

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

23 October 2008

Present:-

Councillors Cann, Dyke, Foggin, Gordon, Healey, B. Hughes, S. Hughes, Lewis, Manning, Mochnacz, Mrs. Nicholson, Mrs. Parsons, Viney and Yeomans.

Apologies:-

Councillors Button, Clatworthy, Ford, Fry, Hannon, Leaves, Shadrick, Tully, Wallace and Way.

DSFRA/44. Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2008 be signed as a correct record.

DSFRA/45. Resignation from and Appointment to the Authority

(An item taken in accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972).

The Chairman determined that this should be considered as a matter of urgency to enable the Authority to be apprised of a change in membership at the earliest opportunity and determine consequential Committee appointment.

The Chairman reported that, with effect from 22 October 2008, Councillor Matthew Phillips (a Torbay Council appointee to the Authority) had resigned from the Authority. Torbay Council had subsequently appointed Councillor Manning to fill the resulting vacancy. The Chairman, on behalf of the Authority, welcomed Councillor Manning.

RESOLVED that Councillor Manning be appointed to fill the vacancies, resulting from the resignation of Councillor Matthew Phillips, on the following bodies (the appointment to last until the Annual Meeting of the Authority in 2009):-

- Human Resources Management and Development Committee;
- Community Safety and Corporate Planning Committee; and
- Standards Committee.

DSFRA/46. Declarations of Interest

Members of the Authority were invited to consider whether they have any **personal/personal and prejudicial interests** in items as set out on the agenda for the current meeting and to declare any such interests at this time.

NO interests were declared.

DSFRA/47. Appointment of New Chief Fire Officer

(An item taken in accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972).

The Chairman determined that this should be considered as a matter of urgency to enable the Authority to determine at the earliest opportunity the appointment of a new Chief Fire Officer following a recent meeting of the previously-appointed Appointments Panel.

The Chairman reported on the meetings of the Appointments Panel held on 20 and 21 October 2008. The Panel had been specifically established to oversee the selection and appointments process for the new Chief Fire Officer to the Authority and to recommend an appointment to the current meeting for approval, in accordance with the Authority's Standing Orders.

The Chairman of the Authority (who also chaired the Appointments Panel) reported that, at the end of its deliberations, the Panel had unanimously recommended that Mr. Lee Howell (currently Chief Fire Officer of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service) be appointed to replace the current Chief Fire Officer following his official retirement on 31 December 2008.

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Appointment Panel be approved and the appointment of Mr. Lee Howell (currently Chief Fire Officer of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service) be confirmed as the new Chief Fire Officer of the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, the commencement date to be confirmed in due course.

DSFRA/48. Minutes of Committees etc.

(a) Community Safety and Corporate Planning Committee

The Vice-Chair of the Committee (Councillor S. Hughes) **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2008 which had considered, amongst other things:-

- a request for Member attendance at the "Future Risk of Flooding – Reflections on the Pitt Review" conference to be held in London on 18 November 2008;
- a presentation on the Community Safety departmental plan;
- a report on the redirection of existing resources to promote enhanced community safety activities; and
- an update report on retained duty system initiatives; and
- an update report on the Service/South-West Ambulance Service Co-responder scheme.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the attendance by Councillor Tully at the "Future Risk of Flooding – Reflections on the Pitt Review" Conference, to be held in central London on 18 November 2008, be authorised as an approved duty for the payment of conference fees, travel and subsistence expenses in accordance with the Authority's approved Scheme of Allowances;
- (ii) that, subject to (i) above and in accordance with Standing Orders, the Minutes be adopted.

(b) Human Resources Management and Development Committee

The Chair of the Committee (Councillor Cann) **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2008 which had considered, amongst other things:-

- a report on absence management;
- a report on firefighter recruitment;
- a report on the development of the Authority's Corporate Single Equality Scheme;
- a report on a recently-undertaken survey of Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service staff; and
- an update on the position in relation to non-uniformed job evaluation.

RESOLVED that, in accordance with Standing Orders, the Minutes be adopted.

(c) Standards Committee

The Vice-Chair of the Committee (Mr. D Phillips – Independent Member of the Committee) **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2008 which had considered, amongst other things, a report on implementation issues in relation to the local assessment regime.

RESOLVED that, in accordance with Standing Orders, the Minutes be adopted.

