

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 8 September 2016.

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

Also present:

Mr. G. Walsh (Chief Fire Officer), Mrs. D. Whittaker (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), Mr. M. Andrews (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), Mr. A. Ghebre-Ghiorghis (Monitoring Officer), Mr. D. Savage (Treasurer/Assistant Director Resources), Mrs. L. Ridley (Assistant Director Planning & Improvement), Mrs. S. Klein (Clerk to the Fire Authority).

935. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

935.1 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.

936. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

936.1 Apologies were received from Councillors Deane and Morris.

937. URGENT ITEMS AND CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

937.1 Former Fire Authority Member Brian Gadd

Members stood in silence for one minute in memory of Brian Gadd, who had died on 13 August following a long illness. Brian had been a member of East Sussex Fire Authority from 2001 to 2010, as well as being a Councillor for East Sussex County Council, and was our Lead Member for Learning & Development.

938. TO CONSIDER PUBLIC QUESTIONS, IF ANY

938.1 There were none.

939. TO CONSIDER PUBLIC PETITIONS, IF ANY

939.1 There were none.

940. **NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JUNE 2016**

940.1 **RESOLVED** – That the non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2016 be approved and signed by the Chairman. (Copy in Minute Book).

941. **CALLOVER**

941.1 Members reserved the following items for debate:

942. 2017/18 Strategic Service Planning and Medium Term Financial Plan

943. Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring 2016/17

944. Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2017/18-2019/20

945. Annual Performance Outcome Report 2015/16

946. Immediate Emergency Care Responding – Future Options

948. Date of the Fire Authority meeting in February 2017

941.2 **RESOLVED** – That all other reports be approved according to the recommendations set out in the reports.

942. **2017/18 STRATEGIC SERVICE PLANNING AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

942.1 The Fire Authority considered a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer that rolled forward the Fire Authority's Service Planning Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan for 2017/18 to 2021/22. (Copy in Minute Book).

942.2 The CFO explained that the main purpose of the report was to set the financial context for the service planning process, through an update of the MTFP, and to determine how best to deliver the Authority's Purpose and Commitments, and the targets and priorities that underpin them, within the available resources. Members and officers needed to ensure that the service planning process delivered sustainability in the medium term for both the revenue and capital budgets, and the Service as a whole.

942.3 The Treasurer informed Members that further work was planned to ensure that strategic planning and resource allocation processes were better aligned, ensuring that agreed policy priorities and key outcomes were properly resourced and could be delivered more effectively. This would include a budget review mechanism to challenge directorate and functional budgets and identify potential savings and pressures. Proposed new pressures, savings and investments would be included in future reports for Member consideration.

- 942.4 Councillor Galley felt that a proposed increase in Council Tax of 1.94% was appropriate in the current circumstances and that accepting a 4-year deal from Government was a sensible way to ensure a degree of stability. He had a number of questions which the CFO and Treasurer responded to below:
- 942.4.1 **HQ relocation savings** – the CFO explained that the HQ relocation was one of a number of projects currently being progressed, but the projected savings had not yet been built into the budget. There was an expectation that the Service would require less space at Police HQ than was originally anticipated, which should realise more savings, once Heads of Terms were agreed; any amendments to costs would be reported to Members.
- 942.4.2 **East Sussex Business Rates Pool** – Councillor Galley was concerned about the political implications of a possible withdrawal from the East Sussex Business Rates Pool and proposed that the recommended delegation (to the Treasurer, in consultation with the CFO) should be amended to include ‘and the Chairman and Group Leaders’. Councillor Barnes seconded the proposed amendment and Members agreed the amended recommendation.
- 942.4.3 **Pay Inflation** – officers were concerned that there could be additional pressures on pay, with claims from a number of representative bodies anticipated over the next few years, especially in relation to the changes in firefighters’ roles. The CFO explained that, although the Government intended to cap Public Sector pay increases at 1%, the Treasurer had taken a prudent approach in providing for a net pay inflation of 1.5% for the next year and 2% in later years. This also provided some cover for grade inflation.
- 942.4.4 **Charging for services** – the CFO confirmed that no further consideration on charging for large animal rescues would be taken until the end of the financial year. The Treasurer further explained that the charging policy for large animal rescues remained in place, but that he was proposing not to set income targets at this time until officers had considered the full impact of the new charges.
- 942.4.5 **Draft Efficiency Plan** – the Treasurer confirmed that the last of the Service’s housing had been sold and the capital receipts included in the Plan; assumptions had also been built in about the sale of Service HQ and the Fort Road, Newhaven site. There were still some outstanding queries with the Home Office regarding the Draft Efficiency Plan, but the Treasurer confirmed that the figures had been drawn down from the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 942.4.6 Councillors Galley and Barnes were also concerned that the Draft Efficiency Plan should have political involvement and Councillor Galley proposed that the recommendation be amended to include ‘and the Chairman and Group Leaders’. Councillor Barnes seconded the proposed amendment and Members agreed the amended recommendation.

