

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

10 July 2013

Present:-

Councillors Healey (Chairman), Bown, Brazil, Brooksbank, Burridge-Clayton, Colthorpe, Dyke, Eastman, Edmunds, Ellery, Gordon, Greenslade, Horsfall, Knight, Leaves, Prior-Sankey, Radford, Randall Johnson, J Smith, Woodman and Yeomans

Apologies:-

Councillors Chugg, Gribble and Owen

DSFRA/13. Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual and Ordinary meetings held on 30 May 2013 be signed as correct records.

DSFRA/14. Questions and Petitions by the Public

In accordance with Standing Orders, questions were asked by members of the public and answers given as summarised below:

Question from Mike Creek on crew change proposals for Ilfracombe fire station and why cuts to back-room staff were not part of the proposals

Answer by the Chairman the draft Corporate Plan, decisions on which would be taken later in the meeting, contained proposals for a 13% reduction in non-operational posts during the current financial year and identified non-operational budget reductions of £2.217m made since 2011/12.

Question from Ray Woof on how, if the proposed crew change at Ilfracombe fire station was approved, it was proposed to secure the necessary daytime retained staff to provide cover.

Answer by the Chairman the same measures as currently used by the Service to secure "on call" staffing at other stations in the Service area would be utilised, including the electronic staff availability system, with the One Ilfracombe pilot being supported by operational staff to undertaking prevention activities but who could also be called upon to support Ilfracombe fire station in times of crew shortages.

Question by Susie Colley seeking details on why firefighters had not been involved in discussions on the formulation of proposals prior to public consultation on them.

Answer by the Chairman referred to some nine staff "Alert" newsletters issued by the Chief Fire Officer between March 2010 (when the Authority first became aware of the financial issues to face) and January 2013 all of which sought expressions of interest, ideas or suggestions for measures to deliver Service improvements within a shrinking financial envelope.

Question by Julie Brandon on steps taken by the Authority to ensure the accuracy of the information presented to on the outcome of public consultation on the draft Corporate Plan 2013-14 to 2014-15.

Answer by the Chairman that all Members had received the papers for the meeting in accordance with legislative requirements and had been afforded the opportunity to question matters and seek clarification from report authors prior to the meeting. It was for the Authority collectively, as part of the meeting and in accordance with the democratic process, to consider the material before it, challenge this as necessary and reach a reasoned and reasonable decision.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE DSFRA/20 BELOW)

DSFRA/15. Addresses by Representative Bodies

In accordance with Standing Orders the Authority received addresses from:

- UNISON expressing concern at the impact of the proposals in the draft Corporate Plan 2013-14 to 2014-15 on the support service and expressing a desire to work collectively to develop and deliver appropriate solutions to the issues facing the Authority; and
- the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) expressing opposition to proposals in the draft Corporate Plan 2013-14 to 2014-15 and expressing concerns at the impact on front-line service provision and the detrimental impact, in the view of the FBU, on public safety.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE DSFRA/20 BELOW)

DSFRA/16. Minutes of Committees

(a) Commercial Services Committee

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Healey, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2013 which had considered, amongst other things:

- the commercial services outturn for the 2012-13 financial year;
- the accountabilities, roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors of Red One Ltd.;
- the commercial services strategy and purpose;
- the profit and loss accounts for Red One Ltd. for the current (2013-14) financial year; and
- a general update on commercial matters, leads and opportunities being pursued.

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

(b) Community Safety & Corporate Planning Committee

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Leaves, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2013 which had considered, amongst other things:

- a progress report on the establishment of the SAFE South West charity (intended to assist in accessing funding streams for community safety initiatives) and the appointment of trustees to the charity; and
- a presentation on response and resilience issues including the integrated approach to prevention, protection and response activities, the introduction of light rescue pumps and involvement in general emergency planning and Local Resilience Forums.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the recommendation at Minute CSCP/4 (the appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee as ex-officio trustees for the SAFE South West charity) be approved;
- (ii) that, subject to (i) above, the Minutes be adopted in accordance with Standing Orders.

