

## **EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY**

**Minutes of the meeting of the East Sussex Fire Authority held at East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, 20 Upperton Road, Eastbourne, at 10.30 hours on Thursday 7 February 2013.**

**Present:** Councillors Carden, Duncan, Fawthrop, Healy, Heaps, Howson, Kenward, Livings (Chairman), Ost, Pidgeon, Powell, Rufus, Scott, Sparks, Theobald, Thomas, Tidy and Waite.

**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. D. Williams (Assistant Chief Officer – Corporate Services), Mrs. C. Rolph (Assistant Chief Officer – People & Organisational Development), Mr. A. Ghebre-Ghiorghis (Monitoring Officer), Mr. D. Savage (Treasurer), Mr. R. Charman (Director of Financial Services) and Mrs. A Bryen (Clerk).

### **699. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

699.1 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.

The Monitoring Officer advised Members that under the previous ethical standards regime, Members would have been granted an automatic dispensation to take part in the consideration of setting the precept, a decision which has to be taken by the full Fire Authority. Similarly, dispensations would have been granted to allow Members to consider and decide upon allowances paid to Members, a decision which was also reserved for the full Fire Authority.

The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new ethical standards regime and the automatic dispensations had been removed. Both the Standards Panel and the Monitoring Officer now had delegated authority to grant dispensations to Members. Nationally, there had been a divergence of opinion as to whether or not a dispensation was required to consider setting a budget or Members' allowances, but to avoid any risk of challenge, he advised that dispensations should be sought and given.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that all Members of the Fire Authority had made written application to him requesting dispensations which he confirmed he had granted.

### **700. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

700.1 There were none.

### **701. URGENT ITEMS AND CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

701.1 a. Members of the Fire Authority

The Chairman said that this was the last meeting of the full Fire Authority before the County Council elections, due to be held on 2 May 2013. He thanked all Members for their service on the Fire Authority and particularly those Members who were retiring.

701.2 b. Mrs Diana Williams M.B.E. - Assistant Chief Officer (Corporate Services)

The Chairman said that this would be the last full Fire Authority that Diana Williams, Assistant Chief Officer, would be attending before she retired at the end of March.

Diana had 39 years' service in local government, beginning with Brighton Borough Council in 1974 followed by East Sussex County Council in 1984. She had joined the Fire & Rescue Service on 1 October 1994 to assist the Organisation as it moved towards becoming a Combined Fire Authority.

The Chairman thanked Diana for her contributions to the Service, and for the support and guidance that she had given to him as Chairman and to all Members helping them in the performance of their roles. He wished her good health and happiness in her retirement, and presented her with a rose bowl in appreciation of her service.

Councillor Sparks, Vice-Chairman, on behalf the Liberal Democrat Group, echoed the sentiments expressed by the Chairman and thanked Diana for her diligent work for ESFA and ESFRS, both professionally and for the personal help and support that she had given to Members during the past years, and presented her with a bouquet.

Councillor Rufus, on behalf of the Green Group expressed Members' appreciation to Diana for the support she had given to Members, particularly the welcome and advice that she extended to those newly appointed to the Authority. He said that she would be greatly missed.

Councillor Scott, on behalf of the Labour Group, also thanked Diana for her guidance and support to the Fire Authority and personally to him over the many years that he had known her.

Councillor Thomas, on behalf of the Conservative Group, said that Diana had always demonstrated a high level of professional integrity in all that she had done in her role as a Principal Officer with the Service. She had given Members the support they needed to enable them to carry out their roles in an efficient and thorough manner, as well as helping many Members at a personal level. He wished Diana a long and healthy retirement.

701.3 Duncan Savage – Treasurer to the Fire Authority

The Chairman informed Members that Duncan Savage, Treasurer to the Fire Authority, was leaving the employment of East Sussex County Council and that this would be the last meeting that Duncan would be attending before he left on 8 February 2013. The Chairman and Members thanked Duncan for his support and advice that he had given to the Fire Authority and wished him well for the future.

The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive thanked Duncan for the professional advice and wise counsel that he had given him, and complimented him on helping to place the Fire Authority in a secure and healthy position from which to go forward. He wished him well for the future.