(d) Audit And Performance Review Committee

In the absence of the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, Cllr. Lewis (Committee Member in attendance at the meeting) **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2008 which had considered, amongst other things:-

- a report on performance by the Service during April to July 2008 against those targets and activities contained within the approved Corporate Plan 2008/09 to 2010/11;
- a presentation on Comprehensive Area Assessment (the successor to Comprehensive Performance Assessment); and
- the Annual Governance Report including the draft opinion on the 2007/08 Statement of Accounts.

RESOLVED that, in accordance with Standing Orders, the Minutes be adopted.

(e) Resources Committee

The Chair of the Committee (Councillor Gordon) **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2008 which had considered monitoring reports on the approved revenue budget 2008/09 and the Capital Programme 2008/09 to 2010/11. In light of the indicative underspend on the approved revenue budget the Committee had resolved to recommend the Authority to retain in General Reserve the sum of £0.153m initially approved as a contribution towards setting a balanced budget in 2008/09.

RECOMMENDATION

- (i) that the recommendation at Minute RC/10 (Revenue Budget Monitoring 2008/09) as referred to above be approved;
- (ii) that, subject to (i) above and in accordance with Standing Orders, the Minutes be adopted.

DSFRA/49. Devon And Somerset Fire And Rescue Authority Draft Corporate Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer (DSFRA/08/23) appended to which was the Authority draft Corporate Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12. The Plan detailed those organisational goals and objectives by which the Authority intended to achieve its ambitions over the next three years. Once approved in draft form by the Authority, the Plan would be subject to a twelve week consultation period. The report outlined the proposals for the consultation with key stakeholders, the outcomes of which would be reported back to the budget setting meeting of the Authority to be held in February 2009.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority draft Corporate Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12, as appended to report DSFRA/09/23, be approved for consultation purposes;
- (b) that the proposals for consultation on the draft Plan as set out in Section 2 of the report be approved; and
- (c) that the results of the consultation and any recommended changes to the draft Corporate Plan be considered at the Authority's budget meeting in February 2009.

DSFRA/50. Approved Duties - Proposed Modification for The Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority Scheme of Members' Allowances

The Authority considered a report of the Clerk to the Authority (DSFRA/08/24) on a proposed minor modification to the Authority's approved Scheme of Member Allowances in relation to approved duties (specifically conference attendance) and clarifying the process in relation to travel and subsistence claims.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the proposed modification to Section 6 of the Members' Allowances Scheme relating to approved duties, as set out in Appendix A to report DSFRA/08/24, be approved;
- (b) that, subject to (a) above, the report be noted.

DSFRA/51. Authority Corporate Single Equality Scheme - "Making the Connections"

The Authority considered a report of the Head of Human Resources Management and Development (DSFRA/08/25) to which was appended a first draft of an Authority Corporate Single Equality Scheme aimed at ensuring that the Authority and the Service would meet the requirements of the National Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the first draft Authority Corporate Equality Scheme - "Making The Connections" – as appended to this report be endorsed
- (b) that Members be invited to contribute to the development of the "Making The Connections" Corporate Single Equality Scheme;
- (c) that further reports on progressing development of the Scheme be submitted to future meetings;

- (d) that, subject to (a) to (c) above, the report be noted.

DSFRA/52. National Equality & Diversity Strategy: Application for Additional Capital Grant Funding to Meet Higher Recruitment Targets

The Authority considered a report of the Head of Human Resources Management and Development (DSFRA/08/26) on the announcement by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), as contained in the National Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy, to make available additional capital grant to those fire and rescue authorities willing to commit to achieving higher recruitment targets for women and minority ethnic staff.

Further details of the grant, which would be a minimum of £42,000 for each authority applying, had been announced at a recent CLG workshop and were set out, together with application criteria, in the report.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Chief Fire Officer, following consultation with the Chairman, be authorised to submit an application to the Department for Communities and Local Government for a share of the additional Capital Grant funding in relation to meeting higher recruitment targets, subject to receipt of written confirmation of the conditions of the grant and assurance that these can be met by the Authority;
- (b) that, pending successful receipt of the grant, a further report be submitted to a future meeting on proposals for use of the funding so received;
- (c) that, subject to (a) and (b) above, the report be noted.

DSFRA/53. Provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Authority considered a report of the Head of Physical Assets (DSFRA/08/27) on the proposed adoption, following expiry of the current contracts in 2009, of the national Integrated Clothing Project (ICP) to provide a fully-managed service for the supply and maintenance of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for firefighters.

