



DORSET & WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY **Financial Management Policy**

The Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority (DWFRA) is the combined fire and rescue authority for its area, as defined within sections 1 and 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. This document is the Financial Management policy statement for the Authority and will be overseen by the Chief Fire Officer. It is underpinned by a set of procedures.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the sound financial management and control of the assets and finances of the Fire and Rescue Authority and Fire and Rescue Service.

This policy and the supporting procedures are the responsibility of the Director of Finance within our Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)

This Statement and our assurance framework are publically available to promote confidence in the Authority and the Service.

Why is this policy needed?

The Authority and the Service must act in an honest and open manner in accordance with our legal and statutory responsibilities, financial regulations, standing orders and schemes of delegation. The purpose of this Financial Management policy is to assist the Authority and the Service in:-

- establishing guidelines for financial objectives;
- making financial decisions;
- reporting the financial status of the Authority; and,
- managing the Authority's funds

The objective of this policy is to strengthen public sector financial management and its leadership thereby contributing to appropriate stewardship of public resources, effective decision-making, and efficient policy and programme delivery.

As a Fire and Rescue Authority, we need to:

- demonstrate and make sure high standards of financial governance and management are in place throughout the organisation;
- comply with all relevant finance legislation;
- make sure the public has faith in how we spend and manage our finances;
- ensure that decision making is supported by good financial data and information;

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- ensure the right people have the right financial information and advice at the right time; and,
- manage significant financial liabilities and risks.

How we will meet the above requirements?

This is achieved by clarifying the roles and responsibilities for financial management governance that must be exercised for the stewardship, management and oversight of public resources by the Authority, the Chief Fire Officer, the Treasurer and other senior managers.

It is the responsibility of the Fire and Rescue Authority to formulate this policy and to review financial operations on a regular basis.

The Authority delegates this responsibility to the Treasurer of the Fire and Rescue Authority, i.e. the person appointed by them with responsibility for the proper administration of the Authority's financial affairs, in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

The Treasurer is the Fire and Rescue Authority's professional adviser on financial matters and his duties are to:

- provide financial advice on all aspects of the Fire and Rescue Authority's activity, including strategic planning and policy making;
- advise on financial propriety;
- ensure that accurate, timely and complete financial management information is provided to the Fire and Rescue Authority and the Chief Fire Officer;
- secure the preparation of statutory and other accounts
- secure treasury management, including loans and investments
- advise in consultation with the Monitoring Officer on the safeguarding of assets, including risk management and insurance;
- arrange for the determination, issue and transfer of the precept;
- advise on budgetary matters including any consequent long term implications; and,
- liaise with the Chief Fire Officer and Monitoring Officer on matters relating to the operation of the Fire and Rescue Authority

The Authority is required to:

- agree a budget requirement and set a precept on advice from the Treasurer;
- approve the Chief Fire Officer's proposed allocation of resources;
- monitor financial outcomes;
- identify and agree long term spending commitments;
- approve a capital programme and its financing; and,
- decide on the level of general balances it wishes to maintain

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The Authority's financial statements (the Statement of Accounts), as required under the current Account and Audit Regulations will be produced in compliance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom, as published by CIPFA /LASSACC. The accounting arrangements adopted within the Authority's financial statements will be defined in the Statement of Accounts, and reviewed on an annual basis.

The Head of Finance will prepare quarterly finance statements in a format approved by the Treasurer and the Finance and Audit Committee, and be presented to the Treasurer, Strategic Leadership Team and the Finance and Audit Committee for review.

The Treasurer will, with oversight from the Finance and Audit Committee, be responsible for the implementation of the internal audit plan and strategy, as approved by the Finance and Audit Committee.

The Authority will have its accounts externally audited annually each year, by the appointed external auditor, in accordance with statutory deadlines, and the outcome will be reported to the Finance and Audit Committee.

The Treasurer, with the Head of Finance with oversight of the Finance and Audit Committee will review and determine the general investment strategy for all funds, in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy as approved by the Authority.

The Treasurer will determine and keep under review the anti-fraud and corruption and bribery strategies in accordance with current legislative requirements.

Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders identify the financial responsibilities of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority, its Committees, its statutory officers, (the Chief Fire Officer, the Monitoring Officer and the Treasurer), and other officers. The Chief Fire Officer is responsible for ensuring that all employees with financial responsibilities, are made aware of, and have access to, financial regulations and contract standing orders, and the accompanying financial procedures that set out in more detail how they should implement and comply with the regulations. The Director of Finance (Treasurer) is responsible for maintaining a continuous review of these regulations.

Success of the Policy – How is this Policy assured?

We require:

- an awareness and clear understanding by all stakeholders of their roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities for both financial management and stewardship of public resources;
- sound and transparent, and effective financial management to be in place including compliance with financial management policies, directives and standards; and,
- well-informed decision-making, clear accountability for public resources, and efficient and effective policy and programme delivery.

To monitor and assure compliance with these requirements, we will:

- monitor legal and statutory compliance annually, through external and internal audit and review;

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- provide effective scrutiny through the Finance and Audit Committee; and
- submit an annual assurance statement to the Fire and Rescue Authority.

Review Date

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years or will be brought back to Members if requirements change.