

**EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY**

**Minutes of the meeting of the East Sussex Fire Authority held at East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, 20 Upperton Road, Eastbourne at 10.30 hours on Thursday 18 June 2015.**

**Present:** Councillors Barnes, Buchanan, Butler, Deane, Earl, Galley, Howson (Chairman), Lambert (Vice-Chair), Morris, O'Quinn, Peltzer Dunn, Penn, Scott, Taylor, Theobald, Whetstone and Wincott.

N.B. Councillor Whetstone attended the meeting in place of Councillor Pragnell, having been nominated by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the relevant Group spokesperson.

**Also present:**

Mr. D. Prichard (Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive), Mr. G. Walsh (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), Mr. G. Ferrand (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), Mrs C. Rolph (Assistant Chief Officer), Mr. D. Savage (Treasurer), Miss. E Woodley (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Mr. W. Tricker (Head of Finance and Procurement), Mr. J. Salmon (Estates Manager), Mrs. A. Bryen (Clerk) and Mr. C. Reed (East Sussex County Council) (for items 856 and 860).

**843. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

- 843.1 It was noted that, in relation to matters on the agenda, no participating Member had any disclosable pecuniary interest under Section 30 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 843.2 Councillor Taylor informed the Fire Authority that he was a member of the Planning Committee at Eastbourne Borough Council, and as the Fire Authority had not yet decided whether or not it may submit a planning application in connection with the current Service Headquarters building (item no. 857 on the agenda), he would abstain from voting on this item although this was not a pecuniary interest.

**844. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

- 844.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Monitoring Officer that set out the procedures governing the election of Chairman and invited the Authority to appoint a Chairman for the ensuing year. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 844.2 It was proposed by Councillor Scott and seconded by Councillor O'Quinn, that Councillor Wincott be elected as Chair of the Fire Authority. It was further proposed by Councillor Barnes and seconded by Councillor Buchanan that Councillor Howson be elected as Chairman of the Fire Authority. There were no other nominations.
- 844.3 A roll call was taken and 11 votes were cast for Councillor Howson and 6 votes cast for Councillor Wincott.
- 844.4 **RESOLVED** – That Councillor Howson be appointed Chairman of the Fire Authority for the ensuing year.

845. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

845.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Monitoring Officer that set out the procedures governing the election of Vice-Chairman and invited the Authority to consider whether it wished to appoint a Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year. (Copy in Minute Book).

845.2 It was proposed by Councillor Scott and seconded by Councillor O'Quinn, that Councillor Wincott be elected as Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority. It was further proposed by Councillor Galley and seconded by Councillor Buchanan that Councillor Lambert be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority. There were no other nominations.

845.3 A roll call was taken and 12 votes were cast for Councillor Lambert and 5 votes cast for Councillor Wincott.

845.2 **RESOLVED** – That Councillor Lambert be appointed Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority for the ensuing year.

846. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

846.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Sheppard. Councillor Whetstone attended the meeting in place of Councillor Pragnell.

847. **URGENT ITEMS AND CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

847.1 There were no urgent items for consideration.

847.2 **Former Councillor Beryl Healy**

The Fire Authority recorded its sincere condolences to the family and friends of Beryl Healy, who had tragically died following an accident at her home earlier in June and stood in silence in respect of her memory.

847.3 **Councillors Adrian Morris, Jackie O'Quinn and Caroline Penn**

The Chairman welcomed Councillors Adrian Morris, Jackie O'Quinn and Caroline Penn to their first meeting of the Fire Authority, having been appointed by Brighton & Hove City Council.

847.4 **Former Councillor Christopher Hawtree**

The Chairman welcomed Christopher Hawtree to the meeting and presented him with a rose bowl as a memento of his service on the Fire Authority. The Fire Authority thanked Christopher Hawtree for his contributions to the Fire Authority's work during the past three years including his membership of the Policy & Resources Panel. Members wished him well in his future career.

847.5 **DCFO Gary Walsh**

The Fire Authority congratulated DCFO Gary Walsh on being awarded the Queen's Fire Service Medal announced in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. Gary had been recognised for his contributions to the Fire & Rescue Service both locally and at a national level.

847.6 Trevor Green

The Fire Authority recorded its congratulations to Trevor Green on being awarded an MBE also announced in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. Trevor had been recognised for his contribution as a community volunteer and for his work with the charity Operation Florian.

848. **TO CONSIDER PUBLIC QUESTIONS, IF ANY**

848.1 There were none.

849. **TO CONSIDER PUBLIC PETITIONS, IF ANY**

849.1 There were none.

850. **NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2015**

850.1 **RESOLVED** – That the non-confidential Minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman. (Copy in Minute Book).

