

<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	<b>RC/18/12</b>
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>RESOURCES COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>16 MAY 2018</b>
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>FIRE FUNDING ISSUES</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>Director of Finance (Treasurer)</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<i>That the Committee considers the contents of this report with a view to recommending that the Authority supports a sector-led approach to securing improved funding in preference to developing an individual business case.</i>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	This report advises on actions in train to seek to secure an improved funding settlement for the Authority for the 2019-20 and subsequent financial years.
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	Nil.
<b>EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)</b>	The contents of this report are considered compatible with existing equalities and human rights legislation.
<b>APPENDICES</b>	Nil.
<b>LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	Report DSFRA/18/1 ("2018-19 Revenue Budget and Council Tax Levels")

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. At its budget setting meeting on 16 February 2018 the Treasurer confirmed that, despite representations made by the Authority in responding to the government's Technical Consultation on the proposed local government finance settlement 2018-19, the final settlement had not changed from the provisional finance settlement announced in December 2017. Unlike Police and Crime Commissioners, Fire Authorities had not been offered any precept flexibility beyond the 2.99% referendum threshold.
- 1.2. Stemming from this, the Authority resolved (Minute DSFRA/64(a)(vi) refers):  
"that, for the 2019-20 financial year, a business case on Council Tax referendum limits (reflecting Service need requirements) be developed, with local Members of Parliament engaged in both supporting and promoting this business case".

## **2. CURRENT POSITION**

- 2.1 The Fire Finance Network, at which the Authority is represented by the Treasurer, is currently in the process of developing (under the auspices of the National Fire Chiefs' Council and in liaison with the Home Office) a comprehensive evidence base on fire funding to inform the 2019 Comprehensive Spending Review. This will include consideration of all associated issues including government grant and levels of council tax (including current referendum limits). It is felt that this co-ordinated approach may have a greater impact and afford a better chance of securing improved funding across the whole fire sector than might otherwise be the case from pursuing individual submissions.
- 2.2 A sector led approach would be consistent with that taken by the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC), which was successful in petitioning the Home Office for greater precept flexibility (up to £12 per year) when considering the 2018-19 budget setting.
- 2.3 The Committee may therefore wish to consider advising the Authority of this position with a view to seeking endorsement of the Authority to supporting the sector-led approach highlighted above in preference to supporting an individual business case.

**AMY WEBB**

**Director of Finance (Treasurer)**