



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Item 24/35

EXEMPT INFORMATION UNDER PARAGRAPH 3 OF PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 12A
OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

MEETING	Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority
DATE OF MEETING	12 June 2024
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Members Working Group
STATUS OF REPORT	Not for publication
PURPOSE OF REPORT	For review and approval
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2018 requires fire and rescue authorities to produce a Community Risk Management Plan covering at least a three-year period. The Authority fulfils this requirement through its Community Safety Plan. The plan has been written taking account of a wide range of strategic factors including the need to address a projected annual budget deficit of around £2.5m over the medium term. As Members are aware, and as part of the delivery of the Community Safety Plan, the Service has undertaken a comprehensive analysis of its emergency cover arrangements. This included a full review of current and future operational risks, vulnerabilities and demand for each fire station, along with how we respond to fires and other emergencies. This work has highlighted potential opportunities to further maximise the productivity and efficiency of operational resources in a more financially sustainable way. To achieve this goal will mean some challenging choices to stop, redesign and in some cases invest in the operational response. In support of this desire, a resourcing & savings programme has been established with a number of workstreams. These include reviewing and harmonising

	duty systems, reviewing second away appliances, and potential closure of stations. Through engagement with the Clerk and Monitoring Officer, Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority and Chair and Vice Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee it has been agreed that much of this work is within the Chief Fire Officer's delegations and is being progressed accordingly. Members have however indicated that potential fire station closures should remain a decision for the Authority. To support the decision-making process, it is proposed to establish a Members Working Group to look more closely at this issue. It is recommended that this Working group comprises of eight Members of the Authority, including the Chair & Vice Chair of the Authority, Chair & Vice Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee and the Chairs of the four Local Performance & Scrutiny Committees. This will help ensure that the issues can be examined from a number of perspectives. It is further proposed that these working group meetings commence from October 2024, with a view to commencing a public consultation programme, for effected stations, immediately following the June 2025 Annual Meeting. To ensure that all Members are aware of progress, it is further proposed that all Member seminars are held in February and May 2025. This paper therefore provides recommendations for a Members Working Group, and a proposed terms of reference for meetings, to commence in October 2024.
RISK ASSESSMENT	Future financial sustainability remains a growing risk on the strategic risk register that is reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Finance & Audit Committee. In order to secure future financial viability and security, the Authority is required to make a further £2.5m of annual savings over the coming two years. With an already lean Service, that has been deemed as outstanding for Efficiency and Value for Money by His Majesty's Inspectorate, challenging decisions now need to be made in relation to operational response. Failure to achieve the necessary savings will have significant political and governance issues for the Authority. This paper proposes a mechanism to explore

	and determine financial savings and further maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of operational resources.
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT	None for the purposes of this report although full impact assessments will form part of the work to be undertaken.
COMMUNITY IMPACT	None for the purposes of this report although full impact assessments will form part of the work to be undertaken.
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	None for the purposes of this paper, although some finances will be earmarked to undertake public consultation in 2025.
RECOMMENDATION	Members are asked to: 1. Approve the membership of the Members Working Group 2. Approve the proposed terms of reference for the Members Working Group
BACKGROUND PAPERS	Strategic Assessment of Risk 2023-2025 Community Safety Plan 2024-2028 Medium-Term Finance Plan 2024-2028
APPENDIX	None
REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT	Name: Jill McCrae, Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Support Email: jill.mccrae@dwfire.org.uk Tel no: 01722 691073

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In support of the delivery of the Authority's Community Safety Plan 2024-2028, the Service conducted a comprehensive fire cover review (FCR). This review uses four years' worth of data and has been garnered from the harmonisation of management information systems following combination. A station-by-station analysis has been undertaken, looking at current and future demand, risk and vulnerabilities.
- 1.2 As well as the need to reduce the Authority's base budget, there are opportunities to further maximise the productivity and efficiency of operational resources. This will however mean some challenging choices to stop, redesign and in some cases invest in the operational response. This has resulted in making the following commitments, within the CSP:
 - Use the Fire Cover Review to inform decision making on matching resources to risk, whilst maintaining financial sustainability
 - Regularly review the requirement of low operational availability and low community risk fire engines and fire stations
 - Review the shift systems our firefighters are working, considering demand, risk and future sustainability, whilst maximising productivity
 - Review the efficiency and productivity of our fire stations, including the number and type of response vehicles needed, in relation to the risks, demand and future financial sustainability
- 1.3 As Members are aware a resourcing and savings programme has been developed to deliver the commitments within the CSP, deliver £2.5m annual savings and better match operational resources to the risks. Through engagement with the Clerk and Monitoring Officer, Chair & Vice Chair of the Authority and Chair & Vice Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee it has been agreed that much of this work is within the Chief Fire Officer's delegations and is being progressed accordingly. Members have however indicated that potential fire station closures should remain a decision for the Authority.

2. Members Working Group

- 2.1 To support the decision-making process for the Authority, it is proposed to establish a Members Working Group that will meet monthly to support the delivery of the potential station closures workstream. It is proposed that this Working Group could commence from October 2024.
- 2.2 The Clerk and Monitoring Officer, Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority and Chair and Vice Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee are recommending a Working Group of eight Members to include:

- Chair & Vice Chair of the Authority
- Chair and Vice Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee
- Chairs of the Local Performance & Scrutiny Committees

2.3 The proposed terms of reference for this Working Group are:

- Approve the criteria and identification of stations to be reviewed
- Agree the timeline for the review and its associated analysis
- Review and scrutinise the reports, data and impact assessments for each station under review
- Lead the Member seminars in February and May 2025
- Agree the recommendations for each station being reviewed
- Recommend a public consultation programme and timeline for each station under review
- Provide recommendations to the Authority for decision

3. Summary

3.1 The Authority faces a continued financially difficult outlook, and an annual budget deficit of around £2.5m over the medium term. To resolve this issue and to look at opportunities to further maximise operational resources, Members have determined that decisions on potential station closures remains a matter for the Authority. This paper provides recommendations for a Members Working Group, and a proposed terms of reference for meetings to commence in October 2024.