to the good ratio of individuals that had applied to join the Service in comparison to the low number of individuals that had been successful in passing the application process. He queried the decision makers in the recruitment process.

In response, S Kelsey commented that the Service had a greater success rate with corporate staff in terms of diversity. A minimum of three individuals would sit on the recruitment panels for corporate staff, with a view to having as much diversity in the panel as possible. Diversity was also sought at the interview stage for operational staff, although this was more challenging due to the current levels of diversity in the operational cohort. An online national testing system was utilised for the wholetime operational recruitment due to the typically high volumes of candidates. The online testing system was regularly tested for bias, and was monitored by the Service at a local level. The Service would provide individuals with support in undertaking the tests. ACO Strelczenie formed part of a national group, which reviewed the whole process and the recruitment campaigning with a view to attracting diversity into the operational roles. S Kelsey reassured the Members that the Service regularly

checked recruitment processes and these were analysed at each stage to ensure that the Service encouraged as much diversity as possible within the recruitment process.

Councillor Khayum requested that Members be provided with the details of staff recruitment from the various communities at the different ranks within the Service, in terms of employment and progression.

S Kelsey confirmed that the diversity of ranks would be included within future annual reports.

Members noted that the Service's standards had remained the same. The Service would invest in positive action work to attract a greater number of individuals to the vacancies, in order to recruit to the expected standards.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Hogarth regarding whether the IODA EDI course completion rates had increased, S Kelsey commented that the online Learn-Pro had increased to almost 86%. Due to COVID-19, the IODA face-to-face training had been more challenging, however a number of group sessions had recently been completed. The remaining groups would continue to be driven forward over the upcoming few months.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Approved the annual reports for publication.
- ii) Noted the efforts to improve EDI across the Service.

## 12 LOCAL PENSION BOARD - ANNUAL REPORT

A report of the Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority was submitted which provided the Local Pension Board's seventh Annual Report.

The Local Pension Board had been established by the Authority, as Scheme Manager, on 1 April 2015 following several reports to the Authority to appoint the members and agree the Board's Constitution. The primary role of the Board was to ensure effective and efficient governance and the administration of the Firefighters' Pension Schemes. A Bosmans had been Chair of the Local Pension Board since its inception.

The Local Pension Board's Constitution required the Board to produce an annual report on its activities to highlight any areas to the Authority as Scheme Manager.

A Bosmans commented that with the assistance from the Local Government Association (LGA), officers from BMBC, SYFR and WYPF, this had enabled the Board to become one of the Local Pension Boards nationally to establish new thinking, which was well respected at a national level. He highlighted that as Scheme Manager, all Members were responsible for the fire pensions. He encouraged the Members to attend the LGA training that would be held on Thursday 6 October 2022 and to observe the Local Pension Board Meeting that

was scheduled to be held on the same day. He urged that Member representation would continue to future Local Pension Board meetings.

A Bosmans wished to record his sincere thanks to L Noble who had been very proactive in working with the Local Pension Board, the Authority, the LGA and himself. He considered that without the support provided by L Noble, that Board would not be in its current position. The work had been continued by M Bray and D Thorpe.

In relation to the three surveys that the Board had contributed to during the municipal year, Dr Billings queried whether there were any significant issues or risks that should be drawn to Members' attention. Dr Billings referred to the internal audit for the Authority which was provided by RSM UK Ltd, and the 'light touch' audit that had been undertaken during 2017-18 around the governance arrangements. He queried the reason that the cost of a refresh of the audit was cost prohibitive and whether the Internal Audit Plan which had spare capacity related to each another.

Members were informed that the surveys were coordinated by the Administration Team at BMBC in association with SYFR's HR and Pensions Departments, and the West Yorkshire Pension Fund. The results of the previous surveys had not identified any significant risks. The current risk related to abatement and the associated difficulties with the guidance received to date. Any identified problems were included onto the Board's Risk Register which was reviewed on a quarterly basis, together with a deep dive of any identified risks. A Bosmans considered that a light touch audit of the Board's systems should be undertaken from time to time, however the cost would be significantly higher in comparison to the audits that had previously been undertaken by BMBC. The LGA attended meetings of the Board and they had given their assurance that all of the matters that were discussed at the Board meetings were as expected for a local pension board.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the seventh Annual Report of the Local Pension Board.

