

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

(Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority)

11 December 2023

Present:

Councillors Cook-Woodman (Chair), Biederman (Vice-Chair), Atkinson, Best, Brazil, Clayton, Coles, Gilmour, Kerley, Randall-Johnson, Peart, Power, Radford, Roome, Sellis, Slade, Sproston, Sully and Trail BEM

Apologies:

Councillors Fellows, Hendy, Kendall and Patel

DSFRA/23/25 Change in Authority Membership

The Clerk advised the Authority that, as a result of a change in political balance, Torbay Council had appointed Councillor Christine Carter (LD) to the Authority in place of Councillor Anna Tolchard (Con).

This would have implications for the political balance of the Authority and appointments to its Committees. The Clerk would advise the Authority of these implications at the earliest opportunity.

DSFRA/23/26 Minutes

a Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 25 September 2023

RESOLVED that, subject to the following amendment, the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2023 be signed as a correct record:

- Amendment – “Councillor Biederman (Vice-Chair)”, in place of “Councillor Biederman (Chair)”.

b Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 31 October 2023

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Extraordinary Authority meeting held on 31 October 2023 be signed as a correct record.

DSFRA/23/27 Minutes of Committees

a People Committee

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Clayton, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2023 which had considered, amongst other things:

- A report on performance monitoring for the second quarter of the current (2023-24) financial year against those key performance indicators falling within the remit of the Committee;

- A report on actions currently in train by the Service to address issues raised following its last People Survey;
- A report on progress with the Action Plan to address the Cause for Concern and Areas for Improvement identified by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) following its 2022 inspection of the Service; and
- A report on progress by the Service to address issues raised by HMICFRS in report, published in March 2023, on values and culture in fire and rescue services.

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

b **Appointments & Disciplinary Committee**

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Cook-Woodman, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2023 which had considered an issue on the appointment of a Authority Member Non-Executive Director to the Board of Red One Ltd.

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

c **Community Safety Committee**

In the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, Councillor Radford **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2023 which had considered, amongst other things:

- A review of Key Performance Indicators falling within the remit of the Committee;
- A report on performance of the Service in quarter two of the current (2023-24) financial year against those Key Performance Indicators for Strategic Priorities 1 and 2, as falling within the remit of the Committee;
- A report on progress by the Service against the Action Plan developed to address Areas for Improvement within the remit of the Committee and as identified by HMICFRS following its inspection of the Service in 2022.

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

d **Resources Committee**

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Peart, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2023 which had considered, amongst other things:

- A report on Service Treasury Management Performance during Quarter 2 of the current financial year;
- A report on financial performance during Quarter 2 of the current financial year against those Key Performance Indicators falling within the remit of the Committee;

- A report on progress with the Action Plan developed to address Areas for Improvement falling within the remit of the Committee and as identified by HMICFRS following its inspection of the Service in 2022; and
- A report on the financial performance of Red One Ltd. during Quarter 2 of the current financial year.

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

e **Audit & Governance Committee**

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Coles, **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2023 which had considered, amongst other things:

- An update from the Authority's external auditor (Grant Thornton) on progress with the audit of the Authority's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023;
- An interim report on progress against the approved internal audit plan for 2023-24;
- The 2022-23 annual report of the Authority's Local Pension Board; and
- A report on progress against the Action Plan developed to address Areas for Improvement falling within the remit of the Committee and as identified by HMICFRS following its inspection of the Service in 2022.

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

DSFRA/23/28 Independent Review of Members' Allowance Scheme 2024-25 to 2027-28

The Authority considered a report of the Clerk to the Authority (DSFRA/23/26) to which was appended a review, conducted by an independent consultant, on the level of Members' allowances to be payable from the 2024-25 financial year (including a mechanism for automatically uprating these allowances for the following three financial years up to and including 2027-28). The review had been informed by existing legislation and guidance on allowances and had examined, amongst other things, allowances payable by other combined fire and rescue authorities and allowances currently payable by Devon and Somerset County Councils, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council (the constituent authorities which appointed to the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority).

Following a debate on the report, including discussion as to affordability – for which the Treasurer provided an assurance that the proposals could be contained within available resources – Councillor Randall-Johnson **MOVED**, with Councillor Clayton seconding, that the recommendations contained in the report of the independent consultant be approved.

