

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Minutes of the meeting of the SCRUTINY & AUDIT PANEL held at East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, 20 Upperton Road, Eastbourne, at 11:45 hours on Thursday 13 November 2014.

Members Present: Councillors Buchanan, Carden, Deane, Galley, Lambert (Chair), Peltzer Dunn, Taylor and Wincott.

Also present:

Mr. G. Walsh (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), Mrs. C. Rolph (Assistant Chief Officer), Ms. L. Woodley (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Mr. D. Savage (Treasurer), Mr. W. Tricker (Head of Procurement & Finance), Mrs. L. Ridley (Head of Performance Management), Mr. P. King (Ernst & Young Auditors) and Mrs. S. Klein (Clerk).

933. **DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

933.1 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.

934. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

934.1 There were no apologies for absence.

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

935.1 There were no urgent items for consideration.

936. **NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE LAST SCRUTINY AND AUDIT PANEL MEETING HELD ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2014**

936.1 **RESOLVED** – That the non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel held on 18 September 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. (Copy in Minute Book).

937. **CALLOVER**

937.1 Members reserved the following items for debate:

938. Annual Audit Letter 2013/14

939. 2014/15 2nd Quarter Performance Results

945. CIPFA Audit Committee guidance

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

938. **ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2013/14**

938.1 Members considered a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and the Treasurer that presented the recently published Annual Audit Letter 2013/14. (Copy in Minute Book).

938.2 Councillor Galley congratulated the Treasurer and his team on a very satisfactory Audit Letter and a very good result and Mr. King confirmed that the messages in the report were consistent with those reported to the Panel at its September meeting.

938.3 **RESOLVED** – That the Annual Audit Letter 2013/14 be approved on behalf of the Fire Authority.

939. **2014/15 2ND QUARTER PERFORMANCE RESULTS**

939.1 Members considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that presented the second quarter performance indicator results for 2014/15. (Copy in Minute Book).

939.2 Councillor Wincott questioned why attendance times had increased for a number of incidents during the last 12 months and whether attendance times were likely to increase further following the decision by the Fire Authority to remove appliances from Hastings and Hove.

939.3 DCFO Walsh explained that the Corporate Management Team (CMT) receives a monthly report on attendances, and Borough Commanders report to CMT on a quarterly basis when they are questioned about these trends. He informed Members that officers were investigating a correlation between Mobile Data Terminals and the recording and analysing of data, as well as local factors such as on-going road works, and the availability of retained duty crews.

939.4 Work was in progress on attendance at Automatic Fire Alarms, and it is expected that the change approved by the Fire Authority would assist in improving attendance times. Analysis of attendance times in Hastings and Hove indicated that these would not be significantly affected by the removal of appliances in 2015 and 2016 respectively. DCFO Walsh also reminded Members of the impact that industrial action had had over the last twelve months, and confirmed that a further report showing response times excluding periods of industrial action would be presented for Member scrutiny.

939.5 DCFO Walsh also confirmed that the Service was notified in advance of road works, and that the dynamic mobilising process, once introduced along with the new mobilising system (4i), would analyse the position of an appliance, and take account of road works, when recommending which appliance to send to an incident.

939.6 Councillor Peltzer Dunn asked for a timescale for the actions in the exceptions report and was informed that more information would be available for the next meeting of the Panel in January 2015.

939.7 Councillor Carden asked whether the introduction of cycle lanes and 20 mph zones in the City of Brighton & Hove had impacted upon attendance times and DCFO Walsh responded that an agreement had been reached with the City about the use of bus lanes but he would look further into any impact of cycle lanes.

939.8 **RESOLVED** – That:

- (i) the 2014/15 performance indicator results for Quarter 2 as set out in the report to the Panel and Appendix A to the report, be noted; and
- (ii) the information included within the exceptions report be noted, with further information being made available to the Panel at its next meeting in January 2015.

940. **2014/15 2ND QUARTER CORPORATE PROJECTS – OUTTURN RESULTS**

940.1 Members considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that presented the 2014/15 second quarter outturn results on the corporate projects. (Copy in Minute Book).

940.2 **RESOLVED** – That the corporate progress made at the end of the second quarter 2014/15 within the context of the other work priorities be noted.

941. **2014/15 2ND QUARTER CORPORATE RISK REGISTER REVIEW**

941.1 Members considered a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and the Treasurer that set out the latest quarterly review of the corporate risk. (Copy in Minute Book).

941.2 **RESOLVED** – That the latest Corporate Risk Register be approved and the Internal Audit opinion of substantial assurance be noted.

942. **PROCUREMENT UPDATE**

942.1 Members considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that updated them on changes in the arrangements and procedures for the procurement of goods and services, including progress made implementing the recommendations of the internal audit review of contracting and procurement. (Copy in Minute Book).

942.3 **RESOLVED** – That the progress be noted.

943. **2013/14 – SERVICE BENCHMARKING REPORT**

943.1 Members considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive which presented the Fire Statistics for 2013/14 and benchmarking of East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service against its family group. (Copy in Minute Book).

943.2 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

944. **OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND FIRE PEER CHALLENGE 2014**

944.1 Members considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that presented the Action Plan following the outcomes from the Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge 2014. (Copy in Minute Book).

944.2 **RESOLVED** – That it be noted that:

- (i) an action plan had been developed with Members and relevant managers;
- (ii) plans are in hand to address the 'areas to be explored' through the business as usual arrangements; and

It be agreed that:

- (iii) the action plan can be closed as all the areas had either been completed or are in progress through the existing departmental business plans.

945. **CIPFA AUDIT COMMITTEE GUIDANCE**

945.1 Members considered a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Treasurer that updated them on the latest audit committee guidance for local authorities and highlighted those areas where further action may be required by the Authority to ensure compliance or improve the effectiveness of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel. (Copy in Minute Book).

945.2 Councillor Lambert drew Members' attention to this report and the extensive review which the Treasurer had carried out; Members confirmed that they were happy to approve the recommendations within the report

945.3 **RESOLVED** – That:

- (i) the latest guidance from CIPFA be noted; and
- (ii) the Fire Authority be recommended to approve the new terms of reference for the Panel attached at Appendix A to the report, noting that they will come into being following the approval of the revised Constitution at the December meeting of the Fire Authority.

946. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

946.1 **RESOLVED** – That items numbered. 947, 948 and 949 be exempt under paragraphs 1, 3 and 7 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 grounds that they include information relating to the matters indicated below:

Item 947 paragraphs 1, 3 and 7 – information relating to an individual; information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information); and information relating any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation and prosecution of crime.

Item 948 paragraph 3 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Item 949 paragraph 3 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The meeting concluded at 12:33 hours.

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2014