

# SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

22 NOVEMBER 2021

PRESENT: Councillor T Damms (Chair)  
Councillor C Hogarth (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors: S Sansome, P Garbutt, B Johnson, S Ball,  
J Paszek, D Hutchinson, S Ayris, R Frost, C Ross and  
Dr A Billings

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

M McCarthy, G Kirk, S Loach, L Noble and M Bray  
(Barnsley MBC)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T Smith,  
N Copley, M Potter, S Norman and M Buttery

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

3 URGENT ITEMS

None.

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

RESOLVED – That the following agenda items be considered in the absence of the public and press:-

Agenda item 19 entitled 'Workforce Investment and Efficiencies Plan December 2021 – March 2023'.

Agenda item 20 entitled 'Contingency Crewing Contract Update'.

Agenda item 21 'Sargeant Immediate Detriment'.

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

DCFO Kirby declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 21 entitled 'Sargeant Immediate Detriment', as he was a member of the Firefighters' Pension Schemes.

6 REPORTS BY MEMBERS

In response to a question received by Councillor Sansome, L Noble confirmed that the community safety boxes for the four local authorities had been delayed, but were anticipated for delivery within the next two weeks.

Councillor Ross expressed his thanks to J Patrick, Strategic Intelligence Manager at SYFR, for the Power-bi link which had been embedded in a recent report to the Performance and Scrutiny Board. He requested that the Power-bi link be provided to all Members, and he urged Members to interrogate the system via the link.

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 11 OCTOBER 2021

Councillor Ayris queried how often the updates of the actions arising from the Authority meetings were added to the website via the link provided at the end of the Authority minutes.

Members noted that the link included at the end of the Authority minutes provided historical updates of the actions arising at the meetings. Since October 2020, an Actions Table had been included at the end of the Authority minutes which provided updates on the matters arising from the meetings. Given the papers are available publicly, this should remove the need to publish the action updates separately elsewhere on the website.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Authority meeting held on 11 October 2021 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

10 COVID-19 UPDATE

Members were provided with an update on SYFR's response and recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Service's functions had now returned to 'business as usual'. The Service's Health and Safety Committee had considered whether the prevention, protection and control measures remained appropriate. Due to the persistently high COVID-19 case numbers within South Yorkshire, it had been agreed to maintain the current control measures which included the requirement for staff to continue to wear face masks within the workplace. The matter had been discussed at length

with the representative bodies, who were in agreement with this course of action. The situation would continue to be reviewed.

The Service continued to monitor the COVID-19 sickness absence levels within the organisation, which remained low. Staff continued to be requested to report when they had received a COVID-19 vaccination, although the Service could not make the vaccinations mandatory.

The Service remained actively involved in the Local Resilience Forum which dealt with the response and recovery measures to the pandemic, and met on a weekly basis.

A number of flu vaccinations had been purchased by the Service, to be offered to those members of staff that were not eligible for a free vaccination.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

## 11 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 2021/22

A report of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive and Clerk and Treasurer was presented as the second in a series of reports that Members would receive throughout the financial year, to inform them as to the likely financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2022.

The report detailed the estimated revenue outturn position in comparison to the annual budget that had been set on 22 February 2021, it also provided an updated reserves position statement together with an update on the Capital Programme.

The approved operating budget for 2021/22 totalled £55.400m, and funding totalled £55.872m which resulted in a planned contribution to reserves of £0.472m. The Authority projected a net operating spend of £54.999m, with funding of £55.872m resulting in an overall forecast operating underspend of £0.873m or 1.5% of the budget.

The approved Capital Programme for 2021/22 totalled £7.704m, and the programme had been adjusted to £9.487m following approval of the 2020/21 Outturn Report on 21 June 2021.

Councillor Hogarth referred to the percentage increases in relation to rents which had a variation of £12,500 (40% above what had been budgeted for) and transport expenses of £8,220 (15% above what had been budgeted for). He requested further information in relation to the total for supplies and services.

