

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**16 FEBRUARY 2015**

PRESENT: Councillor J Andrews (Chair)
 Councillor A Atkin (Vice-Chair)
 Councillors: A Buckley, A Cave, T Fox, C Ransome, C Ross,
 S M Richards and J Satur

L Noble and A Shirt (South Yorkshire Joint Secretariat)

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

A Frosdick, F Foster and D Hanson (BMBC)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors
 A Bosmans, I Hussain and S Phillips

1 **APOLOGIES.**

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

2 **ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

L Noble reminded Members that the Stronger Safer Communities Reserve
 Stakeholder events would be held as follows:

Sheffield – Monday 23rd February 2015 - Fire Headquarters, Eyre Street, Sheffield

Doncaster – Thursday 26th February 2015 - Castle Park RFC, Armthorpe Road,
 Doncaster

Rotherham – Thursday 5th March 2015 - Carlton Park Hotel, Moorgate Road,
 Rotherham

Barnsley – Monday 2nd March 2015 - The Core, Voluntary Action Barnsley, County
 Way, Barnsley

All events will run from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon with a networking lunch; further
 details had been placed on the Authority's website.

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.

Councillors Ross and Satur had attended a very enjoyable event at Rivelin Fire Station last week, where a Chief Fire Officers' Commendation was presented to Zoe and Mathew Evans and Paul Bennett for their part in rescuing an elderly gentleman from a fire in the Stocksbridge / Deepcar area.

Councillor Ross reported that in his role as the Authority's Business Continuity Champion he had attended a further meeting with Russ Parramore at the Service to discuss Business Continuity. Councillor Ross confirmed that he was satisfied with the state of readiness of South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue's Business Continuity Plans.

Councillor Buckley reported that he had attended the LGA Leadership Academy Programme last week at Warwick University, which had been a very good course; he recommended other Members to attend in future.

Councillors Richards, Atkin and Satur had attended the recent Middle Managers' Briefing day on 4 February.

7 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS.

None.

8 TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Monitoring Officer reported receipt of two questions from Mr N Stafford-Fox:

- 1) **Given that the Fire Authority and the Chief Fire Officer celebrate the fact that they:**
 - A. Value their employees;
 - B. Identify their achievements on being the third highest employer of Female Firefighters across the Metropolitan Fire Services; and
 - C. In line with the recent Government initiatives to encourage Mothers to Breastfeed.

Can the Chief Fire Officer give me his assurance that he or any Policy of SYFR would NOT seek to disadvantage any female employees who choose to breastfeed?

At this point in the meeting Mr Stafford-Fox was invited to address the meeting.

Mr Stafford-Fox wished to congratulate the Chair on being awarded the British Empire Medal. Congratulations were also given to ACO Roberts on becoming a new father.

In response to the question, the Chief Fire Officer gave his assurances that neither he, or South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service would seek to disadvantage any female, who chose to breastfeed. It was confirmed that the Service did have a Maternity Policy; part of this covered the issue of breastfeeding. The Policy set out that all female employees, before they returned to work after having a baby, have an interview, which includes a medical with the Service's Occupational Health Unit, where advice is given where they need it regarding breastfeeding. Female employees also see the Service's Medical Officer when they have actually stopped breastfeeding.

It was confirmed that the Policy set out that South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue will take all reasonable steps to ensure that female employees can continue to breastfeed after returning to work. Time will be allowed for female employees to express milk, in a comfortable and private room for that purpose. The Policy does state that for health and safety reasons, it is not possible for the babies themselves to be admitted to Fire Service premises for the purpose of breastfeeding.

Mr Stafford-Fox thanked the Chief Fire Officer for his answer and reassurances that females are treated with due respect. He added that he had some concerns that the policies had not been made available, and that some individuals did not have the return to work interview to establish these facts.

The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Maternity Policy was available on the Service's Intranet, and all employees should be able to access this.

The Monitoring Officer introduced Mr Stafford-Fox's second question, which referred to Firefighter Training, making reference to the Operational Plan 2013-2017 (updated September 2014).

2) Could the Chief Fire Officer please elaborate and explain why there are advantages and a need to undertake operational training during the nightshift?

The Chief Fire Officer explained that recognising the health and safety of firefighters was paramount when developing operational maintenance and competence training. Ensuring that firefighters had the opportunity to attend the Training and Development Centre for assessment of this competence and to receive new and refresher training was an essential part of meeting the Fire and Rescue Authority's duties within the Fire and Rescue Service's Act.

It was explained that a small number of firefighters had indicated that they either couldn't or wouldn't agree to attend the Training and Development Centre during day time periods when they were scheduled to work nights, irrespective of any notice period given. The decision had been taken to consider putting in place night time training to ensure that the Fire and Rescue Authority remained legislatively compliant.