In addition to supplying PPE of a higher specification to that currently used, the ICP contract would also deliver a number of additional benefits including:-

- laundry and repair service;
- full compatibility between all PPE items;
- all risks associated with provision and maintenance to be borne by the supplier (Bristol Uniforms); and
- equality and diversity as a core requirement.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the national Integrated Clothing Project (ICP) contract be adopted for the provision of PPE for the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service;
- (b) that the associated commitment on the revenue budget in 2009/10 and subsequent years be approved.

DSFRA/54. National Procurement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service 2008 – 11

The Clerk reported on receipt from the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) of a consultation document on proposals for a National Procurement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service 2008 – 11. The deadline for responses to the consultation was 14 November 2008. As procurement was one of the six workstreams falling within the responsibility of the South West Regional Management Board (RMB), which would be considering a draft response at its meeting on 7 November 2008, it was proposed that the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Chairman, be authorised to respond to CLG on behalf of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority following the RMB meeting and taking account of the approved regional response.

RESOLVED that the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Chairman and taking account of the approved regional response, be authorised to respond on behalf of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority to the CLG consultation on the National Procurement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service 2008 – 11.

DSFRA/55. Appointment of Authority Member to attend South West Fire Control Ltd. first Annual General Meeting

The Clerk reported that South West Fire Control Ltd., the Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) with overall governance arrangements for the South West Regional Control Centre, would hold its first Annual General Meeting (AGM) at Service Headquarters on Friday 7 November 2008, commencing on the rising of the South West Regional Management Board on that day.

The Authority has been invited to nominate a representative (preferably NOT the Authority appointed Director of the Company) to represent the views of the Authority at the meeting, speaking and voting as necessary.

RESOLVED that the Chairman, Cllr. B. Hughes, be appointed to represent the Authority (including speaking and voting as required) at the first AGM of the South West Fire Control Ltd. to be held on Friday 7 November 2008.

DSFRA/56. Budget Setting Meeting of the Authority – Proposed Change in Date

The Clerk reported on a proposed change of date for the Authority's budget setting meeting in 2009 to avoid a clash with the Somerset County Council budget setting meeting (which had been set following the initial approval of the Authority's Calendar of Meetings for 2008/09).

RESOLVED that the date of the Authority's budget setting meeting be amended to Monday 16 February 2009, commencing at 10.00 hours at Service Headquarters.

DSFRA/57. Report of Urgent Action

The Authority noted the action taken by the Chief Fire Officer, following consultation with the Chair in accordance with Standing Orders and following a briefing session with Members of the Authority, in responding on behalf of the Authority to the FiReControl Part 1 Business Case.

DSFRA/58. South West Regional Management Board

The Authority received **FOR INFORMATION** the Minutes of the meeting of the South West Regional Management Board held on 19 September 2008 which had considered, amongst other things:-

- a proposed regional response to the FiReControl Business Case Part 1;
- a consultation by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) on proposals for apportioning FiReControl shared costs;
- a report on establishing performance standards for the South West Regional Control Centre;
- a Workstreams Highlight Report; and
- proposed revisions to the Regional Business Plan in light of, amongst other things, the latest National Fire and Rescue Framework and the National Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008 – 18.

DSFRA/59. Chairman's Announcements

The Authority received **FOR INFORMATION** a Schedule of events attended by the Chairman on behalf of the Authority since its last meeting. The Chairman also reported on attendance at a "Learn 2 Live" event on 16 October 2008 – a partnership initiative in conjunction with, amongst others, the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary, Devon County Council and the South-West Ambulance Service and aimed at conveying the message of driving safety and what the effects are of failure to drive with due care and attention. Details of similar events in future would be published in the Members' Information Bulletin.

The Chairman also reported that arrangements were being made for the laying of the foundation stone for the new fire station at Dane's Castle, Exeter. Members of the Authority would be invited to attend this once the arrangements had been finalised.

DSFRA/60. Chief Fire Officer's Announcements

The Chief Fire Officer reported on:-

- two fires, both of which were currently subject to inquest, that had resulted in fatalities that had occurred since the last meeting of the Authority:-
 - a house fire in Bridgwater on 25 September 2008 at which no smoke alarm had been fitted. The importance of fitting and maintaining a working smoke alarm had been publicly re-emphasised following this incident; and
 - a caravan fire at Long Sutton, Somerset;
- the commencement of work on the new Exeter East Fire Station at Middlemoor; and
- completion of the temporary fire station at Dane's Castle, Exeter and the forthcoming commencement of demolition of the old permanent station.

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 12.15hours.