In relation to the percentage increase for rents, it was noted that Age UK rented a floor within SYFR HQ which had primary rental values. The Service had anticipated a reduction in diesel cost, repairs and maintenance, and additional amounts had been factored in for the Service's ageing vehicle fleet. The underspend for the total amount for transport was mainly attributable to a reduction in fuel consumption. The Service purchased fuel through the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation framework, which had been supplemented where required through

fuel cards for potential shortages. DCFO Kirby chaired the Service's Recovery Group which focused on collating and realising those benefits.

S Booth would provide Members with a written update in relation to the total for supplies and services.

Councillor Ayris referred to the overachievement of income, which related to the additional grant funding for Protection and New Burdens. He queried what this specifically related to and whether it had been anticipated by the Service.

S Booth would provide Members with a written update in relation to the overachievement of income.

In response to a question received by Dr Billings in relation to the £0.286m underspend for premises, S Booth referred to the professional ratings company that the Service had deployed to ensure matters were in line with expectations across the estate. The £0.286m was a permanent reduction, subject to the company undertaking a further review. The reduction had been taken into account in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Councillor Sansome queried the Service's long term strategy in relation to electric vehicles.

Members noted that S Gilding, Head of Joint Vehicle Fleet Management, had proposed to introduce a new vehicle fleet strategy in the New Year, which would include the green plan for the Service. Members were referred to the new 'E1 EV0' fire engine that had been developed by Emergency One, which was the world's first all-electric pumping appliance that was being trialled in Glasgow, and a solar powered fire engine that was currently being trialled at Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service. The Service was ascertaining whether a passive charging infrastructure could be put in place. At present, charging points were available at SYFR HQ, Rivelin and Barnsley Fire Stations.

Members were referred to a recent Local Resilience Forum meeting which had discussed the scenario of a potential national power outage, as agencies moved to electric vehicles. A sustained power outage over 2 - 3 days would pose a significant issue and risk to the fire and rescue services. The matter would be kept under review by the Service's Strategic Fleet Board.

Councillor Ball referred to the technology that was continually developing in relation to electric vehicles and solar power at fire stations. Councillor Damms said he valued Councillor Ball's knowledge in this area and requested that he continue to provide updates and any support for the Service that they may find helpful.

**RESOLVED – That Members noted:-**

- i) The emerging underlying estimated revenue performance which was showing a potential operating underspend of £0.873m for the financial year ended 31 March 2022.

- ii) The underlying and significant financial risks and uncertainties facing the Service and Sector during the remainder of the financial year and into 2022/2023 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 2021/22, which was in line with expectations.

## 12 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022 - 2025

A report of the Clerk and Treasurer was submitted which intended to provide an early insight and understanding as to the likely financial performance and position of the Service. The report was presented ahead of the Government's Spending Review and Settlement (December 2021) and the proposed Annual Revenue Budget and Council Tax Setting report that was due to be presented for consideration at the Authority meeting scheduled on 21 February 2022.

Members would be provided with a more detailed briefing, and scenario planning, at the Corporate Advisory Group meeting that was scheduled to be held in January 2022 (no date fixed as yet).

In response to a comment received by Councillor Ross regarding the need for the Service to have sufficient resources available to deal with major incidents in times of exceptional demand, DCFO Kirby referred to the national and regional resilience measures that were in place. The Service could also share its resources with other fire and rescue services to provide support in dealing with major incidents.

From 1 November 2021, Tankersley Fire Station as the final fire station to operate the CPC duty system, had reverted back to the 2-2-4 duty system which had enabled the Service's establishment figure to increase to 608. As at 31 December 2021, it was predicted that the Service's total establishment figure would be 559. As at 31 March 2022, a total establishment figure of 603 was predicted, dependent upon the transfers into the Service.

Councillor Frost supported the prudence of the Medium Term Financial Plan. He highlighted the potential struggles of individuals to pay the increase in council tax, following the £20 deduction in Universal Credit. He queried the duration of the temporary Youth Worker officer within the Service.