702. **TO CONSIDER PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS, IF ANY**

702.1 There were none.

703. **NON-CONFIDENTIAL AND CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2013**

703.1 **RESOLVED** – That the non-confidential and confidential Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman. (Copy in Minute Book).

703.2 N.B. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that unless Members wished to raise questions on the accuracy of the confidential minutes, the approval of the minutes could be dealt with without the need to exclude members of the press and public.

704. **CALLOVER**

704.1 Members reserved the following items for debate:

- 705. Fire Authority service planning processes for 2013/14 and beyond – Draft Annual Plan 2013/14 and Draft Revenue Budget
- 706. Sussex Control Centre – progress report
- 707. Fire Authority Treasury Management Strategy for 2013/14
- 710. Fire & Rescue Service Efficiencies Review
- 711. Preparations For Future Delivery of Financial Services For ESFRS
- 712. Quarterly Report (October to December 2012)

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

705. **FIRE AUTHORITY SERVICE PLANNING PROCESSES FOR 2013/14 AND BEYOND – DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN 2013/14 AND DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET**

705.1 The Fire Authority considered a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and the Treasurer that presented the relevant reports on the Service Planning Processes for 2013/14 and beyond for approval for the purposes of setting the 2013/14 Council Tax precept and other relevant matters. (Copy in Minute Book).

705.2 Since the publication of the agenda and reports, Members were updated with the following information:

- i. two letters from the Fire Minister, Brandon Lewis MP, regarding Council Tax Levels in 2013-14:
  - a) encouraging all fire and rescue authorities to sign up in response to the Government's offer of Council Tax Freeze Grant; and
  - b) informing fire and rescue authorities that the Secretary of State proposed a council tax referendum principle of 2%, which was yet to be approved by the House of Commons.
- ii. An analysis of reserves and balances from a number of authorities.
- iii. A revised report 705.B following the final Local Government Finance Settlement announcement on 4 February 2013.

705.A **Draft Annual Plan 2013/14**

705.A.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that summarised the outstanding actions required to complete the Draft Annual Plan 2013/14 for approval and for final completion by the publication date of 30 June 2013. (Copy in Minute Book).

705.A.2 **RESOLVED** that:

- i) the roll forward of the draft Annual Plan for publication by 30 June 2013, subject to any final amendments once the Revenue Budget has been approved and other outstanding information set out in the report, be approved in principle; and
- ii) authority be delegated to the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, following consultation with the Chairman, to approve the final version of the Annual Plan.

## **705.B Draft Revenue Budget 2013/14**

- 705.B.1 The Fire Authority considered a revised joint report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and the Treasurer that set out the final draft Fire Authority Revenue Budget for 2013/14. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 705.B.2 The Treasurer advised that due to the late announcement of the Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) on 4 February 2013, the report had been revised, but there were no material changes and this had resulted in only minor roundings. The settlement had been better than anticipated although the Authority would have to find savings in the order of £3.5m by 2017/18. He expected that the Authority would receive full transitional grant from the Government. There were adequate and proportionate balances to support transition. The LGFS had confirmed the level of Council tax rises that could trigger a referendum and the threshold was 2% for ESFA. The settlement was due to be debated in Parliament on 13 February, but based on past experience, the settlement was unlikely to change following that debate.
- 705.B.3 The Fire Authority had used figures provided by the Government in accordance with the Local Government Finance Settlement in formulating its proposed budget. However, it was evident from returns made by local billing authorities following other recent government guidance on calculations for business rates income, that the actual level of business rates baseline funding was likely to be lower. It was proposed that as the Fire Authority had already recognised this risk and made provision in Reserves and Balances, any adjustments to make up a deficit could be managed through these provisions without it affecting the detailed budget proposed.
- 705.B.4 The Treasurer reminded Members that there remained significant uncertainty about funding after 2014/15 which was unlikely to be resolved until after the completion of Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) 2013. There was also a range of risks associated with the new funding regime which would need to be monitored and assessed during 2013/14. For these reasons, plans for 2014/15 onwards would need to be revisited later in the year.
- 705.B.5 The Treasurer had also circulated an analysis of balances and reserves from a number of authorities. He also referred to correspondence from Brandon Lewis MP Parliamentary Under Secretary of State encouraging local authorities to accept the Council Tax Freeze Grant.