Additionally, the Health and Safety Executive had published a document some years ago entitled 'Training for Hazardous Occupations: a Case Study of the Fire Service' which stated that confidence and competency is developed if firefighter training is undertaken under realistic conditions, which may well expose the firefighter to risk. The Health and Safety publication stated that the Health and Safety at Work Act may not be adequately discharged if this element is not appropriately satisfied.

It was reported that the Service currently undertakes water rescue training at night, as well as BA training; it may be deemed necessary to extend this training in the future, hence its inclusion in the Operational Plan.

The Chief Fire Officer also explained that the Service had a responsibility to ensure that they are providing a high quality service to the people of South Yorkshire.

There were significant demands on the Service's time at various periods in the day, highlighting that there was not a significant difference between duty days and duty nights. There was no good reason why the Service should not consider appropriate training which may be undertaken during the night time period.

Mr Stafford-Fox thanked the Chief Fire Officer for his explanations, adding that he supported his words. Additionally, he felt it was appropriate for firefighters to undertake operational training during their nightshift; however, he was astonished that certain individuals had been denied the right to specifically request to carry out training on an evening.

9 MINUTES OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 5 JANUARY 2014

Councillor Fox stated that the Member Briefing Notes which were being received following the integration of staff from the Joint Secretariat to Barnsley MBC were not as in-depth as Members had previously received. He asked if there was a reason for this.

Councillor Ross commented that this issue had also been raised at the recent Scrutiny Board, adding that Members needed briefings which were robust, thorough and provided all the information they need to make informed decisions.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that Member Briefing Notes were still being prepared by the same Team, in exactly the same way as they had previously. The Monitoring Officer informed Members that he would speak to the Deputy Clerk on this matter.

RESOLVED –

- i) That the Monitoring Officer speaks to the Deputy Clerk regarding Member Briefing Notes.
- ii) That the minutes of the Authority meeting held on 5 January 2014 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

10 BUDGET, PRECEPT AND COUNCIL TAX 2015/16

A joint report of the Treasurer and Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was submitted informing the Authority that it must set its Precept and Council Tax for 2015/16 by 28 February 2015. The first draft 2015/16 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme was considered by Members at the 5th January 2015 meeting and had been updated and presented at Appendix A.

Council Tax options were presented and the impact was considered by the Authority. Members considered whether to accept the Government's offer of grant funding, for a two year period, and accordingly freeze Council Tax for 2015/16.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Approved the Authority's 2015/16 Revenue Budget of £49,627,421 set out at Appendix A.
- ii) Approved the 2015/16 Capital Programme as set out in Appendix B.
- iii) Approved the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy at Appendix C including:-
 - a. Affordable Borrowing Limits and Prudential Indicators.
 - b. The Minimum Revenue Provision Statement.
- iv) Agreed to increase Council Tax by 1.97% for 2015/16, rejected the alternative of a Government grant to freeze Council Tax and approved the following in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992, Sections 40 and 49:
 - A Council Tax Requirement of £21,998,059
 - A Basic Amount of Council Tax of £66.32
 - The following amounts in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands:

Valuation Bands	Rounded
Band A	44.21
Band B	51.58
Band C	58.95
Band D	66.32
Band E	81.06
Band F	95.80
Band G	110.53
Band H	132.64

- The precepts payable by each Billing Authority:

Barnsley	3,996,294
Doncaster	5,022,347
Rotherham	4,342,469
Sheffield	8,636,949
Total	21,998,059

- v) Councillors Andrews, Atkin, Buckley, Cave, Fox, Richards and Satur voted in favour of the above resolution iv); and asked that their votes be recorded.
- vi) Councillors Ross and Ransome voted against resolution iv) and asked that their votes be recorded.

11 PAY POLICY STATEMENT

A report of the Clerk was submitted which provided the revised Pay Policy Statement for the Authority for 2015/16, as required under the Localism Act 2011.

Members noted that for the third consecutive year, the pay multiples between the Chief Fire Officer and the lowest paid non-operational employee had reduced.

RESOLVED – That Members approved the Pay Policy Statement.

12 THE FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEME 2015 - PROPOSALS FOR NEW GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

A report of the Deputy Clerk was presented which set out the proposed governance arrangements for the establishment of a Local Pension Board as required by the Public Services Pensions Act 2013 and Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Approved the proposals set out at Appendix A – Draft Constitution and Terms of Reference.
- ii) Request that officers progress the establishment of the Local Pension Board, including appointments, as outlined in the report and Draft Constitution.