Members noted the National Fire Chiefs' Council's robust submission that had been made to the Treasury in respect of funding for the Fire and Rescue Service. The temporary Youth Worker officer position would be on a fixed term basis for 18 months - 2 years, and would help to support the Service's work with young people within the local communities in the prevention of secondary fires, injuries and fatalities. As soon as an individual had commenced in the role, an evaluation would be undertaken to determine the effectiveness of the post for both the Service and the support provided to young people. The Service also offered targeted and early intervention programmes through the Prince's Trust. Members were welcome to attend future passing out parades.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Accepted the updated MTFP for the financial years 2022/23 to 2024/25; noting the contents of the report, and in particular the likely implications of the different funding scenarios for the operational service and future financial position.
- ii) Endorsed the proposed approach for managing reserves as set out in Section C to the Report; in particular, the proposal to increase the Post Covid-19 by any in year (2021/22) operating underspend, and to note the likely use of those useable earmarked reserves over the term of the Plan.
- iii) Noted the up to date approved capital investment programme spending and financing projections 2022/23 to 2024/25 (Section D).
- iv) Agreed to consider new, additional capital investment schemes for approval into the current capital programme as part of the 2022/23 Budget and Council Tax Setting Report (Section D).
- v) Noted the known financial risks, uncertainties and events that would need careful consideration and management in the run up to and when setting the 2022/23 Budget and Council Tax (Section E) and beyond this date.

13 SYFRS PEOPLE STRATEGY - YEAR THREE EVALUATION

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was submitted which provided a three year evaluation of the SYFRS People Strategy 2018 - 2022, which had been approved at the Authority meeting held in June 2018.

There were six inter-related strategic aims within the SYFRS People Strategy to support the delivery of the organisational strategic priorities and to further embed the Service's new cultural values and behaviours that were set out in 'Our Story'.

Councillor Ross referred to the recent Performance and Scrutiny Board meeting where the new National Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services had been discussed. At the Board meeting, it had been suggested that the Code of Ethics should also include the Authority Members. He highlighted the importance of the principles within the Code of Ethics to be embedded throughout the Service.

In response to a number of questions received by Dr Billings in relation to the 1271% increase in on-call recruitment compared with previous years and the effectiveness of e-learning, S Kelsey referred to the relatively low numbers for on-call recruitment within the Service. A target had been set for the recruitment of 12 individuals into the Service twice per year, which so far had been achieved. E-learning was one element of the training techniques utilised by the Service, and a more formal evaluation would be undertaken.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the contents of the report for information only as the People Strategy 2018 – 2022 remained relevant and appropriate.

14 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY UPDATE

A report of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive was presented which provided an update on the Workforce Development Strategy for the Service. A review had been undertaken of the current strategy, and the new approach would detail the strategy across all areas of the organisation whilst taking into account the current considerations and training requirements resulting from changes to delivery approaches, improved development programmes and pathways for all staff.

Members noted the timeline for implementation of the new strategy document and associated policies, which were highlighted within the report.

RESOLVED – That Members considered the content of the report and proposed timescales for the revised strategy delivery.

15 LOCAL PENSION BOARD - PROPOSAL TO EXTEND TENURE FOR INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

A report of the Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority was submitted for Members to consider the proposal to extend the tenure of the two Independent Members of the Local Pension Board.

On 1 April 2015, the Authority, as Scheme Manager, had established the Local Pension Board to oversee the Firefighters' Pension Schemes. The two Independent Members had sat on the Board since its inception, and they were happy to continue in the role.

Councillor Frost was a member of the Board, as the Scheme Manager representative. He considered that the two Independent Members provided an excellent role on the Board with a wealth of knowledge in a particularly technical area. He wished to place on record his support for the recommendation to extend their tenure.

RESOLVED – That Members agreed to:-

- i) Extend the tenure of the two Independent Members of the Local Pension Board (one of whom was Chair) for a further three years.
- ii) Review the situation with the existing members in November 2024, and provide a report to the Authority.

