

**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 10:00 hours on Thursday 4 February 2016.**

**Members Present:** Councillors Galley, Howson, Lambert (Chair), Peltzer Dunn, Penn, Taylor and Wincott.

N.B. Councillor Howson attended the meeting in place of Councillor Buchanan, having been nominated by the Group Leader and approved by the Deputy Monitoring Officer.

**Also present:**

Mr. G. Walsh (Chief Fire Officer), Mr. S. Apter (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 Finance & Procurement), Mrs. L. Ridley (Head of Performance Management) and Mrs. S. Klein (Clerk).

006. **DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

006.1 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.

007. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

007.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Buchanan.

008. **ANY OTHER ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIR / CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

008.1 There were none.

009. **NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY AND AUDIT PANEL MEETING HELD ON 5 NOVEMBER 2015**

009.1 **RESOLVED** – That the non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel held on 5 November 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. (Copy in Minute Book).

010. **CALLOVER**

010.1 Members reserved the following items for debate:

011. 2015/16 Third Quarter Performance Results

012. 2015/16 Third Quarter Corporate Projects and Programmes Progress

014. Aerial Rescue Pump – Implementation Review

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

011. **2015/16 THIRD QUARTER PERFORMANCE RESULTS**

011.1 Members considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer that presented the third quarter performance results 2015/16. (Copy in Minute Book).

011.2 The report provided the Panel with a summary of service performance information for the third quarter of 2015/16 and contained the revised measurement for response standards as agreed by the Panel in November 2015. It was noted that this was an interim measure pending a comprehensive review of attendance standards to be undertaken in this year's IRMP.

011.3 Councillor Galley suggested that there were too many targets and, whilst recognising that a lot were set nationally, he asked whether our own local targets could be reviewed, for instance the targets for responding to AFAs, which he thought might take up a lot of officers' time. Ms Ridley explained that the Service was currently considering moving from targets to control charts, which would be simpler and more streamlined, and a report would be brought to Members following this year's fourth quarterly report. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) had put forward national measures for consideration.

011.4 Councillor Wincott asked when the report on responses to AFAs would be published, and the CFO assured him that this work was on-going. An external validation process meeting with the representative bodies was held at the end of January and it was planned to bring a report to the next meeting of the Panel in May 2016.

011.5 Councillor Galley was also concerned that ESFRS was in the lowest quartile for three of the four targets for maintaining and improving the standards of health, safety and welfare of staff and providing a safe and secure workplace.

011.6 Councillor Peltzer Dunn was disappointed to see sickness absence increasing since the last quarterly report, and the Assistant Chief Officer explained that this was due in part to Sussex Control Centre staff taking more sick leave due to the stresses caused by the delays in implementing the new contract for software; and an increase in sickness amongst wholetime firefighters. There were no trends emerging around the increase in firefighter sickness and staff sickness was now being managed under the Bradford Factor scheme, with short term absences now under control. The ACO explained that 'long term' sickness was that lasting more than 28 days, and this included instances of cancer and broken limbs.

011.7 **RESOLVED** – That the 2015/16 performance results for Quarter 3 be noted, as set out in the report and complementary separate Appendix A.

012. **2015/16 THIRD QUARTER CORPORATE PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES  
PROGRESS REPORT**

012.1 Members considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer that informed them of project and programme progress against key milestones, identified slippage, and reported compliance with project governance in terms of documentation. (Copy in Minute Book).

012.2 Members noted key points from the project portfolio, including that the Sussex Control Centre project was awaiting strategic actions by the Chief Fire Officer; IMD Transformation had reached the competitive dialogue stage and was proceeding well; and Newhaven Fire Station was complete and had been handed over on 7 December 2015. ESCC Project Services had been engaged to manage the Service HQ relocation programme; the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) was proceeding to the procurement stage; and Firewatch stage 1 would finish in the first quarter of 2016/17, with phase 2 project documentation being prepared.

012.3 Councillor Galley asked for more information on three areas: the SCC project, the IMD Transformation Programme, and the Service HQ relocation programme.

012.4 Regarding the SCC project, the CFO confirmed that, following further discussions with Remsdaq, there had been an initial, 'without prejudice' demonstration of their technical solution to FAT6 in December 2015. A small team of officers from ESFRS was observing a further demonstration this week.