- 705.B.6 In the view of the Treasurer, in line with the requirements set out in Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the estimates used for the purposes of calculating the budget, revenue and capital, had been produced in a robust and transparent way and the proposed financial reserves were consistent with Fire Authority policy, and were prudent and necessary. In the nature of FRS business, Members were reminded of the need to recognise that risks, financial and otherwise, and their consequent impact on the budget and reserves, may change during the year and would need to be continually reviewed and managed in line with the Authority's policy.
- 705.B.7 At its meeting on 17 January 2013, the Fire Authority had approved the 2013/14 Committed Budget of £38.932m and related detailed provisions, fees and charges, etc. and the 2013/14 to 2017/18 Capital Programme.
- 705.B.8 Under the new funding arrangements, the provisional 2013/14 Finance Settlement included Revenue Support Grant of £10.195m; Retained Business rates (including top up) of £6.782m, Council Tax Transitional Support Grant of £0.092m and a further Council Tax Freeze Grant of £0.249m for two years if the Fire Authority accepted a nil increase in the precept for a further year.
- 705.B.9 Final figures on council tax base and council tax collection fund had enabled a Revenue Budget to be set at £39.079m, for council tax band D increases to be kept to £81.86 if this latest council tax freeze grant was accepted. Members considered other financial policy options set out in the report. Any additional surplus would be transferred into Reserves to be set aside to fund future spending pressures and proposals.
- 705.B.10 Members were advised that the collection fund was in surplus by £0.136m compared with the estimated net nil reported on 17 January 2013. It was proposed to transfer this one off collection fund surplus to Reserves to assist in funding future service pressures in 2013/14 or future years.
- 705.B.11 It was recommended that power should be delegated to the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairman and the Treasurer, to make any presentational changes to the budget that may be required. This would not impact on the agreed precept or level of Council Tax.
- 705.B.12 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive drew Members' attention to Annex 6 which highlighted the shortfalls and levels of savings predicted to be required from 2013/14 to 2017/18 in the three options presented to Members, i.e. a council tax freeze, an increase of 1% and an increase of 1.94%. The level of savings required would present significant challenges to the Fire Authority, and a Members' Seminar had been arranged for 25 February 2013 which he urged all Members to attend to consider the way forward for the Authority to address the future budget shortfalls. He urged that the Fire Authority should give early consideration to preparing a strategic approach to the budgets from 2015/16 to 2017/18 and beyond when the financial pressures faced by the Authority would be greater.

