

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

28 NOVEMBER 2016

PRESENT: Councillor A Cave (Chair)
Councillor A Atkin (Vice-Chair)
Councillors: N Akther, S Ayris, A Buckley, P Haith, B Johnson,
C Ransome, J Satur and G Weatherall

CFO J Courtney, DCFO J Roberts, ACFO M Blunden, S Howe,
M Topham and M Wright (South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue
Service)

J Bell, F Foster, M McCarthy, L Noble, A Brown, D Cutting,
G Richards and R Winter (Barnsley MBC)

A Billings (South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner)
and M Buttery (Office of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime
Commissioner)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor
S Howard, Councillor E Hughes, A Frosdick, D Terris and
M McCoole

1 APOLOGIES.

Apologies were noted as above.

The Chair welcomed Dr Alan Billings, South Yorkshire Police and Crime
Commissioner, and Michelle Buttery, Chief Executive to the Police and Crime
Commissioner to the meeting.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS.

There were no announcements.

3 URGENT ITEMS.

None.

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

RESOLVED – That item 18, ‘Support Services Review of Human Resources’ be
considered in the absence of the public and press.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

6 REPORTS BY MEMBERS.

Cllr Ayris recorded his thanks to S Helps who had organised a visit to Lifewise for himself and Cllr Ransome; the presentation had been extremely helpful and useful.

Cllr Haith had attended the Welcome to Yorkshire Awards in which the Emergency Services Museum had received a highly commended in the small attraction category. Cllr Haith congratulated Matt Wakefield and his team of volunteers on the award.

Cllr Atkin had attended the PRIDE awards; the Service had been nominated for the 'Join the Family' recruitment drive. Unfortunately on this occasion the Service did not win.

Cllr Atkin also informed the Authority that, along with the CFO, he had attended an event in London where the Princess Royal had illuminated the Firefighters Memorial; he had been very proud to represent South Yorkshire at the event.

Cllr Weatherall had attended the ARC Passing Out Parade in Barnsley and was very impressed with what the young people had achieved. He requested a report detailing the costs of an ARC course with a view to the Authority paying for an annual ARC course at every fire station.

Cllr Satur queried whether, as Lead Member for the Lifewise Governance Board, she should still attend meetings of the Board following recent changes.

ACFO Blunden replied that the Governance Board was likely to change but had not changed as yet. At a recent meeting the Authority had approved a report which changed the status of Lifewise from a project to a partnership. The structure would change, with the creation of a Collaboration Board. It would be an Authority decision as to whether a Member attended that Board. Cllr Satur said she felt an Authority Member should continue to sit on the Board given that the Authority provided funding to the Lifewise Centre.

7 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS.

None.

8 TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

9 MINUTES OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 17 OCTOBER 2016

Councillor Ransome reported that she had not attended the tour around TDC on 12 October 2016.

RESOLVED – The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2016 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

10 REVIEW OF THE FRA CONSTITUTION

A report was submitted that provided Members with an update of the full review of the Fire and Rescue Authority Constitution as agreed at the Authority meeting on 4 January 2016 and as recommended by the Internal Audit review into overtime payments to Principal Officers.

L Noble informed Members that the Service were currently re-visiting Part 4 and making minor amendments to reflect the responsibilities of the Partnership Board.

Other outstanding parts were detailed in the report with revised timescales.

RESOLVED - That Members:

- a) Approve the review of the FRA Constitution.
- b) Receive Parts 5c, 5d, 5e and 6a when complete.

11 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER - AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

A report of the Deputy Clerk was submitted to provide Members with an update on the process to recruit an Independent member to sit on the Audit and Governance Committee.

L Noble reminded Members that at the Authority meeting on 19 September 2016 it had been agreed to begin the recruitment process to replace Christine Marshall whose tenure as an Independent member had come to an end.

Subsequently, an advert and supporting information was published through the four district councils and other organisations at no cost to the Authority.

Eight expression of interest had been received; it was intended to circulate application forms on 30 November with a view to interview for a replacement before Christmas.

In the New Year, the Terms of Reference of the Audit and Governance Committee would be reviewed along with the role profile for an Independent member with the help of Rob Winter, Head of Internal Audit. This would coincide with a review of the new governance arrangements in advance of the Annual meeting.

In answer to a question from Cllr Ayris, M McCarthy reminded Members that officers had been charged with the responsibility to begin the recruitment process at the Authority meeting on 19 September 2016.

Cllr Ayris questioned whether the advert was different to the previous one and suggested that any future adverts should list exclusions as to who could apply e.g. contractors to the Authority.

L Noble replied that there had been minor amendments to reflect changes to the Authority, this had been done in liaison with the Head of Internal Audit. With regards to exclusions, officers would discuss this with the Legal team.

Cllr Ransome suggested that the advert should question whether applicants belonged to a political party or were affiliated to one; officers would take advice on this.

RESOLVED – That Members:

- a) Note the progress towards the recruitment of a third Independent member to sit on the Audit and Governance Committee.
- b) Note the proposal to review the Terms of Reference for the Audit and Governance Committee, the role profile and the remuneration for an Independent member and request officers to provide further reports as necessary to align with the review of the governance structure in April 2017.

12 POLICING AND CRIME BILL

Members considered a report which advised them of the content of the Police and Crime Bill which was currently progressing through Parliament.

DCFO Roberts informed the Authority that the Bill was currently in the House of Lords and it had been expected that it would be granted Royal Assent before Christmas, although there could still be further changes to the Bill before it was enacted.

