

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

25 NOVEMBER 2013

PRESENT: Councillor J Andrews (Chair)
Councillor A Atkin (Vice-Chair)
Councillors: A Bosmans, A Buckley, S Phillips, S M Richards,
J Satur and D Woodhouse

S Pick, M Jaworski, M McCarthy, L Noble, M McCoolle and
R Bywater (South Yorkshire Joint Secretariat)

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

I Tyminski (Observer)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Cave,
T Fox, I Hussain and C Ross

1 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were noted as above.

2 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None.

3 **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

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

None.

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

None.

6 **REPORTS BY MEMBERS**

Councillor Richards had visited various fire stations and town halls during a recent holiday to the United States. Many of the firefighters worked on a retained basis, with very few wholetime firefighters working outside of cities.

Councillor Bosmans referred to a recent meeting with members of staff responsible for managing risk across the Service. As Lead Member for Risk Management he had found the exercise extremely informative.

7 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

None.

8 TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

9 MINUTES OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 28 OCTOBER 2013

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 28 October 2013 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

10 STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL PLANS 2013-17

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was submitted which presented feedback from the second phase of the IRMP consultation process, and sought Authority approval for the Plans.

The Authority had initiated a 13 week consultation period in March 2013, on broad topics to be considered in the Plans. Thereafter Members agreed to an additional 6 week consultation on the draft Plans; after which the consultation period was extended by 3 weeks for consultation in the Mosborough/Birley Moor area, due to proposed changes to the new Birley Moor Fire Station's crewing system. In 2013 there had been a total of 22 weeks consultation on the development of the Plans.

Members noted early discussions had been held with representative bodies, for running a Close Proximity Crewed (CPC) pilot at one or more stations from April 2014.

Chief Fire Officer Courtney referred to concerns raised by a number of parties in respect of the impact of Birley Moor Fire Station being a retained station, as opposed to a CPC station. Following consultation the station would revert to a CPC Station subject to the necessary Planning approvals.

RESOLVED – That Members approved the Strategic and Operational Plans 2013-17. N.B. Councillors Satur and Richards abstained from the decision.

11 SAFER STRONGER COMMUNITIES RESERVE

A report of the Deputy Clerk was submitted which presented to Members the process for delivery of the Stronger Safer Communities Reserve Fund (SSCR).

The Authority had previously agreed to set aside £2m from general reserves to enhance partnership work on community fire safety. It was proposed to set an upper limit of £250,000 for individual projects, and a lower limit of £5,000.

Members noted the key objectives:-

- Community Safety was the focus for funding any proposed schemes.
- The most vulnerable in society would remain an absolute priority;
- Collaboration with other agencies to derive maximum return on investment (social and financial).
- All opportunities for match funding would be maximised.
- Data sharing opportunities would be explored wherever possible with other agencies, to identify the most vulnerable in society and focus resources.
- Consider the LEGACY such initiatives might offer to individuals and communities across South Yorkshire.
- Initiatives would be promoted in order to increase public awareness and understanding of the breadth of work the Service were engaged in, particularly in the field of community fire safety.
- Target prevention work on the high risk super output areas identified in the Service's Community Fire Risk Model.

M McCarthy commented that an initial risk assessment had been carried out on the reserve itself; the view was the risk was being managed in the most positive way it could, acknowledging the risks associated with an exercise of this nature.

Members noted the application process would be available on line, and in other formats if required and advertised extensively. The Reserve would be operative over the next 2/3 financial years, starting in 2013/14; the first round would commence from 6 January 2014 to 10 February 2014.

Councillor Richards requested Members be provided with website links, which could be forwarded onto local groups within their areas.

RESOLVED – That Members agreed:-

- i) The application process and the assessment criteria for the SSCR.
- ii) Membership of the Assessment Board.
- iii) A lower limit of £5,000 be set for individual projects.

12 AMENDMENTS TO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEME (1992) AND THE NEW FIREFIGHTERS PENSION SCHEME (2006)

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive Officer was submitted which outlined the changes made to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (1992) and New Firefighters' Pension Scheme (2006), together with subsequent Amendment Orders made by the Department for Communities and Local Governments (DCLG) following consultation in relation to amendments that took place in 2011.

RESOLVED – That Members approved delegated authority to the Chief Fire Officer in relation to handling claims for additional pay to be treated as pensionable, and that any financial implications be reported in financial monitoring reports.