- 705.B.13 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive reminded Members that out of 24 Fire & Rescue Services across England, 15 were part of County Councils who set their budgets. The remaining Fire Authorities were either well placed larger authorities with greater opportunities to absorb budget pressures with possible increased income from a share of business rates, or smaller authorities who had been given greater flexibilities and grants. Representations had been made to the Minister to allow all Fire Authorities to raise their precepts by up to £5, but the Minister had allowed only those Authorities in the lower quartile to do this. East Sussex Fire Authority was middle-placed, was a coastal service with the majority of its population living in coastal towns, and had none of the advantages of a larger CFA or the financial grants provided to the smaller authorities.
- 705.B.14 He advised Members that there was a danger that ESFA could become isolated and asked Members to consider re-opening discussions with West Sussex County Council about a merger between East Sussex and West Sussex Fire & Rescue Services. The business case for this had demonstrated clear financial and service delivery benefits, but a successful future merger would require local political support and Ministerial support. He asked Members to consider seeking a formal meeting with Brandon Lewis MP and Eric Pickles MP to enable a deputation from the Authority to clearly explain the financial pressures on ESFA.
- 705.B.15 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive referred to the letter from Brandon Lewis MP regarding the Council Tax freeze grant. He recognised that there was a potential risk to the future funding for the Fire Authority should Members decide not to accept the freeze grant. The Treasurer re-iterated that the freeze grant would be paid for two years across 2013/14 – 2014/15. All other authorities across East Sussex were accepting the freeze grant, except Brighton & Hove City Council and Chichester. There still remained a significant level of Government grant in the funding settlement for ESFA.
- 705.B.16 Members debated the budget proposals and the implications of accepting the freeze grant, or increasing the council tax by 1% or by 1.94%.
- 705.B.17 Councillor Thomas said that to refuse to accept a Council tax freeze grant would only delay making difficult decisions about the radical changes that would be needed in the delivery of the fire & rescue service in future years. ESFA should be seeking to influence the Government to instigate a total review of the Service. There were ambiguities in the Government's grant settlements which needed to be resolved. He considered that a rise in council tax, however small, would hit the most vulnerable in the community, and that the Authority should accept the Council Tax Freeze Grant.
- 705.B.18 Councillor Sparks said that this had been the most complex budget setting year that he had known. He referred to the response from UNISON, and wished to place on record that the service support staff were a vital and valued part of the organisation. He said that the Authority should embrace localism and take into account the results of the public consultation, in which local residents had supported a modest increase in council tax to secure sustainable fire and rescue services. The Authority would need to consider finding other ways to pay for services. He said that the Authority should consider accepting Option C in the report i.e. a council tax rise of 1.94% and reject the Council Tax Freeze Grant.

- 705.B.19 Councillor Rufus said that it was important to reject the Council Tax Freeze Grant and he supported Option C set out in the report – to accept a 1.94% rise in council tax. He said that it was uncertain what would be available in grants offered by the Government for the 2014/15 and beyond, and whether or not it would be possible to raise Council Tax by 2% in the following years. It was important to recognise that this was a single function emergency service, and that service reductions were more difficult to achieve than those faced by other local authorities dealing with a wide range of services and functions.
- 705.B.20 Councillor Scott said that raising Council Tax by 3p per week would give the Authority flexibility over time and would help to protect jobs and service delivery, and he supported building this increase into the base budget for 2013/14. He supported rejecting the Council Tax Freeze Grant and approval of Option C set out in the report – to raise Council Tax by 1.94%. He said that the Hastings Review had shown how much the public valued the Fire and Rescue Service.
- 705.B.21 Councillor Tidy supported accepting the Council Tax Freeze Grant. She said that many local residents were in low paid employment but came within the threshold required to pay Council Tax. She said that Members should give further consideration to the medium term at the next Members' Seminar.
- 705.B.22 Councillor Healy said that the Authority had been financially prudent during recent years, but a Sussex wide review of the Service was needed. She supported Option C – a 1.94% increase.
- 705.B.23 Councillor Theobald supported further consideration of a merger with West Sussex FRS, but supported accepting the Council Tax Freeze Grant to help local residents in 2013/14.
- 705.B.24 Councillor Duncan considered that the longer term was best served by increasing the Council Tax and he supported Option C. Recent research had shown that the most vulnerable residents were more likely to be at risk from injuries and death caused by fire, and the Service should be funded to a level which would enable continued support to these residents.
- 705.B.25 Councillor Powell said that accepting the Council Tax Freeze Grant would create the largest shortfall in funding over the long term. She supported rejecting the freeze grant.
- 705.B.26 Councillor Carden was concerned that the long term financial situation could worsen and may result in the closure of fire stations. He urged Members to reject the Council Tax Freeze Grant and support Option C.
- 705.B.27 **RESOLVED** – That
- i. the detailed recommendations set out in section 1.2 of the report be approved, i.e.
    - a. the final budget figures of £39.079m for 2013/14 a 2.38% reduction on the 2012/13 base budget of £40.030m before consideration of any further temporary spending options if the precept is increased by up to 2%;
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<b>Option A – Accept Council Tax Freeze Grant and do not increase Council Tax precept in 2013/14.</b>			
	<b>Revenue Budget Summary</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
Actual		Original Estimate	Original Estimate
£'000		£'000	£'000
(617)	Council Tax Freeze Grant (11/12)	(617)	0
	Council Tax Freeze Grant (12/13)	(743)	0
	Council Tax Freeze Grant (13/14)		(249)
	Council Tax Support Grant Transitional		(92)
(77)	Collection Fund Surplus (Surplus)	(21)	(136)
(24,674)	Council Tax Requirement	(24,764)	(21,625)
<b>(25,368)</b>	<b>TOTAL COUNCIL TAX INCOME</b>	<b>(26,145)</b>	<b>(22,102)</b>
<b>(39,203)</b>	<b>TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND PRECEPTS</b>	<b>(40,030)</b>	<b>(39,079)</b>
	Surplus (147,000 added to balances)		0

