Supporting a governance review

Final Report

December 2020

1. Introduction

1.1. The Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority (the Authority) wanted to step back and check that it is effective in its role and that its structures, processes and other arrangements are fit for purpose and are able to serve the community now and in the future.

1.2. Within the context of HMG's objectives for fire sector reform and the HMICFRS programme, the effectiveness and resilience of the Authority is likely to be subject to scrutiny in the future and Members wish to ensure it can robustly meet such scrutiny of its capability and capacity to secure the delivery of high quality fire and rescue services across the counties of Devon and Somerset.

1.3. Building of the work done in 2019, the Authority sought to review its governance arrangements to ensure that it has in place the right framework to maximise its value and contribution.

1.4. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) was invited to advise and support the Authority Members and Officers in the review of the Authority's governance arrangements to ensure that it is effective in discharging its statutory functions by providing quality oversight and accountability in policy and decision making (including corporate, financial and service plans) to secure overall improvements in the delivery of fire and rescue services.

2. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny

2.1. CfGS is the leading national body promoting and supporting excellence in governance and scrutiny. Its work has a strong track record of influencing policy and practice nationally and locally. CfGS is respected and trusted across the public sector to provide independent and impartial advice.

2.2. CfGS is an independent national charity founded by the Local Government Association (LGA), Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) and Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA). Its governance board is chaired by Lord Bob Kerslake.

3. Review scope and methodology

3.1. The Authority has a constitutional governance framework which is subject to regular review and amended as necessary to reflect either legislative change or best practice. It wished to explore its overall governance arrangements, however, to see how it can strengthen and develop its impact and value in relation to its core functions.

3.2.   Scope:

- **Culture**. The relationships, communication and behaviours underpinning the operation of the Authority. Is there a shared mission within the Authority? This will also involve the Authority's corporate approach in developing policy and strategies and its working relationships with its respective parent councils and the Fire and Rescue Service itself.

- **Information**. How information is prepared, shared, accessed and used in the service of the Authority.

- **Impact**. How effective is the Authority, what value does it contribute? How does it make a tangible and positive difference to the effectiveness of the Service, and to local people?

- **Focus**. How the Authority, through its committee structure, focuses on a programme of work designed to provide oversight, direction and accountability.

- **Structure**. Test the shape of the Authority - is it fit for purpose and does its committee structure provide the most effective platform for its Members to perform its keys tasks responsibilities?

- **Member/Officer relations.** Assess the quality of Member/Officer relations and clarity of respective roles.

- **Member development**. Assess the opportunity for Member development arrangements.

3.3.   CfGS proposed the following broad areas of focus, which were explored through the review:

- **Prioritisation and focus**. Is the Authority focused on the right priorities? How do Members and committees lead and drive improvement and change?

- **Outcomes and impact**. How is the Authority making a difference? Where and how is this demonstrated and presented?

- **Policy and strategy development**. Where and how do Members play an active and leading role in the core plans of the Service, including corporate and service plans, budgets and medium-term financial plans?

- **Holding to account**. How effective is the Authority in discharging its function to hold the CFO and the Service to account for the delivery of an effective service plan and ensuring public safety? Is there open and objective scrutiny?

3.4.   Evidence sourcing:

The following elements acted as a framework for the evidence gathering:

1. Organisational commitment and clarity of purpose
2. Members leading and fostering good relationships
3. Prioritising work and using evidence well
4. Having an impact

3.5.   The evidence gathering consisted of:

- **Desktop work** – a review of the Authority's constitutional governance framework, core strategic plans and a review of agendas, minutes, work plans.

- **Interviews** – interviews with elected Members in Chair roles, committee Members, PCC, senior Officers and governance leads, and partners. All Members were given the opportunity to be interviewed. We are confident that sufficient evidence was captured from a range of elected Members, Officers, and partners.

- **Survey** – we carried out a survey of Members to invite comment more generally. A summary of the findings can be found at Appendix A.

Observation – due to the current Covid-19 restrictions, planned meeting of the Authority have been disrupted. Meetings are now held virtually and are available for public viewing via the Authority's YouTube channel. We have observed those committees which were accessible including: Audit & Performance Review Committee, Standards Committee, Resources Committee, Community Safety & Corporate Planning Committee, Human Resources Management & Development Committee and the full Authority.

- **Member workshops –** three virtual workshops to take feedback on the draft report and recommendations. The outcome of these is reflected in the final version of this report.

4.   Summary of findings - Overall assessment:

4.1.   The Authority is ambitious to ensure that its governance arrangements are fit for purpose, today and to meet future challenges. Whilst it is confident of compliance with governance codes, it is keen to ensure the culture, structure and processes support efficient and effective decision-making which respond to community needs. With potential national developments impacting on its governance, a new inspection regime and elections expected in May 2021, it is a timely opportunity to review and consider improvements.