13 DISSOLUTION OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER (LGYH) AND APPOINTMENT TO Y&H EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATION

A report of the Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority was submitted to inform Members of a decision of the LGYH Council held on 15th January 2015 to dissolve the Local Government Yorkshire and Humber (LGYH) with effect from 31st March 2015.

Members noted that the Yorkshire and Humberside Employers' Organisation would continue in its current form and be administered by Wakefield Council.

Councillor Richards asked if the Authority would be required to make any financial contributions to the Yorkshire and Humberside Employers' Organisation. L Noble agreed to investigate and report back to the Authority accordingly.

Members agreed that Councillors Andrews and Atkin be appointed to this body which would be ratified at the Annual Meeting on 29th June 2015.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Noted the dissolution of the Local Government Yorkshire and Humber (LGYH) with effect from 31st March 2015.
- ii) Request L Noble to contact the Yorkshire and Humberside Employers Organisation to identify if there will be any financial contributions required by the Authority.
- iii) Appoint Councillors Andrews and Atkin to represent the Authority on the Yorkshire and Humberside Employers' Organisation with effect from 1st April 2015.

14 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION SUBSCRIPTION 2015/16

A report of the Deputy Clerk was submitted for Members to consider the continued membership of the Local Government Association (LGA) for 2015/16.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Agreed the Authority's membership of the Local Government Association for 2014/15;
- ii) Noted that a 2.5% loyalty discount was being offered by the Local Government Association for Members who were not on notice, alongside the existing 2.5% prompt payment discount to Authorities who paid the annual subscription in full by 30 June 2015, and;
- ii) Agreed to take up the offer of the discounted subscription for 2015/16, of £10,388 plus VAT.

15 DECEMBER 2014 PROJECTED OUTTURN REPORT

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was submitted to inform Members of the projected revenue and capital spend for the 2014/15 financial year based on actual and committed expenditure to December 2014 and a projection of spend in the remaining quarter of the year.

Members noted that the projected underspend of £1.4m reported to the Authority in November 2014, was now projected to increase to £2.915m, as a consequence of slippage of allocated funds for new fire appliances. The main reasons for the variances were explained within the report.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

16 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER THREE - 2014/15

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive and Clerk was submitted which provided Members with details of corporate performance for quarter three of 2014/15.

Councillor Buckley commented that the Scrutiny Board had examined the performance report in detail, and thanked the Service for the comprehensive report. The Scrutiny Board had requested further information on a number of items within the report which would be reported at future Scrutiny Board meetings.

Councillor Richards referred to future targeting, and the ongoing work with vulnerable households, asking the Service to look at high risk areas within the private rented housing sector, in particular landlords who let flats in urban areas.

ACO Roberts confirmed that the Service had recognised that vulnerable people could also reside in private rented housing, and that they could well be the people who would be missed. It was reported that the Service would continue to work with private landlords, wherever possible, to raise people's awareness of fire safety.

Councillor Richards asked if there was a particular reason why Arson incidents had reduced during quarter 3.

ACO Roberts explained that this was due to a combination of factors, mainly through the Service's efforts and changes in society.

Councillor Fox asked if there would be a future update report presented to the Authority on the implementation of Close Proximity Crewing (CPC).

The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that it was the Service's intention to bring a six month progress update report on the introduction of CPC to the April Authority meeting.

RESOLVED - That Members:-

- i) Noted the contents of the report; and
- ii) Scrutinised and commented on the information presented in the report.
- iii) Agreed to receive an interim report on the introduction of CPC at the April meeting of the Authority.

17 METROPOLITAN FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES BENCHMARKING REPORT - 2013/2014

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, in five out of the ten benchmarked measurers, SYFR were ranked the lowest (i.e. the best performer). The measurers were:

- Accidental Dwelling Fires per 10,000 dwellings
- Number of deaths arising from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population
- Number of calls to malicious false alarms per 1,000 population – attended
- Number of calls to malicious false alarms per 1,000 population – not attended
- Number of RTCs attended per 100,000 population

Members' congratulated the Service on the results and requested that their thanks be passed onto all staff for the excellent figures.

RESOLVED –

- i) That Members noted the contents of the report.
- ii) That the Service be congratulated on the results and that thanks be passed onto all staff for the excellent figures.

18 CONTROL COLLABORATION PROJECT (CCP) UPDATE

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive and Clerk was submitted to provide the Authority with a quarterly update on the progress of the joint Control Collaboration Project which was being undertaken in conjunction with West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (WYFR).

Members noted that to date, the system had taken over 14,000 calls and mobilised to over 7,000 incidents and, on the whole, it was meeting the Service's requirements.

One area of concern for the Service had been identified regarding the level of post delivery service arrangements; this was now being addressed and monitored closely.

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

CHAIR