- b. To note that the final Council Tax Base for 2013/14 and the confirmed Collection Fund Surplus, (detailed in Appendix 1 section 2 of the report), which deliver a positive movement in available resources of £0.147m compared to that previously estimated which will be transferred direct to Reserves as part of the committed budget;
  - c. To note the previously approved Capital Programme payments for 2013/14 totalling £4.150m which have no related revenue consequences;
  - d. To note that as the Council Tax Freeze Grant has not been rejected in favour of a precept increase of up to 2% it is not necessary to take decisions as to whether to support specific community safety initiatives for a limited period time; and
  - e. the Prudential Indicators set out in Appendix 2, be approved.
- ii. It be noted that the final tax base figures have been provided by the billing authorities and the Local Government Finance Settlement has been confirmed;
  - iii. It was moved by Councillor Thomas and seconded by Councillor Howson that East Sussex Fire Authority accepts the Council Tax Freeze grant in 2013/14 to achieve a nil change in precept.

In accordance with Standing Order 22.1, four Members having requested it, a recorded vote was taken on the motion to accept the government's Council Tax Freeze Grant, the result which was as follows:

For (9): Councillors Fawthrop, Howson, Kenward, Livings, Pidgeon, Theobald, Thomas, Tidy and Waite.

Against (9): Councillors Carden, Duncan, Healy, Heaps, Ost, Powell, Rufus, Scott and Sparks.

Abstentions (0).



There being an equality of votes, in accordance with Standing Order 22.3, the Chairman exercised his second casting vote. The motion was therefore carried.

- iv **RESOLVED** - That in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the acceptance of the latest Council Tax Freeze Grant in 2013/14 to achieve a nil change in precept and the following be approved:
  - a the amount calculated by East Sussex Fire Authority as its net budget requirement for the year 2013/14 is £39.079m; a decrease of 2.38% on the 2012/13 base budget of £40.030m;
  - b the amount calculated by East Sussex Fire Authority as its Council Tax Requirement for the year 2013/14 is £21.625m and the basic amount of its council tax (i.e. for a Band D property) for the year 2013/14 is £81.86 (based on final tax base figures), a nil increase on the 2012/13 figure of £81.86 to accord with the Government's further support to council taxpayers in view of the economic situation and commensurate grant support for a national freeze on council tax in 2013/14; and
  - c Brighton & Hove City Council and the borough and district councils (the billing authorities) be advised by the Treasurer of the relevant amounts payable and the council tax in the other bands, in line with the regulations and table set out below and to issue precepts accordingly;
- v. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive be authorised, after consultation with the Chairman and the Treasurer, to make adjustments to the presentation of the budget to reflect the final Local Government Finance Settlement, if required.

#### 705.C **Consultation Outcomes from Representative Bodies**

- 705.C.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that set out the responses received from the Representative Bodies in relation to this year's budget consultations for members' consideration.
- 705.C.2 **RESOLVED** – That the responses which were considered as part of the Fire Authority Service Planning Processes for 2013/14 and beyond, be noted.