4.2.   There was a strong view that, in recent years, there have been improvements in the governance culture with increased Member involvement, holding to account and joint working with the Chief Fire Officer, the Executive Board and Committee Chairs. Relations overall between Members, Officers and partners are positive and respectful, and the role of democratic accountability is valued and respected.

4.3.   The majority of those interviewed felt that improvements were however needed for the Authority to operate in a more strategic and efficient way. For many, the current governance model and approach acts as a barrier rather than an enabler to effective decision-making. Consequences of this included frustrations over a lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities, increased operational focus and time spent in Committees with minimal impact beyond advising or information sharing.

4.4. Whilst a minority of people were content with how things were working, most recognised that changes were needed to enable a clearer focus on strategic priorities, greater clarity of roles and responsibilities, and potentially a move to a more streamlined and proportionate governance model.

4.5. Many people recognised that introducing a more strategic approach will require a change in culture and mindset. Without this, process or structure changes will only have a limited impact. Many believed that it was essential for the Authority to lead, and be seen to be leading, its own governance modernisation programme.

5. Governance context

5.1. The COVID pandemic required an immediate change in how the Service operated to continue to protect citizens and communities. During this period, adjustments were also made to how the Authority worked and engaged with the Service, recognising the pressures on resources and lockdown restrictions. Meetings have been moved online and for many people this is working well.

5.2. Whilst the ongoing restrictions continue to present a challenges, particularly with regard to maintaining Member accountability and engagement, those interviewed also saw longer-term benefits from some online working, including less travel, accessibility and a better balance with other commitments and, sometimes, a better quality debate.

5.3. The pending local authority elections in May 2021 are seen as a further driver for change. There was a desire to use this opportunity to achieve the ambition of raising governance standards and creating a safe foundation for any potential change to the membership of the Authority.

5.4. Nationally, there has been further discussions about the potential merging of blue light services and reorganisation of local government. Many of those interviewed were aware of this and there was a mix of views, seeing both risks and opportunities. It was recognised that these changes should also be a driver for the Authority to carry-out this external assessment and agree an improvement plan.

5.5. In January 2020, Her Majesty's Chief inspector of Fire and Rescue Services, Sir Thomas Winsor, published his first annual assessment of fire and rescue services in England[1] based on the inspections carried out between June 2018 and August 2019. He reported that fire and rescue services had not been formally inspected for more than a decade. The National Audit Office published a report on fire and rescue services in 2015, but its focus was solely on their financial sustainability. It was seen as a landmark report and the HMI inspection framework and recommendations is being seen as a significant driver for all fire authorities' strategic priorities.

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[1] https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/state-of-fire-and-rescue-2019-2.pdf

5.6.   Pertinent to this report, the annual assessment described potential barriers to becoming more effective and efficient, which included 'unclear demarcation between political oversight and operational leadership'. The Chief Inspector concluded that 'Chief fire officers should have operational independence to run their services effectively and efficiently to meet the priorities and commitments in their integrated risk management plans'. It recommended that the Home Office should issue clear guidance on the demarcation between governance and operational decision-making to clarify and protect the role of chief fire officer.

6.   Strategic impact

6.1.   Authority Members are articulate and passionate about ensuring the Service is able to deliver the support required to the counties' communities. Improvements have been made in involving Members in setting the strategy and holding to account. It was however felt that that the Authority did not consistently provide the necessary democratic leadership in terms of setting direction, providing strategic oversight and assuring value for money.

6.2.   Time and attention is given to strategic priorities such as the Safer Together Strategy, Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and HMI inspection framework, but this is alongside time also being allocated to issues and decisions that could be considered as operational. The majority of those interviewed were keen to see the Authority focus more of their time on key strategic decisions, risk and the budget in particular.

6.3.   The size of the Authority membership and committee structure also drives how policy, decision-making and oversight is managed. There was evidence of attempts to be strategic by a small number of elected Members, including the Chairs, and Officers, but it is stifled by embedded historical practice and the committee model. Overall this leads to a traditional approach to the Authority's business focused primarily on ensuring effective operational performance rather than looking 3-5 years ahead and having a wider view.

6.4.   The desire to improve was described by several interviewees: "the Authority needs to have clear public outcomes"; "I want the Authority to understand their role and when necessary hold the officers to account. This means that we'll be able to challenge and support. I don't think we are fully equipped to a make an impact" and "We can't stay as we are, so we've got to improve matters. All Members take their role seriously and feel a real responsibility, there is no one there who takes it lightly."

6.5.   Many people recognised that introducing a more strategic approach will require a change in culture and mindset. Without this, changes such as those resulting from new Home Office guidance or any structural change will only have a limited impact. A range of improvement measures will be needed to give the Authority the focus and flexibility to align more easily with strategic priorities and risks as identified through the strategy.

