

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Minutes of the meeting of the POLICY & RESOURCES PANEL held at East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, 20 Upperton Road, Eastbourne, at 11.30 hours on Thursday 28 May 2015.

Members Present: Councillors Barnes, Deane, Lambert (Chair of the meeting), Pragnell, Scott and Theobald.

N.B. Councillor Deane attended the meeting as the Green Party representative pending a review of the political balance on the Authority's Panels at the annual meeting of the Fire Authority on 18th June 2015.

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) (until 12:10 hours), Mr. D. Savage (Treasurer), Mr. W. Tricker (Head of Finance & Procurement), Mrs L Ridley (Head of Performance Management), Mr. J. Salmon (Estates Manager), Mr M O'Brien (Director of Response & Resilience), Miss L. Woodley (Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Mrs. A. Bryen (Clerk).

977a. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING**

In the absence of Councillor Howson, the Chairman of the Panel, Councillor Lambert was elected Chair for the meeting.

977. **DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

977.1 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.

978. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

978.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Howson.

979. **ANY OTHER NON-EXEMPT ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN/CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

979.1 There were no urgent items for consideration.

980. **NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES PANEL MEETING HELD ON 15 JANUARY 2015**

980.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (Copy in Minute Book).

981. **CALLOVER**

981.1 Members reserved the following item for debate:

983. Review of the Provision of Large Animal Rescue Capability

982. **PROVISIONAL REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2014/15**

982.1 Members received a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and Treasurer that advised Members about the provisional revenue and capital budget outturn for 2014/15 along with an updated analysis of reserves and balances. (Copy in Minute Book).

982.2 The provisional Revenue Budget outturn for 2014/15 was projected to be £672,000 or 1.7% underspent (previously forecast as £132,000 underspend). This was primarily due to an underspend of £636,000 in IMD mainly as a result of delays in progressing a number of significant projects. It was proposed that the underspend was transferred to balances, £484,000 as a carry forward for slipped projects and £188,000 to the Capital Programme Reserve.

982.3 The overall Five Year Capital Programme was projected to be under budget by £71,000 (previously reported as £43,000). The underspend of £2,766,000, in the 2014/15 budget outturn was primarily due to the re-phasing of the Newhaven Fire Station project and a number of other property schemes (previously forecast as a £2,047,000 underspend).

982.4 The projected year end figure for total usable reserves had increased by £4.6m from the original plans primarily due to lower than anticipated drawdown to fund the Capital Programme (£2.6m), accelerated income from the sale of Service Housing (£1.3m) and delays in the implementation of the Norman vs Cheshire judgement (£0.6m).

982.5 The report informed the Panel of the savings of £2.023m taken from the 2014/15 budget. The shortfall of £429,000 was a result of delays in implementation, primarily of Sussex Control Centre (SCC) and Locality Managers.

982.6 Borrowing and investment were in line with the approved Treasury Management Strategy. The performance of these budgets as at 31 March 2015, was reflected in the Revenue Budget.

982.7 **RESOLVED** – that:

- i. the fee for Commercial Training at the Customers site be set at £595 per session for 2015/16; and
- ii. the following be noted:
 - (a) the provisional 2014/15 Revenue Budget outturn;
 - (b) the provisional 2014/15 Capital Budget outturn;
 - (c) the actual use of Reserves;
 - (d) that the shortfall in 2014/15 savings was managed within the overall revenue underspend;

- (e) the proposed transfer of the 2014/15 revenue underspends to earmarked reserves set out in paragraph 5.5 of the report; and
- (d) the capital programme slippage in Appendix 3 to the report.

