

## **DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**

(Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority)

30 September 2013

### Present:-

Councillors Healey (Chairman), Bown, Brazil, Brooksbank, Burrige-Clayton, Chugg, Colthorpe, Dyke, Eastman, Edmunds, Ellery, Greenslade, Gribble, Horsfall, Owen, Prior-Sankey, Radford, J Smith, Woodman and Yeomans

### Apologies:-

Councillors Darcy, Gordon, Knight and Randall Johnson

### **DSFRA/23. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2013 be signed as a correct record.

### **DSFRA/24. Deregulation Bill**

(An item of urgency 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 submit a response to the consultation paper within the required deadline.

The Clerk reported receipt of a letter from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) inviting a response to a consultation on the draft Deregulation Bill in so far as this applied to combined fire and rescue authorities. He drew attention to a draft response that had been circulated at the meeting for consideration. The consultation was on the proposed removal of unnecessary red tape surrounding the requirement for the Secretary of State to have to consult on changes to existing combination orders that fire and rescue authorities had already agreed locally such as changes in name. The Deregulation Bill would therefore include two clauses to amend the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to remove this regulatory burden should this proposal be supported.

It was noted that the consultation response was required by 30 September 2013 and the Clerk indicated that, subject to approval by the Authority, he would submit the response on its behalf.

**RESOLVED** that, subject to amendment of a typographical error on page 2 of the response in the second paragraph from "will" to "while", the Clerk be authorised to submit the draft response as circulated to the DCLG by 30 September 2013.

### **DSFRA/25. Questions by Members of the Authority**

In accordance with Standing Orders, a question was asked of the Authority by Councillor Jill Owen who sought a breakdown of the roles and responsibilities of the Chief Fire Officer and his team in the light of the slimming down of his team, coupled with the new arrangements for the Welsh Government concerning Mr Howell.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Owen for her question and responded to her, a copy of which was circulated at the meeting for information.

## **DSFRA/26. Minutes of Committees**

### **(a) Human Resources Management & Development Committee**

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Bown, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26 July 2013 which had considered, amongst other things:

- the Health, Safety and Welfare Framework for the Operational Environment;
- the Equality Strategy - "Safer Lives, Brighter Futures" – a six monthly monitoring report for the period November 2012 to April 2013;
- the Equal Pay Audit;
- an update on progress made with the partnership with Plymouth and Devon Race Equality Council;
- the appointment of Members to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Internal Dispute Resolution Panel.

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

### **(b) Audit & Performance Review Committee**

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Radford, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 29 July 2013 and 25 September 2013 which had considered, amongst other things:-

- the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service performance against the measures within the Corporate Plan for 2013/14 to 2015/16 for the periods April to June 2013 and April to August 2013 respectively;
- reports of the Authority's auditors, Grant Thornton in respect of the work undertaken on the audit of the financial statements for 2012/13 and the opinion on the Statement of Accounts;
- the Statement of Accounts for 2012/13;
- the annual Statement of Assurance for 2012/13;
- progress reports on the audit and review programme for 2013/14;

**RESOLVED** that, in accordance with Standing Orders, the Minutes of the meetings held on 29 July 2013 and 25 September 2013 be adopted.

### **(c) Treasurer Appointment Committee 31 July 2013**

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Healey, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 31 July 2013 which had considered the process for the appointment of a new Treasurer.

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

### **(d) Community Safety & Corporate Planning Committee**

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Eastman, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4 September 2013 which had considered, amongst other things:-

- A presentation on the process for Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP);
- A reference from the Authority meeting held on 10 July 2013 in respect of the proposal for the establishment of an integrated planning group to prepare for future years.'

Councillor Prior Sankey raised the point that, on Minute \*CSCPC/9., she did not feel that the Minute, although it was accurate, reflected the true nature of the discussion held as she felt that it implied that the Authority did not consult with the community or its partners. The Clerk suggested the addition of a form of words to the Minute in the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph as follows:

“Following a debate of the issue, Members recognised that consultations with constituent authorities and community partnerships did take place, whereupon Councillor Colthorpe proposed .....

Councillor Dyke proposed that this amendment be made (and was seconded by Councillor Prior Sankey) and upon a vote, this was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED** that, subject to the amendment above and in accordance with Standing Orders, the Minutes be adopted.

#### **(e) Resources Committee**

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Greenslade, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 September 2013 which had considered, amongst other things:

- A financial performance report for April to June 2013, including a recommendation to approve the transfer of £0.450million from the 2013-14 approved revenue budget to an Earmarked Reserve to fund enhanced prevention activities;
- A recommendation for the adoption of a revised Capital Programme for 2013-14 to 2015-16;
- A treasury management report for the period April to June 2013;
- A recommendation for the purchase of the ICT building at Service Headquarters.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) that the recommendations at Minutes RC/4 (Financial Performance Report 2013-14: Quarter 1) and RC/5 (Capital Programme 2013-14 to 2015-16) be approved;
- (ii) that the recommendation at Minute RC/8 (ICT Building at Service Headquarters) be considered in conjunction with item 13 below); and
- (iii) that, subject to (i) and (ii) above, the Minutes be adopted in accordance with Standing Orders.