DSFRA/17. Medium Term Financial Plan 2013-17 - Impact of 2013 Spending Round Announcement

The Authority received for information a report of the Treasurer (DSFRA/13/14) on the impact of the Chancellor's recent 2013 Spending Round announcement for the Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2013 - 17.

The government announcement confirmed a 10% reduction, in 2015-16, for local government funding (including fire and rescue authorities). The announcement also detailed the government's expectations for council tax (continuation of a freeze) and pay awards (move away from automatic incremental pay scales) from 2014-15.

The impact of this announcement on the Authority's MTFP was to increase the forecast savings targets (over the 2012-13 base budget) from £4.104m to £4.423m in 2014-15 and from £10.726m to £12.333m in 2016-17. While planned savings from the draft Corporate Plan proposals would, if implemented, be sufficient to balance the budget in 2014-15, they would not be sufficient to balance the forecast shortfall from 2015-16. It was, therefore, likely that further savings proposals would need to be brought forward in sufficient time for the additional savings to be delivered from 2015.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE DSFRA/20 BELOW).

DSFRA/18. "Facing The Future" - Sir Ken Knight's Independent Review of Efficiency and Operations In Fire & Rescue Authorities in England

The Authority received for information a report of the Chief Fire Officer (DSFRA/13/15) to which was appended the outcome report of Sir Ken Knight's review of fire and rescue authorities in England, as commissioned by the Fire Minister, Brandon Lewis MP, in December 2012.

In summary, the review report outlined a rationale and options for a reconfiguration of the fire and rescue service which, as a result of a range of issues including societal changes, technological improvements, safety campaigns etc., had seen a 40% reduction in incidents during the last decade while firefighter numbers and service expenditure remained broadly the same.

While the government's response to Sir Ken Knight's report was still awaited, it still remained for this Authority to set a balanced budget for each financial year and in so doing address anticipated budget shortfalls over the next several years. The proposals contained within the draft Corporate Plan would assist in this and accorded with recommendations contained in the review report.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE DSFRA/20 BELOW).

DSFRA/19. Non-Operational Savings

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer (DSFRA/13/16) on the outcomes to date of the strategy to address reductions in grant funding in so far as these related to non-operational support services.

Effective budget control had realised a total of £4.381m savings since 2010, £2.699m of which had been allocated to the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) budget strategy reserve with the remaining £1.649m used to fund on-off, invest-to-save activities. This investment, together with delivery of some early change projects, had realised reductions of £2.217m in the revenue budget between 2011-12 and 2013-14.

Plans were also in place to deliver a further £1.5m additional savings from non-operational support functions as identified in the draft Corporate Plan.

Some 16 support staff posts previously held vacant had been deleted from the establishment during the current financial year (representing 5.4% of support staff numbers) and it was anticipated that this would be further reduced by the end of the year to approximately 40 posts in total (13%). This would be achieved by natural turn-over and voluntary redundancies for which the report identified the proposed mechanisms and levels of delegation for determining associated redundancy payments. While there were currently no proposals for compulsory redundancies, this could not be guaranteed for future years.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the use of voluntary redundancy arrangements as part of the mechanism for delivering the required non-operational support savings target for 2014/15, with costs to be met from the CSR Reserve, be approved;
- (b) that the Chief Fire Officer be delegated authority to approve redundancy and early retirement payments where costs in each case are recovered within two years AND where the total of all redundancy payments does not exceed £500,000 in any one financial year;
- (c) that the Human Resource Management & Development Committee be delegated authority to approve redundancy and early retirement payments where costs in each case cannot be recovered in two years on the understanding that the full cost of any redundancies and early retirements is normally recovered within a period of three years, but in exceptional circumstances within a period of no more than five years AND where the total of all redundancy payments does not exceed £500,000 in any one financial year.
- (d) that the anticipated reduction in non-operational support staff numbers of approximately 40 posts (13%) in this financial year be noted;
- (e) that the £2.217m non-operational budget reductions made since 2011/12 be noted;
- (f) that it be noted that the Service was on track to deliver the target additional savings of £1.5m from non-operational areas.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE DSFRA/20 BELOW)

DSFRA/20. Draft Corporate Plan 2013-14 To 2014-15: Consultation Results

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer (DSFRA/13/17) on the outcome of the public consultation on draft Corporate Plan 2013-14 to 2014-15. The draft Plan, which contained a range of proposals, had been approved for consultation purposes by the Authority at a special meeting held on 18 January 2013 (Minute DSFRA/48 refers).