- 942.5 Councillor Barnes felt that the Plan could be a useful tool for educating the Home Office, and suggested that more figures and explanations should be included, especially around procurement and work with the Health Service and Social Services. The CFO confirmed that a report on the Government's release of procurement data for FRSs would be brought to the Scrutiny & Audit Panel in November.
- 942.6 Councillor Barnes was happy to accept the Government's 4-year deal, which he felt would give the Authority more stability, as he felt there was still a large national deficit, with economic growth likely to be slower than anticipated. He also suggested that the IRMP may identify a need for further investment.
- 942.7 **RESOLVED** – That:
- i) the updated Medium Term Financial Plan for 2017/18 – 2021/22 and its underlying assumptions be approved;
 - ii) the Government's offer of a multi-year funding settlement 2016/17 – 2019/20 be accepted;
 - iii) the draft Efficiency Plan 2016/17 – 2019/20 be approved and authority delegated to the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Assistant Director Resources / Treasurer, Chairman and Group Leaders, to finalise the Plan for submission to the Home Office by 14 October 2016; and
 - iv) authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Resources / Treasurer, after consultation with the Chief Fire Officer, Chairman and Group Leaders, to determine whether the Fire Authority remains within, or withdraws from, the East Sussex Business Rate Pool

943. **REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2016/17**

- 943.1 The Fire Authority considered a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer that reported on issues arising from the monitoring of the 2016/17 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme as at 31 July 2016. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 943.2 This was the first financial monitoring report to the Authority for the financial year 2016/17 and a number of risks had been identified. Members were informed that the current Revenue Budget was forecast to be underspent by £47,000 and there were a number of significant risks, although certainty would increase once the work to revisit the Wholetime pay and pension budgets was complete.

- 943.3 Members noted that the overall Capital Programme was projected to be £13,000 underspent, but there was a risk that the current year's spending profile may slip for some schemes. Members were reminded that the Authority maintains Earmarked and General Reserves in order to assist it in managing its spending plans across the financial year and making provisions for the financial risks it faces. A summary of the current planned use of Reserves and a summary of the savings already taken from the 2016/17 budget, was also reported to Members.
- 943.4 Councillor Galley asked about the appointment of a Programme Management Officer (PMO) and the DCFO confirmed that work in this area, including two major projects, had been on-going while the PMO remit was developed. This was now being finalised and the Service was ready to go out to advertise for the PMO.
- 943.5 Councillor Galley also asked for clarification of the 'Safer Communities' budget heading in the Revenue Budget Objective Analysis and the CFO explained that, following the management restructure, this budget heading included the majority of operational staff.
- 943.6 Councillor Barnes felt that the Revenue Budget Objective Analysis did not provide sufficient detail. He would be more interested in an objective analysis, for instance, of the cost of fighting fires against the cost of educating businesses. The Treasurer confirmed that more detailed analysis was provided in the narrative of the report, especially regarding risks, but he could arrange for more detail to be provided on the Safer Communities Budget, which made up almost half of the Revenue Budget, as part of future reports.
- 943.7 **RESOLVED** – That
- a) The following be noted:
 - i) the projected Revenue Budget underspend and the risks identified;
 - ii) the variations to the capital programme, all within the delegated powers of the Chief Fire Officer and the Treasurer to approve;
 - iii) the projected underspend in the Capital Programme;
 - iv) the planned use of reserves;
 - v) the monitoring of savings taken in 2016/17; and
 - vi) the current year investments; and
 - b) the drawdown of up to £350,000 from the IMD Transformation Reserve be approved to fund the IT implications of the SHQ Relocation Programme and other planned refresh activity in 2016/17.