16 UPDATE OF THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD KEY ISSUES AND DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2021

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update of the Local Pension Board key issues and draft minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2021.

17 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE APPEALS AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2021

RESOLVED – That Members noted the draft minutes of the Appeals and Standards Committee held on 7 October 2021.

18 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2021

RESOLVED – That Members noted the draft Minutes of the Yorkshire and Humber Employers' Association held on 21 September 2021.

19 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.

20 WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AND EFFICIENCIES PLAN DECEMBER 2021 - MARCH 2023

A report of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive was presented which provided Members with an update on the workforce investment and efficiencies plan for December 2021 – March 2023.

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

21 CONTINGENCY CREWING CONTRACT UPDATE

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was presented which provided an update on the Home Office expectations of Fire and Rescue Services and the current arrangements regarding the business continuity plans for Industrial Action.

RESOLVED – That Members agreed to the recommendation outlined within the report.

22 SARGEANT IMMEDIATE DETRIMENT

A report of the Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority was submitted to provide Members with an update following the 2018 Court of Appeal judgement in Sargeant. An interim order had been made by the Employment Tribunal on 18 December 2019, which had provided that members who had brought claims (claimants) were entitled to be treated as if they had remained in the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992 (with further specific requirements).

RESOLVED – That Members agreed to adopt the approach specified at Option 1 of the recommendations within the report.

Actions Table

No.	Action	Timescale	Officer(s)	Status/ Update
1	To provide Members with the Power-Bi link.	ASAP	L Noble	<b><u>Update 29-11-21</u></b>  Power-Bi link provided by e-mail to all Members.  <b>ACTION DISCHARGED</b>
2	To provide Members with a written update in relation to the total for supplies and services.	Before the next Authority meeting on 10.01.22	S Booth	<b><u>Update 17-12-21</u></b>  Please see the information sheets attached to the minutes.  <b>ACTION DISCHARGED</b>
3	To provide Members with a written update in relation to the overachievement of income.	Before the next Authority meeting on 10.01.22	S Booth	<b><u>Update 17-12-21</u></b>  Please see the information sheets attached to the minutes.  <b>ACTION DISCHARGED</b>

CHAIR

Please follow the link below for further information on the updates of the actions arising from the Fire and Rescue Authority meetings:-

<https://meetings.southyorks.gov.uk/ecSDDisplayClassic.aspx?NAME=SD1250&ID=1250&RPID=402996&sch=doc&cat=13039&path=13039&zTS=D>

**Updates in relation to Actions 2 and 3 on the Actions Table**

At the meeting in November, a number of detailed variance analysis questions were asked by Members where a written response was expected with regard to Supplies and Services and Income.

**Supplies & Services**

BUDGET	CURRENT BUDGET	PROJECTED OUTTURN 2021/22	VARIATION
Equipment, Furniture & Materials	985,299	828,599	(156,700)
Clothing, Uniform and Laundry	227,066	225,166	(1,900)
Office Expenses	91,258	61,751	(29,507)
Services	757,480	749,440	(8,040)
ICT & Network Expenses	1,999,625	1,942,724	(56,901)
Other Miscellaneous	46,460	54,680	8,220
Stronger Safer Community Fund	337,176	315,975	(21,201)
	0	590,368	590,368
<b>TOTAL SUPPLIES &amp; SERVICES</b>	<b>4,444,364</b>	<b>4,768,703</b>	<b>324,339</b>

The above table is a snapshot from Appendix A of the Quarter 2 Financial Performance Report relating to Supplies & Services. For each of the categories further details of the main under or over spends are provided:

- **Equipment, Furniture & Materials**
  - Hydrants – there is an underspend of £50,000 due to most of the repairs this financial year having related to major repairs the cost of which is met by Yorkshire Water. SYFR only cover the cost of minor repairs.
  - Furniture & Fittings – there is a potential underspend of £53,500 in this area, however some of this will offset the overspend of £24,000 of one-off equipment replacements necessary by Technical Services due to unexpected wear and tear ahead of the planned replacement.
  - Deaf Smoke Alarms and Heat Alarms – there is an underspend of £70,000 due to less home visits than expected as a consequence of the ongoing pandemic.
  
