

# DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

19 December 2012

## Present:-

Councillors Healey (Chair), Bakewell MBE, Brooksbank, Mrs. Chugg, Dyke, Eastman, Foggin, Fry, Gordon, Gribble, Horsfall, Hughes OBE, Knight, Leaves, Mills, Radford, Randall Johnson, D Smith, Way and Woodman

## Apologies:-

Councillors Bown, Burrige-Clayton, J Smith and Yeomans

### **DSFRA/38. Nepal Firefighter Training**

The Authority received from information a report of the Chief Fire Officer (DSFRA/12/28), together with a briefing from those officers who attended, on the recent visit by Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service staff to Kathmandu, Nepal, to assist in and support the establishment of a self-sustaining fire and rescue capability for that country.

The visit, which had been funded by the United Nations Development Programme, featured the delivery of training on a wide range of fire and rescue service issues (e.g. types of equipment and appliances required; mobilising and communications strategies; educational programmes) to multi-agency participants.

At the meeting the Chief Fire Officer received on behalf of the Service a framed Letter of Appreciation from the United Nations and the Nepal Ministry of Local and Federal Affairs for the work undertaken by the participating Service personnel.

### **DSFRA/39. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held 5 November 2012 be signed as a correct record.

### **DSFRA/41. Minutes of Committees**

#### **(a) Commercial Services Committee**

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Healey, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2012 which had considered, amongst other things:

- a monitoring report on the commercial services budget as at the second quarters of the current (2012/13) financial year; and
- an update on commercial matters currently being pursued.

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

#### **(b) Human Resources Management and Development Committee**

The Vice-Chair of the Committee, Councillor Brooksbank, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2012 which had considered, amongst other things:

- a report on absence management and the health of the organisation;
- a monitoring report on progress during the first six months of the current year in implementing those measures contained in the Service's approved Equality Strategy; and

- a presentation on the outcome of the recent RoSPA health and safety audit which had seen the Service receive the Diamond award, RoSPAs highest possible award.

In response to comments from Members, the Director of People and Organisational Development stated that the Service was committed to improving its sickness absence management and that, as part of this, efforts were being made to secure comparative benchmarking data to inform future absence management monitoring reports.

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

**(c) Audit and Performance Review Committee**

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Radford, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2012 which had considered, amongst other things:

- a letter from Grant Thornton on the planned External Audit fee for 2012/13;
- a report on progress during the second quarter of the current financial year against the approved internal audit plan; and
- a report on Service performance during April to September 2013 against those measures contained in the approved Corporate Plan 2012/13 to 2015/16.

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

**(d) Community Safety and Corporate Planning Committee**

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Leaves, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2012 which had considered, amongst other things:

- an update report on progress in establishing a charitable arm to enable the Service to access funding streams otherwise unavailable to fund community safety initiatives;
- a report on the success of the “Honest Truth” campaign, a road safety partnership between the Service and other public and private sector organisations which had secured four Gold Awards at a recent Chartered Institute of Public Relations national awards ceremony;
- a progress report on the operation of the Service fatal fire review process aimed at driving down fire deaths by better dissemination of lessons learned and promotion of greater inter-agency co-operation;
- a presentation on the “Firemark” initiative, a national campaign aimed at engaging with private sector landlords to promote fire safety;
- a presentation on development by the Service of a simple but innovative product to assist people in the weekly testing of smoke alarms; and
- a presentation on the types and location of “Tier 3” (specialist) appliances currently in use by the Service in support of the main fleet.

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

**DSFRA/42. Change and Improvement Programme - Budget Virement Request**

The Authority considered a report of the Treasurer (DSFRA/12/29) on a proposal to transfer, in accordance with the Authority’s Financial Regulations, resources totalling £284,000 identified from efficiencies in other budget areas to fund initiatives in the Change and Improvement Programme.

The Change and Improvement Programme featured a number of projects, covering estates, procurement and ICT work, each of which was aligned to key strategic objectives and aimed at delivering a more efficient and effective organisation.

**RESOLVED** that, in accordance with Financial Regulations, a budget virement of £284,000, as outlined in paragraph 2.3 of report DSFRA/12/29 and set out below, be approved.

Budget Line	From £000	To £000	Reason
Equipment and Furniture	(100)		To provide additional investment of £284,000 towards key projects identified by the Change and Improvement Portfolio Board
Travel and subsistence	(100)		
Capital Charges	(84)		
Non-uniformed staff costs		184	
External fees and services		100	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(284)</b>	<b>284</b>	

**DSFRA/43. 2013/14 Council Tax Precept Consultation**

The Authority considered a report of the Treasurer (DSFRA/12/30) on proposals to consult, in accordance with legislative requirements, the business community on the level of council tax precept for 2013/14 and to extend this consultation to include the public. The costs of the consultation (£7,100) would be met from within existing resources.

**RESOLVED** that the proposal as outlined in report DSFRA/12/30 to consult more widely on proposed level of 2013/14 council tax precept by including the public in a telephone survey, in addition to the legislative requirement to consult the business community on the proposed level of Authority expenditure in 2013/14, be endorsed.

**DSFRA/44. Local Government Finance Settlement 2013/14**

The Authority was informed that the local government finance settlement for 2013/14 was anticipated for later that day. Once received, it would require analysis to determine the impact on the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority.

**DSFRA/45. Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman circulated a list of events attended and activities undertaken on behalf of the Authority since its last meeting.

**DSFRA/46. Chief Fire Officer's Announcements**

The Chief Fire Officer reported on:

- two fire fatalities not previously reported to the Authority;
- the selection of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Neil Gibbins, as International President of the Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) from July 2014;

- receipt of a letter of thanks from Somerset County Council for the assistance provided by the Service during the recent flooding in both Devon and Somerset;
- the recent announcement by the Government of a Fire Service Efficiency Review, to be led by Sir Ken Knight. The Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service would be visited as part of the review;
- the recent visit by the Fire Minister, Brendon Lewis MP, which had afforded the Service the opportunity to demonstrate at first hand some of its prevention and response (e.g. Light Rescue Pumps) initiatives.

The Authority asked to have placed on record its congratulations to Deputy Chief Fire Officer Neil Gibbins on his achievement.

The meeting started at 10.00am and finished at 10.40am.