7.   Clarity of purpose and roles

7.1.   There is a perceived lack of clarity in the legislation about where accountability for operational decisions lie, as per the HMI annual inspection report reference, which for some Authority Members is the rationale for the existing approach and focus on operations. The LGA governance guide for Members[2] is however clear that the Authority should be setting strategic policy objectives, keeping with its responsibility in the statutory framework and holding the Chief Fire Officer to account.

7.2.   The Authority's existing scheme of delegation also provides clarity on roles and responsibilities but this is not regularly applied or reinforced by either the Authority or senior Officers. This often leads to a blurring of lines with time being spent on operational areas and decisions beyond the remit of the Authority. The expected new Home Office guidance gives a further impetus for the Authority review and implement a clearer demarcation.

7.3.   There is a significant range in Members' understanding of the Authority's role and purpose. Also levels of engagement vary across the Authority, beyond what you may usually expect in a democratic setting. Some Members are working hard to be strategic, offer insight and challenge and be evidence-led. Others are more comfortable in the operational space, keen to stray into operational detail or are less willing to challenge senior Officers. The team and family ethos is a huge strength of the fire service and some Members have been involved for a long time and see their role as a supportive, civic duty. It is however important to balance this with the strategic responsibilities and the requirement to hold to account.

7.4.   Many of those interviewed felt that it would be beneficial to refresh understanding of the statutory responsibilities of the Authority and delineation of the Member and Officer roles from Member induction onwards. One interviewee with experience of organisational change said "Experience showed that if you get governance right everything will flow from it. It will however take time and needs investment in training and development to support the change".

7.5.   There were regular references to Member's responsibility to scrutinise and hold Officers to account. There was debate about whether this should be happening in a more formal structural way, similar to the leader/ cabinet/ scrutiny model (within the limits of what the law allows for combined fire authorities) or for scrutiny to form an integral part of their role as described by an interviewee: "We need Members to be acting more like scrutineers and to stress test ideas".

7.6.   Members also raised concerns about the lack of public understanding of the role and purpose of the Authority and if there was more that should be done to engage directly with the public, outside of formal consultations.

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[2]

https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/10.35_New_Fire_Authority_Members_Guide_WEB_0.pdf

8. Relationships, behaviours and culture

8.1. Overall, the governance culture is one of positive working relationships between Members and Officers. There is regular and good engagement between the Authority Chair, Chief Fire Officer and the Executive Board. Officers talked positively and understood the role and value of democratic leadership, accountability and decision-making, and work hard to make the current arrangements add value.

8.2. Some Members shared concerns about Officers not sharing information in a timely manner, feeling unsure about what information they could request. Some interviewees cited previous issues relating to commercialisation (Red One), the consultation regarding fire station closures, and transparency of the budget spend as examples.

8.3. Relationships between political groups is co-operative and there is no evidence of politics in decision-making. Whilst there are differences in approach, Members work together to achieve similar goals in Committees. The culture is sometimes traditional and hierarchical in its approach, behaviours were generally respectful and views listened to in meetings. There could be value in introducing a working protocol focused on values and behaviours, particularly if challenging transformation work is undertaken.

8.4. The Chairs appear to work well together and the Chairs meeting is effective and meets regularly with the Chief Fire Officer and other officers on the Executive Board. Members particularly valued the monthly 'Member Forum' which was an informal briefing session and often used to inform policy discussions.

9. Membership and the governance model

9.1. The Authority currently consists of 26 Member representatives of the local authorities plus the two Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). The PCCs joined in 2020 and this is seen as a valuable and important partnership. The Authority membership is the largest in the country and whilst the original rationale in terms of political and geographical representation is understood, many people felt it was now too big to support effective and efficient decision-making. The size of the group limited the quality of debate and time that can be allocated to agenda items to hear views. There were also costs associated with such a large membership.

9.2. The Chair has worked hard to improve the focus, content and quality of Authority meetings and the regular Committee Chairs meetings enable improved co-ordination of business. Chairs of the Committees also work closely with the senior officers. However, the level of engagement can vary and in some instances a lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities in terms of agenda setting in the broadest sense and involvement in operational issues.

9.3.   The Committee structure itself is largely historical in that broadly similar committees have been in place since 1996/97. Again, whilst this will have been appropriate for a period, it was felt that the structure no longer appears to be fit for purpose, in particular to achieving the Authority's ambitions of strategic outcomes, managing risk and delivering value for money and reflecting changing service demands.

9.4.   Some of those interviewed saw value in the Committee structure in that it enabled a wider group of more Members to be involved, thorough consideration of issues and enabled people to build up knowledge and understanding. Most however felt that there were potentially too many committees, with overlaps leading to duplication, particularly as most decisions-making is held by the Authority.

9.5.   From feedback, it was reported that there is not always enough meaningful work for each Committee and they do not consistently add value. It was felt that the cycle of meetings, rather than strategic risks and priorities, is driving the agenda and taking up significant Officer and Member time. One interviewee described the committee structure as being "relevant in theory and then you go along as a committee Member and wonder what you've achieved at the end of it".

