

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

MONDAY 28 APRIL 2025

Present

Councillor Hogarth (Chair)

Councillor Cherryholme (Vice Chair)

Councillor Alston, Councillor Ayris, Councillor McClean, Councillor Ridler, Councillor Morrell,
Councillor Elliott

David Peet (South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority)

Martin McCarthy (Monitoring Officer)

CFO Chris Kirby, DCFO Andrew Strelczenie, ACFO Simon Dunker, Linda Haigh, Sue Kelsey, Jill
Nanson, Paul Heffernan, Chris Tyler, John Billings, Kayleigh Storer

Zoe Duddell, Rob Longley (Authority Governance Team)

Public - members of the public were present

Item 1 – Apologies

Councillor McKiernan, Councillor Ransome, Councillor Hutchinson, AM Gillatt

Item 2 – Announcements

Welcome from CFO Kirby to the first meeting held since the governance support of the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) from Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) ended on the 31 March 2025. He thanked BMBC colleagues and wider teams for their help and support in this process as well as recognising and welcoming two new Governance Officers. He welcomed any feedback and discussions going forward.

CFO Kirby recognised this to be the last meeting as Chair for Councillor Hogarth and formally thanked for his work as FRA member and time as Chair.

M McCarthy confirmed from Thursday 01 May 2025 Councillor Hogarth would step down as Chair. He confirmed until a new Chair and Vice Chair are voted in at the AGM on the 16 June 2025 that Vice Chair Councillor Cherryholme would be the point of contact.

CFO Kirby provided an overview of the pensions position and advised an update will be brought to next meeting in detail.

Item 3 – Urgent items

Minutes: None

Item 4 – Items to be considered in the absence of the public and press

Minutes: None

Item 5 – Declarations of interest by individual members in relation to any item of business on the agenda

Minutes: None

Item 6 – Reports by members

Minutes: None

Item 7 – Receipt of petitions

Minutes: None

Item 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

Minutes: None

Item 9 – Minutes of the Authority meeting held on Monday 17 February 2025

Minutes: Councillors Ayris had comments on the impact of tariffs that have an update but would raise these when discussed at Item 11 on the agenda.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Authority meeting held on 17 February 2025 are signed by the Chair as a correct record.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

Item 10 - Service Level Agreement (SLA) Update

L Haigh provided Members with a SLA update.

The project is to bring SLA functions in-house following Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council's (BMBC's) termination notice for governance, finance, people, and legal services from 1 April 2025 is nearing completion.

The Monitoring Officer (MO) agreement with West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (WYFRS) for 1 day per week support from 01 April 2025 is signed. Finance and governance appointees are in place, with handover training completed. The Finance Team is preparing for year-end, and the transition's smoothness will be monitored through April and May 2025.

The main risk to the project is retaining the necessary roles and skills for in-house tasks. BMBC has assured continued support after 01 April 2025, though capacity may be limited. Annex A shows anticipated savings from bringing services in-house, with some double running costs in 2024/25.

A separate report will be provided at a future meeting detailing for Members the proposed amendments to the Constitution.

Minutes:

L Haigh repeated thanks to BMBC colleagues.

In response to a query raised by Councillor Alston regarding the Monitoring Officer position CFO Kirby advised of confidence with current position and confirmed that legal guidance is drawn

down from an external provider. The English Devolution White Paper from December 2024 will inform the next steps and may result in reviewing the current position.

Councillor Hogarth welcomed M McCarthy to the Monitoring Officer position.

RESOLVED - That Members:

- 1) Noted the progress of the transition, the duplication of costs in 2024/25 (Annex B), and the estimated annual savings post-31 March 2025 (Annex A).
- 2) Approved the appointment of Martin McCarthy as Clerk and Monitoring Officer from 1 April 2025

Item 11 - Asset Management Board Update

L Haigh provided Members with an Asset Management Board update.

The Asset Management Board (AMB) provides a strategic and critical role as a guardian of South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue's (SYFR) assets. The ABM's objectives are to achieve sustainable finance and efficient (and effective and compliant) use of property, fleet, operational information assets and stock.

This report provides a summary of the quarterly Asset Management Board in January 2025.

Minutes

Following a query raised by Councillor Ayriss regarding whether the Estates Plan will be presented to FRA members ACFO Dunker confirmed there will be more transparency and communication about the work being undertaken regarding Estates, with updates to be presented at Corporate Advisory Group (CAG).

Councillor Ayriss noted that issues with the electronic supply chain have continued to be impacted since the Covid 19 Pandemic and suggested that the Audit Committee look at the wider supply chain and tariff impact as part of Corporate Risk Register updates.

DFO Strelczenie confirmed regular contact with Head of ICT and no significant issues have been highlighted in terms of tariffs. He confirmed that the Executive Team have discussed tariffs at their meetings. He noted members receive a quarterly briefing on the property risk register, assurance has been provided, and any issues will be highlighted.

L Haigh thanked Councillor Ayris for his comment and assured him that this is a known risk but there is no quantification so is not impacting current forecasting, a report on tariffs is also included on the Audit Committee agenda and verbally updated on the Corporate Risk Register.

RESOLVED – That Members:

- 1) ACTION - Noted the contents of the report and to provide further scrutiny and support to enable continuous and effective management of assets.

Item 12 - People and Culture Board Updates Q3 & Q4 2024-5

S Kelsey provided Members with a People and Culture Board Q3 & Q4 2024-5 update.

This report provides a summary of the items raised and discussed at the People and Culture Board in Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 in 2024/25. One meeting was held in Q3 on 11 December 2024 and one meeting was held in Q4 on 12 March 2025.