944. **INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (IRMP) 2017/18-2019/20**

- 944.1 The Fire Authority received a report of the Chief Fire Officer that sought Members' approval for the 2017/18 – 2019/20 IRMP and consultation process. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 944.2 Members considered the next IRMP, which details the Authority's strategic direction for the next three years 2017/18 – 2019/20, and was now ready for Fire Authority approval and public/stakeholder consultation. Due to the short timescales between Fire Authority meetings an eight week consultation period had been recommended.
- 944.3 The DCFO confirmed that the current IRMP would conclude in March 2017, and there was nothing contentious in the next three years' IRMP; the intention was to embed current work on projects such as the HQ relocation, the Sussex Control Centre, IMD and the business case work around the Policing & Crime Bill, and to ensure the stability and sustainability of the Service.
- 944.4 Councillor Barnes suggested being more specific about the non-emergency work with Health & Social Care, which could be raised during the consultation process, and confirmed he was happy with an eight-week consultation period.
- 944.5 Councillor Scott asked how the required future increase in housing, identified under 'Planning for Growth', would affect the Service's resilience, and suggested the Authority should be looking for 'planning gains' in the future. The DCFO confirmed that she was already in conversation with a number of Districts and Boroughs to develop a framework document regarding S106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This document would articulate the implications of growth on the Fire Authority, for instance in Hailsham and Wealden – this document would also be presented to Districts and Boroughs during the planning consultation period. The DCFO was also seeking consultations with the Police, to make this a joint document for Emergency Services.
- 944.6 Following the recent deaths by drowning at Camber Sands, Councillor Scott asked how the Fire Authority and Boroughs and Districts could work with Rother District Council in the future to increase water safety advice. The DCFO confirmed that she had already spoken to the Executive Directors at Rother DC, in her role as lead CFOA member on drowning and water safety, and they had welcomed the Authority's support and advice.
- 944.7 The DCFO would soon be able to share with Members some local work being undertaken, as well as the enhanced prevention work being led by the Prevention & Community Safety Team. She had also used the opportunity for free publicity through a national film being made by ITV regarding drowning and water safety and this would also be shared with Members when launched later this month. It was noted that deaths caused by drowning were, nationally, three times more prevalent than deaths caused by fire.

- 944.8 Members also raised the issue of swimming lessons and education about water safety in general. The DCFO informed Members that a national review had recently been requested by the Department for Education, and the Amateur Swimming Association was leading on this. Locally, ESFRS was looking to include water safety in schools education and Safety in Action days, as well as increasing information to young adults with a film from the Royal Life Saving Society. The Service was also exploring partnership working for a 'Swim Safe' project for next summer.
- 944.9 Councillor Scott asked about the methodologies to be used in the consultation process as very few people had attended previous meetings and exhibitions, and these had mainly been firefighters, their families and support staff. This had been discussed at the last Members' Seminar and, although the consultation process would have many similarities, Mrs Ridley reminded Members that they would also be receiving packs to help them engage with their communities and local groups. Councillor Barnes asked that they also receive these electronically so that they can pass them on to their Town and Parish Clerks for further distribution.
- 944.10 Councillor Galley suggested the Chairman's Forward to the consultation draft should be re-worded as the PCC is not considering taking over the **running** of the Fire Authority. He also suggested that the proportion of support staff to operational staff in Appendix A needed to be explained, as the Home Office and PCC could think it was too high, and might look to make savings there. He suggested that the Scrutiny & Audit Panel could analyse the support staff numbers and Mrs Ridley confirmed that a benchmarking report was being prepared for December's Fire Authority meeting.
- 944.11 **RESOLVED** – That the following be approved:
- i) the draft IRMP and associated appendices, as amended;
 - ii) the proposals included in the draft IRMP and detailed in this report at 2.3; and
 - iii) the eight week consultation period and Plan.

945. **ANNUAL PERFORMANCE OUTCOME REPORT 2015/16**

- 945.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer that presented the annual performance results for 2015/16. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 945.2 This report provided Members with details of the Service's performance for the period April 2015 – March 2016. The Service had met its target in 68.2% of its Performance Indicators for 2015/16, which was a slight reduction on last year where it met 71%.

945.3 Members were interested to note that the Fire Authority was meeting its target for the number of fires in domestic properties (Indicator No. 15) but was still one of the worst performing nationally. It was explained that it was difficult to keep up with the 'best performers', partly due to demographics and risk, but a detailed analysis would be brought to a future meeting of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel.

945.4 Councillor Pragnell asked why barely half the target of 480 inspections of high risk premises had been completed (Indicator No. 16) and the CFO explained that this was due to recruitment and training issues, the high number of enforcement actions being undertaken, and the investigation into the St. Michael's Hospice fire impacting on the figures. Members were reassured that these 'high risk premises' were business premises and did not include residential homes and social housing.