9.6.   It was felt that there is value in operating committees if they have a clear purpose aligned to the Authority's priorities or another suggestion was aligning committees with the HMI inspection criteria. There would also be more value if Committees could have decisions delegated to them or they were assigned overview and scrutiny type responsibilities.

9.7.   Formal changes to the governance model which would provide an option for the Authority to operate as an 'executive' type function is limited by the legislation. Although variations on these arrangements have been implemented elsewhere (see section below) and it is therefore possible to introduce some changes within the legislation.

10.   Meetings

(It is necessary to note that due to the Covid-19 restrictions, meetings of the Authority have been disrupted and we are aware that virtual meeting can lack some of features and benefits of normal physical meetings. We have tried to take account of this in our observations and evidence).

10.1.   **Meeting agendas** - Reflecting the various roles of the Authority's Committees, meeting agendas vary quite considerably and suggest that some Committees have much more to do than others. Overall, agendas tend to be information or reporting matters, with much less focus on strategy and forward planning. Some Committees appear to struggle to find suitable agenda subjects which may indicate that there could be options for consolidation. The main Authority meeting also includes a regular set of information reports and receives minutes and recommendations from committees. This may not be an efficient use of its time and may unnecessarily prolong the meeting. For the full Authority, as the key decision-making body, there could be more focus on executive decision-making around policy, strategy and improvement.

10.2. **Quality of discussion** – Members are generally quite knowledgeable about the Service and are capable of asking questions. However, these can often be information gathering questions. Members may see their role in some Committees as providing oversight and scrutiny, rather than shaping and leading strategy. Some Committees by their nature can be rather internally focused. There is limited use of additional knowledge briefings, drawing on external research, benchmarking etc. to assist Members in their deliberations (see para 11.3 below).

10.3. **Chairs** - play a useful role in scene-setting and leading discussion in Committees, although engagement can vary widely. There is a need for greater clarity and understanding on the role of officers and chairs in agenda planning and setting. Whilst it is for officers to set the agendas, Chairs and members should have the opportunity to discuss items to be considered. At the meetings, there was very limited (sometimes no) involvement from some Members and a familiar smaller group of Members who tend to take on much of the discussion. It is worth exploring the reasons for this, especially where some Members may need additional support.

10.4. **Quality of papers/evidence** - Committees tend to be served by reports or presentations produced by Officers. These are high quality and comprehensive, especially finance and performance reports. However, given the number of Committees, it would suggest that a considerable amount of resource is used in serving, reporting and organising committees.

11. Support and training

11.1. A Director with responsibility for governance and a small and experienced team of Officers (two FTE) support the Authority and Committees. In addition, the Authority draws on wider support from the Chief Fire Officer and senior officers. The team is proactively engaged in advising Members and Officers.

11.2. It was agreed that Member services deliver a comprehensive induction for new Members which is valued. With regard to ongoing training and development, it was felt that there is a balance to be struck with the training Members receive at their local authority.

11.3. Members and Officers did however feel there was more scope for focused sessions on statutory responsibilities, roles and responsibilities, strategic priorities, what good looks like, and this could be regularly reinforced/ refreshed. There could also be a more bespoke training and development offered for Chairs, Committee Members on questioning skills, and specific knowledge briefings as required. Also, to be able to draw on external support and expert contributions from the LGA or similar bodies.

12. Governance Models - Comparisons

12.1. Devon & Somerset has the highest number of Members serving on its full authority at 26 (excluding the two PCCs), compared to other CFAs. The Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority (Combination Scheme) Order 2006 states "the Authority shall consist of not more than 25 members" and the existing population formula would currently support a membership of 15; 18; 19; or 20 members.

12.2. Other membership levels below 15 and above 20 would also be possible. However, from a good governance perspective, there are many factors at play when considering an ideal size for a decision-making board, for the Authority this includes population and local authority representation. Taking this into account, we would support a Board size of between 15-20 to provide sufficient depth and diversity, and reflect democratic and political representation.