13 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1 2022/23

A report of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive and Clerk and Treasurer was submitted as the first in a series of reports to be presented to the Authority throughout the financial year, which informed Members as to the likely financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2023. The report included an estimated revenue outturn position when compared to the annual budget set on 21 February 2022, an updated reserves position statement and an update on the capital programme alongside a narrative commentary to help explain the key financial changes that were contributing to each of them.

Members noted that the approved operating budget for 2022/23 was £57.877m, the funding was £58.827m which had resulted in a planned contribution to reserves of £0.950m which reflected the one-off services grant for 2022/23 only.

In relation to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the temporary staff within Control, Councillor Ayris queried whether future reports could show the trajectory of the individual headings, to ascertain whether there had been an underspend or overspend on the quarter in comparison to the previous quarter.

S Slater commented that the variance was reviewed on a quarter by quarter basis. She would include the detail into the future reports that were provided to the Authority.

Dr Billings referred to the MTFP which provided for pay increases at 2% across the Service, which would now be less. He queried what each 1% increase would add onto the costs of staff inflation.

Members noted that the potential pay award for support staff was based upon a set amount per pay grade between 3% - 10%, which with operations for every percentage would equate to £700k. For example, if there was an agreement for operations of 5%, an additional £1m would be required on top of the 2%, and with the current potential pay award there could be an additional £400k required for support staff. Potentially, an additional £1.4m could be required.

Within the forecast spend for overtime and the net spend on overtime which was as a result of not being at full strength, Dr Billings queried how much of an impact this had on the Service.

S Slater referred to the correlation of the Service not being at full establishment and overtime. Both operations and the Senior Leadership Team had looked into the matter. Overtime had been impacted upon by the COVID-19 pandemic. A budget was set each year in relation to overtime. Some of the overtime was attributable to the Service not being up to full establishment, members on modified duties and training days for which overtime would sometimes be needed to cover.

At present, the Service's forecast overspend for transport was primarily related to the significant increase in the cost of fuel which had risen by approximately 53%. The Service's utilities for gas and electric were on a fixed price basis. Therefore the forecast increase of £1m should not increase in October 2022, should there be any increase in energy prices.

In response to a number of questions raised by Councillor Smith, S Slater referred to the Prime Minister's recent announcement on the Government assistance with utilities, which had identified that some support would be made available for businesses which included the public sector. Further information was awaited together with clarity as to whether this would be extended for fire and rescue services and the wider local government sector. The support would be for 6 months, with review undertaken after a 3 month period.

The Service's repairs and maintenance for the revenue premises cost had forecast a slight underspend. The Head of Estates was currently reviewing the savings and sustainability for the estate. With regard to the capital programme, there was a programme of projects and work which was approved and ongoing. Work was underway to bring together the next few years of capital projections. It was anticipated that the revenue cost would slightly reduce.

Councillor Turpin was pleased to observe the improvements that had been made to the estate. He requested an analysis of the £1m additional electricity bills, to determine the energy use.

Members noted that a new Sustainability Manager had recently commenced in post, who together with the Head of Estates were working closely on sustainability, which included the Service's gas and electricity consumption. The Service had been awarded Salix funding which would assist with sustainability. Part of the Salix funding had been utilised to undertake full surveys and modelling to determine the performance of the buildings within the estate and to ascertain what improvements could be made in each location. A strategy had been developed, and a Green Team had been established to focus upon local solutions. Motion sensor LED lighting had been implemented across the estate, which would significantly reduce the Service's energy bills. The Service's ambition was to move as close as possible to a carbon neutral organisation by 2040, which would be exceptionally difficult in terms of fire appliances. All areas of sustainability and the use of energy was being reviewed across the organisation.

Following a query raised by Councillor Smith regarding wind generation, Members were referred to the new Sustainability Committee, which would report into the Authority. It was planned to open up the Green Team to Members of the Authority regarding how the Service dealt with climate change and energy consumption. The Service had an ambition as part of being a responsible employer to educate the workforce, with the hope that the learning would be applied to their private lives.

RESOLVED – That Members noted:-

- i) The emerging underlying estimated revenue performance which was showing a potential operating overspend of £0.076m for the financial year ended 31 March 2023.
- ii) The underlying and significant financial risks and uncertainties facing the Service and Sector during the remainder of the financial year and into 2023/2024 and beyond.
- iii) The latest estimated change in General and Earmarked Reserves as set out in Section C of the report.
- iv) The current position of the capital programme for the financial year ending 2022/23, which was in line with expectations.

