

# DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

25 September 2023

## Present:

Councillors Cook-Woodman (Chair), Biederman (Chair), Atkinson, Best, Brazil, Chesterton, Coles, Fellows, Gilmour, Hendy, Kerley, Patel, Power, Radford, Randall-Johnson, Sellis, Slade, Sproston, Sully, Tolchard and Trail BEM.

## Apologies:

Councillors Clayton, Kendall, Peart and Roome

### DSFRA/23/14 Minutes

#### a Annual General Meeting - 12 June 2023

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 12 June 2023 be signed as a correct record.

#### b Ordinary Meeting - 12 June 2023

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 12 June 2023 be signed as a correct record.

### DSFRA/23/15 Minutes of Committees

#### a Audit & Governance Committee

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Coles, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2023 which had considered, amongst other things:

- An external audit progress and sector update;
- The annual internal audit report 2022-23;
- An internal audit interim progress report 2023-24;
- The draft Annual Statement of Assurance 2022-23;
- A report on the Corporate Risk Register;
- A formal response from management to the external auditor (Grant Thornton) in relation to the going concern review;
- A report on the annual review of the Authority's Standards arrangements;
- A report on progress with action to address the areas for improvement identified by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) following its last inspection of the Service and falling within the remit of this Committee to monitor; and

- A report identifying the management response to the improvement recommendations identified in the External Auditor's Annual Report 2021-22.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes be adopted in accordance with Standing Orders.  
(See also *Minute DSFRA/23/19(a) below*).

**b People Committee**

In the absence of the Chair, the Committee Vice-Chair, Councillor Trail BEM, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2023 which had considered, amongst other things:

- A report on performance at Quarter 1 of 2023-24 against the key performance indicators for the Authority approved strategic priorities associated with this Committee;
- A report on the high-level findings of the most recent Service People Survey;
- A report on progress against the actions to address the Cause for Concern and Areas for Improvement identified by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) following its recent inspection of the Service and falling within the remit of this Committee to monitor; and
- A report on progress made by the Service to address those recommendations contained in the recently-published HMICFRS national report on values and culture in the fire and rescue service.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes be adopted in accordance with Standing Orders.  
(See also *Minutes DSFRA/23/19(a) and (b) below*).

**c Resources Committee**

In the absence of the Chair, the Committee Vice-Chair, Councillor Best, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2023 which had considered, amongst other things:

- A report on Treasury Management Performance of the Authority during the first quarter of the current (2023-24) financial year;
- A report on performance during the first quarter of the current (2023-24) financial year against those financial targets associated with the Authority's approved budget for that year;
- A report on progress with the Service Environmental Strategy and Action Plan;
- A report on progress against the actions to address the Areas for Improvement identified by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) following its recent inspection of the Service and falling within the remit of this Committee to monitor; and

- A report on the financial performance of Red One Ltd. (the Authority's arms-length trading company) during the first quarter of the current (2023-24) financial year.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes be adopted in accordance with Standing Orders. *(See also Minute DSFRA/23/19(a) below).*

**d Community Safety Committee**

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Hendy, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2023 which had considered, amongst other things:

- A report on performance at Quarter 1 of 2023-24 against the key performance indicators for the Authority approved strategic priorities associated with this Committee;
- A report on work being undertaken in the Service in relation to Planning applications and the role of the fire and rescue;
- A report on protection and prevention partnership activities with other agencies to target high-risk groups and individuals; and
- A report on progress against the actions to address the Areas for Improvement identified by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) following its recent inspection of the Service and falling within the remit of this Committee to monitor.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes be adopted in accordance with Standing Orders. *(See also Minute DSFRA/23/19(a) below).*

**DSFRA/23/16 Appointment of Monitoring Officer**

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer (DSFRA/23/19) on the requirement, in light of the imminent departure of the current Monitoring Officer, to appoint a Monitoring Officer and Clerk for the Authority. The Local Government & Housing Act 1989 (the Act) required the Authority to have a Monitoring Officer to discharge, amongst other things, those duties imparted by the Act.

The report outlined three options to provide a Monitoring Officer (both internal and external appointment), together with an appraisal for each of the options.