The People and Culture Board provides a strategic and critical role as a guardian of the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR) People Strategy, in safeguarding and promoting a positive culture and ensuring a modern, sustainable and healthy working environment for our staff and volunteers.

Minutes:

Councillor Alston queried the reasons behind an increase in requests for flexible working and flexible retirement.

In response S Kelsey commented that due to recent changes in legislation this can now be requested from the start of employment which is perhaps the reason for the increase. Regarding flexible retirement S Kelsey commented it is known SYFR have an aging work force, that flexible that flexible retirement is only available to corporate and control staff (pension scheme requirements) and the fact the service has both a significant ageing workforce (with new younger talent coming through) this may provide some reason for the increase.

Following a query raised by Councillor Alston regarding incentives to improve driver numbers, J Billings commented that a driver working group has been established and are working through a

suite of options including potential incentives to increase numbers. He confirmed there has been a small increase of people coming forward and this will continue to be monitored.

In response to a query raised by Councillor Cherryholme regarding operational staff re-engagement S Kelsey confirmed that the policy applies to all staff (operational and corporate) and SYFR look for the skills they require.

RESOLVED – That Members:

- 1) Noted the contents of the report and to provide further scrutiny and support to enable continuing effective management of people issues.

Item 13 - IMPROVES Tool

J Nanson provided Members with an IMPROVES Tool report.

The Local Government Association has produced a set of questions for Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) members to ask senior officers about work to improve culture and inclusion. The IMPROVES tool aims to provide insights for members into our priorities, help clarify uncertain evidence, and ensure they have the information needed for informed decisions and confidence in leadership.

The report provides suggestions about how SYFRA could utilise this tool to seek assurance that our culture improvement journey is appropriate and having the required impact.

Minutes: None

RESOLVED -

- 1) ACTION - To be added to the next available CAG, so Members can be advised of the tool and receive an update on our culture improvement journey to date and future plans.
- 2) ACTION - That the questions in the IMPROVES tool are transferred into an aide memoire.
- 3) ACTION - That an introduction to the tool is included in Members' induction.

- 4) ACTION - The six-monthly culture updates to the FRA are presented with the above areas/questions in mind so that assurance can be provided.
- 5) ACTION - The tool is embedded in the terms of reference for the new FRA People and Culture sub-committee (until this sub-committee is established it is suggested that Performance and Scrutiny Board has a standing agenda item on culture that will encompass the current EDI one).

Item 14 - Joint Community Safety Department Review

C Tyler provided Members with a Joint Community Safety Department Review update.

This report provides a member briefing for the review and proposed restructure of the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR) Joint Community Safety Department (JCSD). The JCSD is a collaborative partnership between SYFR and South Yorkshire Police (SYP) that delivers vital prevention and early intervention services aimed at reducing vulnerability and keeping communities safe.

Minutes:

C Tyler reiterated the paper is a proposal and under consultation which will hopefully end in August 2025, and he will return to present an update to Members in September or October 2025. The new structure will then hopefully be confirmed and approved in April 2026.

Following a query raised by Councillor Alston regarding the roles the review encompassed and if South Yorkshire Police (SYP) were aware C Tyler commented that the review was split into three areas Education, Partnerships and Home Safety for Vulnerable Individuals. C Tyler advised he has held meetings with SYP to discuss their input and how they can work better together.

In response to a request for an update on the Road Safety Partnership from Councillor Ayris C Tyler advised he sits on the Strategic Board for South Yorkshire; this is starting to make progress and there have been appointments from the Mayor's office and Road Safety initiatives are to be expanded.

Councillor Elliott asked about post numbers and if staff would need to reapply for their jobs. C Tyler stated jobs have been ring fenced to the department and that there are no plans for

redundancies but can't guarantee this. He confirmed there are the same number of positions under new proposal alongside some vacant roles.

Councillor Hogarth queried changes to pay and possible reductions. C Tyler commented there was a potential but that it depended on what position was applied for however there is a pay protection policy in SYFR.

RESOLVED – That Members:

- 1) Noted the current position and the commencement of formal consultation with staff and representative bodies on the proposed changes to the structure of the JCSD.

Item 15 - Items for discussion in the absence of the press and public

- Councillor Hogarth thanked the Authority and the Service for his time as Chair.

Summary of actions

Actions	Owner	Timeframe	Status
Review finance risk scoring for tariffs	L Haigh	16 June 2025	Presented at Audit and Governance 23rd May 2025.
For the IMPROVES Tool to be presented at the next CAG on Thursday 12 June 2025 so Members receive an update on our culture improvement journey to date and future plans.	J Nanson	12 June 2025	J Nanson confirmed presentation will be delivered on the 12 June at CAG.
The questions in the IMPROVES tool are transferred into an aide memoire.	J Nanson	31 July 2025	The questions in the IMPROVES tool are transferred into an aide memoire.
An introduction to the IMPROVES tool is included in Members' induction.	J Nanson , Z Duddell, R Longley	31 July 2025	Members pack being updated by Governance Officers and J Nanson is to

			provide updates to be included.
Provide a six-monthly culture updates to the FRA so that assurance can be provided.	J Nanson	20 October 2025	On forward register to go to FRA in October.
The IMPROVES tool is embedded in the terms of reference for the new FRA People and Culture sub-committee (until this sub-committee is established it is suggested that Performance and Scrutiny Board has a standing agenda item on culture that will encompass the current EDI one).	J Nanson	Next Performance and Scrutiny Board is 10 July 2025	Next Performance and Scrutiny Board is 10 July 2025 - confirmed with J Nanson this is to be included in People and Culture update section.