

**EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY**

**Minutes of the meeting of the East Sussex Fire Authority held at Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Hove, BN3 3BQ at 10:30 hours on Thursday 15 June 2017.**

**Present:** Councillors Barnes, Elford, Galley, Lambert (Vice-Chair), Morris, O'Quinn, Osborne, Scott, Smith, Taylor, Theobald and Tutt.

**Also present:**

Mrs. D. Whittaker (Interim Chief Fire Officer), Mr. M. Andrews (Interim Deputy Chief Fire Officer), Mr M O'Brien (Interim Assistant Chief Fire Officer) Mr. A. Ghebreghiorgis (Monitoring Officer), Mr. D. Savage (Treasurer/Assistant Director Resources), Mrs V. Chart (Assistant Director, HR & Organisational Development), Mrs. L. Ridley (Assistant Director Planning & Improvement), Mrs. K. Ward (Clerk to the Fire Authority).

**977. INTERESTS**

- 977.1 It was noted that, in relation to matters on the agenda, no participating Member had any disclosable interest under the Authority Code of Conduct for Members.

**978. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

- 978.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Monitoring Officer. (Copy in minute book).
- 978.2 The Combination Order for the creation of the East Sussex Fire Authority set down the procedures for the election of the Chairman of the Authority. The Fire Authority's Standing Orders required a Chairman to be elected at the annual meeting from amongst its members as the first item of business, and set out the rules for doing so.
- 978.3 **RESOLVED** – That Councillor Barnes be elected Chairman of the Fire Authority.

**979. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

- 979.1 The Fire Authority considered a report of the Monitoring Officer. (Copy in minute book).
- 979.2 The Fire Authority's Standing Orders stated that the Authority may elect a Vice-Chairman or Vice-Chairmen from amongst its members and set out the rules for doing so.
- 979.3 In considering the appointment of a Vice-Chairman, Members had regard to Standing Order 9.3 which stated that the Authority, when deciding to elect a Vice-Chairman, should consider an appropriate representative balance between the two constituent authorities such that the Vice-Chairman, unless the Fire Authority specifically determined otherwise, should be a Member from the other constituent authority to that of the newly elected Chairman.

979.4 Councillor Lambert and Councillor Theobald were the two nominees for the post of Vice Chairman and the matter was decided by a vote of the other councillors.

979.5 **RESOLVED** – That Councillor Theobald be elected Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority.

980. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

980.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Deane, Dowling, Earl and Sheppard.

981. **URGENT ITEMS AND CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

981.1 **NEW MEMBERS**

The Chairman welcomed Councillors Dowling, Elford, Osborne, Smith and Tutt to the Fire Authority.

981.2 **GRENFELL TOWER**

Officers will provide Members with a position statement with a full briefing on policy and risk to be provided at a later date. There had been progress on implementing improvements following the report into the Lakanal House incident. Members were also reminded that the Authority had set aside £400,000 over the last few years to match fund the retro fitting of sprinklers in high rise / high risk buildings.

982. **TO CONSIDER PUBLIC QUESTIONS, IF ANY**

982.1 There were none.

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

983.1 There were none.

984. **NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 FEBRUARY 2017**

984.1 **RESOLVED** – That the non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2017 be approved and signed by the Chairman. (Copy in Minute Book).

985. **CALLOVER**

985.1 Members reserved the following items for debate:

- 986. Political Representation on the Panels of the Fire Authority
- 989. East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service IT Strategy
- 990. Immediate Emergency Care Responding – Future Options

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

986. **POLITICAL REPRESENTATION ON THE PANELS OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY**

986.1 The Fire Authority considered a report by the Monitoring Officer on securing the political balance on Panels in accordance with the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 and agreeing the resultant membership to the Panels of the Fire Authority. (Copy in Minute Book).

986.2 It was agreed that membership of the Principal Officers Appointment Panel be amended to read Group leaders or their "nominated representative" plus one additional Conservative.

986.3 There was a discussion on whether to merge some of the Panels as it was thought there were too many. Members were informed that there will be a review of the Authority's governance later this year that will include consideration of this issue.

986.4 **RESOLVED** – That the Fire Authority:

- i) confirmed the Panel arrangements and political representation as set out in the report;
- ii) agreed (with no Member voting against) that the political balance provisions shall not apply to the membership of the Principal Officer Appointments Panel, and;
- iii) left the appointment of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to the Panels as has been the practice in the past under Standing Order 41.14.
- iv) amended the membership of the Principal Officer Appointments Panel to read 'Group leaders or their nominated representative and one additional Conservative'.

987. **FIRE AUTHORITY AND PANEL MEETINGS 2017/18**

987.1 The Fire Authority considered a report by the Clerk to the Fire Authority which informed Members of the dates of meetings of the Fire Authority and Panels for the next 12 months. (Copy in Minute Book).

987.2 **RESOLVED** – That the dates of meetings of the Fire Authority and Panels for the next 12 months be noted.

988 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STEWARDSHIP REPORT 2016/17**

988.1 The Fire Authority considered a report by the Assistant Director, Resources/Treasurer, on the Annual Treasury Management Stewardship Report, which is a requirement of the Fire Authority's reporting procedures and covers the Treasury activity for 2016/17. The report also included the Prudential Indicators which relate to the treasury activity. (Copy in Minute Book).

