

**EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY**

**Minutes of the meeting of the POLICY & RESOURCES PANEL held at County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes at 11:30 hours on Thursday, 26 July 2018.**

**Members Present:** Councillors Barnes, Galley, O'Quinn, Scott, Theobald and Tutt.

**In attendance:**

D Whittaker (Chief Fire Officer), M Andrews (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), V Simpson (Deputy Monitoring Officer), D Savage (Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer), L Ridley (Assistant Director Planning & Improvement), H Scott-Youlton (Assistant Director Training & Assurance), C George (Procurement Manager) and E Simpkin (Democratic Services Officer).

**94        DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

94.1        It was noted that, in relation to matters on the agenda, no participating Member had any interest to declare under the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct for Members.

**95        ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

95.1        Councillor Barnes was appointed as Chairman for the ensuing year.

**96        APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

96.1        Apologies had been received from Councillor Dowling. Councillor Galley was attending as his substitute. Apologies were also received from Councillor Elford.

**97        NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND PROPOSES TO TAKE AT THE END OF THE AGENDA/CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

97.1        There were none.

**98        MINUTES OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES PANEL MEETING HELD ON 24 MAY 2018**

98.1        **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Panel held on 24 May 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (*Copy in Minute Book*)

**99        CALLOVER**

99.1        Members reserved the following items for debate:

100        Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring 2018/19

102        Procurement Strategy

## **100 REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2018/19**

- 100.1 The Panel considered the report of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer (ADR/T) on issues arising from the monitoring of the 2018/19 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme as at 30 June 2018. (*Copy in minute book*)
- 100.2 Members were informed that with it being at an early stage in the financial year, the report was on an exception basis and addressed those areas where there were clear issues or risks.
- 100.3 The Panel was advised that currently the revenue budget was projected to overspend by £190,000. The overall Capital Programme was projected to be £13,000 over budget, with the current year's Capital Programme projected to underspend by £3,168,000 primarily due to slippage of Fleet and Equipment spend.
- 100.4 The ADR/T explained the primary risks for the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme which included:
- There was a significant risk of overspend on the Safer Communities operational staffing budget, partly due to a pressure on overall resource due to light duties, sickness and secondments being covered by the use of fixed term contracts. This was being managed and monitored by the Senior Leadership Team. The implementation of the Service Delivery Review also intended to embed a more proactive approach to resource management.
  - The FBU had registered a local dispute claiming that an Additional Responsibility Allowance (ARA) should be paid in relation to Swift Water Rescue which may have a potential financial impact for ongoing and back pay.
  - It was thought that negotiations regarding the annual pay award increase for Grey Book staff may reach a national outcome soon. There was a provision in the 2018/19 Revenue for a 1% award backdated to 1 July 2017.
  - Sussex Control Centre (SCC): a drawdown from the general reserves had been agreed which included £125,000 transfer into the revenue budget for an initial payment to extend the SCC project team.
  - With regards to the Capital Programme Fleet and equipment, a review of the fleet and equipment strategy was currently being undertaken to ensure that it met future operational demands and achieved value for money. Some previously planned purchases had been suspended pending the review. Interim proposals were being developed pending the medium/long term strategy. Both the interim proposals and the long term strategy would be put forward to the Panel/Fire Authority in due course.
- 100.5 In response to questions from the Panel regarding the Safer Communities budget overspend, the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) acknowledged that sickness had been a factor but that there were also legacy issues. The Authority had now opened recruitment, however, it did take two years to become a competent fire fighter. In addition, other Fire Authorities were also recruiting and officers been lost to

neighbouring brigades, especially London. The CFO acknowledged that there was a need to create stability in the workforce and re-baseline operational budgets.

- 100.6 The Panel sought clarification on the Preston Circus redevelopment and noted that the paragraph 5.2 (page 11 of the agenda) should read 'underspend by £100,000'. The scheme had been paused pending the development of the ESFRS design guide which would serve as the basis for the overall design of all future redevelopments. A steering group comprising of senior officers, external consultants and Members had been established and the possibility of finding a public sector partner to co-locate was being explored. Both Authority Members and Brighton & Hove City Council Members, as well as other stakeholders, would be briefed as the scheme progressed.
- 100.7 Members suggested that it would be helpful to include a copy of the risk register in future reports. This had been presented to the Scrutiny and Audit Panel and would be circulated to the Panel for information.
- 100.8 Further discussion was had over recruitment and retention and it was noted that opportunities, such as open days and community events, and recruitment campaigns were being utilised to market the role of a fire fighter. The CFO undertook to remind local authority chief executives of the benefits of dual employment, with support from Authority Members.
- 100.9 **RESOLVED:** That the panel noted:
- i) the risks to and the projected Revenue Budget overspend;
  - ii) the risks to and the projected underspend in the current year's Capital Programme;
  - iii) the use of reserves;
  - iv) the monitoring of savings taken in 2018/19; and
  - v) the current year investments.

## **101 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY**

- 101.1 The Panel considered a report of the Procurement Manager seeking approval for the new Procurement Strategy for the period 2018-2020, which was due to be reported to the Fire Authority (*Copy in minute book*).
- 101.2 Following publication of the agenda, it had been decided that a proportion of the report could be discussed in the public.
- 101.3 The ADR/T introduced the report which outlined how the central procurement team would support the Authority's purpose and commitment in delivering cost effective services which met the needs of the community by maximising the impact of procurement both internally and externally.
- 101.4 The Panel heard from the Procurement Manager who highlighted that with focus having been on compliance and substantial assurance, there was now an