850.2 In relation to minute no. 833.B.4, Councillor Deane asked what progress was being made to continue identifying and agreeing savings. She referred to the 8 fires that had occurred in the City during the same week, and asked how the Service had managed that situation and how it would cope in future similar circumstances given that a fire appliance was being removed from the City.

850.3 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive explained the mature arrangements that were in place for responding to incidents across the whole of the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, an area that covered East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove. Appliances were moved across the County and City to provide cover when required and mutual cover arrangements were in place with neighbouring Fire & Rescue Services.

850.4 Councillor Deane commended the Service for the way it had dealt with multiple incidents.

851. **CALLOVER**

851.1 Members reserved the following items for debate:

852 Political Representation on Panels of the Fire Authority

855 Communications & Engagement Strategy 2015-2020

856 Local Firefighters' Pension Board – Update

857 Service Headquarters – Stage 3 report

851.2 **RESOLVED** – That all other reports be resolved in accordance with the recommendations as detailed below.

852. **POLTICAL REPRESENTATION ON THE PANELS OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY**

852.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Monitoring Officer that sought agreement to secure the political balance on the Authority's Panels in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 and to allocate seats to the Panels accordingly. (Copy in Minute Book).

852.2 Councillor Barnes informed the Fire Authority that he had been appointed as Leader of the Conservative Group on the Fire Authority and would therefore be serving on the Principal Officer Appointments Panel in accordance with the current terms of reference. This position had previously been taken by Councillor Theobald. Her experience gained from attending earlier meetings of that Panel, particularly in connection with the current recruitment process for the post of Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, would be lost.

852.3 Since the Panel's constitution had been agreed in December 2014, local government elections had been held in Brighton & Hove City Council resulting in a change of political representation on the Fire Authority from Brighton & Hove City Council. Councillor Barnes proposed that the Panel's constitution be amended for the ensuing year to include one additional member of the Conservative Group to those already appointed to it. Councillor Barnes proposed Councillor Theobald for this additional place, thereby retaining her knowledge and providing representation on the Panel for Brighton & Hove City Council which would otherwise be absent given that all political group leaders were currently East Sussex County Councillors. Councillor Lambert seconded the proposal.

852.4 Upon a vote, the Fire Authority agreed that the constitution of the Principal Officer Appointments Panel be increased by one place and this be allocated to the Conservative Group for the ensuing year.

852.5 **RESOLVED** that:

i) the Panel arrangements and political representation be as follows:

<u>Panel</u>	<u>Political Representation</u>
Scrutiny & Audit	3 Cons, 2 Lab, 1 LibDem, 1 UKIP
Policy & Resources	3 Cons, 2 Lab, 1 LibDem, 1 UKIP
Human Resources	3 Cons, 2 Lab, 1 LibDem, 1 UKIP
Urgency	3 Cons, 2 Lab, 1 LibDem, 1 UKIP

Additionally, the following Panels do not have to be politically balanced, as agreed by the Fire Authority on 12 December 2014:

Principal Officer Appointments	Group Leaders + Chairman of the Fire Authority if not a Group Leader + one place allocated to the Conservative Group
Pensions Board	TBC (see minute no. 856 below)

- ii) the Panels be asked to elect their Chairmen in accordance with Standing Order 41.14; and
- iii) it be noted that a further report will be submitted to the Scrutiny & Audit Panel on 17 September 2015 suggesting a new approach for Member Leads.
- iv) the constitution of the Principal Officer Appointments Panel be increased by one place and this be allocated to the Conservative Group for the ensuing year.

853. **FIRE AUTHORITY AND PANEL MEETINGS 2015/16**

- 853.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Monitoring Officer that set out the dates of meetings of the Fire Authority and Panels for the next 12 months. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 853.2 The Authority's Standing Orders required the dates of Fire Authority meetings to be notified annually in advance.
- 853.3 **RESOLVED** – That the following dates of meetings of the Fire Authority and Panels for the next 12 months be noted.

Date:	Meeting:
9 <sup>th</sup> July 2015 *	Scrutiny & Audit and Policy & Resources Panels
10 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	Fire Authority
17 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	Scrutiny & Audit Panel
5 <sup>th</sup> November 2015	Scrutiny & Audit and Policy & Resources Panels
10 <sup>th</sup> December 2015	Fire Authority
14 <sup>th</sup> January 2016	Scrutiny & Audit and Policy & Resources Panels
11 <sup>th</sup> February 2016	Fire Authority
12 <sup>th</sup> May 2016	Scrutiny & Audit and Policy & Resources Panels
16 <sup>th</sup> June 2016	Fire Authority

Meetings of the Fire Authority to commence at 10.30 hours  
 Meetings of the Panels to commence at 10.00 hours

All meetings to take place at Service Headquarters, 20 Upperton Road,  
 Eastbourne BN21 1EU

\*Note – the Panel meetings due to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> July have since been cancelled.

854. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT – STEWARDSHIP REPORT FOR 2014/15**

- 854.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Treasurer that covered treasury activity for 2014/15 and the prudential indicators related to that activity. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 854.2 The Fire Authority had complied with its approved Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators for the year.
- 854.3 In challenging economic conditions the average rate of interest received through Treasury Management activity was 0.51%. This reflected the Fire Authority's continuing prioritisation of security and liquidity over yield.
- 854.4 No new borrowing had been undertaken in 2014/15, with total loan debt outstanding remaining at £11.123m at an average interest rate of 4.62%. There were no beneficial opportunities to reschedule debt during the year. The outturn of the Fire Authority's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), a measure of the underlying need to borrow, was £11.123m.
- 854.5 **RESOLVED** – That the treasury management performance for 2014/15 be noted.

855. **COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2015-2020**

- 855.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that presented a revised Communications and Engagement Strategy for 2015-20 and Communications Equality Guide. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 855.2 ESFRS had ambitious plans for the future in terms of campaign and partnership work. This revised communications and engagement strategy would help deliver those aims. It would also assist ESFRS in meeting obligations in relation to consultation and engagement with both the public and staff as the Service looks to transform itself.
- 855.3 Councillor Galley suggested that the communications activities listed in para 3.2.8 of the strategy should be widened to include national events for example, patriotic memorial events and more recent conflicts. He suggested that the Communications Equality Guide be reconsidered with a view to taking into account issues faced by all sections of the community and to it being written in plainer terms.
- 855.4 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive informed Members that this was a guide for staff to help them develop a greater understanding of communicating with the wide range of community groups within the Service's area. The information in the guide had been taken from various government sources. The Service sought to continue its good record of inclusivity. ACO Chery Rolph reminded Members of the Fire Authority's statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to prepare Equality Impact Assessments. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive suggested that it may be helpful to amend a specific part of the guidance to give consideration to the use of words or phrases.

855.5 Councillor Deane supported the Guide and said that ESFRS should take advantage of all opportunities to reach all sections of the community. Councillor Scott also supported the Guide, and recognised that ESFRS was an inclusive organisation.

855.6 Councillor Barnes, supported the Communications & Equality Strategy but felt that the Guide did not reflect current language and the use of different words that constantly changed over time. The Service's policy should be to use appropriate language and not to cause offence. Although it was suggested that the Strategy be reviewed in 2020, ACO Rolph informed Members that this would be considered annually to ensure that it remained up to date, particularly with regard to the use of language.

855.7 Councillor Butler asked that consideration be given to engaging an apprentice to the journalism and media section of the Service and to recording meetings of the Fire Authority as part of the Communications and Engagement Strategy.

855.8 **RESOLVED** – That

- (i) the revised Communications and Engagement Strategy for 2015-20 be approved;
- (ii) it be noted that the Communications and Engagement Strategy and the Communications Equality Guide will be reviewed annually by officers to ensure they included current terminology; and
- (iii) the Communications Equality Guide be approved subject to the wording being amended from 'use' to 'consider using' wherever it occurred in the document as appropriate.

856. **LOCAL FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION BOARD – UPDATE**

856.1 The Fire Authority considered a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, Treasurer and Monitoring Officer that updated Members on the progress for appointing members to the Local Pension Board and appointing a Chair. (Copy in Minute Book).

856.2 The Authority had previously agreed the establishment of a Pension Board in relation to the Firefighters Pension Scheme. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive informed Members that 4 employee groups represented by the Fire Brigades' Union, Retained Firefighters Union, Fire Officers Association and the Association of Chief Fire Officers, had been invited and had agreed to nominate a representative to serve on the Local Pension Board. Four employer representatives would now need to be appointed to the Board. The Local Government Association was developing a training package for Board Members.

856.3 The Treasurer said that Councillors Earl, Butler, Taylor and Penn had expressed an interest in serving on the Board. There were no other expressions of interest.

856.4 The Fire Authority had previously agreed that the Chair of the Board should be an Authority appointed Chair. Members were asked if they wished the Fire Authority to appoint a Chair of the Board now, or leave it to the Board to do this at its first meeting.