12.3. Membership on other combined fire authorities range from 10 to 25, the Median being 18 and Average being 19.
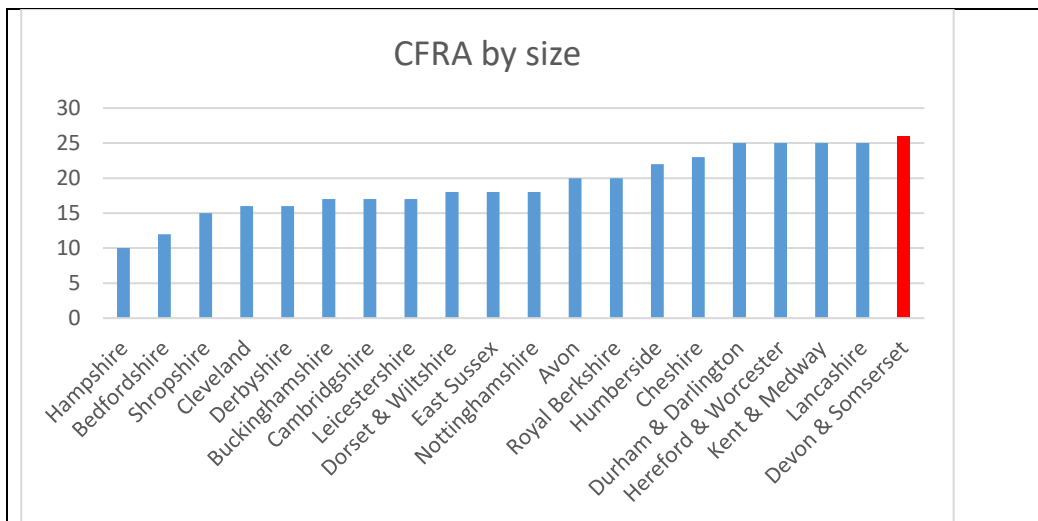
12.4. When considering a committee structure comparison, although some of the other authorities' committees are ad-hoc, Devon & Somerset has the least 'lean' committee structure compared to all other combined fire authorities – the most common number of committees being two.
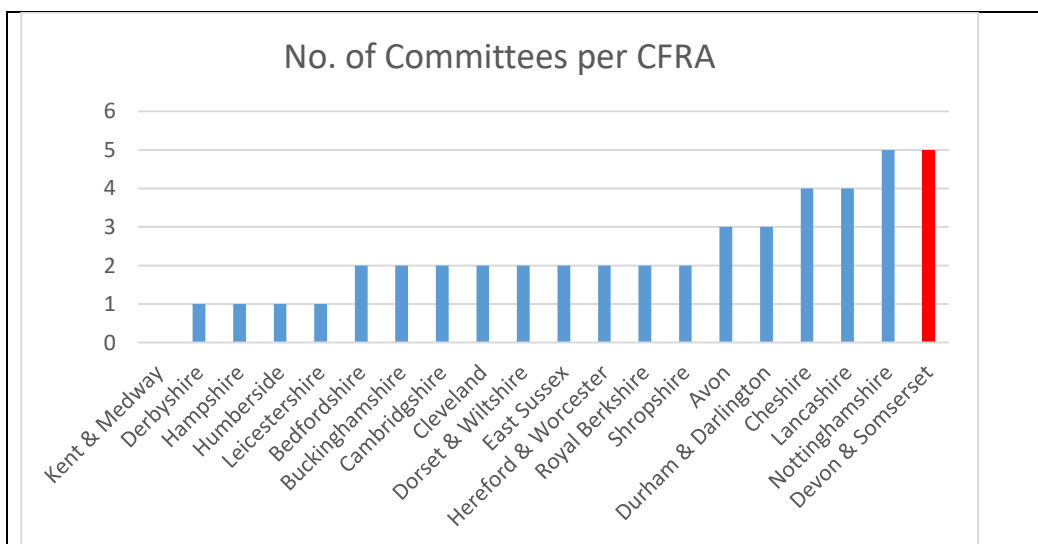
13.   Recommendations

13.1.   The draft recommendations were considered during a series of Member workshops which took place in November 2020, overall there was acceptance of the report findings and analysis, although for some it did not match their experience.

13.2.   The majority of members understood the external drivers for change and felt it was important for the Authority to own governance modernisation. There was broad acceptance of the majority of recommendations.

13.3.   In relation to the recommendation on the governance model, there was a mixed response from Members, with some agreeing that fundamental change was needed, others felt changes should focus on ways of working, and others did not accept the need for any change. Following consideration of the workshop feedback, our independent review remains that a fundamental change is needed to the update and modernise its governance model to support the Authority's ambitions and pre-empt external drivers which could impose radical change on fire authorities and there structures..

13.4.   At the third workshop Members agreed to set up a task group to lead the co-design and feasibility testing of possible new governance model options. The group will report back to the Fire Authority meeting in February 2021 with a view to any accepted being implemented in May 2021.

Review recommendations:

13.5.   **Review and agree the strategic focus and prioritisation** – reflecting on the Authority's statutory purpose and guidance, undertake a review of the Authority's role in leading development of its strategy and overseeing its delivery.

This process could involve:

- agreement of the public outcomes for the Authority and how they will be communicated.
- explaining how the Authority will oversee their achievement e.g. through the development and oversight of the IRMP, budget setting, performance reviews, programme board updates and HMI inspection action plan and preparation.
- describing how policy development, key decisions and oversight will be managed to inform the agreement of a work programme.