012.5 Councillor Peltzer Dunn was concerned at the human cost of delays to the SCC project, and the CFO agreed that stress could be an issue and, therefore, additional staff were being recruited to the SCC, with costs shared with West Sussex, to alleviate the problems.

012.6 Members noted that discussions were taking place with three potential contractors for the IMD Transformation Programme. The Head of Finance & Procurement confirmed that the Invitation to Participate in Dialogue (ITPD) Phase 1 was now 100% complete. The on-going dialogue was due to be completed by 5 February 2016, following which the three potential contractors would be invited to submit their final bids by 12 February – he believed that a projected contract award by 31 March was still achievable

012.7 The Deputy Monitoring Officer explained to Members that legal advice for the appointment of a third party Programme Management Team to support the Service HQ move had not been sought from Brighton & Hove City Council until the end of September, following which advice was given – there had, therefore, not been a delay of 61 days.

- 012.8 Councillor Howson asked whether the moves to Lewes were still on schedule for June and December 2016 and the CFO explained that, whilst these dates were still aspirational, he thought the moves would be completed by 31 March 2017.
- 012.9 Councillor Howson asked whether Newhaven Fire Station was now complete and the CFO confirmed that the three parties were now occupying the building.
- 012.10 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.
013. **2015/16 THIRD QUARTER CORPORATE RISK REGISTER REVIEW**
- 013.1 Members considered a report of the Treasurer on the latest quarterly review of Corporate Risk which sought their agreement on outcomes. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 013.2 **RESOLVED** – That the latest Corporate Risk Register be approved.
014. **AERIAL RESCUE PUMP – IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW AND FUTURE CREWING ARRANGEMENTS**
- 014.1 Members considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer that presented the outcomes of the planned implementation review following the introduction of the Aerial Rescue Pump (ARP) at Eastbourne Community Fire Station. The report also identified the modified future crewing arrangements for the vehicle, required as a result of the Fire Authority's decision to accept a range of savings proposals as an alternative to Day Crewed Plus. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 014.2 The Chief Fire Officer reminded Members of the crewing arrangements for the ARP and how these were being implemented to meet the savings identified and agreed by the Fire Authority. Councillor Wincott suggested that the ARP was troublesome and not cost effective if it could not be utilised to its full capacity due to budget restraints and the CFO explained how the ARP was being used across the County, particularly to support Hastings and the City of Brighton & Hove. He also explained that the ARP was suitable for the needs of Eastbourne and the Service at the time it was purchased, and this remains the case; it was also the most reliable ARP in the country and staff were seeing its benefits. Councillor Taylor had seen the ARP in use in a number of situations and thought it was brilliant!
- 014.3 The CFO also assured Councillor Wincott that the apparent high number of defects detected by firefighters was normal when introducing a new appliance which staff were not familiar with, as they spent longer checking it and raising any queries for clarification.
- 014.4 **RESOLVED** – That the following be noted:
- i the report and the key findings from the implementation review; and
  - ii the amended crewing arrangements to come into effect in 24 months' time, and the resultant changes to operational capability.

015. **COUNTER FRAUD PROJECT OUTCOMES**

015.1 Members considered a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer and Deputy Monitoring Officer that provided an update on the outcomes from the review of the Authority's Counter Fraud approach. (Copy in Minute Book).

015.2 It was noted that there were three appendices – the Fraud Risk Assessment & Counter Fraud Action Plan; the Fraud Awareness Survey Report Recommendations, cross referenced to the Counter Fraud Action Plan; and a third appendix – the Fraud Awareness Survey, Summary of Responses – which was considered by Members in the confidential part of the meeting (see confidential minute no. 018).

015.3 **RESOLVED** – That:

- i the outcomes from the Counter Fraud Review be noted; and
- ii the Counter Fraud Action Plan be approved.

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

016.1 **RESOLVED** – That item number 017 be exempt under paragraphs 2 & 3, and item numbers 018 and 019 be exempt under paragraphs 1 and 2 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 (para 1) information relating to any individual, (para 2) information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual, and (para 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The meeting concluded at 11:03 hours

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2016