

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

(Ordinary Meeting)

28 May 2010

Present:-

Councillors Healey (Chairman), Bown, Boyd, Burridge-Clayton, Cann, Dyke, Eastman, Foggin, Fry, Gordon, Gribble, Horsfall, Hughes OBE, Leaves, Manning, Mills, Mrs. Nicholson, Radford, Randall Johnson, Smith, Turner, Viney, Way, Woodman and Yeomans

DSFRA/8. Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the budget meeting of the Authority held on 19 February 2010 and the Extraordinary Meeting of the Authority held on 25 March 2010 be signed as correct records.

DSFRA/9. Declarations of Interest

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

At this stage Councillors Woodman and Healey each declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in items relating to South West Fire Control Ltd., the Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) with overall governance responsibility for the South West Regional Control Centre (RCC), by virtue of their being, respectively, the new Authority-appointed Director to the Company and the outgoing Director.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE DSFRA/15 AND 16 BELOW)

DSFRA/10. Minutes Of Committees

(a) Standards Committee

The Vice-Chair of the Committee, Mr. Phillips, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 March 2010 which had considered, amongst other things:

- a report on further considerations for expanding the remit of the Standards Committee;
- the Standards for England draft Annual Return 2010; and
- the Standards for England training DVD "Assessment Made Clear – Local Assessment of Complaints".

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

(b) Community Safety And Corporate Planning Committee

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Leaves, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 March 2010 which had considered, amongst other things:

- an update on implementation of the Partnership Framework and other evaluation tools;
- a progress report on implementation of specialist rescue provision.

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

(c) Human Resources Management And Development Committee

The Vice-Chair of the Committee, Councillor Boyd, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 April 2010 which had considered amongst other things:

- substantive appointments to the Firefighters Pension Scheme Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure Stage 2 Panel;
- a progress report on the outcomes of the 2008 staff survey and arrangements for the 2010 survey;
- an update report on the Positive Action Strategy;
- a report on the implications for the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service of the introduction of the European Community (EC) Drivers' Hours and Tachograph Rules for Goods Vehicles;
- a report on absence management; and
- an update report on establishment issues.

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

(d) Resources Committee

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Gordon, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 April 2010 which had considered, amongst other things:

- a financial performance report 2009/10; and
- a report on debt recovery procedure.

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

(e) Audit And Performance Review Committee

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Dyke, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 May 2010 which had considered, amongst other things:

- Audit Commission reports on progress with audit work undertaken, the Audit Opinion Plan 2009/10 and the Audit Fee Letter 2010/11;
- a report on the performance of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service during 2009/10 against those goals, activities and targets as set out in the Authority's Corporate Plan for that year;
- an update on implementation of the International Financial Reporting Standard;
- the Audit and Review Service policy and three year plan 2010 – 2012; and
- the Annual Internal Audit Report 2009/10.

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

DSFRA/11. Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Carbon Management Plan

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer (DSFRA/10/14) to which was appended the Authority's Carbon Management Plan 2010 – 2014. The Plan had been developed in conjunction with the Carbon Trust, via the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme Phase 7, and amongst other things set an aspirational target of a 30% reduction in CO₂ levels by 2014. The Plan identified several projects and initiatives – some of which had already been implemented - to secure this target.

RESOLVED that the Carbon Management Plan enclosed separately with report DSFRA/10/14 be approved subject to the associated resource requirements being considered annually as part of the budget setting process.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE DSFRA/15 BELOW)

DSFRA/12. Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Performance Report March 2009 - April 2010

The Authority received for information a report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DSFRA/10/15) on performance by the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service during 2009/10 against those goals, activities and targets as contained in the Authority's Corporate Plan for that year. In particular, the following issues were highlighted:

- proactive Service activities had resulted in the Service securing better performance than the target set for reducing accidental dwelling fire deaths – with actual performance representing in excess of a 20% reduction over the 11 year period to March 2010;
- there was a good direction of travel in relation to accidental dwelling fire casualties and accidental dwelling fires, with the Service target for these two areas for 2010/11 to be within the top 50% of all fire and rescue services nationally;
- the number of home fire safety visits had increased significantly over the past twelve month and measures were now being implemented to ensure more effective targeting of community safety initiatives to those groups most vulnerable;
- a reduction in the number of enforcement activities had been off-set by an increase in fire safety audits and fire safety checks undertaken by operational staff;
- there had been a significant reduction in the number of deliberate fires/incidents of arson with the Service being the only one in the region to have secured such a reduction;
- considerable strides had been made in relation to equality and diversity issues, driven by implementation of “Making the Connections” – the Service single equality scheme covering all six equality strands and bringing together current and future Service activities relevant to the Local Government Equality Standard. The number of employed staff with a disability had increased and the recent wholetime recruitment campaign involved making use of established networks and partnerships with established minority ethnic targeted media, organisations and networks to disseminate Service recruitment messages. The Service had also developed a positive action strategy for 2010-13 focussed on increasing the recruitment of females to operational roles and ethnic minority people across all roles. The inclusive, non-tokenistic ethos of this Strategy was aimed at establishing the concept of a diverse workforce and materials produced to support this Strategy included the “Considering Needs” equality scheme overview, the “From the Community for the Community” information pack and the “All Fired Up” film telling the firefighters story and featuring a mix of race and gender;
- improved management techniques had resulted in more efficient absence management with lower sickness rates being achieved as against the reduction target set;

- despite having attended some 18,000 operational incidents and undertaken some 32,000 community safety activities, the Service had only received 33 complaints (nine less than the previous year);
- predicted savings from combination had been exceeded; and
- expenditure against the approved budget indicated a small (0.4%) underspend.

The Authority congratulated all concerned on securing these results.

DSFRA/13. Financial Outturn 2009/10

The Authority considered a report of the Treasurer (DSFRA/10/16) on the financial outturn position 2009/10 for both revenue and capital spending. For revenue, total spending was reported at £72.618m against an agreed budget of £72.659m, representing an underspend of £0.041m. The report detailed all spending and variations against approved budget lines.

The level of underspend was insufficient to meet the original agreed transfer of £0.357m to an Earmarked Reserve for the Integrated Clothing Project. The Service remained committed to this project, however, and consequently the report detailed an alternative proposal to transfer some funding to such a reserve both from the indicative underspend and from savings on another Earmarked Reserve. Options for the funding of this project would be reported to a future meeting of the Resources Committee.

In relation to the Capital Programme 2009/10, the report indicated total spending of £9.707m against a final programme of £10.423m. The slippage of £0.716m reflected changes to the timing of the costs being incurred rather than a change in the overall cost of the programme. A revised programme for 2010/11 to 2012/13, including re-profiling of the slippage against individual projects, would be reported to a future meeting of the Resources Committee.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the following proposed transfers as outlined in paragraph 10.2 of report DSFRA/10/16 be approved:
 - (i) That the underspend against the revenue budget of £0.041m be transferred to an Earmarked Reserves to part-fund the Integrated Clothing Project (ICP);
 - (ii) That the identified savings of £0.025m from other Earmarked Reserves be transferred to an Earmarked Reserve to part-fund the ICP project;
- (b) that the capital determinations in relation to the funding of capital spending in 2009/2010, as provided in paragraph 16.1 of the report, be approved;
- (c) that, subject to (a) and (b) above, the position in respect of the 2009/2010 Revenue and Capital Outturn, as indicated in the report be noted.

DSFRA/14. Treasury Management Performance 2009/10 (To March 2010)

The Authority received for information a report of the Treasurer (DSFRA/10/17) and presentation from Adam Burleton (Sector) – the Authority's Treasury Management adviser – comparing the performance of the Authority's borrowing and investment activities during 2009/10 as against the approved Treasury Management Strategy.

The report, which complied with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Treasury Management Practice, indicated that none of the Prudential Indicators had been breached and that a prudent approach had been taken to investment decisions during the year, with priority being given to liquidity and security over yield. While investment returns had reduced from the previous year, as a consequence of the fall in interest rates, the Authority had nonetheless achieved returns above the benchmark return for short-term investments. Additionally, the Authority had borrowed at below average Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) rates in 2009/10 and had lowered the average rate on the debt portfolio from 4.212% to 4.177%.

