

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
(Ordinary Meeting)

26 May 2016

Present:-

Councillors Healey (Chair), Burrige-Clayton, Bown, Ball, Chugg, Coles, Colthorpe, Dyke, Eastman, Edmunds, Greenslade (Vice-Chair), Hendy, Hill, Knight, Julian, Leaves, Radford, Redman, Riley, Thomas, Wheeler, Woodman and Yeomans.

Apologies:-

Councillors Ellery, Randall Johnson and Way

DSFRA/7 Address by the Retained Firefighters Union

The Authority received, for information, an address by Mr. Tristan Ashby (Chief Executive, Retained Firefighters Union) on the progressive approach adopted by the Union in liaising with fire and rescue authorities, the good working relationship existing between the two bodies, significant issues facing the fire and rescue service moving forwards (as referred to by the Home Secretary, Theresa May MP, in her recent address at a REFORM event) and how the Union might work with fire and rescue authorities in addressing these issues.

DSFRA/8 Minutes of Committees

a **Human Resources Management & Development Committee**

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Bown, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2016 which had considered, amongst other things:

- an update on the interim results of the Employee Survey conducted in 2015;
- a report on absence management;
- applications for retirement and re-employment;
- a consultation on the proposed reform of public sector exit payments;
- a report on the proposed exercise of a pensions discretion; and
- a report on trades union facilities.

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 meeting held on 11 April 2016 which had considered, amongst other things:

- a report from the Authority's external auditor, Grant Thornton, on work against the approved external audit plan;
- a report on internal audit work undertaken during the 2015-16 financial year;
- a proposed change in strategy for undertaking internal audit and review work in future;
- the proposed internal audit plan for the 2016-17 financial year;
- production of the 2015-16 Annual Assurance Statement;
- the Corporate Risk Register;

- an update on the Peer Review of the Service undertaken in 2014 and the actions arising from that process;
- Group accounts for the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service and Red One Ltd.;
- performance by the Service during January to December 2015 against those indicators contained in the organisations strategic plan (“Our Plan”) 2015-2020; and
- a proposed review of Service performance measures to effect better alignment to the approved strategic priorities of public safety, staff safety and organisational effectiveness and efficiency.

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

c Community Safety & Corporate Planning Committee

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Eastman, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2016 which had considered, amongst other things:

- a proposed review of Service performance measures to effect better alignment to the approved strategic priorities of public safety, staff safety and organisational effectiveness and efficiency;
- a report on the outcome of the rapid intervention vehicles pilot together with an indication of proposed next steps;
- a report on the effectiveness of the call reduction policy for unwanted fire signals;
- a report on the “Better Business for All” partnership initiative aimed at promoting better compliance and regulation of businesses in Devon and Somerset; and
- a report on enforcement action under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

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

d Resources Committee

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Dyke, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2016 which had considered, amongst other things:

- a report on the draft financial outturn for the 2015-16 financial year;
- a proposed revision to the 2016-17 to 2018-19 capital programme; and
- a report on the 2015-16 draft financial outturn position for Red One Ltd.

RESOLVED

- (i). that the recommendation at Minute RC/17 (Provisional Financial Outturn 2015-16) be considered in conjunction with the item elsewhere on the agenda for the Authority meeting;
- (ii). that the recommendation at Minute RC/18 (Revisions to Capital Programme 2016-17 to 2018-19) be approved; and
- (iii). that, subject to (i) and (ii) above, the Minutes be adopted in accordance with Standing Orders.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE DSFRA/9 BELOW)

Provisional Financial Outturn 2015-16

The Authority considered a report of the Treasurer (DSFRA/16/13) on the provisional financial outturn for the 2015-16 financial year against the approved revenue and capital budgets for that year.

For revenue, total spending was £72.833m against an approved budget of £74.710m, resulting in an underspend of £1.878m (2.51% of the approved budget). This was net of transfers to earmarked reserves totalling £5.739m and comprising:

- transfers to reserves included in the budget (£3.551m);
- 2015-16 carry forwards (£0.091m)
- Grants unapplied (£0.420m); and
- contribution to capital funding (£1.678m).

The report highlighted the more significant (over £0.050m) variations from the approved budget. The draft outturn position had previously been considered by the Resources Committee at its meeting on 17 May 2016 which had resolved (Minute RC/17 refers) to recommend that the Authority transfer the £1.878m underspend to the following Earmarked Reserves:

- Essential Spending Pressures 2015-16 (£0.557m); and
- Capital Funding Reserve (£1.321m)

The report commented on the austerity measures implemented by central government over the past few years and projected that the Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan should allow for further significant reductions in funding beyond 2016-17. The recommended transfers to Earmarked Reserves would assist future budgets by mitigating the need to add further debt charges to the revenue base.

The provisional capital outturn indicated spending of £6.171m against a revised capital programme for 2015-16 of £8.202m. £1.627m of the underspend had been carried forward to the 2016-17 financial year and savings of £0.404m having been secured.

RESOLVED

- (i). that, in accordance with the recommendations of the Resources Committee (minute RC/17 of the meeting held on 17 May 2016 refers), the provisional underspend of £1.878m against the 2015-16 approved revenue budget be transferred to the Essential Spending Pressures Earmarked Reserve (£0.557m) and to the Capital Funding Earmarked Reserve (£1.321m);
- (ii). that, following a review of Earmarked Reserve requirements, £0.011m be transferred from Earmarked Reserves to the General Reserve;
- (iii). that, subject to (i) and (ii) above, the draft 2015-16 revenue and capital outturn position as outlined in report DSFRA/16/13 be noted, specifically that the revenue underspend figure of £1.878m is **net** of:
 - a. the transfer of £0.402m to the Grants Unapplied Reserve, as required under the International Financial Reporting Standards relating to grants received but not utilised during the financial year;
 - b. a transfer of £0.091m to the Earmarked Reserve for 2015-16 Budget Carry Forwards to fund planned projects not completed by 31 March 2016;
 - c. a transfer of £1.677m to the Earmarked Reserve for Capital Funding; and

d. additional provisions of £0.066m relating to pensions liabilities.

