



DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	DSFRA/13/15
MEETING	DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	10 JULY 2013
SUBJECT OF REPORT	“FACING THE FUTURE” - SIR KEN KNIGHT’S INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF EFFICIENCY AND OPERATIONS IN FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Fire Officer
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This report introduces the recently-published report of Sir Ken Knight following his independent review into efficiency and operations in the fire and rescue services in England. The report comments on the headline findings of the review, the full report for which is included (page numbered separately) with the agenda for this meeting.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Subject to the decisions made at both national and local level, significant savings are possible. The Authority will be aware of previous changes already made to make this Service more efficient. Elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting additional savings are presented, many of which accord with the suggestions contained in Sir Ken Knight’s report.
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)	NA
APPENDICES	“Facing the Future” – Findings from the Review of Efficiencies and Operations in Fire and Rescue Authorities in England (enclosed with the agenda for this meeting, page numbered separately)
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	As above.

- 1.1 In December 2012 the Fire Minister, Brendon Lewis MP, The Minister commissioned the then Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor, Sir Ken Knight, to review efficiencies within the Fire Service.
- 1.2 Sir Ken's resultant report, *'Facing the Future: Findings from the review of efficiencies and operations in fire and rescue authorities in England'* was published on 17 May 2013.
- 1.3 Sir Ken said "It is a really good news story that there has been a massive reduction in emergency incidents in the last decade, particularly in fires of all kinds. Fire and rescue authorities have played a pivotal role in this, and have moved from predominantly emergency response organisations to organisations that look to reduce risk. There is little doubt that prevention is better than cure. But the reduction in fire risk is not solely due to the actions of fire and rescue authorities – societal changes, technological improvements, the increase in smoke alarm ownership, safety campaigns and government regulations for both buildings and furniture have played a huge part.
- 1.4 "Deaths from fires in the home are at an all time low; incidents have reduced by 40 per cent in the last decade, but expenditure and firefighter numbers remain broadly the same. This suggests that there is room for reconfiguration and efficiencies to better match the service to the current risk and response context".
- 1.5 Sir Ken's report took an analytical look at the national picture on fire and rescue, in particular on expenditure and the differences between fire and rescue authorities. The statistics used in the report are as recent as possible, based on publicly available data, in most cases, from 2011/12. He did acknowledge that further efficiencies will have been sought and achieved in 2012/13 that are not reflected in this data.
- 1.6 The headline messages were that fire and rescue authorities in England could find a further £200m in savings across a number of areas, some of which in the longer term would need Government enabled transformation for further efficiencies. The £200m saving is largely a broad-brush measure of savings that could be achieved if the top 25% highest spending Authorities reduced their spend.
- 1.7 "Increasing the total 'on-call' firefighters nationally by just 10% (to 40%) could provide annual savings of up to £123 million. All fire and rescue authorities must consider whether 'on-call' firefighters could meet their risk – it is an invaluable cost-effective service".
- 1.8 He also outlined that £17 million could be saved if authorities adopted the leanest structure in their governance types.
- 1.9 Whilst the Government is still considering its response to Sir Ken's report, and the Chairman and I continue to ensure the specific issues for Devon and Somerset are reflected in our grant settlement, we do have to meet the shortfall in budget in the meantime.

LEE HOWELL
Chief Fire Officer