**Council Tax Calculations**  
 East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service  
 Precept for 2013/14  
 ref S.43 Local Government Finance Act 1992

	£	£
<b>NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT</b>		<b>39,078,800</b>
Forecast Business Rates retained	2,230,654	
Top Up Grant	4,551,494	
Total Base Line Funding	6,782,148	
Add Revenue Support Grant	<u>10,194,540</u>	
Total Grant funding ( excluding transitional/freeze grant)	16,976,688	
Council Tax Grant 13/14	249,029	
Council Tax Support Grant Transitional	91,867	
Previous Year's Surpluses/(Deficits)	135,809	
Total Council Tax Required		21,625,407
Tax Base	264,175.60	
Basic Council Tax (Band D equivalent)		81.86
Basic council tax as calculated above		£.p
Band A	6/9	54.57
Band B	7/9	63.67
Band C	8/9	72.76
Band D	9/9	81.86
Band E	11/9	100.05
Band F	13/9	118.24
Band G	15/9	136.43
Band H	18/9	163.72
Basic council tax as calculated above	Tax Base	Precept (£)
Brighton & Hove	79,781.90	6,530,946.33
Eastbourne	32,476.60	2,658,534.48
Hastings	23,319.00	1,908,893.34
Lewes	34,436.00	2,818,930.96
Rother	35,021.30	2,866,843.62
Wealden	59,140.80	4,841,265.89
		<b>21,625,414.62</b>

706. **SUSSEX CONTROL CENTRE – PROGRESS REPORT**

- 706.1 The Fire Authority considered an oral report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that provided an update on the progress of the Sussex Control Centre. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 706.2 ACO Rolph informed Members that there had been no major changes to the successful implementation of the project since this was last reported to Members. A planning application had been submitted seeking approval to the proposed works at Haywards Heath Fire station, and following a visit from a planning officer, no material concerns had been raised. Formal confirmation had been received of the need for a new electricity and transformer sub-station to meet the power requirements for the Sussex Control Centre.
- 706.3 As previously reported to Members, a contract had been awarded to Remsdaq and contract signing and sealing was imminent. Work was continuing with Remsdaq on an implementation plan. Work would be carried out to the building between March and October 2013, with facility and user tests being completed by the end of October. Following control room staff training and preparation, the 'Go-Live' date was on schedule for 31 March 2014.
- 706.4 On 22 January 2013, West Sussex County Council had begun the TUPE process to transfer staff and ACO Rolph had formally written to WSF&RS on measures for the TUPE process. She had met regularly with control room staff at West Sussex, and the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer would be meeting with the relevant staff in May.
- 706.5 A list of Frequently Asked Questions, with responses, had been sent to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and was available to all Members on request.
- 706.6 **RESOLVED** – That the oral report be noted.

707. **FIRE AUTHORITY TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR 2013/14**

- 707.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Treasurer that set out the Treasury Management Strategy for 2013/14, which included the authorised borrowing limit, prudential indicators, treasury management indicators, the minimum revenue provision statement, and a review of 2012/13. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 707.2 It was not expected that any new external borrowing would be undertaken over the next 15 months. The Authorised Limit for Borrowing determined for 2013/14 would be the statutory limit determined under the Local Government Act 2003 (section 3(1)). For 2013/14 it was estimated that the authorised borrowing limit would be £13.987m.
- 707.3 Members were also advised in the report that the Fire Authority had a statutory duty to determine an amount of minimum revenue provision that it considered to be prudent. The Fire Authority was legally obliged to consider a statement on the Authority's policy for its annual MRP before the start of the financial year to which the provision will relate.

707.4 In response to a question from Councillor Howson, the Treasurer confirmed that the institutions listed in the strategy were continually reviewed taking into account the on-going global financial situation, the views of the ratings agencies and other sources.

707.5 Councillor Duncan asked for ethical considerations to be taken into account when considering where the Authority placed investments. It was agreed that the Scrutiny & Audit Panel be asked to consider the inclusion of an appropriate addition to the strategy regarding ethical consideration.

707.6 **RESOLVED** – That

- i) for 2013/14, the authorised limit for borrowing shall be £13,987,000;
- ii) the prudential indicators and treasury management indicators (set out in section 6 of the report), be adopted;
- iii) the following Minimum Revenue Provision Statement for 2013/14 (set out in section 7 of the report), be approved;

For capital expenditure incurred before 1 April 2008 or which in the future will be Supported Capital Expenditure, the MRP policy will be:

- Based on based on the non-housing CFR, i.e., the Fire Authority currently sets aside a Minimum Repayment Provision based on basic MRP of 4% each year to pay for past capital expenditure and to reduce its CFR.