983. **REVIEW OF THE PROVISION OF LARGE ANIMAL RESCUE CAPABILITY**

- 983.1 Members considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that updated them on the outcomes of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) review into the provision of large animal rescue capability to Kent Fire & Rescue Service and the development of a revised call handling and charging protocol for large animal rescue incidents within East Sussex. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 983.2 East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS) had a widely respected, long and established tradition of responding to and extricating large animals (livestock and horses) which had become trapped. A specialist response capability was based at Crowborough Community Fire Station. The CFO&CE informed Members that as part of this specialist response team, firefighters had been trained in animal husbandry at Plumpton College. Where appropriate, veterinary support was provided at rescues. He assured Members that fire cover was not compromised when firefighters were otherwise engaged in animal rescues.
- 983.3 In March 2008, the Authority (ESFA) and Kent & Medway Towns FA (KFRA) had entered into a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for discharging large animal rescue (LAR) operations in and around the West Kent area.
- 983.4 Under Phase 3 of the Medium Term Financial Plan and related IRMP, Kent FRS had been consulted about establishing a full cost recovery basis for large animal rescues and a new and updated MoU was to be agreed.
- 983.5 ESFRS's Corporate Management Team had considered ESFRS's approach to LAR within its area, including ways of providing more clarity about when a charge may be reasonably levied. A revised call challenge procedure was to be introduced with three core lines of enquiry intended to reduce call demand in the long term.
- 983.6 Further development was required before charging could commence for LAR in both Kent and East Sussex although it was expected that this would be completed within the current financial year in both cases.
- 983.7 The Panel welcomed the proposals in the report.
- 983.8 **RESOLVED** – That the following developments be noted:
- i. a revised Memorandum of Understanding with Kent & Medway Towns Fire Authority based on a revised set of charges predicated on full cost recovery for large animal rescue provision into their area; and
 - ii. a revised call handling and charging protocol for large animal rescue incidents occurring within East Sussex.

984. **CORPORATE PERFORMANCE TARGETS UP TO 2015/16**

984.1 Members received a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that presented the corporate performance indicator targets up to 2015/16 (base line 2010/11) for approval for inclusion in the Service's Planning documents. (Copy in minute book).

984.2 In May 2011, the Panel had agreed strategic performance indicator targets for application in 2011/12 that covered the five year period up to 2015/16. The targets were set to achieve incremental improvements in the majority of service delivery indicators, such as incidents attended, deaths and injuries.

984.3 The indicators and targets were reviewed annually against projected performance results. In some instances, due to better than expected performance or changes in Service provision, Directorates may suggest a revision to the targets based on projected performance.

984.4 **RESOLVED** – That

- i. the performance indicator targets for application in 2015/16 onwards contained in Appendix 1 to the report be approved; and
- ii. the existing 'Top set' of strategic indicators for 2015/16 as set out below, be confirmed:
 - Percentage of HSVs to the vulnerable members of our community
 - Number of accidental fires in dwellings
 - Percentage of accidental dwelling fires confined to room of origin
 - Percentage reduction of automatic fire alarms
 - Number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence for all staff

985. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

985.1 **RESOLVED** – That item 986 be exempt under paragraph 4 and item 987 be exempt under paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 and, accordingly, are not open for public inspection on the following grounds:

Paragraph 4 - that it includes information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

Paragraph 1 – that it includes information to any individual.

The meeting concluded at 12:30 hours.

Signed

Chairman

Dated this Day of

2015

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

The Policy & Resources Panel, at its meeting on 5th November 2015, approved the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 28 May 2015 as a correct record, and in so doing, agreed that minute no. 986 - Service Headquarters Stage 3 Report - shall be made available to the press and public. The report and background papers relating to this minute are to remain exempt from publication under paragraph 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 on the grounds that they include information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority; accordingly, they are not open for public inspection.

Minute no. 986 of the Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the POLICY & RESOURCES PANEL held at East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, 20 Upperton Road, Eastbourne, at 11.30 hours on Thursday 28 May 2015 is set out below.

Members Present: Councillors Barnes, Deane, Lambert (Chair of the meeting), Pragnell, Scott and Theobald.