13 BUDGET MONITORING APRIL TO SEPTEMBER

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive and Clerk and Treasurer was submitted, which set out the latest forecast revenue spending for 2013/14, based on the first half of the year and taking into account any other known factors. In February 2013 the 2013/14 revenue budget of £52.95m had been set, which included essential spending on property schemes of £1.4m.

Councillor Atkin queried why the purchase of truck cabs (£50k) and buses, to be used to simulate road traffic accidents in heavy rescue pump training, had not been budgeted for.

B Sandy commented there had initially been difficulty in sourcing the vehicles; once the vehicles had been sourced, they were procured earlier than was perhaps required, which had in turn created an automatic overspend.

Councillor Bosmans expressed concern at the Services' overspend of £80k in particular to Equality and Diversity, and Corporate Communications and queried whether this had been rigorously challenged at the time. He also asked why there was always slippage in the capital programme which had resulted in the overspend in capital financing costs of £46k.

Chief Fire Officer Courtney commented that equality and diversity had remained high on Members' agenda for some time; some of the information brought to the Authority had been around the conclusion of on-going work. Members noted that Corporate Communications consisted of a small group of people, and due to the heavy workload, and a member of staff leaving, assistance had been sought from outside of the Service. Reassurance was given to Members that the Service was managing its respective budget heads, and observations were being carried out around Equality and Diversity spending.

It was agreed a report be produced looking at the position which excluded contingency expenditure, to establish a more definable position for 2014/15 when considering the budget for next year.

Councillor Richards expressed concern at the cost of the industrial action and supported the suggestion that costs should be reimbursed from Government. The Chair had sent a letter to Brandon Lewis MP requesting the money be reimbursed, but no formal reply had been received.

Members agreed that another letter would be sent to Brandon Lewis MP, on behalf of the Chair, to establish whether the money from the industrial action would be reimbursed.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Noted the contents of the report.
- ii) Agreed an additional letter be sent to Brandon Lewis MP, on behalf of the Chair, to establish whether the money spent as a result of the industrial action would be reimbursed.

14 QUARTER 2 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was submitted which provided Members with the Quarter 2 Performance Report for 2013/14 including the quarterly and monthly dashboards.

There had been an increase in the total number of calls received in Quarter 2 by 26.35%, compared to the same quarter last year, but was lower than the same quarter in 2011/12. When the quarterly data was examined, it showed a reduction in the percentage of calls which were being mobilised to. The Service mobilised to 39.0% of calls in Quarter 2, compared to 39.6% in Quarter 2 2012/13, 43.5% in 2011/12 and 43.9% in 2010/11.

Members noted a total of 140 Accidental Dwelling Fires in Quarter 2, which was 27 above the same quarter for last year (an increase of 23.89%), and 2.19% above the same quarter for 2010/11. Out of the total incidents 43 dwellings did not have smoke alarms fitted, and at 51 dwellings the smoke alarms had not activated.

Councillor Buckley commented that the Scrutiny Board had looked at the report in detail, and were very happy with the revised report layout which provided simplification. The Board would continue to monitor the report, on a regular basis, as part of the scrutiny agenda.

Councillor Richards referred to the Corporate Communications Team campaign, which targeted dirty grill pans and ovens, and expressed concern about reaching vulnerable people and the hard to reach. Councillor Richards asked whether the Service could provide assistance to the people working with private sector housing in Sheffield. As an example, EU residents may be unaware of the availability of free smoke alarms; and the need to work with agencies such as Age Concern to target vulnerable people who were property rich and cash poor.

J Roberts would shortly be meeting with the Sheffield Head of Information Knowledge Management to discuss this issue. Work had been on-going in Sheffield for some time. Members noted that a large number of fires occurred in privately rented accommodation. The Service would look to incorporate national work with CFOA on the Blue Watch Scheme, to private landlords for certification of their own premises.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Noted the contents of the report.
- ii) Scrutinised and commented on the information presented in the report.

15 KPMG: ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2012/13

A report of the Clerk and Treasurer was submitted which presented the KPMG's Annual Audit Letter.

KPMG had issued an unqualified value for money conclusion for 2012/13 on 30 September 2013, together with an unqualified opinion on the Statement of Accounts. KPMG had not raised any high priority recommendations as a result of their 2012/13 audit work.

The Chair gave thanks to the finance officers for the work provided.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the Annual Audit Letter which had been published on the Authority's website before the 31 October 2013 deadline.

CHAIR