This motion was put to the vote whereupon it was

RESOLVED that

- (a). the basic allowance be set at:
 - £3,346 from 1 April 2024, and
 - Provisionally, £3,505 from 1 April 2025, subject to:
 - the officers increase not being more than 4.75%;
 - that should the increase be higher than the higher amount should be used as the uprating for the basic allowance and the SRAs appropriately; and
 - that if there is a pay freeze, this provisional increase should also be revisited);
- (b). Members should only be able to claim one Special Responsibility Allowance (at the highest rate applicable);
- (c). the multiplier for the Chair's Allowance be set at 4.9x basic allowance giving an allowance of £16,395 from 1 April 2024 and £17,175 from 1 April 2025 (subject to (a) above);
- (d). the Vice Chair's allowance be set at 2.48x basic allowance giving an allowance of £8,298 from 1 April 2024 and £8,692 from 1 April 2025 (subject to (a) above);
- (e). the Committee Chair's Allowance be set at 1.45x basic allowance giving an allowance of £4,522 from 1 April 2024 and £5,082 from 1 April 2025 (subject to (a) above);
- (f). the allowance for the Non-Executive Directors placed on the board of Red One Ltd should be set at 2.2x basic allowance at £7,361 from 1 April 2024 and £7,771 from 1 April 2025 (subject to (a) above);
- (g). the allowance for the Local Pensions Board should be set at 0.15x basic allowance giving an allowance of £501 from 1 April 2024 and £525 from 1 April 2025 (subject to (a) above);
- (h). the allowance for Independent Members of the Audit & Governance Committee should be set at 0.5x basic allowance giving an allowance of £1,673 from 1 April 2024 and £1,753 from 1 April 2025 (subject to (a) above);
- (i). from 1 April 2026 uprating of allowances should continue to be linked to any annual increase agreed by the NJC for Local Government Services (Green Book). In the event of a flat-rate increase arising from the Green Book pay award in any future year, the automatic uprating applied should be the percentage increase on the overall Green Book staffing budget resulting from the pay award.
- (j). travel rates should be linked to the rates published by HMRC and uprated as appropriate.

- (k). subsistence should be linked to the employee scheme and updated as appropriate.
- (l). overnight accommodation should be approved via Democratic Services based on the introduction of the following guidelines:

Members would be eligible for overnight accommodation when:

- *A Member is attending a residential event as the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority appointed representative; and*
- *Attendance at a non-residential meeting by a member as the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority appointed representative would require them to leave home before 7.00am or arrive back home after 11pm.*

When booking accommodation, either via Democratic Services or directly, there is an expectation that reasonable effort be made to book as far in advance as possible to secure the best rate available

DSFRA/23/29 Strategic Business Change Plan Tranche One

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer (DSFRA/23/27) on steps proposed by the Service Executive Board to ensure the future sustainability of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (the Service).

The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) was proposing to make changes, under powers as set out within the Authority's approved Scheme of Delegations, to the current service delivery operating model to address the predicted budgetary deficit as reported within Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). These changes were intended to boost productivity and facilitate diversity and inclusion within the workforce and would begin a step-change towards achieving the Service's desired future Target Operating Model (TOM).

The report set out the case for change and plans to address current and future challenges, with the following key areas to form the focus for the first tranche of the 'Sustainable Transformation Programme':

- a change to Whole Time Duty Systems;
- changes to the operating model for specialist rescue capability (SRT);
- amendments to the Pay for Availability remuneration agreement; and
- amendments to the policy and practice for dealing with unwanted fire signals.

Following an extensive debate on the report, Councillor Randall Johnson **MOVED**, with Councillor Roome seconding, that the recommendations in the report be approved.

Councillor Biederman proposed, with Councillor Atkinson seconding, that the above Motion be amended by the addition of the following:

- (c). that the Clerk be authorised to make representation on behalf of the Authority to the Local Government Association and the Government pressing for specialist rescue services to be made a statutory duty for fire and rescue services and funded accordingly.

Councillors Randall-Johnson and Roome (as mover and seconder of the original motion) indicated their willingness to accept this amendment with the consent of the Authority (signified without discussion) whereupon the Motion (as amended) was put to the vote, following which it was

RESOLVED that

- (a). the planned areas for change as identified in report DSFRA/23/27 be endorsed;
- (b). the planned areas for change as identified in report DSFRA/23/27 be included within the proposals for the Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2024-25 to be considered at the Authority Budget Meeting in February 2024; and
- (c). the Clerk be authorised to make representations on behalf of the Authority to the Local Government Association and the Government pressing for specialist rescue services to be made a statutory duty for fire and rescue services and funded accordingly.

***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.55 am