

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 26 May 2016.

Members Present: Councillors Barnes, Howson (Chair), Lambert, O'Quinn, Pragnell, Scott and Theobald.

Also present: Councillor Sheppard.

In attendance:

Mr. G. Walsh (Chief Fire Officer), Mr. S. Apter (Temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer) Mr. M. O'Brien (Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer), Mr. D. Savage (Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer), Mrs. H. Scott-Youlden (Assistant Director – Training & Assurance), Miss L. Woodley (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Mr. M. Andrews (Assistant Chief Fire Officer designate) and Mrs. A. Bryen (Clerk).

009. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

009.1 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.

010. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

010.1 There were none.

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

011.1 Mr. S. Apter - Temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Members thanked Mr Apter for the work he had done with ESFRS as temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer, and the enthusiasm, professionalism and energy that he had brought to the role. Members wished him well upon his return to Hampshire FRS. The Chairman presented Mr Apter with a gift as a token of Members' appreciation. Mr Apter thanked Members for making him welcome at ESFRS and for their gift and good wishes.

011.2 Mr. M. Andrews – Assistant Chief Fire Officer designate

The Chairman introduced Mr Andrews who had been appointed to the post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer; Mr Andrews would be taking up the post on 1st June 2016.

011.3 Mrs D. Whittaker – Deputy Chief Fire Officer

The Chairman said that Mrs D Whittaker would be taking up her role as Deputy Chief Fire Officer on 1st June 2016.

- 011.4 Fire Service Reform
The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the Rt. Hon Theresa May M.P. had given a speech on 24 May 2016 outlining her views on fire reform. A copy had been circulated to Members. The CFO said that he would be discussing the broad issues from her speech with the Group Leaders.
- 011.5 Marlie Farm
The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that he had received confirmation that all outstanding compensation claims arising from the incident at Marlie Farm in December 2006 had now been cleared and that there would be no further issues to bring to Members.
012. **NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES PANEL MEETING HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2016**
- 012.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (Copy in Minute Book).
013. **CALLOVER**
- 013.1 Members reserved the following items for debate:
014 Provisional Revenue and Capital Programme Outturn 2015/16
015 Results of the Integrated Risk Management (IRM) Pre-Engagement
016 3SC and Greater Brighton Devolution
014. **PROVISIONAL REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN STRATEGY 2015/16**
- 014.1 Members received a report of the Chief Fire Officer that set out the provisional revenue and capital budget outturn for 2015/16 along with an updated analysis of reserves and balances. The draft accounts were being prepared and would be signed and published by 30 June 2016 and then passed to the external auditor. The audited accounts would then be approved by the Fire Authority and published by 30 September 2016. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 014.2 The financial information contained in the report was based upon enquiries as at 31 March 2016 and the majority of the year-end entries. The Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer informed Members that a revised Appendix 7 (Investments as at 31 March 2016) had been prepared which was circulated at the meeting (copy in minute book).
- 014.3 The Revenue Budget outturn for 2015/16 was projected to be £79,000 underspent, and the overall Capital Programme projected outturn was £74,000 under budget. The Earmarked and General Reserves forecast year end position was £4.4m higher than originally planned.

- 014.4 A total of £1,023,000 new savings had already been taken from the 2015/16 budget taking the total savings to £3,046,000. The Fire Authority, on the 10 December 2015, had approved alternative proposals and the projected shortfall for the year 2015/16 was £468,000.
- 014.5 The Chief Fire Officer outlined the current position regarding the Sussex Control Centre (SCC) project. The Contractor's Project Manager and ESFRS/WSFRS Project Team had met to agree a revised specification to allow a full Factory Acceptance Test (FAT) to go ahead. A Change Control Note would also need to be agreed by both parties. Subject to the full FAT being successful, it was estimated that 'Go-live' would take approximately 6 months after that. The CFO also informed Members that he had met with officers at the Home Office and a further meeting would be held at the end of June.
- 014.6 In the meantime, agreement had been reached with ESFRS's existing supplier (3TC) to provide continuing support for the existing mobilising system. Provision had been made in the budget for this. The risk to ESFRS had been reduced as 3TC had sufficient equipment to support the system for the intervening period.
- 014.7 In response to a question from Councillor Theobald, the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer informed Members that the continuing project management of the SCC had resulted in pressures elsewhere in the budget as well as staffing implications.
- 014.8 **RESOLVED** – that the following be noted:

- (i) the provisional 2015/16 Revenue Budget outturn;
- (ii) the provisional 2015/16 Capital Budget outturn;
- (iii) the actual use of reserves;
- (iv) the shortfall in 2015/16 savings was managed within the overall revenue underspend;
- (v) the transfer of the 2015/16 revenue underspend to the General Fund Balance; and
- (vi) the following capital programme slippage:

Scheme	Underspend current year 2015/16 £,000	Carry forward into 2016/17 £,000
General Schemes	28	28
Sustainability	42	42
Ancillary Vehicles	17	17
Cars & Vans	24	24
Total	111	111

015. **RESULTS OF THE INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT (IRM) PRE-ENGAGEMENT**

015.1 Members considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer that provided feedback from the recent pre-consultation engagement forums held with staff and stakeholders and sought approval for the strategic direction of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2017/18-2020/21. (Copy in Minute Book).

015.2 The current IRMP took ESFRS through to the 31st March 2017 and the next iteration of the Fire Authority's IRMP was now in development. Pre-engagement meetings had been held with staff and stakeholders during April 2016 for the purpose of discussing the strategic direction of the IRMP and gain feedback on the proposed 'purpose' and set of 'commitments'. Running alongside the forums was an online survey which was open to staff, stakeholders and the public to offer an alternative method of providing feedback. This survey had attracted 128 responses.

015.3 The Panel considered a summary of the comments received and the survey results. Councillor Barnes was disappointed with the response rate from this pre-consultation exercise, stressing the importance of getting a steer from the public. Members expressed their strong wish that the public should be engaged in the consultation and asked officers to find appropriate methods of getting input from the public, thereby ensuring broader public support for the direction of the IRMP.

015.4 Councillor Scott was concerned that housing associations should be asked to consult with their tenants rather than officers submitting a response. Members recognised that ESFRS was continually amending consultation methods to improve response rates. It was noted that the next Members' Seminar would be considering the IRMP and the risk analysis behind it, and considering the approach to consultation.

015.5 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the report be noted.

016. **3SC AND GREATER BRIGHTON DEVOLUTION**

016.1 Members considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer that advised Members of the on-going discussions arising from devolution plans within East Sussex County Council as part of the 3SC (Three Southern Counties). (Copy in minute book).

016.2 Governance models for the Fire Authority may start to change during the municipal/financial year of 2016/2017 as a result of the Policing and Crime Bill. The 3SC and Greater Brighton devolution proposals were developing. The Fire Authority was a stakeholder in the 3SC devolution proposals for the wider Sussex/Surrey area.

- 016.3 The Government expected all devolution deals to deliver “collective and binding” decision making amongst partners. The Greater Brighton devolution partners were working closely with the 3SC on this issue and both were committed to undertaking a governance review. The principles between the two proposals were similar.
- 016.4 The plans for devolution within East Sussex County Council as part of the 3SC emerged during the early part of 2015 from discussions for those Authorities which make up SE7 (South East 7). The plans for devolution within Brighton and Hove were part of the Greater Brighton Partnership and the proposals were a natural progression from the Greater Brighton City Deal (2014) and the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (C2C LEP) Growth Deal (2014).
- 016.5 Any proposals to change the governance arrangements of the two constituent authorities may have a knock on effect to the Fire Authority. Running alongside this was the current debate about the potential for the Police & Crime Commissioner to take control of the Fire & Rescue Service should there be a business case for this. Either of these strategic government intentions could impact onto the Fire Authority and the Fire Service.
- 016.6 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

017. **BREATHING APPARATUS TRAINING CHAMBERS**

- 017.1 Members received a report of the Chief Fire Officer that advised Members of the requirement to upgrade the existing breathing apparatus facilities in order to fulfil the recommendations of the Service Training Centre (STC) accident investigation. The report set out the risks and costs to ensure ESFRS was able to deliver a competent and safe workforce. (Copy in minute book).
- 017.2 A survey to assess the condition of the Breathing Apparatus (BA) chamber at STC had been commissioned and a number of significant recommendations had been made, including that work was commissioned on all 4 BA chambers to ensure they met the minimum standards within this financial year. This would cost approximately £300,000 and could be funded from the Authority’s existing reserves established to support the capital programme, subject to Members agreeing a variation of £300,000 to the capital programme.
- 017.3 **RESOLVED** – That a variation to the Capital Programme of £300,000 to support the required works to the Service’s four Breathing Apparatus chambers in 2016/17 be approved.

018. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

018.1 There were no items that, in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, would result in disclosure of exempt information, and which required the exclusion of the press and public.

The meeting concluded at 12:10 hours.

Signed

Chairman

Dated this 7th day of July 2016