DSFRA/10 Annual Treasury Management Report 2015-16

The Authority received for information a report of the Treasurer (DSFRA/16/14), together with a presentation from Adam Burleton (Capita - the Authority's Treasury Management Advisor), reviewing the treasury management activities and operation of prudential and treasury indicators for the previous (2015-16) financial year.

The report, which satisfied the reporting requirements both of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, concluded that no prudential indicator had been breached and that a prudent approach to investment decisions had been adopted during the year, with priority being given to liquidity and security over yield.

DSFRA/11 Chairman's Report - Red One Limited

The Authority received for information a report of the Independent Chair of the Board of Red One Ltd. (DSFRA/16/15) on Board roles and responsibilities for the three Authority-appointed non-executive directors on the Board together with areas of activity undertaken during the time since their initial appointment at the last Authority meeting (Minute DSFRA/53 of the Authority meeting held on 19 February 2016 refers).

(SEE ALSO MINUTE DSFRA/15 BELOW).

DSFRA/12 Chairman's Announcements

The Chair reported on, amongst other things:

- the main themes emanating from the recent speech by the Home Secretary, Theresa May MP, at a recent REFORM event and the implications of these themes for the fire and rescue service both nationally and locally; and
- the election of Alison Hernandez to the post of Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon & Cornwall.

DSFRA/13 Chief Fire Officer's Announcements

The Chief Fire Officer reported on, amongst other things:

- the three main themes (greater efficiency and collaboration by the emergency services; the reform of the fire & rescue service working practices; and greater accountability and transparency in governance) from the speech by the Home Secretary, Theresa May, at the recent REFORM event;
- steps being undertaken by the Authority and Service to address these themes both locally and regionally (e.g. establishment of the Emergency Services Forum, supported by a Chief Officers Group, to promote and deliver regional collaboration; the Police and Fire Community Safety Officer initiative currently operating in North Devon);
- the successful transition to the new control system as part of the Networked Fire Control Services Partnership (NFCSP);
- forthcoming Service exercises (e.g. a high-rise rescue exercise in Bridgwater), to which Authority Members were invited to attend;

- meetings held with, amongst others, the newly-elected Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon & Cornwall (Alison Hernandez) and the re-elected Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon & Somerset (Sue Mountstevens) and with the new High Sheriffs for Devon (Mrs. A. M. Gilbert) and Somerset (Edward W G Bayntun-Coward Esq.);
- attendance at the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Fire & Rescue Service where Lyn Brown MP (Shadow Fire and Communities Minister) was invited to visit the Service.

DSFRA/14 Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item 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 Local Government Act 1972, namely the financial and business affairs of Red One Ltd.

DSFRA/15 Report of the Non-Executive Directors of Red One Limited

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

Prior to the report from the Authority-appointed non-executive directors on the Board of Red One Ltd., the Chief Fire Officer advised the Authority of work being undertaken on behalf of the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) with the United Kingdom Trade and Investment department. The Chief Fire Officer also advised the Authority on other external work undertaken (e.g. Chair of the Arson Prevention Forum and Trustee of the Firefighter Memorial Trust) at no cost (other than reimbursement of reasonable expenses) to the Authority. Such work, however, had tangible benefits both in promoting public safety generally, enhancing the reputation of the Service and Authority generally and providing highly effective methods of sharing best practice delivering both national and local benefits.

The Authority re-affirmed its support for the external activities being undertaken by the Chief Fire Officer which it was felt afforded the Authority considerable benefits. In this respect, Councillor Eastman **MOVED**, with Councillor Redman seconding:

“that, subject to their being no detriment to discharging the role of Chief Fire Officer for the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service, the Chief Fire Officer be fully supported in undertaking external, national roles in light of the national and local benefits accruing and on the basis that the only costs to the Authority were reasonable expenses associated with these activities”.

The motion was put to the vote whereupon it was declared **CARRIED**, unanimously. The Chief Fire Officer left the meeting at this point.

Councillors Healey, Thomas and Woodman then reported on their activities since appointment, in February of this year, as Authority-appointed non-executive directors on the Board of Red One Ltd., the Authority's commercial trading arm. The non-executive directors each described their particular roles on the Board and indicated that, while the company had proven successful since its inception, the intention was to consolidate and build on this success by looking at a range of new options/initiatives including sales to new markets and the potential for collaborative/partnership working with other providers of fire and rescue training.

The Authority thanked the non-executive directors for their full and robust reports whereupon it was

RESOLVED

- (a). that, subject to their being no detriment to discharging the role of Chief Fire Officer for the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service, the Chief Fire Officer be fully supported in undertaking external, national roles (e.g. for the fire sector, via the Chief Fire Officers Association and on behalf of the Firefighters Charity etc.) in light of the national and local benefits accruing and on the basis of reimbursement only of reasonable expenses associated with these activities;
- (b). that the Chief Executive of the Fire Service College be invited to meet the Authority to discuss the scope for collaborative working;
- (c). that, subject to (a) and (b) above, the reports from the Authority-appointed non-executive directors be noted.

The Meeting started at 11.20 am and finished at 2.22 pm