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

946. **IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY CARE RESPONDING – FUTURE OPTIONS**

946.1 The Fire Authority received a report of the Chief Fire Officer that informed Members of the proposal for East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service to undertake Immediate Emergency Care Responding on behalf of South East Coast Ambulance Trust. (Copy in Minute Book).

946.2 Members were informed that each year, ambulance services across the UK respond to approximately 60,000 cases of suspected cardiac arrest but resuscitation is attempted by ambulance staff in less than half of these cases. The reasons for this are that, either the victim has been dead for some time, or they have not received early "cardio pulmonary resuscitation" (CPR) before the arrival of the ambulance service.

946.3 Ambulance trusts in the UK are coming under increased pressure to provide a timely response to such incidents due to the consistent increase in emergency medical calls of around 6% per annum and, at the same time, fire and rescue services (FRSs) are operating within a context of an average 40% reduction in demand on response services over the last decade.

946.4 As a consequence, Members were informed that many FRSs were engaging in "emergency medical response" involving fire and rescue staff supporting the local ambulance service by responding to a pre-agreed category of medical calls in order to improve patient outcomes affected by time-critical medical emergencies. Following discussions between officers and South East Coast Ambulance Trust (SECAMB), officers believed that the Service could enhance its value to the communities of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove and improve patient outcomes in certain medical emergencies, by supporting SECAMB in providing emergency medical response.

946.5 As the majority of costs would need to be borne by the Authority, Members considered whether the proposal to use Fire Authority resources should be a matter for public consultation and, subject to this consultation, whether to commence a two year pilot, to be funded from within existing budgets and reserves. Members agreed that they were happy for this to be reflected in the IRMP consultation and, should the public agree, to commence the two year pilot.

946.6 **RESOLVED** – That:

- i) the contents of the report be noted;
- ii) officers be authorised to consult the public as part of the 2017/18–2019/20 IRMP public consultation process;
- iii) the proposal to introduce a pilot scheme at selected shift, day-crewed and retained stations alongside volunteers from other staff groups (Flexible Duty Officers and Locality Managers) to respond to medical emergencies involving cardiac arrest, breathing difficulties and/or major bleeding (Red 1 calls) be approved;
- iv) additional training be approved to ensure staff involved in the scheme are trained to the appropriate Immediate Emergency Care – Responder standard;
- v) the purchase of the necessary additional equipment to undertake IEC-R be approved;
- vi) start-up funding and project management costs for the two year scheme be approved, to be drawn down from the Improvement & Efficiency reserve; and
- vii) yearly operating costs be approved to be met from within existing budgets.

947. **ESFRS FIREFIGHTERS’ PENSION SCHEME – DISCRETIONS POLICY**

947.1 The Fire Authority received a report of the Chief Fire Officer that sought Members’ approval of the ESFRS Firefighters’ Pensions Scheme – Discretions Policy. (Copy in Minute Book).

947.2 Members were informed that the Firefighters’ Pension Schemes were statutory schemes, with the rules and regulations governing the schemes laid down by the Government. Members noted that there were some provisions of the Schemes that were discretionary and these discretionary powers allowed employers such as ESFRS to choose how, or if, they apply these provisions.

947.3 Members considered a draft policy document which summarised the discretions that ESFRS exercises as an employer in relation to the Firefighters’ and New Firefighters’ Pension Schemes and had been updated to reflect the new regulations which came into force from 1st April 2015.

947.4 **RESOLVED** – That the draft ESFRS Discretions Policy for the employer discretions available under the Firefighter Pension Schemes be approved.

948. **DATE OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING IN FEBRUARY 2017**

948.1 The Fire Authority had previously agreed that a meeting would be held on 9 February 2017. Members were informed that it was now anticipated that all the necessary information would not be available in sufficient time to allow it to be included in the budget proposals for Members' consideration. Therefore, Members were asked to agree to move the date of the Fire Authority meeting from 9 to 14 February 2017.

948.2 **RESOLVED** – That the date of the Fire Authority meeting be moved from 9 to 14 February 2017.

949. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

949.1 **RESOLVED** – That item no. 950 be exempt under paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 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 following grounds: it contains information relating to any individual, information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), and information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

950. **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JUNE 2016 (EXEMPT CATEGORIES 1, 2, 3 AND 5)**

950.1 **RESOLVED** – That the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2016 be approved and signed by the Chairman. (Copy in Minute Book).

The meeting concluded at 12:20 hours.

Signed
Chairman

Dated this 8th day of December 2016.