

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
(Extraordinary Meeting)

10 January 2020

Present:-

Councillors Randall Johnson (Chair), Best, Biederman, Bown, Buchan, Clayton, Coles, Colthorpe, Doggett, Drean, Eastman, Hannaford, Healey MBE, Napper, Peart, Prowse, Radford, Redman, Saywell, Thomas, Trail BEM, Tuffin, Vijeh, Way, Wheeler (Vice-Chair) and Yabsley.

DSFRA/30 Questions and Petitions from the Public

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

Question from Gideon Amos OBE asking the Authority to take into account the strength of feeling in Taunton Deane on the proposed reduction of fire engines based at Taunton fire station.

Answer by the Chair that the consultation on the proposed new Service Delivery Operating Model had run for a twelve-week period from 3 July to 22 September 2019. The proposal for removal of the third appliance from Taunton fire station had featured as part of the consultation. Responses to the consultation had been subject to independent analysis and would be considered by the Authority as part of its decision making process.

Question from Councillor Paul Millar (East Devon District Council) on whether the Authority would consider delaying implementation of any recommendations arising from the recent consultation pending appointment of a government Minister for Fire Services and clarity on future funding provision.

Answer by the Chair that Kit Malthouse MP was currently the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and the Fire Service, having been appointed to that position on 25 July 2019. The proposals subject to consultation were aimed at achieving a better alignment of Service resources to risk together with providing an increase in prevention and protection work. Future funding provision was not a principal driver and there would be no advantage in delaying consideration of any changes.

DSFRA/31 Addresses by Representative Bodies

In accordance with Standing Orders, the Authority received addresses from:

the **Fire & Rescue Services Association** recognising the need for change but commenting that change should be based on sound rationale, implemented in the right way and should be sustainable. The FRSA had welcomed the opportunity to work with both the Authority and the Service during the consultation period, with FRSA Members being satisfied that the consultation was clear. The FRSA expressed its expectation that any changes introduced should result in improvements to the service.

the **Fire Brigades Union** welcoming the proposals before the meeting as being an improvement on the initial proposals but still expressing concerns over day-crewing at wholtime stations and in relation to what the FBU considered to be minimum numbers to crew fire engines in the interests of public and staff safety.

The FBU indicated that it was supportive of proposals for enabling more prevention and protection work and for investing some financial reserves into front-line services.

DSFRA/32 Safer Together Programme (Service Delivery Operating Model) - Outcomes of Consultation on Reallocation of Resources

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer (DSFRA/20/1) on proposals for a new Service Delivery Operating Model stemming from the outcome of the public consultation undertaken from 3 July to 22 September 2019 on seven options previously approved by the Authority for the purposes of public consultation. The consultation had attracted 3,818 completed consultation questionnaires, 205 written submissions, 381 e-mail responses and five petitions with a total of 43,644 signatures. All responses to the consultation had been subject to independent analysis, the outcome of which was appended to the report.

The consultation was around proposed measures to address those risks identified in the Authority's approved Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) by better aligning resources to risk and prioritising prevention and protection activity. The proposals set out in the report had been developed in light of the consultation responses received, specifically to Option 7 which allowed a "mix and match" approach to elements in the other six options approved by the Authority for consultation purposes and which, in summary, related to station closures, removal of fire engines and the introduction of revised crewing arrangements.

Since the launch of the consultation, the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service ("the Service") had received the report of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) following its inspection of the Service earlier in the year. This report had identified a number of areas for improvement which the proposals, if approved, would help address. Additionally, since launching the consultation, the Service had:

- reached an "in principle" agreement with representative bodies on a new "pay for availability" on-call duty system;
- assessed the impact of successful trials of aggregate crewing at two on-call stations;
- commenced initial discussions with representative bodies on changes to the existing whole-time rota system; and
- been advised, via the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, of a 1.7% increase in central government grant funding and a partial funding of firefighter pension funding pressures which had improved the overall financial picture for 2020-21.

The proposals set out in report DSFRA/20/1 would, if approved, secure benefits in delivering:

- an efficient, effective delivery model that actively reduces community and commercial risk while improving responses to emergencies;
- increased fire engine availability;
- increased flexibility, reward, recruitment and retention of the on-call workforce;
- a choice of duty systems for whole-time staff;
- the start of cultural reform;

- increased productivity; and
- increased public safety.

An additional recommendation to those printed in report DSFRA/20/1 was circulated at the meeting. At the commencement of the debate, the Authority agreed to consider each of the recommendations individually.

Councillor Drean **MOVED**, with Councillor Trail seconding:

“deferral of the decision to implement day crewing at Barnstaple, Exmouth and Paigton, subject to a revised 24/7 crewing model, including roving appliances, being agreed with the Fire Brigades Union before the end of the 2019-20 financial year”.

The motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** by 25 votes for, with one abstention.

Councillor Drean **MOVED**, with Councillor Clayton seconding:

“approval of the closure of Budleigh Salterton fire station, with affected firefighters allowed to respond from Exmouth fire station”.

Councillor Biederman sought to propose, with Councillor Bown seconding, an **AMENDMENT** to the motion to defer closure of Budleigh Salterton fire station. It was considered, however, that the proposed amendment would have the effect of negating the motion before the Authority and as such was contrary to the provisions of Standing Order 21 (11).

There being no further, valid, amendments proposed the motion was then put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**, by 23 votes for, 2 against and with one abstention.