N.B. Councillor Deane attended the meeting as the Green Party representative pending a review of the political balance on the Authority's Panels at the annual meeting of the Fire Authority on 18th June 2015.

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), Mr. W. Tricker (Head of Finance & Procurement), Mrs. L. Ridley (Head of Performance Management), Mr. J. Salmon (Estates Manager), Mr. M. O'Brien (Director of Response & Resilience), Miss L. Woodley (Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Mrs. A. Bryen (Clerk).

986. **SERVICE HEADQUARTERS STAGE 3 REPORT (EXEMPT CATEGORY UNDER PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972)**

986.1 Members had considered the stage 2 asset appraisal in November 2014 and had agreed to progress with a stage 3 outline business case on the relocation of Service Headquarters (SHQ) to a shared facility with Sussex Police in Lewes. Members now considered a confidential report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that presented the business case for a relocation of Service Headquarters (SHQ) to the Lewes Sussex Police site. (Copy in minute book).

986.2 The current SHQ building was too large for ESFRS's current and future requirements. Significant capital investment was required to the SHQ building if ESFRS was to continue to occupy the building in the short to medium term. Relocation to a site shared with a strategic partner would bring benefits of shared facilities and closer collaborative working and alignment of services. ESFRS also needed to adopt a more modern working environment.

- 986.3 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.
- 986.4 A relocation to the Sussex Police site would provide ESFRS with a flexible solution for the medium term, with the option to reduce the Service's space requirements in the future without incurring the financial penalties present in the commercial sector. Net present capital cost savings through the relocation were expected to be above £5.5m over 15 years. The Treasurer confirmed that options to move SHQ to another location would avoid significant capital investment in the current building at Eastbourne and would release a capital receipt. There may also be options for the Authority to make a capital contribution to the Police in return for lower annual rental costs. There may, however, be a financial risk in not realising the expected level of capital receipt from the SHQ building at Eastbourne.
- 986.5 Councillor Scott, whilst welcoming the proposals to modernise and adopt flexible and agile working, asked that a green travel plan be developed alongside the proposals to relocate SHQ. The CFO&CE confirmed that discussions were continuing with the Police about options to assist staff to travel to work. Travel plans and relocation expenses would form part of the consultation with staff; however, a travel plan would not be finalised in time for the Fire Authority to consider at its meeting in June.
- 986.6 Councillor Barnes said that the proposals were not only financially prudent, especially in terms of the investment required on the existing SHQ building, but also about developing a flexible and modern organisation that made the best use of digital technology; he considered that the proposals should be implemented as soon as possible, with attention being given to the cultural shift required in the organisation necessary to implement different working patterns.
- 986.7 The CFO&CE said that the Police & Crime Commissioner was supportive of the proposals for ESFRS to relocate to the Police HQ site in Lewes. Initial discussions with the Chief Constable had highlighted the operational benefits that could be gained from sharing the site at Lewes, with possible further integration opportunities to follow.
- 986.8 Members recognised that there would be a significant change for staff, and the need to engage, communicate and consult. The Panel asked the Chairman, in consultation with the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, to agree the wording of a further recommendation to the Fire Authority to encapsulate the views of the Panel regarding the opportunities for transformation of the organisation.
- 986.9 **RESOLVED** – That the Fire Authority be recommended to:
- i. 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;
 - ii. vary the capital programme to include the capital scheme SHQ relocation for £650,000;

- iii. approve the one-off revenue costs of £0.512m to be funded from the Improvement & Efficiency earmarked reserves;
- iv. delegate authority to the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive in consultation with the Treasurer and Monitoring officer to agree the terms of the lease for the Sussex Police site;
- v. agree to the disposal of the existing SHQ site at Upperton Road; and
- vi. delegate authority to the CFO&CE in consultation with the Treasurer and Monitoring Officer to agree the terms of the disposal of the Upperton Road site in line with the best consideration reasonably obtainable.

The meeting concluded at 12:30 hours.