- **Clothing, Uniform and Laundry**
  - The slight underspend in this area is a result of the service being in a period of transition whereby the managed service Bristol Uniform Contract ended and the start of the new separate Laundry Contract (with Elis), aligned to the introduction of the new Structural firefighters kit.

- Office Expenses
  - Office Expenses such as photocopier charges, printing and stationary and office equipment are again low this year as a result of the continued pandemic, with a potential forecast underspend of £29,507. With hybrid agile working likely to become the new working norm, it is expected that this budget will be reviewed for 2022/23.
- Services
  - There is an underspend on the Property Services collaboration costs of £70,000 as a result of the de-coupling with SYP and the current ongoing restructure of the team. This has been reported as part of the Workforce Investment and Efficiencies Plan recently approved by the FRA. These efficiencies will be released as a budget saving in 2022/23.
  - There is an overspend on the joint Fleet collaboration costs of £39,500, however this is offset by underspends on support staff salaries, where the budget for some staff was originally set.
  - Property Services, aligned to the decoupling of the estate with SYP, decided to undertake full condition and fire risk assessment to help baseline future capital investment plans. Normally this would be done annually over a 5 year period. This is likely to result in a £20,000 overspend on professional services.
- ICT & Network
  - The carry forward budget for telephony upgrades to support agile working is fully committed. However, the annual budget allocation has a potential underspend of £78,000, some of which is due to the Service moving to Virtual Server technology. This budget will be reviewed as part of setting the 2022/23 budget.
  - Radio Airwave expenditure has a potential underspend of £30,385 and will be reviewed for 22/23 subject to knowing the final annual cost from Government.
  - IT hardware and software is forecast to have a net overspend of £83,000 mainly due to the service fast tracking the move towards agile working alongside the introduction of virtual service technologies that have helped partially offset this cost pressure.
  - The Financial Systems upgrade has a potential underspend of £28,000 due to a delay in implementation as a result of staff capacity and timing of the elements involved. A request to carry forward this amount will be made at the financial year end.
- Expenses
  - There is a slight overspend on expenditure on food at fires, however this will be offset at quarter 3 by the adjustment of the Fire Safety Volunteers forecast as a result of the continued pandemic.
- Other Miscellaneous
  - Expenditure in this area relates to grants, subsistence, hospitality, and subscriptions. The potential underspend of £21,201 relates to budgets that have been released, as in-year savings, as a result of the pandemic.

- Stronger Safer Community Fund
  - The forecast spend of £590,368 is not budgeted for as this spend is completely offset by a draw down from the SSCR reserve each year. The effect on the service's operating budget is net nil.

**Income**

BUDGET	CURRENT BUDGET	PROJECTED OUTTURN 2021/22	VARIATION
Government Grants	(253,560)	(443,672)	(190,112)
Customer & Client Receipts	(705,132)	(685,103)	20,029
Interest Receivable	(50,000)	(20,000)	30,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>(1,008,692)</b>	<b>(1,148,775)</b>	<b>(140,083)</b>

As with Supplies & Services, the above table shows the snapshot relating to income. Below are the main factors for the over achievement of income currently being reported:

- Government Grants
  - The grants reported in this area are Firelink (National Resilience), New Burdens (Radio Comms), Protection and ESMCP (Emergency Services Network). Currently the Firelink grant is £33,346 above the amount expected when the budget was set and an additional £156,242 has been received in relation to the Protection grant funding to support Business Fire Safety.
- Customer & Client Receipts
  - Income relates fees and charges, other non-government grant income, sales and income from rents. There is an underachievement of £27,320 in relation to the historical budgeted amount, which will not be achieved as a result of the pandemic. This will be reviewed for 22/23.
- Interest Receivable
  - There is a potential £30,000 underachievement from income relating to investments due to the level of funding available and low interest rates.