

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**30 SEPTEMBER 2013**

PRESENT: Councillor J Andrews (Chair)
 Councillor A Atkin (Vice-Chair)
 Councillors: A Cave, T Fox, I Hussain, S Phillips, C Ross,
 J Satur and D Woodhouse

S Pick, L Noble and C Tyler (South Yorkshire Joint Secretariat)

J Courtney, M Shaw, S Chu, B Sandy and S Green (South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors
 A Bosmans, A Buckley and S M Richards

1 **APOLOGIES.**

Noted as above.

2 **ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

None.

3 **URGENT ITEMS.**

None.

4 **ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS.**

RESOLVED:

- a) That Item 17 'Control Collaboration Project (CCP) Update' will be considered in the absence of the public and press.

5 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS IN RELATION TO ANY ITEM OF BUSINESS ON THE AGENDA.**

Cllr Cave declared a non-pecuniary interest, noting that her husband is a member of the Fire Brigades' Union

6 **REPORTS BY MEMBERS.**

Cllr Ross reported that he attended the Middle Managers training session – Managing in a Political Environment on 11th September. It was noted that middle managers had expressed a desire to engage more with Members and a request was made for mechanisms to enable this to happen to be put in place.

Cllr Satur reported on the recent trips to Northumberland and Liverpool. It was noted that Members were made most welcome and the events were very worthwhile. Members expressed their thanks to Rhona Bywater for organising the visits.

7 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS.

None received

8 TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC, OR COMMUNICATIONS SUBMITTED BY THE CHAIR OR THE CLERK AND TREASURER AND TO PASS SUCH RESOLUTIONS THEREON AS THE STANDING ORDERS PERMIT AND AS MAY BE DEEMED EXPEDIENT.

None received

9 MINUTES OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 29 JULY 2013

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 29th July be agreed to be an accurate record.

10 MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 2 SEPTEMBER 2013

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the Extraordinary Authority meeting held on 2nd September be agreed to be an accurate record.

11 EQUALITY AND INCLUSION CORPORATE DIRECTION

A report was presented to update Members on work undertaken to build on the decisions made by the Authority last November in respect of the approach and pace of working within the FRS Equality Framework and a broadened approach to equality and inclusion.

It was noted that the report also re-commits SYFR to working within the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework (FRSEF), as the sector self-assessment framework for this strategic priority.

Members considered the level of the FRSEF corporate management can commit to in the current and future climate of scarce resources and in light of the decision made in November 2012 to suspend the immediate plan to reach 'excellence' within the FRSEF by April 2013. Members acknowledged current pressures and competing expectations, but urged that activity pick up again as soon as practically possible. Members also voiced support for the notion of having FRSEF principles embedded throughout the service.

RESOLVED, That Members:

- a) Note continuing work being delivered to achieve service delivery and employment equality objectives and comply with the Single Equality Duty. Further, that SYFR remain committed to working within the FRSEF and aim to sustain 'achieving' level over the next two years till 2015. Some corporate work will continue to ensure embedding of E&I across all services and SYFR will move from an 'auditing' approach towards an educational and learning approach for this area of work.
- b) That SYFR continues to work within FRSEF, and recognises the unprecedented significant challenges facing the sector and SYFR, aims to sustain an 'achieving' level within the Framework up to 2015.

12 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME - TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE

A report was presented recommending amendments to the current Members Allowances Scheme.

Members were reminded of the independent review of allowances undertaken by Professor Declan Hall in 2009 and to note that since that time there has been no increase in Members' Allowances, nor any change to the travel and subsistence rates. Members were also asked to note that the South Yorkshire district councils have simplified and unified their travel and subsistence rates.

It was confirmed that the proposals would not result in a greater cost to the Authority.

In consideration of approved duties, clarity was requested regarding whether a Member who is the sole representative of a political party constitutes a 'group' within the context of Members' Allowances.

It was suggested that a full review of Members' allowances be undertaken at some stage.

RESOLVED:

- a) That Members agree:
 - i) To unify the mileage rate for Fire and Rescue Authority Members to 45p per mile,
 - ii) To remove the 'banding' for mileage claims
 - iii) To continue to hold subsistence rates at the 2009 levels
- b) That L Noble will provide clarity regarding the definition of a 'group'
- c) That consideration will be given to a full review of Member allowances at an appropriate time

13 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

A report was presented to provide Members with a brief update on the Financial Planning assumptions which will form the backcloth to the Authority's budget setting process for 2014/15 and beyond.