Councillor Drean **MOVED**, with Councillor Clayton seconding:

“the relocation of Topsham fire station to Service Headquarters and the relocation of one fire appliance to Middlemoor fire station (both existing Topsham fire engines to be relocated to Service Headquarters until an on-call crew can be established at Middlemoor).

Councillor Thomas sought to propose an **AMENDMENT** to add the words

“with a report on the proposed disposal of the Topsham site to be presented to the Authority at a future date”

to the motion before the Authority. Councillors Drean and Clayton indicated their acceptance of this and the altered motion was accepted in accordance with Standing Order 21 (15).

The altered motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** by 17 votes for to 5 against, with 5 abstentions.

The meeting then adjourned at 12.30pm, reconvening at 12:40pm.

On reconvening, Councillor Drean **MOVED**, with Councillor Saywell seconding:

“removal of the third fire engines from Bridgwater, Taunton, Torquay and Yeovil”.

At the commencement of the debate on removal of the third fire engine from Bridgwater, Taunton, Torquay and Yeovil fire stations, Councillor Redman sought to propose an **AMENDMENT** to the Motion. This was not, however, seconded. Councillor Healey then expressed the view that, instead of removal of the third fire engine, it might instead be replaced by a Rapid Intervention Vehicle.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that replacement of the third fire engine with a Rapid Intervention Vehicle would still amount to overprovision to address the risks identified in those areas.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer went on to say that it might be possible, however, to replace the third fire engine with an alternative vehicle (for example, a light 4 x 4 pump) at each of the stations, potentially with limited firefighting capability but which, more significantly, could be used to transport additional firefighters to incidents should this be necessary, in-keeping with addressing the risks identified for those areas.

In light of this, Councillor Healey proposed, with Councillor Peart seconding an **AMENDMENT** to the motion:

“to delete the word “removal” at the beginning of the motion, insert the word “replacement” at the beginning of the motion and insert the words “with alternative vehicles” at the end of the motion”.

Councillors Drean and Saywell indicated their acceptance of this and the altered motion was accepted in accordance with Standing Order 21 (15).

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

Councillor Drean **MOVED**, with Councillor Saywell seconding:

“removal of the second fire engines from Crediton, Lynton, Martock and Totnes fire stations”.

Councillor Way proposed, with Councillor Coles seconding, an **AMENDMENT** to the motion:

“ to delete the word “Crediton” from the motion”.

The amendment was put to the vote and declared **LOST**, by 15 votes against, 7 for and with one abstention.

The substantive motion was then put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** by 18 votes for to 6 against.

Councillor Drean **MOVED**, with Councillor Buchan seconding:

“introduction of variable fire engine availability dependent on risk as set out in paragraph 9,14 [of report DSFRA/20/1]”.

The motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** by 16 votes for to 5 against.

Councillor Drean **MOVED**, with Councillor Peart seconding:

“that the Authority notes the arrangements for payments for on-call firefighters as set out in section 6 [of report DSFRA/20/1]”.

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

Councillor Drean **MOVED**, with Councillor Thomas seconding:

“that, in approving a new Service Delivery Operating Model, existing emergency response standards be maintained but an explicit performance target for meeting the first appliance attendance times for both incident types (house fires and road traffic collisions) on 75% of all occasions be set”.

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

Councillor Buchan **MOVED**, with Councillor Peart seconding:

“that the Audit & Performance Review Committee be tasked with reviewing existing performance measures and developing any additional measures necessary to enable performance monitoring against the expected improvements derived from better resource distribution according to risk, including (but not limited to):

- (i) on-call fire engine availability;
- (ii) emergency response standards against the target set; and
- (iii) levels of prevention and protection activity”.

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

It was, therefore, **RESOLVED**:

- (a). that, having taken account of analysis of the outcome of the consultation on the reallocation of resources to support the new Service Delivery Operating Model, the following be approved:
 - (i) deferral of the decision to implement day crewing at Barnstaple, Exmouth and Paignton subject to a revised 24/7 crewing model, including roving appliances, being agreed with the Fire Brigades Union before the end of the 2019-20 financial year;
 - (ii) closure of Budleigh Salterton fire station, with affected firefighters allowed to respond from Exmouth fire station;
 - (iii) relocation of Topsham fire station to Service Headquarters and relocation of one fire appliance to Middlemoor fire station (both existing Topsham fire engines to be relocated to Service Headquarters until an on-call crew can be established at Middlemoor), with a report on the proposed disposal of the Topsham site to be presented to the Authority at a future date;
 - (iv) replacement of the third fire engines at Bridgwater, Taunton, Torquay and Yeovil with alternative vehicles;
 - (v) removal of the second fire engines from Crediton, Lynton, Martock and Totnes; and
 - (vi) introduction of variable fire engine availability dependent on risk, as set out in paragraph 9.14 of report DSFRA/20/1;
- (b). that the arrangements for payments for on-call firefighters as set out in section 6 of the report be noted;
- (c). that, in approving a new Service Delivery Operating Model, existing emergency response standards be maintained but an explicit performance target for meeting the first appliance attendance times for both incident types (house fires and road traffic collisions) on 75% of all occasions be set;
- (d). that the Audit & Performance Review Committee be tasked with reviewing existing performance measures and developing any additional measures necessary to enable performance monitoring against the expected improvements derived from better resource distribution according to risk, including (but not limited to):
 - (i) on-call fire engine availability;

- (ii) emergency response standards against the target as set in (c) above; and
- (iii) levels of prevention and protection activity.

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 2.17 pm