13.6.   **Clarity of roles and responsibilities** – flowing from the agreement of the strategic focus and plans, review the scheme of delegation as necessary, reflecting on the need to create a stronger strategic focus and a clear demarcation between political oversight and operational leadership.

13.7. **Governance model review** – with agreement on the strategic focus and roles and responsibilities, it is possible to design an appropriate governance model (form following function).

The overall governance model of the Authority has remained unchanged for a considerable time, whilst the Fire Service itself has undergone several restructures over recent years. Updating its governance model would enable the Authority to demonstrate that it is mindful of the need to ensure that its governance arrangements are effective, efficient and provide value for money.

Our review suggests that a fundamental review of the Authority's structure is overdue and is in need of modernising and simplifying. We are recommending the introduction of a more streamlined, agile and innovative governance model which supports effective and efficient decision-making and oversight.

Two models were presented for consideration and will from part of the work of the task group:

a. A smaller Authority model with fifteen Members which acts as the main decision-making and policy setting forum. It would meet every six weeks and be supported by an Audit, Governance and Standards Committee to provide oversight and assurance.

To manage the distribution of workloads, Lead Members roles are recommended, these roles would create a simple structure for some Members to take on extra responsibility (albeit in a non-decision taking capacity) and grow expertise to support the Authority's capacity and capability.

b. A larger Authority model with twenty Members with a streamlined Committee structure with delegated decision-making. The Authority would meet quarterly and in designing the Committee structure, Members would need to be confident that there would be sufficient decisions which can be formally delegated.

For both options, due to a potentially larger Member commitment, it is recommended that the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances should be reviewed.

13.8. **Meeting management** - update the terms of reference to reflect the new working parameters, including frequency, Member and Officer engagement, etc. and provide new guidance to provide clarity of roles and responsibilities and how this works in practice e.g. agenda setting. Also consider how the experience of online meetings can be used to inform new arrangements.

13.9. **Training and development** - implement a new member training and development programme with a new package of support which equips Members to undertake their role in the Authority.

The programme should include regular refresher briefings, core knowledge sessions, bespoke offers to chairs and others in key roles that includes coaching, mentoring, alongside a more general offer that reflects the skills needed to achieve the Authority outcomes e.g. questioning skills, commercialisation, finance, performance management, data analysis. Also

consider what independent support can be made to the Authority and Members.

13.10. **Adopt a protocol** - Changing will require a new culture, mindset and openness to challenge, this tool is helpful in reinforcing how everyone should be treated and how they should treat others, and Members and staff at all levels will be empowered to challenge any behaviour contrary to the code.

14. Acknowledgments and thank you

15.1. CfGS was commissioned by Devon and Somerset Fire Authority to advice and support in the review of the Authority's governance arrangements. We would like to thank the Members, Officers and partners for their time, insights and open views.

15. CfGS Project Management and Delivery

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Q1: What would you say, in a short sentence or two, is the role of the Fire Authority?

(All answers below displayed using word frequency cloud)

Q2: Is there shared understanding and agreement on the strategic priorities for the Authority across Members and Officers?

Q3: Are Members and Officers involved in the Authority clear on their distinct roles and responsibilites?

Q4: How effective is the Authority in setting a clear strategic direction and supporting the development of key strategic documents e.g. the Fire & Rescue Plan and Integratred Risk Management Plan?

Response	Percentage
Extremely effective	30.00%
Effective	60.00%
Moderately Effective	10.00%
Not very effective	0.00%
Not effective at all	0.00%

Q5: How effective is the Authority in holding to account the Chief Fire Officer and other senior officers for delivery of these plans?

Response	Percentage
Extremely effective	40.00%
Effective	30.00%
Moderately Effective	20.00%
Not very effective	10.00%
Not effective at all	0.00%

Q6: Where does the Authority spend most of its time - looking into strategy, policy development and holding to account or operational management?

Category	Value
Mainly forward looking at strategy, policy development and holding to account	40.00%
Mainly focused on operational management	10.00%
An equal mix	50.00%

Q7: What is the Authority's role in setting the strategic direction including developing the budget? (Select all that apply)

Category	Value
The process is fully Member-led and co-ordinated	1
Members are involved in the early stages and drive the process	5
It is mainly involved in the later stages when it is finalised	4
It is hardly involved in strategy and budget planning, its mainly officer-led	1
The authority tends to focus on how the budget is spent and tracking performance	3

Q8: Are there sufficient opportunities for the public to input into the work of the Authority?

Q9: Is the Authority effective in communicating with the public during strategy setting and in terms of its accountability?