856.5 **RESOLVED** – That

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) Councillors Butler, Earl, Penn and Taylor be appointed to the Local Pension Board; and
- (iii) the Board be asked to appoint its Chairman at its first meeting.

857. **SERVICE HEADQUARTERS – STAGE 3 REPORT**

- 857.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that presented the business case on a relocation of Service Headquarters to the Sussex Police site in Lewes. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 857.2 Mr C Reed (ESCC), Asset Investment Manager with East Sussex County Council (ESCC), was invited to answer relevant questions from Members. He had written the Disposal Strategy Options Appraisal (exempt information under paragraph 3 of the Local Government Act 1972 and set out in item no 860). Mr Reed declared that as part of his role with ESCC, he managed a Service Level Agreement with Sussex Police and was acting for Sussex Police on the Heads of Terms agreement.
- 857.3 Members were reminded that the Policy & Resources Panel on 28 May 2015 had considered this report and had recommended the Fire Authority to approve option 2, the relocation of Service Headquarters (SHQ) to the Sussex Police site in Lewes with the delivery of touchdown space elsewhere in the ESFRS estate.
- 857.4 Members had considered the stage 2 asset appraisal in November 2014 and had agreed to progress with a stage 3 outline business case for the relocation of Service Headquarters (SHQ) to a shared facility with Sussex Police in Lewes.
- 857.5 The work undertaken around ESFRS's future workspace requirements and future ways of working showed that the Service could operate within a much smaller footprint.
- 857.6 Councillor Galley commented on the apparent distance between the Training Block and Malling House and the potential for their being a separation of senior managers from other staff. Councillor Barnes said that the move to Sussex Police presented an opportunity for agile working which would benefit all staff including senior managers. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive reminded Members of the existing culture and way of working in ESFRS which was one of inclusive and shared working and that managers at all levels were encouraged to regularly get out of their offices and to talk to their staff.
- 857.7 Councillor Scott said that whilst supporting the relocation of Service HQ to Lewes, the impact should be discussed with Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council. He welcomed the future development of a green travel plan.



- 857.8 Councillor Theobald asked about the different break clause options for both Malling House and the Training Block, and about car parking for staff and Members of the Fire Authority. Mr Salmon informed Members that the different break clauses gave greater flexibility for ESFRS to adjust to future requirements for office accommodation. ACFO Ferrand informed Members that Sussex Police were seeking to expand the car parking facilities on the site and there may be opportunities for more spaces to become available to ESFRS at a cost.
- 857.9 Councillor Lambert suggested that Members did not fetter officers' discussions and their ability to achieve the best possible outcomes for the Fire Authority regarding the future of the current SHQ building in Eastbourne.
- 857.10 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive informed Members that there would be suitable meeting room accommodation at Lewes (not shown on the office layout plans). Negotiations were continuing with Sussex Police on options for rent and service charges, and upfront payments. The relocation of Service HQ to Lewes would set a framework for the transformation of future service delivery.
- 857.11 Members considered the exempt information presented in item no. 860 when the press and public had been excluded from the meeting, before making the decisions set out below.
- 857.12 **RESOLVED** - That
- (i) option 2, the relocation of Service Headquarters (SHQ) to the Sussex Police site in Lewes with the delivery of touchdown space elsewhere in the ESFRS estate be approved;
  - (ii) the Capital Programme be varied to include the capital scheme SHQ relocation for £650,000;
  - (iii) the one-off revenue costs of £0.276m be funded from the Improvement & Efficiency earmarked reserves;
  - (iv) authority be delegated to the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, in consultation with the Treasurer and Monitoring Officer, to agree the draft terms of the leases for the Sussex Police site and the Policy & Resources Panel be asked to approve the final terms of the leases;
  - (v) disposal of the existing SHQ site at Upperton Road be approved;
  - (vi) authority be delegated to the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, in consultation with the Treasurer and Monitoring Officer, to agree the draft terms of the disposal of the Upperton Road site in line with the best consideration reasonably obtainable and the Policy & Resources Panel be asked to approve the final terms of the disposal; and
  - (vii) the implementation of the agile programme to support future working styles and future Service transformation be commenced.

Councillor Taylor abstained.

858. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

858.1 **RESOLVED** – That items nos. 859 and 860 be exempt under the paragraphs indicated below of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 and accordingly are not open for public inspection on the following grounds:

859 Paragraphs 1 and 3 - includes information relating to an individual and includes information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and includes information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

860 Paragraph 3 - includes information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The meeting concluded at 13:10 hours.

Signed

Chairman

Dated this 10th day of September 2015.