

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	DSFRA/20/12
MEETING	DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	23 OCTOBER 2020
SUBJECT OF REPORT	REPORT OF URGENT ACTION (STANDING ORDER 27)
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Fire Officer
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This paper summarises those urgent actions taken by the Chief Fire Officer, following consultation with the Authority Chair, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 27.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	N/A
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS	N/A
APPENDICES	Nil.
BACKGROUND PAPERS	Full details of each of the urgency decisions can be found at the following link .

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1. As with other public authorities, social distancing measures introduced in response to the Covid-19 pandemic have impacted on the Authority's governance arrangements, including the ability to hold formal meetings to determine matters. While Regulations¹ introduced by central government on 4 April 2020 provide for formal meetings to be held "virtually" i.e. with remote access (including telephone and video conference) for Authority Members, the press and public, it has nonetheless been necessary for a number of matters to be determined by the Chief Fire Officer following consultation with the Authority Chair in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 27. As required by that Standing Order, this paper now summarises, for information, those actions taken.

2. **URGENT ACTIONS TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 27**

2.1. The following table details each matter determined in accordance with the urgency provisions of Standing Order 27, together with a brief explanation of why it was considered appropriate to use these provisions. For transparency purposes, full details of each urgency action have been published on the Authority's website and can be accessed by following this [link](#).

NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION
1.	23 March 2020	Approval of Request for retirement and re-employment – Watch Manager (Collaboration).
	Reason:	The current government guidelines relating to social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, at the time of the decision, the Regulations allowing for "virtual" meetings had not been made.
2.	1 May 2020	Approval of Request for retirement and re-employment – Firefighter (USAR technician).
	Reason:	The current government guidelines relating to social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic and as the Authority did not have in place a platform to facilitate "virtual" meetings at the time the decision was required.
3.	12 May 2020	EB Restructure and delegation of authority to the Appraisals & Disciplinary Committee to undertake a process for and appoint to two substantive Assistant Chief Fire Officer posts.
	Reason:	As per (2) above.

¹ The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION
4.	21 May 2020	Cancellation of Authority Annual and Ordinary Meetings 5 June 2020.
	Reason:	The current government guidelines relating to social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic. Regulations issued under Coronavirus Act 2020 provide that annual meetings need not be held in 2020, with any existing appointments to remain in place until the next Annual Meeting. Additionally, the Authority did not have in place a platform to enable the Annual and Ordinary Meetings to take place “virtually” on the scheduled date.
5.	2 June 2020	Related to the 2019-20 budget outturn, approval of the transfer of £2.348m to the Reserve for Capital funding and revisions to the capital programme for 2020-21 to 2022-23. (NOTE: the reports informing these decisions were submitted for information to the Resources Committee meeting on 2 July 2020 and can be found here).
	Reason:	As per (2) above.
6.	10 June 2020	Approval of Remote Meetings Protocol, associated amended Standing Orders and Calendar of Meetings for 2020-21. (NOTE: the Protocol, amended Standing Orders and Calendar of Meetings have been published on the website).
	Reason:	Regulations introduced under the Coronavirus Act 2020 allow for “virtual” local authority meetings until May 2021. The protocol and associated Standing Orders provide for “virtual” meetings to be held by this Authority, in accordance with the Regulations.
7.	17 June 2020	Changes to Committee Memberships 2020-21 Municipal Year.
	Reason:	In the absence of an annual meeting (see (4) above), to give effect to appointments that would otherwise have been made at such a meeting for the remainder of the current (2020-21) municipal year. The changes were necessitated by the appointment to the Authority of Councillor Corvid in place of Councillor Tuffin by Plymouth City Council.

NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION
8.	3 July 2020	Disposal of Budleigh Salterton Fire & Rescue Station.²
	Reason:	Following consultation, closure of the Station was approved by the Authority at its extraordinary meeting held on 10 January 2020. Affected firefighters were operating from Exmouth Fire & Rescue Station. Given this, awaiting the next full Authority meeting was considered an unnecessary delay to progressing disposal.
9.	28 July 2020	Further changes to Committee Memberships 2020-21 Municipal Year.
	Reason:	In the absence of an annual meeting (see (4) above), to give effect to appointments that would otherwise have been made at such a meeting for the remainder of the current (2020-21) municipal year. The changes were necessitated by the appointment to the Authority of Councillor Brazil in place of Councillor Way by Devon County Council.
10.	24 August 2020	Amendment to Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegations – Six month attendance rule. (NOTE: these documents have been published on the website).
	Reason:	The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic has resulted, amongst other things, in some unavoidable disruption to the holding of Authority meetings the effect of which may mean that some Members could otherwise be detrimentally impacted by the effect of Standing Order 10(3), requiring attendance at a minimum of one meeting within a six month period. The revisions to Standing Orders and the Scheme of Delegations are designed to remove the potential for this detrimental impact and provide a transparent and pragmatic solution to resolving associated issues.

LEE HOWELL
Chief Fire Officer

² Subsequent to this decision, the station has been sold with contracts exchanged. In the event, the sale of the station realised a capital receipt of £366,666 as against an independent market valuation of £125,000. In accordance with accounting regulations, the capital receipt has now been included in the Authority's capital funding.