

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 11 February 2016.

Present: Councillors Barnes, Buchanan, Butler, Deane, Galley, Howson (Chairman), Lambert (Vice-Chair), Peltzer Dunn, Penn, Pragnell, Scott, Sheppard, Taylor, Theobald and Wincott.

Also present:

Mr. G. Walsh (Chief Fire Officer), Mr. S. Apter (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), Mrs. C. Rolph (Assistant Chief Officer), Mr. D. Savage (Treasurer), Mr. A Ghebre-Ghiorghis (Monitoring Officer), Miss. E. Woodley (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Mr. W. Tricker (Head of Finance and Procurement), Mrs. L. Ridley (Designate Assistant Director – Planning & Improvement) and Mrs. K. Ward (Clerk).

898. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

898.1 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.

899. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

899.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Earl, Morris and O'Quinn.

900. URGENT ITEMS AND CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

900.1 This was Cheryl Rolph's last Fire Authority meeting as Assistant Chief Officer and the Chairman and Group Leaders wanted to record their thanks and appreciation for the help and advice provided and her dedication to East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service over the past 10 years.

901. TO CONSIDER PUBLIC QUESTIONS, IF ANY

901.1 There were none.

902. TO CONSIDER PUBLIC PETITIONS, IF ANY

902.1 There were none.

903. NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2015

903.1 **RESOLVED** – That the non-confidential Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman. (Copy in Minute Book).

904. **CALLOVER**

904.1 Members reserved the following items for debate:

905. Fire Authority Service Planning Processes for 2016/17 and Beyond – Revenue Budget 2016/17 and Capital Strategy 2016/17 To 2020/21.

908. Pay Policy Statement 2016-17.

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

905. **FIRE AUTHORITY SERVICE PLANNING PROCESSES FOR 2016/17 AND BEYOND – REVENUE BUDGET 2016/17 AND CAPITAL STRATEGY 2016/17 TO 2020/21.**

905.1 The Fire Authority considered a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer and the Treasurer that set out the Fire Authority's Revenue Budget 2016/17, Capital Strategy 2016/17–2020/21 and Medium Term Finance Plan for 2016/17–2020/21. Revised pages were circulated at the meeting. (Copy in Minute Book).

905.2 The Authority's draft budget proposals for 2016/17 had been considered by the Policy & Resources Panel on 21 January 2016. Since that meeting the report had been updated to reflect final council tax and business rates information, collection fund positions and forecast income from the business rate pool. The Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) would now be finalised as The Local Government Finance Report (England) 2016/17 had been approved by Parliament on the previous day, 10 February 2016.

905.3 The Authority had continued to make good progress in identifying and agreeing savings proposals over the last 12 months, through its Changing the Service, Shaping our Future programme. The latest version of the MTFP showed that the Authority had already identified £6.4m of savings for delivery which would meet its funding gap up to 2019/20. However, further savings of £0.249m were still required by 2020/21.

905.4 The development of the new Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) in 2016/17 would be closely linked to the development of ESFA's future financial plans, ensuring that service priorities were matched to available resources and that the Authority could achieve financial sustainability over the medium term. There was sufficient capacity within existing reserves to create an earmarked reserve of £2.0m for the expected one-off investment required as part of the IMD Transformation project.

905.5 The report outlined proposals for setting a balanced revenue budget in 2016/17, including commitments and growth bids, subject to the Authority agreeing a 1.94% increase in its council tax in line with its existing budget strategy.

905.6 The Capital Strategy reflected the Authority's identified capital investment requirements for the next five years and could be financed from existing resources without the need to incur additional borrowing.

- 905.7 The Authority had acted prudently in establishing reserves and balances to meet its assessed risks and to provide one-off funding for specific priorities. This continued to provide the funding to support the Authority's transformation programme and meet its capital investment priorities over the next five years.
- 905.8 Members thanked the Treasurer and his team for the work that had gone in to compiling the budget.
- 905.9 Councillor Galley referred to staffing numbers and that support staff making up 20% of the establishment figure was high. Officers provided assurance that this was in line with other Fire and Rescue Services. East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service was a standalone Service and therefore provided the majority of support functions, however opportunities to share support services in the future were being looked at.
- 905.10 **RESOLVED** – That:
- (i) an increase in council tax of 1.94% be approved and as a result:
 - the budget proposals set out in the report and the net budget requirement of £38.432m for 2016/17 be approved;
 - the council tax requirement of £24.280m be approved; and
 - the council tax and precepts as set out in Appendix G to the report (and set out in the attached), be approved.
 - (ii) the capital programme for the next five years and the capital budget of £4.566m for 2016/17 and the plans to use capital grant, capital receipts and revenue contributions to finance that expenditure be approved;
 - (iii) the maintenance of the General Reserve at a minimum of 8% of the net revenue budget over the medium term be approved;
 - (iv) the establishment of an IMD Transformation Reserve using resources totalling £2.0m transferred from other reserves as set out in Appendix F to the report be approved;
 - (v) the transfer of the Transitional Grant £0.097m to the Improvement & Efficiency Reserve to fund the outcomes of the IRMP be approved;
 - (vi) the fees and charges set out in Appendix D to the report be approved; and
 - (vii) the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Chairman and Treasurer, be authorised to make adjustments to the presentation of the budget to reflect the final Local Government Finance Settlement.

Councillor Deane wished it formally recorded that she voted against the proposed budget.

906. **DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN 2016-17**

- 906.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer that summarised the outstanding actions required to complete the Draft Annual Plan 2015/16 for approval and for final completion by the publication date of 30 June 2016. (Copy in Minute Book).