The Bill contained a number of changes that would affect Fire and Rescue Services and Authorities, including a statutory duty to collaborate and giving Police and Crime Commissioners the ability to take on the responsibilities of the Fire and Rescue Authority. It was noted that where Police and Crime Commissioners chose not to take on these responsibilities, they would have the right to request a seat on the Fire and Rescue Authority with full voting rights.

Another significant part of the Bill was to establish a Chief Fire and Rescue Inspector for England who would be appointed by the Home Secretary. The legislation enabled Fire Inspectors to join with Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary to undertake inspections without the consent of the Service.

Before taking any questions the Chair invited PCC Dr Alan Billings to speak.

Dr Billings thanked the Authority for the invitation to attend today's meeting.

The Bill contained significant potential changes to the way the emergency services worked and there was still work to be done to understand all the implications of the Bill.

Dr Billings had recently attended several meetings that Brandon Lewis, the Police and Fire Minister, had addressed and that had led to further understanding of the direction the Government were pursuing. It was clear that there was an expectation to see real change with deeper and wider collaboration at a more strategic level.

There would be some PCCs who would decide to take on the responsibilities of the Fire and Rescue Authority but Dr Billings informed the Members that, at the moment, he had no intention of doing this.

There would obviously be a need to take collaboration further and this could be taken forward by the creation of a strategic joint board or committee. As a minimum, the Government would expect to see the PCC sitting on the Fire Authority, and Dr Billings informed Members that he would be writing to the Authority to formally request this.

The CFO acknowledged the views expressed by Dr Billings. There was obviously work to be done to take collaboration further; there would be a need to ensure that Authority members were engaged in that process.

In answer to a question from Cllr Ransome, Dr Billings commented that all the PCCs recognised the need for deeper collaboration and some would go further.

M Buttery informed Members that she was aware of three PCCs who had already lined up their public consultations and business cases ready for when Royal Assent was granted.

The Chair thanked Dr Billings and M Buttery for attending the meeting.

13 SEPTEMBER 2016 PROJECTED OUTTURN REPORT

A report was considered which informed Members of the projected revenue and capital spend after the first six months of the 2016/17 financial year.

Members were reminded that the previous report which was based on the July 2016 projected position suggested a potential overspend of £422,702. The latest projected outturn position had seen a significant change and an underspend of approximately £102,815 was now anticipated. The variances were explained in the report – the two most significant being a reduction in legal costs in relation to the Hillsborough inquest and capital financing requirements.

In answer to a question from Cllr Ayriss, S Howe informed members that the variation in the BMBC recharge was due to increased audit costs in relation to overtime payments and Wirral Cladding and Roofing.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

14 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

A report was considered which provided context and assumptions behind the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which would form the basis of the Authority's budget setting process for 2016/17 and beyond.

Members were reminded that the Government had offered a guaranteed 4-year funding plan which SYFRA had accepted, although this could have been affected by the Autumn Statement or the 2017/10 settlement it was thought it would not be fundamentally different from the position set out in the report. The 4-year funding

plan was subject to the receipt of an efficiency plan; SYFRA had submitted this on 14 October 2016.

The report gave details around current assumptions made for future funding and also contained assumptions around spending requirements.

Members were informed that the Governments Efficiency Plan stated that the Authority needed to have a clear strategy for the use of reserves. It was proposed that a strategy was implemented that put aside reserves to fund the Capital Programme over the next 3 years, or for as long as the level of reserves set aside allowed.

By funding the current Capital Programme 3 year period, the Authority would be able to reduce the minimum revenue provision and capital financing impacts which would allow the potential for a balanced budget up to 2020/21.

Whilst it was acknowledged that the current reserves strategy regarding earmarked reserves does currently support certain capital projects, the subtle difference with the proposed strategy was that the focus changes to supporting the whole of the unfunded programme and therefore making a commitment to reduce reserve levels and at the same time deferring any further borrowing which in turn will reduce the impact of the capital financing costs with the revenue budget.

Based on the risks set out in the report it was recommended that the minimum level of reserves that should be maintained by the Authority in a stable funding situation was £2.5m which represented approximately 5% of the revenue budget.

Members noted that the use of reserves would need to be subject to further discussion as part of the budget setting process and further information would be presented at a future meeting. Subject to Member approval, the first draft version of the 2017/18 budget would be based on the assumption that there would be no borrowing to fund the Capital Programme in 2016/17.

RESOLVED – That:

- a) The report be noted and the Authority would receive an updated position when the 2017/18 Local Government Settlement had been received.
- b) That the proposals regarding reserves strategy, and in particular to funding the 2016/19 Capital Programme from reserves are accepted.

15 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER TWO - 2016/17

A report was submitted which detailed corporate performance for 2016/17 Quarter Two.

Members considered exception reports for the following performance indicators:

- Number of Primary Fires
- Accidental Dwelling Fires
- Accidental Dwelling Fire Injuries

- Secondary Arson Incidents
- False Alarms Caused by Automatic Fire Detection – Non-Domestic Properties

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

16 MINUTES OF THE SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
LOCAL PENSION BOARD HELD ON 17 OCTOBER 2016

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Local Pension Board held on 17 October 2016 be noted.

17 MINUTES OF THE YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION
HELD ON 6 OCTOBER 2016

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Yorkshire and Humber Employers' Association held on 6 October 2016 be noted.

18 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and the public interest not to disclose information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

19 SUPPORT SERVICES REVIEW OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The Authority considered and discussed a report which detailed the outcomes from a Support Services review of the Human Resources function, incorporating the Occupational Health department.

RESOLVED – That the Authority authorise the commencement of consultation in accordance with organisational restructure procedures.

CHAIR