988.2 The Fire Authority has complied with its approved Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators for the year.

988.3 The Bank of England (BoE) Base Rate was cut from 0.50% to 0.25% on the 4th August 2016. In challenging economic conditions the average rate of interest received through Treasury Management activity was 0.52%. This reflected the Fire Authority's continuing prioritisation of security and liquidity over yield.

988.4 No new borrowing was undertaken in 2016/17 with total loan debt outstanding remaining at £10.973m at an average interest rate of 4.61%. There were no beneficial opportunities to reschedule debt during the year. The outturn of the Fire Authority's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), a measure of the underlying need to borrow, is £10.973m.

988.5 **RESOLVED** – That the Fire Authority note the Treasury Management Performance for 2016/17.

989. **EAST SUSSEX FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE IT STRATEGY**

989.1 The Fire Authority considered a report by the Assistant Director - Resources/Treasurer, which seeks approval from the Fire Authority for the IT Strategy for East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. It builds upon work previously carried out by Spirit Acuity and has been approved by Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Policy & Resources Panel. (Copy in Minute Book).

989.2 The IT strategy provides a long term view of how the underlying IT of East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS) can be adapted and flexed to satisfy the business needs as communicated via the IRMP and through discussions with senior management.

989.3 In formulating the IT Strategy, the emphasis was on establishing a direction of travel across key technology areas, mapped to a solid framework of activity that will over time incrementally unlock desired business outcomes.

989.4 Funding in support of the ambition will undoubtedly always pose a challenge, though the strategy has aimed to put in realistic funding requirements whilst not overly hedging ambition. Existing sources of funding at £7m will not be sufficient to fully support the forecast cost of £8.8m and the Authority will need identify the balance of funding required through the budget setting process for 2018/19.

989.5 The IT Strategy does not stand on its own, but will be woven into business planning and programme planning cycles – business cases, prioritisation and the organisations ability to consume change will all influence the pace at which the supporting IT change can occur.

989.6 The recent activity of moving to Telent as an IT delivery partner combined with a robust and agreed IT Strategy, will help to ensure that IT becomes a key enabler to support change at the business pace required and as funding availability dictates.

- 989.7 Monitoring of delivery of the Strategy will be through IT and Programme Management Office governance structures and regular reporting to CMT and Scrutiny & Audit Panel.
- 989.8 The Interim Chief Fire Officer noted that the Independent Peer Review identified weaknesses in the Authority's existing IT strategy.
- 989.9 In response to a question regarding staff continuity and loss of knowledge the ITG Manager said that previously the Authority operated with a small number of staff within the team which created a knowledge gap. Now they have access through talent to vast knowledge and resources.
- 989.10 **RESOLVED** – That:
- i) the IT Strategy 2017-22 including the use of existing funding of £7m for its delivery be approved;
  - ii) that further funding will be identified through the budget setting process and review of the Capital Asset Strategy for 2018/19;
  - iii) that regular reports on the delivery of the IT Strategy will be presented to Scrutiny & Audit Panel

990. **INCLUSION, EQUALITY & DIVERSITY STRATEGY 2017 – 2021**

- 990.1 The Fire Authority received a report of the Interim Deputy Chief Fire Officer on the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy. The strategy was renewed in March 2017 with an updated strategic direction drawing out the main drivers for change over the next four year period and beyond. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 990.2 The Interim Deputy Chief Fire Officer said the Authority needed to refresh its strategy to eliminate discrimination. It needed to embed equality into everything it did.
- 990.3 Nicky Thurston, the Inclusion and Diversity Adviser, has a national role on the Equality and Diversity Strategy Group and a lead role on the NFCC national equality and inclusion group. The group is engaging with Stonewall. Nicky Thurston said there needs to be an inclusion drive throughout the organisation.
- 990.4 The Interim Chief Fire Officer stated that the declaration of staff with disabilities is under-reported. The declaration was previously form based but the Authority are now moving away from that to a web portal. This is easier to fill in and so should attract more people to engage with it.
- 990.5 It was felt that ESFRS had come a long way and had made great strides compared to others. But more needed to be done. There were, for example, no minority groups within the Service. It is a question of how the Service engages with different groups and how it sets its diversity targets to ensure they are meaningful and achievable. There also needs to be proper monitoring for audit.
- 990.6 The Assistant Director, HR & Organisational Development, said funding would be looked at. The IMD have only a small budget for equality and diversity.

990.7 Nicky Thurston said she had consulted with other stakeholders and language was raised as an issue, so the wording in the Equality and Diversity Strategy had been changed.

990.8 The Chairman welcomed the strategy and asked that a delivery plan be developed with clear performance indicators to allow members to monitor its delivery.

990.9 **RESOLVED** – That the revised Inclusion, Equality and Diversity Strategy for 2017 – 2021 be adopted and that the Scrutiny and Audit Panel monitor implementation and progress of the Strategy and associated action plan.

991. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

991.1 **RESOLVED** – That item no. 992 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.

992. **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 FEBRUARY 2017 (EXEMPT CATEGORY 3)**

992.1 **RESOLVED** – That the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2017 be approved and signed by the Chairman. (Copy in Minute Book).

The meeting concluded at 12:50 hours.

Signed  
Chairman



Dated 7 day of September 2017