The report set out a high-level summary of the consultation methodology used (which had been adapted, following request, to meet local circumstances) together with the key consultation results for each of the proposals (including alternative suggestions advanced). Accompanying the report were further, detailed reports on the consultation methodology, results and equalities risks and benefits analyses associated with the proposals.

The Plan had been developed using the principles of:

- matching stations, vehicles and their crews to identified and evaluated existing and potential local risk;
- ensuring prevention and protection activity was targeted to those at highest risk;
- staff working in a new, more flexible way; and
- having appropriate evidence to support and justify any changes proposed.

Additionally, the proposals in the plan were designed to secure ongoing efficiency savings in the region of £7m per year without the need for station closures, loss of appliances or compulsory redundancies.

Each of the proposals subject to consultation and the associated results were debated during the meeting.

Adoption of an integrated approach to prevention, protection and response activities

Councillor Healey **MOVED**, with Councillor Dyke seconding:

“that the integrated approach to prevention, protection and response activities be approved in principle”

This motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** by 15 votes for the motion, with 6 abstentions.

Proposal 1 – introduction of smaller fire engines (“light rescue pumps”) in areas where larger fire engines were at a disadvantage

Following the debate on this proposal during which, amongst other things, clarification was provided on the specifications (cab size, loaded chassis weight etc.) of the proposed smaller appliances, Councillor Bown **MOVED**, with Councillor Yeomans seconding:

“that the Authority notes the additional comments on the smaller fire engines (light rescue pumps) and agrees to introduce these to specific station areas where larger fire engines are at a disadvantage – with implementation to be considered as part of the capital allocation budget setting process”

The motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** by 19 votes for, with 2 abstentions.

Proposal 2 – introduction of policy of non-attendance at automatic fire alarm calls to non-domestic properties

Following debate on this proposal during which clarification was provided as to the risk assessment to be applied to certain types of “high risk” non-domestic properties, Councillor Dyke **MOVED**, with Councillor Burr ridge-Clayton seconding:

“that the Authority resolve to implement a policy to no longer attend automatic fire alarm calls at non-domestic properties unless the occupants of the building confirm there is a fire, this policy to apply seven days a week between 08:00hours and 18:00hours and to exclude those properties where a prior risk assessment indicates that other arrangements are necessary”.

The motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** by 20 votes for to 1 against.

Proposal 3 – mobilise a single co-responder to co-responder incidents

Councillor Knight **MOVED**, with Councillor Ellery seconding:

“that the Authority resolves not to implement a policy of mobilising a single co-responder direct from their home or place of work to a co-responder incident”

The motion was put to the vote and declared **LOST** by 15 against to 3 votes for, with 3 abstentions. Whereupon Councillor Prior-Sankey **MOVED**, with Councillor Burridge-Clayton seconding:

“that the Authority resolves to implement a policy of mobilising a single co-responder direct from their home or place of work to a co-responder incident”

The motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** by 15 votes for to 3 against, with 3 abstentions.

Proposal 4 – reduce the number of middle/senior managers

Councillor Dyke **MOVED**, with Councillor Yeomans seconding:

“that the Authority resolves to support the principle of a reduction in middle and senior managers”

The motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**, unanimously.

Proposal 5 – Invest a further £450,000 in additional prevention activity in 2013

Councillor Burridge-Clayton **MOVED**, with Councillor Randall Johnson seconding:

“that the Authority resolves to invest a further £450,000 in additional prevention activities.”

The motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**, unanimously.

Proposal 6 – crew three fire appliances in Plymouth as “on call” rather than wholetime

Councillor Gordon **MOVED**, with Councillor Leaves seconding:

“that the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority establishes an integrated planning group with immediate effect with the purpose of preparing for future years’ corporate and financial planning that ensures:

- *best practice with respect to both stakeholder and public engagement;*
- *integration with partner organisations’ plans for efficiencies; and*
- *comprehensive compliance with the recommendations and best practice examples summarised in Sir Ken Knight’s “Facing the Future” report of May 2013.”*

This motion was then debated following which it was **AGREED** that it should stand referred for consideration at the next meeting of the Community Safety and Corporate Planning Committee.