- 906.2 The current 2015/16 Annual Plan contained key information on the Fire Authority's Service priorities for the year ahead, including summary performance information and available resources. The draft 2016/17 Annual Plan was being prepared alongside the decisions being made by the Fire Authority and its Panels on similar issues for 2016/17 and beyond.
- 906.3 The Fire Authority, at its meeting on 10 December 2015, considered the key Service priorities and savings to meet the overall resources available to the Fire Authority, but deferred final consideration on the Council Tax precept until the February 2016 meeting.
- 906.4 The final version of the draft 2016/17 Annual Plan will be adapted to take into consideration the outcomes of all of the 2016/17 Service Planning decisions, including current Community Risk Management review activities, the latest Revenue Budget and Capital Programme as well as the outcome of the corporate performance results 2015/16.
- 906.5 **RESOLVED** – That:
- (i) the roll forward of the draft Annual Plan for publication by 30 June 2016 be approved in principle subject to any final amendments once the Revenue Budget has been approved at this meeting and other outstanding information set out in the report; and
 - (ii) authority for the approval of the final version of the Annual Plan be delegated to the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chairman.

907. **SENIOR MANAGEMENT RESTRUCTURE**

- 907.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer that advised Members of the outcome of the individual staff consultations and trade union feedback on the proposed Senior Management restructure. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 907.2 **RESOLVED** – That the feedback and equality impact assessment action plan, (which will be monitored by the Scrutiny & Audit Panel), be noted.

908. **PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2016-17**

- 908.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Monitoring Officer that sought approval of the Fire Authority's Pay Policy statement for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 908.2 The Localism Act 2011 imposes a duty on relevant local authorities to prepare pay policy statements for each financial year following the principles of transparency. The statement must be approved by 31 March 2016 and must include policies such as remuneration of its Chief Officers, remuneration of its lowest paid employees, the relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and that of other employees who are not Chief Officers, etc. A full list of policies to be included could be found in the Pay Policy Report.

908.3 Councillor Galley had noted that the staffing figures quoted within the report did not equate to the figures quoted within the Budget Report and asked why this was so. The Treasurer explained that HR reported actual staff figures whereas Finance reported on the posts budgeted for.

908.4 **RESOLVED** – That the Pay Policy Statement set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

909. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2016-17**

909.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Treasurer that contained recommendations about the borrowing limits, the prudential indicators and limits, the investment strategy and policy as required by Section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003 and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance 2004. (Copy in Minute Book).

909.2 **RESOLVED** – That:

- (i) the treasury management strategy and policy statement for 2016/17 (and adopted for the remainder of 2015/16), be approved;
- (ii) it be determined that for 2016/17 the Authorised Limit for borrowing shall be £11.813m;
- (iii) the prudential indicators as set out in the attached Appendix 2 of the report be adopted; and
- (iv) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement for 2016/17 as set out in the attached Appendix 3 of the report be approved.

910. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

910.1 Members noted and agreed the dates of future meetings:

26 May 2016	Scrutiny & Audit and Policy & Resources Panels
16 June 2016	Fire Authority
7 July 2016	Scrutiny & Audit and Policy & Resources Panels
8 September 2016	Fire Authority
15 September 2016	Scrutiny & Audit Panel
3 November 2016	Scrutiny & Audit and Policy & Resources Panels
8 December 2016	Fire Authority
19 January 2017	Policy & Resources Panel
2 February 2017	Scrutiny & Audit Panel
9 February 2017	Fire Authority
27 April 2017	Scrutiny & Audit and Policy & Resources Panels
15 June 2017	Fire Authority
6 July 2017	Scrutiny & Audit and Policy & Resources Panels
7 September 2017	Fire Authority
14 September 2017	Scrutiny & Audit Panel
2 November 2017	Scrutiny & Audit and Policy & Resources Panels
7 December 2017	Fire Authority

All Fire Authority meetings to commence at 10:30 hours

All Panel meetings to commence at 10:00 hours

911. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

911.1 **RESOLVED** – That items nos. 912 and 913 be exempt under the paragraphs indicated below 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 following grounds:

912 Paragraphs 1 and 3 – includes information relating to an individual and includes information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

913 Paragraph 3 – includes information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The meeting concluded at 12:05 hours.

Signed

Chairman

Dated this 16 day of June 2016

APPENDIX TO MINUTE NO. 905

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY: PRECEPT FOR 2016/17

REF: S43 LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 1992

	£	£
NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT		38,432,000.00
Forecast Business Rates retained	2,505,000.00	
Top Up grant	4,768,000.00	
Total Base Line funding	<u>7,273,000.00</u>	
Add Revenue Support Grant	6,196,000.00	
Total Grant funding (excluding transitional/freeze grant)	<u>13,469,000.00</u>	
Transition Grant	97,000.00	
Section 31 Grant Business Rates adjustment	217,000.00	
Previous Year's Surpluses/(Deficits)	369,000.00	
Total Council Tax required		<u>24,280,000.00</u>
Tax base	279,983.54	
Basic Council Tax (Band D equivalent)		86.72
Basic Council Tax from above calculation		<u>Council Tax</u>
Band A	6/9	57.81
Band B	7/9	67.45
Band C	8/9	77.08
Band D	9/9	86.72
Band E	11/9	105.99
Band F	13/9	125.26
Band G	15/9	144.53
Band H	18/9	173.44
	<u>Tax Base</u>	<u>Precept</u>
Brighton and Hove	86,173.00	7,472,923
Eastbourne	33,606.10	2,914,321
Hastings	24,678.00	2,140,076
Lewes	35,797.10	3,104,325
Rother	36,808.84	3,192,063
Wealden	62,920.50	5,456,466
	279,983.54	24,280,174