Detailed explanations of the assumptions currently being used to inform the figures were provided. It was noted that these assumptions will continue to become more refined in preparation for future capital bids.

It was noted that the key message of the report arising from the preliminary projections is that even after allowing for the full leavers' profile, funding gaps begin to emerge midway through the period to 2016/17.

Regarding the potential usage of reserves to offset the emerging funding gap, Members were asked to be mindful of other commitments and mounting financial pressures.

Members and officers present considered the growing appetite in central government for emergency services joint working. It was noted that the Fire Minister, Brandon Lewis, is to present a white paper in November in respect of support of greater collaboration. It was confirmed that Members will be kept fully abreast of any local developments.

Concerns were again reiterated that the lack of younger firefighter recruitment is leading to an ever ageing workforce, a situation which will become unsustainable in the longer term and therefore must be addressed at some stage. Members were assured that the Government continues to be lobbied in respect of this matter, via AMFRA and directly.

Regarding next steps, it was noted that the development of cost reduction measures is ongoing and will be progressed alongside further detailed work on future years cost drivers/pressures and service delivery implications. Further reports will be presented for Members' consideration, and deliberation in due course.

RESOLVED:

- a) That Members note the preliminary information contained in the report.

14 BUDGET MONITORING APRIL TO JULY 2013

A report was received setting out the latest forecast revenue spending for 2013/14 based on the first four months of the year and taking into account other known factors.

It was noted that due to the uncertainty around the type and impact of any industrial action, complete figures cannot be factored into the projected position. However, costs incurred to date in relation to contingency arrangements and any costs which are likely to be incurred in the near future have been included.

It was noted that based on current predictions, expenditure across all budgets is projected to be under budget by £25k.

Areas of key variance (underspend and overspend) were noted and explanations provided.

Regarding capital expenditure, it was confirmed that the £18.8k allocated for Rivelin toilet refurbishment (scheme 8487) is funding the complete redevelopment of the facilities and not just cosmetic improvements. It was also confirmed that the £569k increased capital programme cost for Parkway and Birley Stations is primarily due to additional land purchase requirements at the Birley site.

Members again voiced concerns that the cost of contingency measures required to cover industrial action was being unfairly borne by the rate payers of South Yorkshire. It was agreed that the Chair should therefore seek Counsel's opinion regarding whether recompense for this outlay should be sought.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- b) That the Chair may seek Counsel's opinion regarding contingency outlay reimbursement.

15 QUARTER ONE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2013-14

A report was presented to provide Members with the Quarter One Performance Report for 2013/14.

The report was accompanied by additional exception reports that focused on the performance indicators that have performed exceptionally well against their targets or where they have performed below expectations.

It was reported that overall, the performance of SYFR's Corporate Performance Indicators has been mixed. 8 out of 16 measures have performed worse than the same quarter in 2012/13 and 8 have performed better. Currently there are 5 measures that are predicted to be over their year-end targets. However, it was noted that it is relatively difficult to predict with any accuracy, the outturns of some measures, with only the first quarter's data available. It was noted that future reports will present more accurate predictions.

It was noted that various initiatives are being undertaken to address issues, including station open days to promote safety in the home and improved sharing of information and best practise between teams and with other agencies to address arson

Concerns that funding and reduced staffing pressures will continue to stretch the resources available to deal with all types of issue were again noted.

It was suggested that other factors e.g. the weather may have an effect on short term incident numbers and therefore trend identification. It was also acknowledged that against small figures, a minor change can appear to be a substantive percentage increase.

The need to continue to work closer with other agencies was reiterated. It was noted that engagement is being co-ordinated at SNT level with PCSOs patrolling with arson reduction officers.

In relation to how the figures are recorded. It was confirmed that 'several incidents' perpetrated by 1 individual over a short space of time would be recorded as 'several incidents'.

RESOLVED, that Members:

- a) Note the contents of the report.

16 KEY ISSUES FROM THE WORKFORCE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD HELD ON 24 JULY 2013

Members were provided with a summary of the key Issues discussed at the Workforce Organisation and Development Board held on 24 July 2013.

RESOLVED, that Members:

- a) Note the contents of the report.

17 CONTROL COLLABORATION PROJECT (CCP) UPDATE

A report was presented to provide Members with the quarterly update on the progress of the Joint Control Collaboration Project.

RESOLVED, that Members:

- a) Note the progress of the project to date.

CHAIR