**NB. MINUTE DSFRA/32 BELOW ALSO REFERS.**

#### **(f) Commercial Services Committee**

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Healey **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 September 2013 which had considered, amongst other things:

- a commercial activity and performance report;
- revisions to year 2 (2013-14) of the Five Year Business Plan;
- a commercial leads and opportunities update.

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

**DSFRA/27. Filling of Vacancies on Committees Etc.**

The Authority considered a report of the Clerk to the Authority (DSFRA/13/19) that set out details of vacancies that had arisen on committees and outside bodies as a result of the recent resignation of Councillor Leaves and which sought nominations for appointments to these vacancies.

**RESOLVED**

- (a) (i) that Councillor Darcy be appointed to the vacancy on the Community Safety and Corporate Planning Committee;
- (ii) that Councillor Greenslade be appointed to the vacancy on the Capital Programme Working Party;
- (iii) That Councillor Horsfall be appointed as the Climate Change and Sustainability Member Champion;
- (iv) that Councillor Gribble be appointed to the vacancy on the Local Government Association General Assembly;
- (b) that, in each case, the appointment be made until the Annual Meeting of the Authority in 2014.

**DSFRA/28. Local Government Finance Settlement 2014-15 to 2015-16: Technical Consultation - Draft Response**

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer (DSFRA/13/20) that sought approval of a draft response to be issued to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in respect of a technical consultation on the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2014-15 and 2015-16, the aim of which was to inform the implementation of additional policy and spending announcements for 2014-15 to 2015-16.

Members of the Authority drew attention to the following points in terms of the proposed response:

- Question 1 on Page 37- the Government should be urged within the response to adopt a staged approach so that a more even spread between urban and rural funding could be achieved;
- Question 6 on page 38 – it was suggested that this would be imposing a carbon tax by the back door and that this point should be highlighted within the response.

Councillor Greenslade indicated that he would be happy to pursue the issue of urban versus rural funding with Members of Parliament and enquired as to whether a simple, one page briefing note could be compiled for Members to utilise in this respect which the Treasurer undertook to prepare.

Reference was made to the potential for mergers, combination or amalgamation of fire and rescue services as set out within Sir Ken Knight's Independent Review of Efficiency and Operations in Fire and Rescue Services in England. The Chief Fire Officer responded that, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service had already addressed many of the issues raised as possible areas of savings within the Knight review. Further representations with Government continue to take place to ensure a more favourable grant settlement is received in future.

**RESOLVED** that, subject to incorporation of the amendments set out above, the draft response to the technical consultation document on the Local Government Finance Settlement 2014-15 to 2015-16, as attached as Appendix A to report DSFRA/13/20, be approved and the Treasurer authorised to submit it on behalf of the Authority.

**DSFRA/29. Chairman's Announcements**

The Authority received for information details of events attended on its behalf by the Chair since the previous formal meeting.

**DSFRA/30. Chief Fire Officer's Announcements**

The Chief Fire reported on:

- Two fire fatalities that had occurred since the previous meeting:
  - A vehicle fire in Plymouth on 5 September 2013 that was not accidental. Work is ongoing with partners in the mental health sector.
  - A house fire that occurred on 12 September 2013 in Taunton, where an elderly man had been rescued initially but paramedics were unable to resuscitate him at the scene. The cause of the fire was careless use of smoking materials and the Service continues to work with partners to educate the public on this issue.

Reference was made in particular to a piece of work undertaken by one of the Services' officers, Andy Justice which has examined on a regional basis the underlying contributory factors associated with fire deaths. Armed with this information, Fire Services can enter into discussions with local authorities to target activity with a view to further reducing fire deaths and injuries in the future. This work is commendable.

- The Industrial Action by the Fire Brigades' Union on 25 September 2013 between 12:00 and 16:00hours during which there had been only five calls received by the Service, four of which were in respect of Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) with the other being a co-responder call at which medical attention was rendered to an individual who was stabilised at the scene until the ambulance service arrived. ACFO Stratford and his team were commended for the work undertaken to ensure that robust business continuity arrangements were in place. The Service had not been informed of any further dates for industrial action at this stage.

**DSFRA/31. Exclusion of Press and Public**

**RECOMMENDATION** that, in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act, namely information relating to the financial and business affairs of the Authority and other organisations.

**DSFRA/32. ICT Building at Service Headquarters**

(An item taken in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during which the press and public were excluded.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Services (RC/13/10) that set out proposals for the purchase of the ICT Building at Service Headquarters.

**RESOLVED** that the purchase of the ICT building at Service Headquarters at the agreed price be approved.

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 11.45hours