Q10: How would you describe the governance culture at the Authority? (Select all that apply)

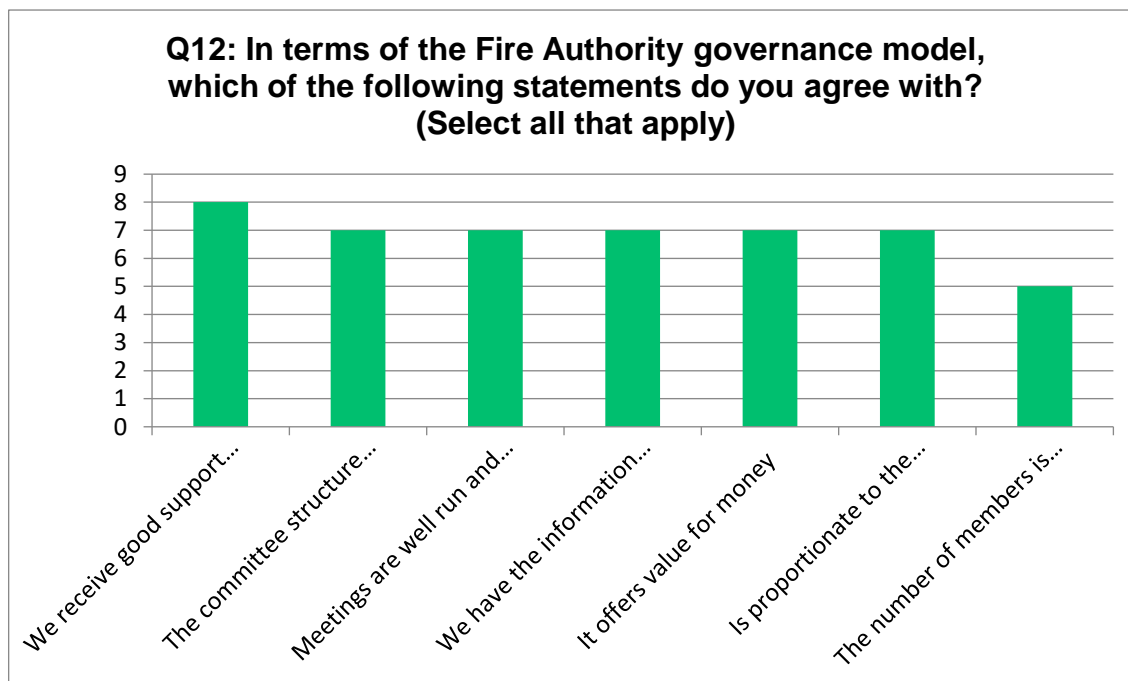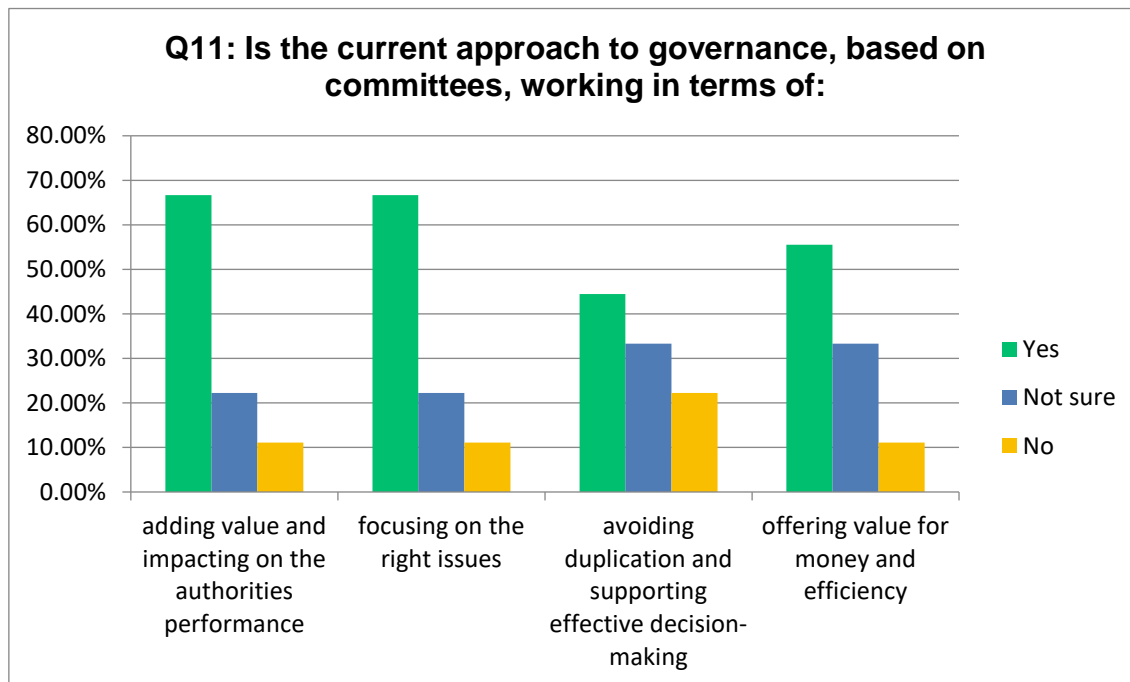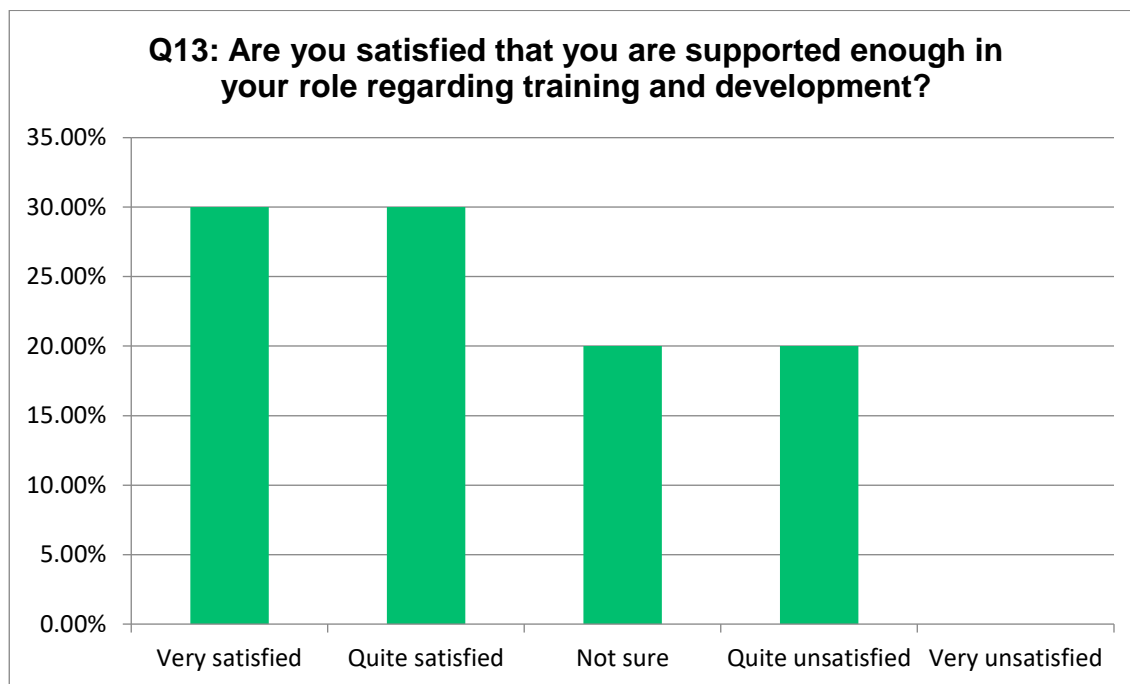| Answer	Value
Those involved in...	9
It is open and transparent	8
The Authority makes...	8
There are good working...	8
There are good working...	7
The Authority is focused on...	6
It is making an impact and...	6
There is clarity of purpose,...	5
The Authority welcomes...	5

