

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

26 September 2022

Present:

Councillors Randall-Johnson (Chair), Best, Chesterton, Coles, Cook-Woodman (Vice-Chair), Drean, Hannaford, Hendy, Kendall, Kerley, Long, Power, Radford, Roome, Sellis, Shayer, Sully, Thomas and Trail BEM.

Apologies:

Councillors Biederman, Brazil, Clayton, Partridge, Peart and Prowse.

DSFRA/22/14 Retiring Members' Presentation

The Authority paid tribute to former Authority Members in recognition of their service and contribution to the work of the Authority.

DSFRA/22/15 Minutes

a Annual Meeting 10 June 2022

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the annual Authority meeting held on 10 June 2022 be signed as a correct record.

b Ordinary Meeting 10 June 2022

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the ordinary Authority meeting held on 10 June 2022 be signed as a correct record.

DSFRA/22/16 Minutes of Committees

a Audit & Governance Committee

In the absence of the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, Councillor Kerley **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2022 which had considered, amongst other things:

- The proposed Authority response to the Government White Paper "Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service";
- An internal audit progress report for the first quarter of the current (2022-23) financial year;
- An assurance report on the Authority as a going concern;
- An annual review of the Authority's Standards arrangements;
- A revised forward plan for items for submission to future meetings; and
- A report on the inclusion of an appropriate entry relating to Red One Ltd. on the Authority's Corporate Risk Register.

RESOLVED:

- (i). That the recommendation at Minute AGC/22/8 (Corporate Risk Register – Inclusion of Red One Ltd. [Authority Trading Company]) and relating to proposed revisions to the Terms of Reference of the Committee be approved; and
- (ii). That, subject to (i) above, the Minutes be adopted in accordance with Standing Orders.

b People Committee

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Hannaford, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2022 which had considered, amongst other things:

- Publication of the report following the 2021 inspection of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (the Service) by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services;
- Appointments to the Internal Disputes Resolution Panel for the 2022-23 municipal year;
- An update on the Service People Strategy; and
- A report on performance for the first quarter of the current (2022-23) financial year against those key performance indicators associated with the Authority-approved Strategic Policy Objectives 3a to 3c inclusive.

RESOLVED that the Minutes be adopted in accordance with Standing Orders.
(See also Minute DSFRA/22/17 below).

c Resources Committee

In the absence of the Committee Chair, Councillor Drear (Committee Vice-Chair) **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2022 which had considered, amongst other things:

- A report on Authority Treasury Management Performance for the first quarter of the current (2022-23) financial year;
- A report on Service financial performance (revenue and capital expenditure and use of reserves) for the first quarter of the current financial year;
- An update on progress with the Service Environmental Strategy; and
- A report on Red One Ltd. financial performance for the first quarter of the current financial year.

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

DSFRA/22/17 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) 2021 Inspection Report

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer (DSFRA/22/17) on publication by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) of its finding following its inspection of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (the Service) in 2021.

Appended to the report were action plans to address both the cause for concern and areas for improvement as identified by HMICFRS. The report also outlined the proposed arrangements to ensure appropriate scrutiny of progress against these action plans by both the full Authority and its Committees.

RESOLVED

- (a). That the proposals for reporting progress against the action plans to address the cause for concern and areas for improvement identified in the 2021 HMICFRS inspection report, as set out in Section 3 of report DSFRA/22/17, be endorsed;
- (b). That it be noted that:
 - (i). The Service grading for the Efficiency pillar of the HMICFRS inspection had improved since the last inspection from “Requires Improvement” to “Good, with the grading for the Effectiveness pillar remaining at “Good”;
 - (ii). The Service had developed action plans to address both the cause for concern and areas for improvement as identified in the HMICFRS report.

(See also Minute DSFRA22/16(b) above).

DSFRA/22/18 Firefighters Pensions Schemes Discretions Policy

(Councillor Sellis declared a pecuniary interest in this item by virtue of her partner being in receipt of a firefighters pension. Councillor Sellis took no part in the discussion or voting on this item).

The Authority considered a report of the Director of Finance, People & Estates (DSFRA/22/18) to which was appended a proposed revised policy for the Authority on the exercise of discretions afforded by current Firefighters’ Pensions Schemes. The opportunity had been taken to define a clear policy to apply for each discretion to promote consistency of approach and decision making.

The proposed policy had been considered at the Authority’s Local Pensions Board meeting on 7 September 2022 and was now commended for approval.

RESOLVED

- (a). That the Firefighters’ Pensions Schemes Discretions Policy as appended to report DSFRA/22/18 be approved; and
- (b). That, in relation to exercising the discretions:
 - (i). Those discretions of a more routine, Scheme administration type, be exercised by the Chief Fire Officer; and
 - (ii). Those individualised, case-by-case discretions that could involve additional financial implications be exercised either by the Chief Fire Officer, the People Committee or the full Authority depending on the quantum of the financial implications and alignment to financial thresholds as contained in the Authority’s approved Financial Regulations.

DSFRA/22/19 Appointments to the Devon Audit Partnership Committee

(Councillor Roome declared a personal, non-pecuniary, interest in this item by virtue of his being current Chair of the Devon Audit Partnership Committee).

The Authority considered a report of the Director of Governance & Digital Services (DSFRA/22/19) on the appointment of two Authority Members to sit on the Devon Audit Partnership (DAP) Committee.

The Authority had previously resolved to join DAP, as a full voting partner, for the provision of internal audit services for the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (Minute DSFRA/22/8 of the ordinary Authority meeting held on 10 June 2022 refers).

DAP had indicated that the appointments to the Committee would normally be the Chair and Vice-Chair of the partner's Audit Committee.

RESOLVED that the ex-officio appointment of the both the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee to the Devon Audit Partnership Committee be approved.

DSFRA/22/20 Appointment of Independent Members to the Audit & Governance Committee

The Authority considered a report of the Director of Governance & Digital Services (DSFRA/22/20) on the proposed appointment of independent, co-opted members to the Audit & Governance Committee.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) had published a revised position statement in July 2022 recommending such appointments. The report identified the legal basis on which such appointments may be made and addressed the issue of remuneration for such appointees.

RESOLVED that, in accordance with the CIPFA revised position statement, two independent, co-opted members be appointed to the Audit & Governance Committee and that to facilitate this:

- (a). The Clerk be authorised to:
 - (i). Undertake a process to identify suitable candidates for appointment; and
 - (ii). Amend the Authority's currently approved Scheme of Members' Allowances to provide for annual remuneration of £1,418 to each appointee; and
- (b). Final appointment of the independent, co-opted members be delegated to the Appointments & Disciplinary Committee.