Councillor Bown then **MOVED**, with Councillor Randall Johnson seconding:

“that the Authority resolves to implement alternative crewing arrangements (“on call” rather than wholetime) for three fire appliances in Plymouth.”

The motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** by 13 votes for to 6 against, with 1 abstention.

Proposal 7 – dual crew the aerial appliance in Plymouth with “on call” firefighters

Councillor Colthorpe **MOVED**, with Councillor Burrige-Clayton seconding:

“that the Authority resolve to implement revised crewing arrangements (dual-crewing with on-call firefighters) for the aerial ladder platform at Crownhill fire station, Plymouth.”

Councillor Leaves moved, with Councillor J Smith seconding, that the above motion be **AMENDED** by the insertion of the words shown in **bold, italics**, the amended motion to read:

*“that the Authority resolve to **defer the implementation** of revised crewing arrangements (dual-crewing with on-call firefighters) for the aerial ladder platform at Crownhill fire station, Plymouth, **pending an impact assessment of the implementation of Proposal 6 (the crewing of three fire appliances in Plymouth as “on call” rather than wholetime).**”*

The amendment was put to the vote and declared **LOST** by 13 votes against to 6 for, with 1 abstention.

There being no further amendments proposed, the initial motion proposed by Councillor Colthorpe, as set out above, was then put to the vote as the substantive motion and declared **CARRIED** by 13 votes for to 5 against, with 2 abstentions.

Proposal 8 – end the crewing pilot at Yeovil fire station and standardise crewing at that station with other similar fire stations

Councillor Woodman **MOVED**, with Councillor Knight seconding:

“that the Authority resolves to cease the pilot at Yeovil fire station and standardise crewing at that station with other similar fire stations.”

The motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**, unanimously.

Proposal 9 – change the crewing arrangements of the second fire appliance at Taunton fire station from wholetime to “on call”

Councillor Prior-Sankey **MOVED**, with Councillor Horsfall seconding:

“that the Authority resolves not to implement revised crewing arrangements for the second fire appliance at Taunton fire station until further work has been undertaken on the proposed daytime cover arrangements.”

The motion was put to the vote and declared **LOST** by 10 votes against to 5 for, with 4 abstentions.

Councillors Yeomans then **MOVED**, with Councillor Knight seconding:

“that the Authority resolves to implement revised crewing arrangements for the second fire appliance at Taunton fire station from wholetime to “on call”.

The motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** by 9 votes for to 5 against, with 4 abstentions.

Proposal 10 – change the crewing arrangements of the second fire appliance at Torquay fire station from wholetime to “on call”

Councillor Ellery **MOVED**, with Councillor Brooksbank seconding:

“that the Authority resolves not to implement revised crewing arrangements for the second fire appliance at Torquay fire station from wholetime to “on-call.”

The motion was put to the vote and declared **LOST** by 10 votes against to 6 for, with 3 abstentions.

Councillor Woodman then **MOVED**, with Councillor Yeomans seconding:

“that the Authority resolves to implement revised crewing arrangements for the second fire appliance at Torquay fire station from wholetime to “on-call.”

The motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** by 10 votes for to 7 against, with 1 abstention.

Proposal 11 - change the crewing arrangements of the fire appliance at Ilfracombe fire station from day-crewed (wholetime, day time only) to “on call”

Councillor Edmunds **MOVED**, with Councillor Greenslade seconding:

“that the Authority resolves not to implement revised crewing arrangements for the fire appliance at Ilfracombe fire station from day-crewed (wholetime, day time only) to “on-call.”

The motion was put to the vote and declared **LOST** by 11 votes against to 7 for, with 1 abstention.

Councillor Burridge-Clayton then **MOVED**, with Councillor Knight seconding:

“that the Authority resolves to implement revised crewing arrangements for the fire appliance at Ilfracombe fire station from day-crewed (wholetime, day time only) to “on-call.”

The motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** by 11 votes for to 6 against, with 2 abstentions.

Following the debate and determinations on the individual proposals, as indicated above, Councillor Woodman then **MOVED**, with Councillor Burridge-Clayton seconding:

“that, subject to incorporation of the decisions relating to the 11 specific proposals as identified elsewhere in this report, the draft Corporate Plan 2013-14 to 2014-15 be approved and the outcome of the consultation exercise on the Plan, as identified in report DSFRA/13/17 and associated appendices, noted.”

The motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** by 16 votes for, with 1 abstention.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the integrated approach to prevention, protection and response activities, as outlined in report DSFRA/13/17, be approved in principle;
- (b) that the additional comments arising from the consultation exercise on the introduction of smaller fire engines (light rescue pumps) be noted and approval given to the introduction of smaller fire engines at specific stations where larger fire appliances are at a disadvantage, with implementation to be considered as part of the capital allocation budget setting process;
- (c) that, for non-domestic properties, a policy be implemented of non-attendance at automatic fire alarm calls unless confirmation is subsequently provided by the building occupants, subject to:
 - the policy applying seven days a week between 08:00 and 18:00hours; and
 - the policy not applying to non-domestic properties where a prior risk assessment indicates that other arrangements are necessary;
- (d) that mobilisation of a single co-responder directly from home or place of work to co-responder incidents be implemented;

- (e) that the principle of seeking a reduction in the number of middle and senior managers be approved;
- (f) that a further, one-off investment of £450,000 in additional prevention activities be approved;
- (g) that “on call” crewing arrangements for three fire appliances in Plymouth be implemented as follows:
 - Plympton and Plymstock fire engines to become “on call”;
 - Camelshead to keep one wholetime fire appliance, with one moved to Crownhill;
 - Crownhill to receive the fire appliance moved from Camelshead thereby having two fire engines, one wholetime and one “on call”
- (h) that dual crewing of the aerial ladder platform at Crownhill fire station, Plymouth, be implemented;
- (i) that the crewing pilot at Yeovil fire station be ended and crewing at that station standardised with that at other, similar fire stations;
- (j) that revised crewing arrangements (from wholetime to “on call”) for the second fire appliance at Taunton fire station be implemented;
- (k) that revised crewing arrangements (from wholetime to “on call”) for the second fire appliance at Torquay fire station be implemented;
- (l) that revised crewing arrangements (from day-crewed [wholetime, day time only] to “on call”) for the fire appliance at Ilfracombe fire station be approved;
- (m) that, subject to incorporation of those decisions relating to the 11 specific proposals as identified in (b) to (l) inclusive above, the draft Corporate Plan 2013-14 to 2014-15 be approved;
- (n) that the outcome of the consultation on the draft Corporate Plan 2013-14 to 2014-15, as identified in report DSFRA/13/17 and associated appendices, be noted.

(SEE ALSO MINUTES DSFRA/14 AND 15, AND DSFRA/17 TO 19 INCLUSIVE ABOVE)

DSFRA/21. Arrangements for Appointment of Authority Treasurer

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer (DSFRA/13/18) on the proposed process for appointment of a new Authority Treasurer who would also serve as officer with responsibility for the proper administration of the Authority’s financial affairs in accordance as required by Section 112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and as per the Authority’s Financial Regulations. This followed from the decision taken at the last meeting to approve a restructure of the Senior Management Team and the implications arising therefrom (Minute DSFRA/12(c) refers).

RESOLVED

- (a) that a small Treasurer Appointment Committee, comprising the Authority Chairman and Vice-Chairman (Councillors Healey and Gordon respectively) together with Councillors Burrige-Clayton and Yeomans, be established with delegated authority to determine the appointment of a new Treasurer (and Section 112 officer) for the Authority;

- (b) that the Clerk be authorised to establish meeting(s) of the Committee with a view to it concluding its work prior to the departure of the existing Treasurer;
- (c) that, having appointed a new Treasurer (and Section 112 officer), the Committee be formally disbanded.

DSFRA/22. Chairman's Announcements

The Authority received, for information, details of events attended on its behalf by the Chairman since the last formal meeting.

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 16.23hours.