Q10 Answer Choices

- Those involved in governance have easy access to the right information to make decisions

- It is open and transparent

- The Authority makes decisions that are ethical and based on evidence

- There are good working relationships between the Authority and officers – trust, confidence and open to challenge

- There are good working relationships between members – trust, confidence and open to challenge

- The Authority is focused on the right priorities

- It is making an impact and adding value to the Service

- There is clarity of purpose, roles and responsibilities including delegation

- The Authority welcomes external scrutiny

Q11: Is the current approach to governance, based on committees, working in terms of:

Q12: In terms of the Fire Authority governance model, which of the following statements do you agree with? (Select all that apply)

Q13: Are you satisfied that you are supported enough in your role regarding training and development?

Chart data:
- Very satisfied: 30.00%
- Quite satisfied: 30.00%
- Not sure: 20.00%
- Quite unsatisfied: 20.00%
- Very unsatisfied: 0.00%

Q14: Is there any specific training or development that would help you be more effective in your role?

Answers included:

- "Aims and objectives of committees."
- "Further training on the role of Members with the Authority Trading Arm company. More training for leadership roles/strategic policy making."

Q15: Is there any aspect of the governance of the Authority you would describe as good practice and be keen to keep?

Answers included:

- "I feel that not enough use is made of the excellent Members Forums. Authority Members should be actively encouraged to make these meeting mandatory. Much good work and understanding of the wider issues comes from these Forums."
- "I like the use of the Members Forum to discuss issues in depth ahead of main Authority Meetings."
- "A free open vote on all issues."

Q16: Is there any specific aspect of the governance of the Authority you would like to improve or change?

Answers included:

- "Reform the Committee Structure, avoid duplication, speed up decision making. Have more thorough Member involvement in the budget setting process."

- "I think the Authority is too large for its role, though reducing its size would make the representative function more problematic."

- "Better scrutiny and more defined targets/KPI's. All members of the authority need to understand better what we do so that we are willing to challenge. Subgroups can help build knowledge and involvement."