**RESOLVED**

- (a). That Ms. Samantha Sharman be appointed as the Authority's relevant officer to serve as its Monitoring Officer and Clerk with effect from 25 September 2023;
- (b). That the Clerk be authorised to make any consequential changes to the Authority's Constitutional Governance Framework (Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegations etc.) as may be necessitated by this appointment.

**DSFRA/23/17 Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies**

The Authority considered a report of the Monitoring Officer & Clerk to the Authority (DSFRA/23/20) on proposals to fill vacancies on Committees etc. arising from changes in membership.

**RESOLVED**

- (a). That Councillors Clayton and Sproston be appointed to the vacancies on the Audit & Governance Committee, the Term of Office to be until the Authority annual meeting in 2024;
- (b). That, in relation to the two Scheme Manager Vacancies on the Local Pensions Board:
  - (i). Councillor Coles be appointed to one of the vacancies, the Term of Office to be for four years (pending continuation of Authority Membership); and
  - (ii). The Assistant Director of Corporate Services be appointed to the second vacancy, the Term of Office to be for four years (pending continuation of employment);
- (c). That Councillor Cook-Woodman be appointed to the vacancy on the DELT Working Group, the Term of Office to be until the Authority annual meeting in 2024 or until dissolution of the Working Group (whichever is the sooner).

**DSFRA/23/18 Extraordinary Authority Meeting to Consider the DELT Shared Services Business Case**

The Authority considered a report of the Monitoring Officer & Clerk to the Authority (DSFRA/23/21) on a requirement for an extraordinary Authority meeting to consider the DELT Shared Services business case.

**RESOLVED** that an Extraordinary Authority meeting be held at 10.00hours on Tuesday 31 October 2023 to consider DELT Shared Services business case.

**DSFRA/23/19 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection**

**a Action Plan Update**

The Authority received for information a report of the Chief Fire Officer (DSFRA/23/22) on progress against the action plans developed to address the Cause of Concern and all of the fourteen Areas for Improvement identified by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) following its most recent inspection of the Service.

Detailed monitoring of relevant actions had been assigned to respective Committees.

The report identified that one action in the Cause of Concern action plan and three actions in the Areas for Improvement action plan were currently recorded as being "in progress – off track", with the reasons for being off track indicated in each case.

***(See also Minutes DSFRA/23/15(a) to (d) inclusive, above).***

**b Culture Recommendations - Update**

The Authority received for information a report of the Chief Fire Officer (DSFRA/23/23) on progress against the action plan developed to address the 34 recommendations (14 requiring action at a national level; 20 specific for fire and rescue services) contained in the national report published recently by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) on values and culture in fire and rescue services.

*(See also Minute DSFRA/23/15(b) above).*

**DSFRA/23/20 Appointment of Independent Person - Standards Issues**

(A report published in accordance with the provisions of Section 100B(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972).

The Authority considered a report of the Monitoring Officer (DSFRA/23/24) on the requirement for appointment of an Independent Person. The Localism Act 2011 required the Authority to appoint, as part of its Standards arrangements, at least one Independent Person whose views must be sought and taken account of prior to deciding any allegation which had been subject to investigation.

At its ordinary meeting on 7 June 2019, the Authority had approved a recommendation from its (then) Standards Committee to adopt recommendations from the Committee on Standards in Public Life that each relevant authority should have at least two Independent Persons, each to serve for a maximum term of office of two years (renewable once).

The term of office for one of the Independent Persons subsequently appointed by the Authority would expire in November 2023.

**RESOLVED**

- (a). That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to undertake a process for the appointment of an Independent Person (as required by the Localism Act 2011), the appointment to be confirmed by the Authority;
- (b). That, pending this appointment and subject to them still being willing to serve, the current appointee's term of office be extended accordingly.

**DSFRA/23/21 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**RESOLVED** that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) 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 any particular person – including the authority holding that information.

**DSFRA/23/22 Restricted Minutes of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority Ordinary Meeting held on 12 June 2023**

**RESOLVED** that the Restricted Minutes of the Authority Ordinary Meeting held on 12 June 2023 be signed as a correct record.

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.35 am