#### 14 HMICFRS TRANCHE 2 INSPECTION FINDINGS

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was submitted which provided a summary of the main findings from Round 2, Tranche 2 of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) inspections of 15 fire and rescue services in England. The fire and rescue services within all 3 tranches had now been inspected and the findings from Tranches 1 and 2 had now been released. In December 2022, the findings from Tranche 3 were due to

be released, alongside the 2022 State of Fire and Rescue Report. SYFR would form part of the Tranche 3 findings.

Members were referred to the three pillar judgements that were included within the inspection regime being effectiveness, efficiency and people. It was the intention of the HMICFRS to move away from the three pillar judgements and to instead focus upon 11 individual questions.

ACO Strelczenie expressed his thanks to everyone that had been involved in the SYFR inspection, together with all of the SYFR staff who had been heavily involved.

Councillor Ayris queried the benchmarking that had been used by the Service as a consequence of the previous inspection rounds, to identify good practice and the pitfalls to be avoided in future inspection rounds.

In response, ACO Strelczenie commented that the Service reviewed all of the areas for improvement and good practice areas that were published by the HMICFRS, which were provided to the relevant department heads for consideration.

ACO Strelczenie offered to provide the new Members onto the Authority with the virtual training sessions on the HMIC programme.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the contents of the report and provided further scrutiny and support to enable continual service improvement.

#### 15 CRMP REVIEW PLAN

ACO Strelczenie informed Members that the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) provided an up-to-date analysis of local risk which described how the Service would effectively co-ordinate its prevention, protection, response and resilience work to improve the safety of the public of South Yorkshire and to save lives.

Following extensive staff and public consultation, the current CRMP went live in April 2021. The most recent update had been provided to the Authority earlier in the year. The Service would review the CRMP on an annual basis. The process of reviewing the CRMP had now commenced, with the intention to be presented to the Authority for approval in early 2023. The review of the CRMP would incorporate an updated analysis of local risks. It was not anticipated that the CRMP would be updated to include any significant changes to frontline service delivery or fire stations.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the verbal update.

#### 16 PEOPLE BOARD UPDATE

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was presented which provided a summary of the items raised and discussed at the People Board during Quarter 1 2022/23. The People Board provided a strategic and critical role as a guardian of the SYFR People Strategy, which monitored the progress of the

People Strategy and scrutinised information from the four SYFR committees that report to the People Board.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the contents of the report and provided further scrutiny and support to enable continuing effective management of people issues.

17 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

A report of the Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority was submitted to present the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2021/22 for the Authority's consideration and approval.

In support of good governance, the Audit and Governance Committee produced an Annual Report for the Authority which outlined the role of the Committee, the responsibilities undertaken by its Members and the programme of work.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Considered the Annual Report of its Audit and Governance Committee.
- ii) Agreed to publish it on the Authority's website.

18 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION HELD ON 7 JULY 2022

RESOLVED – That Members noted the draft minutes of the Yorkshire and Humber Employers' Association held on 7 July 2022.

19 KEY ISSUES ARISING FROM THE PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 14 JULY 2022

RESOLVED – That Members noted the key issues arising from the Performance and Scrutiny Board Meeting held on 14 July 2022.

20 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 JULY 2022

RESOLVED – That Members noted the draft minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 25 July 2022.

21 DRAFT MINUTES OF LOCAL PENSION BOARD HELD ON 26 JULY 2022

RESOLVED – That Members noted the draft minutes of the Local Pension Board held on 26 July 2022.

22 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE POLICE AND FIRE COLLABORATION BOARD HELD ON 3 AUGUST 2022

RESOLVED – That Members noted the draft minutes of the Police and Fire Collaboration Board held on 3 August 2022.

23 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and the public interest not to disclose information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

24 CORPORATE STAFF PAY UPDATE

A report of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive was submitted which provided Members with an update on the corporate staff pay.

RESOLVED – That Members approved the recommendation as outlined within the report.

Actions Table

No.	Action	Timescale	Officer(s)	Status/Update
1	A report to be presented to a future Authority meeting to outline the lessons learnt and the contingency plans to be put in place following the high volume of fires that had occurred during the extreme weather conditions on 19 July 2022.	To a future FRA meeting	DCFO Carlin	<b><u>Update 12.09.22</u></b>  A report to be presented to the Members within the upcoming couple of Authority Meetings.

CHAIR