

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

16 December 2020

Present:

Councillors Randall Johnson (Chair), Best, Biederman, Bown, Brazil, Buchan, Clayton, Coles, Colthorpe, Corvid, Drear, Hannaford, Healey MBE, Peart, Prowse, Radford, Redman, Saywell, Thomas, Trail BEM, Vijeh, Wheeler (Vice-Chair) and Yabsley.

Sue Mountstevens (Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner).

Apologies:

Councillors Eastman, Howgate and Napper.

Alison Hernandez (Devon & Cornwall Police & Crime Commissioner).

DSFRA/60 Councillor Ian Doggett

Prior to the formal commencement of the meeting, the Authority observed one minute's silence as a mark of respect for Councillor Ian Doggett who had died recently. Councillor Doggett was a Torbay Council appointee who had served on the Authority since May 2019.

DSFRA/61 Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2020 be approved as a correct record.

DSFRA/62 Minutes of Committees

a Community Safety & Corporate Planning Committee

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Redman, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2020 which had considered:

- a report on progress with the "Safer Together" Programme; and
- a report on progress by the Service in addressing recommendations from the Grenfell Phase 1 Inquiry.

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

b Human Resources Management & Development Committee

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Hannaford, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2020 which had considered:

- a report on the health, safety and well-being of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service for the period April to September 2020;
- a report on progress with implementing the Service's People Strategy;
- a request for retirement and re-employment; and
- a proposed response to the government's consultation on reforming local government exit payments.

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

c Audit & Performance Review Committee

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Healey MBE, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2020 which had considered:

- the external auditor's (Grant Thornton) finding for the Authority's 2019-20 financial statements;
- the Authority's final statement of accounts for the 2019-20 financial year;
- the 2019-20 Letter of Representation to accompany the financial statements;
- a report on progress against the approved internal audit plan for 2019-20;
- a report on the performance of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service during April to September 2020 against approved corporate measures; and
- a review of corporate measures for performance reporting externally.

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

DSFRA/63 "Safer Together" Programme - Update on Implementation of Service Delivery Operating Model (SDOM) Decisions

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer (DSFRA/20/20) on progress in implementing those proposals linked to the Service Delivery Operating Model (SDOM). The proposals had been approved, following a twelve-week public consultation, at the Authority extraordinary meeting held on 10 January 2020 (Minute DSFRA/32 refers). The report outlined the progress against the following:

- deferral of day crewing at Barnstaple, Exmouth and Paignton (dependent on agreement with the Fire Brigades Union on the introduction of a revised 24/7 crewing model). Introduction of a new crewing model had in part been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic but in the meantime the Service had recruited 34 firefighters on new contracts to provide the flexibility required and a further external recruitment process would be undertaken in 2021;
- closure of Budleigh Salterton fire station. This had been completed;
- relocation of Topsham fire station. This had been completed and options for community use of the station to be disposed of were being explored;
- replacement of third appliances at Bridgwater, Taunton, Torquay and Yeovil. This was due for completion in January 2021 and had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic;

- removal of second appliances from Crediton, Lynton, Martock and Totnes. Martock and Totnes was completed at the end of March 2020; Crediton and Lynton in October 2020; and
- introduction of variable fire engine availability dependent on risk. This was dependent on the introduction of Pay for Availability. Eleven stations in total had been identified for this, with two risk-dependent stations having transitioned in October 2020, with third planned for January 2021. The remaining eight stations would transfer at the same time as moving to Pay for Availability.

The following issues were covered during discussion of this item:

- latent capacity from wholtime stations would be used to crew roving appliances. Roving appliances would be sited on a dynamic, risk assessment basis using software developed externally but which was being refined to reflect the priorities in the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan. The roving appliances would be used for prevention and protection work (which in turn could be aligned to Service seasonal campaigns) but could also be used to augment incident response as required;
- the ultimate Service vision was for all on-call staff to eventually have migrated to the Pay for Availability system, which it was considered offered enhanced reward for availability, greater flexibility for staff and could assist in promoting the Service's diversity agenda. It would also result in more robust service provision, aligning resources to risk.

RESOLVED

- (a). that the progress as outlined in report DSFRA/20/20 in implementing the Service Delivery Operating Model decisions approved by the Authority on 10 January 2020 be noted; and
- (b). that the Authority welcomes the progress made on the introduction of the Pay for Availability system and thanks the officers and firefighters for their work on the wider adoption of this important initiative.

DSFRA/64 Confirmation of Members' Allowances Scheme 2021-22

The Authority considered a report of the Director of Governance & Digital Services (DSFRA/20/21) on the approved Scheme of Members' Allowances to operate for the 2021-22 financial year.

RESOLVED

- (a). that the rates of basic and special responsibility allowances to be payable during the 2021-22 financial year, as set out in Table 1 of Section 2 of report DSFRA/20/21, be approved, subject to any automatic annual uprating as provided for by the Scheme;

- (b). that the Special Responsibility Allowance payable in 2021-22 to Authority-appointed non-executive directors on the Board of Red One Ltd. be set at the current level of £6,305, consistent with the rationale set out at paragraph 3.11 of the report, subject to any automatic annual uprating as provided for by the Scheme
- (c). that the rates of co-optees allowances to be payable during the 2021-22 financial year, as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report, be approved;
- (d). that the co-optees allowances be automatically uprated, annually, in accordance with any proposal agreed by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (“the green book”) and that the Clerk to the Authority be authorised to amend the approved Scheme accordingly;
- (e). that the rates of reimbursement for travel and subsistence allowances to apply for 2021-22 as set out in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 of the report be approved; and
- (f). that the Clerk to the Authority be authorised to publicise details of the Scheme as confirmed above one or more local newspapers circulating in the area served by the Authority.

DSFRA/65 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public (with the exception of those representatives of the Board of Red One Ltd.) 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 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act, namely information relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person – including the authority holding that information.

DSFRA/66 **Red One Ltd. Update**

(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).

(Councillors Saywell and Thomas each declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in this item by virtue of being Authority-appointed non-executive directors on the Board of Red One Ltd.).

The Authority received, for information, a verbal report from the Independent Board Chair and the co-Chief Executives on the operation of Red One Ltd. (“the company”) during 2020-21. As with other private businesses, the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted significantly on the company but despite this it was projected that it would realise a profit for the 2020-21 financial year.

Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the company had (along with many other businesses), moved its annual financial reporting to March 2021. This would allow for certainty in relation to a number of contract areas still in play. The final accounting position would be reported to the Authority via an Annual General Meeting in 2021. In the meantime, the Resources Committee would continue (in accordance with its terms of reference) to monitor progress with the company, which also maintained close and regular reporting links with the Authority Treasurer.

The recently-awarded contract relating to Hinkley Point C was progressing well, with very positive feedback having been received from the employer. The company had been awarded a number of additional task orders under the contract and one of the co-Chief Executives has been seconded, temporarily, as incident response lead for the Hinkley C site. The Authority was also advised of other contractual successes by the company.

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.56 pm