

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Minutes of the meeting of the East Sussex Fire Authority held at East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, 20 Upperton Road, Eastbourne at 10:30 hours on Thursday 8 December 2016.

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

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), Mrs. L. Woodley (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Ms. I. Sidoli (Senior Lawyer, Brighton & Hove City Council), Mr. D. Savage (Treasurer / Assistant Director Resources), Mrs. L. Ridley (Assistant Director Planning & Improvement) and Mrs. S. Klein (Clerk to the Fire Authority).

951. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

951.1 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.

952. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

952.1 Apologies were received from Councillors Earl, Pragnell, Scott and Wincott.

953. URGENT ITEMS AND CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

953.1 PCC Business Case

953.1.1 Copies of recent correspondence between the Chairman, Group Leaders and PCC were circulated to Members for information and the Chief Fire Officer informed them of the slippage in the timetable for the development of the business case by PA Consulting; this was now expected in February 2017.

953.1.2 The CFO was awaiting further details of the timetable around consultation on any business case following a decision by the PCC. Following the second reading of the Policing & Crime Bill, there was now a duty to consult for a minimum of 56 days – this could now run into the pre-election period of 'Purdah', before the County Council elections on 4 May 2017. He would also raise this issue at the next meeting of the Strategic Reference Group on 13 December.

953.1.3 The Chairman thanked the CFO and Councillor Lambert, the Vice-Chair, for their continuing hard work on this issue.

954. TO CONSIDER PUBLIC QUESTIONS, IF ANY

954.1 There were none.

955. **TO CONSIDER PUBLIC PETITIONS, IF ANY**

955.1 There were none.

956. **NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2016**

956.1 Councillor Galley referred to paragraph 944.10 where ‘... Mrs. Ridley confirmed that a benchmarking report was being prepared for December’s Fire Authority meeting.’ The report was not on the agenda for this meeting, and Mrs. Ridley confirmed that this was subject to the availability of the national benchmarking report, and would be brought to Members in due course.

956.2 **RESOLVED** – That the non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2016 be approved and signed by the Chairman. (Copy in Minute Book).

957. **CALLOVER**

957.1 Members reserved the following items for debate:

958. Member Allowances Scheme Annual Review

959. Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2017/18-2019/20 – Consultation Results

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

958. **MEMBER ALLOWANCES SCHEME ANNUAL REVIEW**

958.1 The Fire Authority considered a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer and Monitoring Officer regarding the annual review of the Member Allowances Scheme. (Copy in Minute Book).

958.2 The Fire Authority had previously approved the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Advisory Group (IRAG) for a Member Allowances Scheme to take effect from 1 April 2014 until 2017/18. This Scheme provided for an annual report to be brought to the Fire Authority in December for any changes to be implemented with effect from 1 April the following year. The financial implications of any changes to the rates that Members may agree would be taken into account in planning the revenue budget to be brought to Members in the new year.

958.3 Members were reminded that the Policy & Resources Panel had the remit to monitor this Authority’s scheme, other CFAs’ Member Allowances schemes, and those of the constituent authorities on an annual basis between formal review periods to ensure that it remained equitable and fair. Members also noted that the Panel may be assisted by an Independent Remuneration Advisory Panel. As there were no perceived issues arising from this annual review, and the financial implications were minimal, the report had been brought direct to the Fire Authority for final consideration.

958.4 The CFO confirmed that there was unlikely to be a report to the Policy & Resources Panel before September 2017.

958.5 **RESOLVED** – That:

- i) a 1% increase in rates of basic and special responsibility allowances be approved with effect from 1 April 2017;
- ii) an additional allowance of 5p per mile per passenger (in addition to the standard mileage allowance payable) be payable to a Member conveying another Member or an officer to the same event which is an approved duty, subject to the capacity of the vehicle;
- iii) it be noted that the CFO has the authority to keep travel and subsistence rates under review and upgrade them; and
- iv) a review will be undertaken of the arrangements to consider Member allowances in the Spring of 2017, specifically to consider the membership, guidance and terms of reference of the Independent Remuneration Advisory Group.

959. **INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (IRMP) 2017/18-2019/20 – CONSULTATION RESULTS**

959.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer that asked Members to consider the results of the consultation exercise relating to the Integrated Risk Management Action Plan 2017-2020 and agree the draft IRMP or propose any changes in the light of the responses made, in order to agree a final Plan to take effect from April 2017. (Copy in Minute Book).

959.2 At their meeting on 8 September 2016, Members had agreed to commence an 8-week public consultation on the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2017-2020. The consultation period had now ended and Members considered the responses received.

959.3 The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that the consultation had had a broader reach than in previous years as a result of an extensive communication strategy and concentrated engagement from Fire Authority Members; the quantitative, online survey had received 588 responses (528 of which were usable) and qualitative feedback was gathered at three fora from 24 attendees. This increased engagement was particularly pleasing, given the non-controversial nature of the Plan, and the great increase in the use of social media had been very welcome.

959.4 The Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed Members that a number of learning points from this consultation exercise would be taken forward to enhance future consultation, such as next year's recruitment exercise and the current Inclusion & Diversity Strategy which was now available on the website. The ACFO also suggested that any feedback on the Inclusion & Diversity Strategy might be coordinated through the Lead Member, Councillor Caroline Penn.

959.5 The DCFO thanked Mrs. Ridley and her team for their work on this exercise and Members echoed her thanks. Councillor Barnes suggested future consultations could enclose a brief questionnaire asking Parish Councils, for instance, to return them. He was pleased with the approach to the question on health collaboration.

- 959.6 The CFO confirmed that no responses had been received from Representative Bodies.
- 959.7 Councillor Peltzer Dunn noted that those respondents who had had contact with the Service were very satisfied, and he asked how the views of those who had not had contact with the Service could be obtained.
- 959.8 Councillor Morris asked how awareness of safer business training could be improved and the DCFO informed Members that this was being actively pursued, through social media.
- 959.9 Councillor Deane noted that respondents had said they would be willing to pay more, through council tax, for their local fire and rescue service next year, if it was to be spent on core priorities. She suggested the Service should lobby for further dispensations for FRSs to raise council tax above government thresholds if further cuts to budgets were inevitable. The Treasurer confirmed that CFOA and the Fire Finance Network do lobby government and that they had asked for an extension to Fire Authorities of the current dispensation, available to some PCCs and Borough and District Councils in the bottom quartile, to increase their council tax by £5 – he would update Members in due course.
- 959.10 **RESOLVED** – That:
- i) the report be noted, including the consultation feedback and the Equality Impact Assessment for the IRMP; and
 - ii) the changes proposed in paragraph 10.5 of the report be agreed and the final Plan be approved for publication.

960. **TRAVEL PLAN**

- 960.1 The Fire Authority received a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer that set out proposals for a Travel Plan which would support the SHQ relocation decision taken by Members in June 2015. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 960.2 **RESOLVED** – That the Travel Plan measures be agreed and the ESFRS Travel Plan be approved as set out in the report.

961. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

- 961.1 **RESOLVED** – That item no. 962 be exempt under paragraph 3 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 the business affairs of the Fire Authority.

The meeting concluded at 12:08 hours.

Signed
Chairman

Dated this 14th day of February 2017.