

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

27 JANUARY 2014

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

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

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

G Wilkinson and C Wane (Observer)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors
A Buckley, C Ross and J Satur

1 **PRESENTATION OF LONG SERVICE AWARD**

The Chair presented Mr Steven Tibbs with a Long Service Award for 30 years' service at South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue.

Mr Tibbs had joined the Service on 9 October 1983 as a Mechanic, having then worked up to the position of Temporary Brigade Engineer, and was now the Workshop Manager at Rotherham Station.

2 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were noted as above.

3 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Bosmans had attended a number of briefings at Doncaster, Dearne and Tankersley Stations before Christmas, with the Chief Fire Officer and officers, which had all been successful.

4 **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

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

None.

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

None.

7 REPORTS BY MEMBERS

Councillor Richards had helped to facilitate a recent workshop for middle managers, on managing in a political environment, and gave thanks to SYJS officers for organising the event. Councillor Richards would also be attending a Middle Managers' Engagement Day on 19 March 2014.

8 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

None.

9 TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

10 MINUTES OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2013

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 25 November 2013 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

11 DRAFT BUDGET 2014/15

A report of the Clerk and Treasurer and Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was submitted which set out the implications of the provisional finance settlement and the latest draft budget for 2014/15, along with consideration of issues relating to the medium term financial position.

In December 2013 the provisional settlement had been announced, which would result in the Authority losing £2.6m in funding for 2014/15, with a further £2.7m indicative reduction in 2015/16. From 2016/17 onwards grant cuts were set to continue.

The report presented Members with information on the council tax freeze grant on offer for 2014/15.

Members also considered the use of reserves to fund new appliances included in the capital programme and requested further information on the advantages and disadvantages of using reserves in view of the projected deficits in the medium term.

RESOLVED – That Members agreed:-

- i) M Jaworski to present two council tax options to the next Authority meeting, when the actual figures would be known, relating to the acceptance or not of the council tax freeze grant for 2014/15.

- ii) To defer considering the use of direct revenue funding, until further information as requested is brought back to the Authority.

12 OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF SERVICE DELIVERY

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was submitted which requested Members sign off the Service's self-assessment submission to the OpA peer assessment team.

In 2010 SYFR underwent an Operational Assessment of Service Delivery (OpA), and all actions which had arisen had been completed. Officers had applied for a new OpA in 2013, which would take place from 18 to 21 February 2014.

Members will be receiving a CD containing the full submission, including all seven KAA self-assessment reports, case studies and supporting evidence.

Councillor Atkin had recently attended two events at New York Stadium, Rotherham at which the Community Safety (Prevention and Protection) Team had gone through their element of the OpA self-assessment. Both events had been both challenging and informative. Councillors Ross and Fox had also attended one of these events.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Noted the report.
- ii) Approved the Service's OpA self-assessment submission.

13 METROPOLITAN FIRE SERVICES BENCHMARKING REPORT

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was submitted which provided an Annual Benchmarking Report that compared SYFR to its' peers.

Members noted that SYFR were generally performing well in all areas. A report covering performance in respect of health and safety would be submitted to the next Scrutiny Board meeting.

Councillor Bosmans commented that benchmarking could present a number of problems in terms of comparisons, particularly around the way figures were measured in different authority areas.

Councillor Bosmans added that due to the current recruitment freeze, the percentage of firefighters by gender and ethnicity could not be improved upon, but asked whether there was any foreseeable way to drive up the number of female firefighters.

M Shaw commented that the last round of RDS recruitment had been positive in terms of targeting females, and he would provide figures to the next Workforce and Organisational Board. The Service would start to look at what positive action could

be undertaken at different levels within the organisation in terms of progression and retention.

Councillor Richards commented that the percentage of BME firefighters within the Service appeared to be severely lagging behind compared to other Fire and Rescue Services, and asked how others had managed to attain higher levels.

M Shaw commented that the community make-up of the other services needed to be taken into consideration. The Service did not have the same opportunity when recruiting around the retained duty service, as the Service did not have large groups of BME staff in retained station areas. It was unlikely that the Service would be recruiting in the near future, and would focus on where progression could be supported within the Service.

Councillor Richards commented that, as a result of starting from a low base, the progression would also be very small, and asked for this to be kept in mind when recruitment re-commenced, so that the Service would already have asked other services to ensure plans were in place.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the contents of the report.

14 FRA BUSINESS PLAN - PERFORMANCE MEASURES: JUNE 2013 - DECEMBER 2013

A report of the Clerk and Treasurer was submitted providing Members with the third update on the progress against the agreed FRA Business Plan Performance Measures for June 2013 – December 2013, and inviting comments on the content and reporting format.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the six-monthly update.

15 PEOPLE STRATEGY 2014-17

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was submitted which presented the People Strategy 2014-17 for Members to consider and approve, subject to consultation being completed.

Councillor Fox commented there had been an in-depth discussion on the People Strategy at the Workforce and Organisational Board, which was an arena for both Members and representative boards.

RESOLVED – That Members approved the People Strategy 2014-17.

16 SYFR SAFETY SOLUTIONS UK LTD RECEIPT OF SHARE

A report of the Deputy Monitoring Officer was submitted in order to draw the Authority's attention to the issue of the sole share of the Authority's trading company – SYFR Safety Solutions UK Ltd.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Noted the report.
- ii) Accepted the Share Certificate.

17 DRAFT BUDGET MONITORING APRIL TO NOVEMBER

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive and Clerk and Treasurer was submitted which informed Members of the latest projected outturn position for 2013/14.

Councillor Richards referred to the continuing industrial action, and suggested asking other fire authorities to join with the Service to write to Brandon Lewis MP, to collectively request that the costs of industrial action be reimbursed by the Government.

The Chief Fire Officer commented that the situation varied significantly from service to service. Those Services which were predominately retained had a healthy proportion of their retained firefighters working normally. The Service was dealing with the situation in South Yorkshire.

Councillor Richards suggested exploring whether the decision of the Minister not to reimburse the costs of industrial action was challengeable.

Members agreed that a Q.C. would be consulted, through S Pick, to establish whether there were grounds for a judicial review.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Noted the contents of the report.
- ii) Agreed a Q.C. be consulted to establish whether the Minister's decision was challengeable, and if there were grounds for a judicial review.

18 CONTROL COLLABORATION PROJECT (CCP) UPDATE

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive and Clerk and Treasurer was submitted in order to provide the quarterly update on the progress of the joint Control Collaboration Project, which was being undertaken in conjunction with WYFR.

Members noted that since last reported to the Authority, all station-end equipment had been installed at every station within South and West Yorkshire, and staff training had commenced.

Councillor Richards referred to the proposed national Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP), and asked, if it materialised, how the CCP would fit into it.

M Shaw commented that the SYSTEL System was required to integrate with the current national mobilisation and was Airware accredited; any new system would have to fulfil the same Airwave requirement.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the progress of the project to date.

19 KEY ISSUES FROM THE WORKFORCE AND ORGANISATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT (WOD) BOARD HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2013 AND 15
JANUARY 2014

Members were provided with a summary of the key issues discussed at the Workforce and Organisation Development Board held on 20 November 2013 and 15 January 2014.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the contents of the report.

CHAIR