From 1 April 2008, for all unsupported borrowing, the MRP policy has been:

- Asset Life Method – MRP will be based on the estimated life of the assets, in accordance with the proposed regulations (this option will be applied for any expenditure capitalised under a Capitalisation Direction).
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- iv) the Treasury Management Strategy and the following Policy Statement for 2013/14 be agreed.

*East Sussex Fire Authority defines its treasury management activities as:*

*“The management of the organisation’s cash flows; its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective management of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”*

*The Fire Authority regards the successful identification, monitoring and management of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the organisation.*

*This Authority acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving best value in treasury management, and to employing suitable performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.*

- v) The Scrutiny & Audit Panel be asked to consider an appropriate addition to the Treasury Management Strategy regarding ethical consideration.

708. **APPROVAL OF PAY POLICY STATEMENT**

708.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Monitoring Officer that set out the legal requirements relating to the adoption of a pay policy statement, and the details of what that should contain. (Copy in Minute Book).

708.2 **RESOLVED** – That the Pay Policy Statement for 2013/14, appended to the report, be approved.

709. **MEMBER ALLOWANCES – ANNUAL REVIEW**

709.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that set out a review of the Member Allowances Scheme. (Copy in Minute Book).

709.2 **RESOLVED** – That a nil increase in rates for Members' Allowances for 2013/14 be approved.

710. **FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE EFFICIENCIES REVIEW**

710.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that advised Members that the Fire Minister had commissioned Sir Ken Knight to undertake a review of efficiencies and operational improvements in the delivery of fire & rescue services in England. (Copy in Minute Book).

710.2 Issues being considered in the review included firefighter training, flexible staffing and crewing arrangements, use of retained firefighters, procurement, shared services, collaboration with other organisations, sickness management, sharing senior staff, locally led mergers and operational collaborations, new fire-fighting technology, preventative approaches and working with local businesses. A draft response would be brought to Members at a later date. Members were informed that the report on the outcome of the review would be available in the Spring 2013.

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

711. **PREPARATIONS FOR FUTURE DELIVERY OF FINANCIAL SERVICES FOR EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY**

711.A **Future Arrangements**

711.A.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that set out the current position regarding the proposals to provide a range of financial services for the Fire Authority with effect from 1 April 2013, after the existing contracts expired on 31 March 2013. (Copy in Minute Book).

711.A.2 **RESOLVED** – That

- i. following any further legal advice and satisfactory completion of terms, responsibility be delegated to the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, after consultation with the Chairman and the Treasurer, to approve the appropriate agreements for a range of financial services for East Sussex Fire Authority with effect from 1 April 2013; and
- ii. Contract Standing Orders 13 to 23 be waived to allow for inter-authority co-operation agreements and contracts to be progressed, as appropriate.

711.B **Role of the Treasurer**

711.B.1 The Chairman agreed to accept this report as a matter of urgency, as the Fire Authority had been formally notified on 1 February 2013 that Duncan Savage, the Treasurer and Section 151 Officer, would be leaving East Sussex County Council, (who currently provided this service), on 8 February 2013. This was after the agenda had been published. Since the Authority was legally required to have an appointed Treasurer in place and the Fire Authority would not meet again until June 2013, it was necessary for the Fire Authority to now consider arrangements for the appointment of a Treasurer.

7.11.B.2 The Fire Authority considered a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer that set out proposals for interim arrangements for the appointment of a Treasurer to the Fire Authority. (Copy in Minute Book).

7.11.B.3 The East Sussex Fire Service's Combination Scheme required the Authority to appoint a Treasurer, and Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 required every local authority to secure that one of their officers is responsible for the proper administration of their financial affairs. It was proposed that in the near future, the Authority would make its own direct appointment to the role of Treasurer and Section 151 Officer for a fixed period not exceeding 18 months. However, it was necessary to put in place interim arrangements until such time as a Treasurer was formally appointed to East Sussex Fire Authority.