DSFRA/15. South West Regional Management Board

(Councillors Woodman and Healey each declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in this item, in so far as it related to South West Fire Control Ltd., the Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) with overall governance responsibility for the South West Regional Control Centre (RCC), by virtue of their being, respectively, the newly appointed Authority-appointed Director to the Company and the outgoing Director). The Authority received, for information, the Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 22 March 2010 which had considered, amongst other things:

- a highlight report on the progress of workstreams undertaking projects on behalf of the Board;
- a report on a revised 2010/11 Business Plan for the programme of collaboration being undertaken by the South West Fire & Rescue Services;
- a report detailing the outcome of a mid-year benchmarking exercise undertaken amongst South West Fire & Rescue Services and examining areas such as operational measures of performance, Comprehensive Area Assessment highlight results and examining areas for future benchmarking projects; and
- a report on the Carbon Management Collaborative Programme.

(SEE ALSO MINUTES DSFRA/9 AND 11 ABOVE)

DSFRA/16. South West Fire Control Ltd. - Feedback From Authority-Appointed Director

(Councillors Woodman and Healey each declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in this item, in so far as it related to South West Fire Control Ltd., the Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) with overall governance responsibility for the South West Regional Control Centre (RCC), by virtue of their being, respectively, the newly appointed Authority-appointed Director to the Company and the outgoing Director).

As outgoing Director, Councillor Healey reported that, whilst there had been announcements by the coalition Government relating to the regionalisation of the fire and rescue service, the current understanding in relation to the FiReControl Project was that it would progress. Consequently, this Authority and Service would still endeavour to ensure that, while this was the case, the best interests of the communities of both Devon and Somerset were served from the Project.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE DSFRA/9 ABOVE).

DSFRA/17. Chairman's Announcements

The former Chairman, Councillor Hughes OBE, reported on attendance at the following events on behalf of the Authority since its last ordinary meeting:

- the opening of the new Exeter fire & rescue stations at Middlemoor and Danes Castle on 26 February 2010;

- the East Devon District Council Civic Service on 7 March 2010;
- the Local Government Association Annual Fire & Rescue Service Conference between 8 and 10 March 2010;
- the ceremony to mark the receipt of new aerial appliances for the Service at Plymouth Hoe on 22 March 2010;
- the South Somerset District Council Civic Service at Yeovil on 23 March 2010;
- the Devon County Council Civic Service on 28 March 2010;
- a Firefighters Charity event held on HMS Belfast on 30 March 2010;
- the West Devon District Council Civic Ceremony on 9 April 2010;
- a meeting to discuss the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service museum on 12 April 2010;
- the South Hams District Council Civic Lunch on 17 April 2010;
- the Annual General Meeting of the Service Ceremonial Unit on 22 April 2010;
- the opening of the community facilities at the Ivybridge fire & rescue station on 8 May 2010;
- a service at the National Firefighters Memorial on 9 May 2010;
- the Torridge District Council Civic Dinner on 14 May 2010;
- the re-launch of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Partnership Framework on 17 May 2010;
- the Plymouth City Council Mayor Making Ceremony on 21 May 2010;
- a meeting with officials from the Department for Communities and Local Government to discuss the combination of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Services on 25 May 2010;
- a meeting with representatives of the Audit Commission as part of the Managing Performance assessment on 26 May 2010; and
- a visit to the new Exeter fire & rescue stations at Middlemoor and Danes Castle with former Chief Fire Officer Paul Young and his wife.

DSFRA/18. Chief Fire Officer's Announcements

The Chief Fire Officer reported on:

- five fire deaths that had occurred since the last ordinary meeting of the Authority. Where practicable, the Service was actively working with other partner agencies to better target its fire safety initiatives;
- a forthcoming seminar to be hosted at Service Headquarters on 24 June 2010 to promote awareness of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and to promote more effective targeting of services to these communities;
- the forthcoming joint 999 fire and police cadet passing-out parade on 26 June 2010;
- production of a range of DVDs produced by the Service on its prevention activities, its partnership working and fire safety initiatives to assist vulnerable groups had been produced and were available for Members to promote the Service activities as part of their wider community role;

- establishment of the on the Twitter and Facebook social networking sites;
- progress on the exploration of establishment of a Trading Arm for the Service;
- positive initial feedback from the Audit Commission, as part of its Managing Performance assessment, that the Authority demonstrated strong political leadership and that there was a positive direction of travel in addressing business transformation change within the organisation. There were still areas, however, where greater convergence would deliver enhanced benefits and these were being actively pursued;
- an ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders to explore and identify appropriate options to address estates needs in the Torbay area.

The meeting started at 15.18hours and finished at 16.34hours.