7.11.B.4 It was proposed that, as an interim measure, Mo Hemsley, East Sussex County Council's Assistant Director Service Finance, be appointed to the position of Treasurer to the Fire Authority and Section 151 Officer.

7.11.B.5 **RESOLVED** – That

- i. the appointment of Mo Hemsley to the role of Treasurer and Section 151 Officer to the Fire Authority until the Authority makes a direct appointment to both roles be approved; and
- ii. the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, after consultation with the Chairman and Monitoring Officer, be authorised to appoint a Treasurer and Section 151 Officer for a period not exceeding 18 months.

712. **QUARTERLY REPORT (OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2012)**

- 712.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that set out the quarterly activity results for the period October to December 2012. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 712.2 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive advised Members that there had been one fatality in Kemp Town during the third quarter of 2012/13, rather than nil as stated in the report. Also, there had been no fatalities in the same quarter in 2010/11. He also drew Members' attention to long serving retirements of two members of staff who had served for 30 years and 43 years 7 months respectively.
- 712.3 Councillor Theobald asked what percentage of the whole number of retained duty firefighters had resigned. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive informed Members that the numbers resigning represented a small percentage of the overall number of retained duty firefighters. Due to the nature of the retained posts, staff often left because of changes in their primary occupations or family commitments, and it was, therefore, important to continue to maintain the number of retained staff.
- 712.4 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive informed Members that the external funding for 'Coaching For a Safer Community' had come to an end and consideration was now being given to how this project could continue. The project used sport as a medium to engage youngsters and raise awareness of the dangers of alcohol and drugs, and encourage citizenship. During the four years that the project had been running, approximately 80,000 school children had been seen through the project. There were currently 63 qualified coaches in ESFRS. Members congratulated Dave Amiet, the Project Manager, on winning the Barclays Community Sports Award for December 2012.
- 712.5 Councillor Theobald said that whilst the number of false alarm calls was reducing, the number remained high and asked if the Service could make a charge for this. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive advised Members that a charge could not be made where the Service turned out in response to a call. However, there may be provisions to allow for charges to be levied in the future.
- 712.6 Councillor Duncan asked about the community safety work that ESFRS undertook to reduce vehicle speeds. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive informed Members that a Road Safety Strategy had been launched. ESFRS continued to work with CFOA on national road safety initiatives, as well as with Sussex Police and the Safer Roads Partnership. He would welcome further collaborative work with Brighton & Hove City Council to resolve the issues of obstructive parking, particularly where there were possibilities of impeding the movements of emergency service vehicles.
- 712.7 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

713. **FIRE AUTHORITY AND PANEL MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED** – That the following dates be approved:

**Fire Authority meetings** at 10.30 hours unless otherwise stated:

06 June 2013  
12 September 2013  
12 December 2013  
16 January 2014  
06 February 2014

**Panel Meetings**

11 April 2013	Policy & Resources, Scrutiny & Audit
11 July 2013	Policy & Resources, Scrutiny & Audit, Standards
29 August 2013	Policy & Resources
19 September 2013	Scrutiny & Audit
14 November 2013	Policy & Resources, Scrutiny & Audit
09 January 2014	Policy & Resources, Scrutiny & Audit, Standards

Commencement times for these Panels, to be notified in advance of the meetings, are generally likely to be: Policy & Resources 10.00; Scrutiny & Audit 11.00; and Standards 14.00 hours.

714. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC.**

714.1 **RESOLVED** – That whilst item 715 shall remain exempt, the press and public need not be excluded from the meeting unless any questions are raised by Members as to the accuracy of the minutes.

714.2 Item 715 shall remain exempt under paragraphs 1,3,4 & 5 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 and accordingly is not open for public inspection on the grounds that it includes information relating to any individual, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, 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, and information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

715. **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2013 (EXEMPT CATEGORIES 1,3,4 & 5)**

The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2013 were dealt with at minute no. 703 above.

The meeting concluded at 13:25 hours.

Signed

Chairman

Dated this                      day of June 2013.