

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

21 SEPTEMBER 2015

PRESENT: Councillor J Andrews (Chair)
Councillor A Atkin (Vice-Chair)
Councillors: S Ayris, A Buckley, A Cave, G Furniss, E Hughes,
R Munn, C Ransome, S M Richards and J Satur

M McCarthy, R Bywater, L Noble, R Winter and M McCoolle
(South Yorkshire Joint Authorities)

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

J Bell and F Foster (BMBC)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Haith
and B Sandy

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Authority conveyed their condolences to B Sandy, who had recently lost her father.

M McCarthy apologised to Members for the fragmented manner in which the agenda and Audit Committee agenda had been despatched; this was due to software technicalities.

M McCarthy referred Members to the joint consultation document which had been circulated from the Home Office, CLG and the Department for Health entitled 'Enabling Closer Working Between Emergency Services'. M McCarthy recommended, due to the significance of the document, that a date be canvassed for all Members to attend a corporate planning event; the deadline for receipt of responses was 23 October.

Councillor Hughes referred to her recent induction session which she had found to be very informative. She had recently visited the Control Room, where staff had indicated that issues in relation to the computer system, for emergency and non-emergency telephone calls, had not yet been resolved.

N Carbutt, South Yorkshire Fire Brigades Union Secretary (FBU), requested to make a statement to the Authority. Councillor Andrews declared an interest and left the room, and Councillor Aktin assumed the position of Chair for the item.

N Carbutt commented that the FBU had been contacted by an overwhelming number of his members following the recent newspaper articles in the Yorkshire

Post, Barnsley Chronicle and the subsequent response by CFO Courtney via his blog. The newspaper articles detailed overtime payments made to Principal Officers for providing availability during periods of industrial action taken by FBU members in a right and justified defence of their pensions.

N Carbutt presented the following questions to the Authority:-

- 1) Were Principal Officers working under gold book terms and conditions? If so, could this Authority point out the relevant paragraphs that allow/permit additional/overtime payments to be made?
- 2) Were Principal Officers working under secondary contracts when they received these additional payments? If so, could the Authority place these in the public domain?
- 3) Were any of the additional payments made to Principal Officers pensionable? If so, could the payments be made available for public scrutiny?
- 4) At which Fire Authority meeting/other meeting were these payments sanctioned, who sanctioned them and who was present?
- 5) Could it be that as Principal Officers were in receipt of their usual salary and then received additional/overtime payments that they effectively were then paid two and a half times their remuneration for the contingency hours they gave?
- 6) Would you, as Members, be willing to refer this for external audit?

M McCarthy informed Members that when the matter came to light, the Chair of the Audit Committee had contacted the Clerk to the Authority who had agreed that the Head of Internal Audit be asked to undertake a review of the process. It was the intention to present the outcome of the review to the Audit Committee in November and this would incorporate a response to the questions posed by N Carbutt. It was deemed inappropriate to provide any further comments at this stage as it may prejudice the review.

Councillor Richards reiterated M McCarthy's comments. It was noted that the Terms of Reference/Scope for the internal audit review would be presented to the Audit Committee at the conclusion of FRA.

3 URGENT ITEMS

None.

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

RESOLVED – That agenda Item 16 entitled 'Stronger Safer Communities Reserve Round 2' 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

Councillor Ayris declared an interest at Item 10 on the agenda entitled 'New Member – Fire and Rescue Authority'.

Councillor Andrews declared an interest at Item 16 on the agenda entitled 'Stronger Safer Communities Reserve Round 2', as he was a director of one of the projects referred to.

6 REPORTS BY MEMBERS

Councillor Richards referred to a recent meeting with M Wright, Head of Asset Management, to discuss the environmental brief and estates, which had been useful. On 19 September she had visited the new Birley Moor Fire Station which was state of the art. A number of teething problems had been encountered with the traffic light system. It was hoped that an official opening would be held shortly to which Members of the Authority would be invited.

Councillor Satur reported that Councillor Atkin, R Bywater and herself had recently presented a cheque to Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber of Commerce from the Stronger Safer Communities Reserve Fund at Wentworth Woodhouse.

Councillors Atkin, Andrews and Cave had recently undertaken a visit to Maltby Fire Station.

Councillor Ransome commented that she had been working alongside S Helps, Area Manager, Head of Prevention and Protection, on the Doncaster Health Board. They would be attending an obesity workshop on 1 October, and examining the impact and assistance the Service could provide in this area. It was noted that Adwick Fire Station had opened a dementia friendly café.

Councillor Munn had visited Low Edges Fire Station on 12 September, where firefighters had held a car wash for the Firefighters' Charity. He had also visited the community allotment, looked around the close proximity crewing area and looked at future building plans for the fire station.

7 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

None.

8 TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

9 MINUTES OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 27 JULY 2015

Councillor Richards queried why the costs had significantly reduced in respect of the appliance bay doors at Rivelin Fire Station.

DCFO Roberts commented that this had resulted from the first quotation received which had been for a full door replacement; upon investigation this had been deemed unnecessary.

Councillor Richards emphasised the importance of publicising the Stronger, Safer Communities Reserve results nationally, regionally and locally which had been a

great success, and she made particular reference to the Sleeping Safely (Barnsley Babies) project.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 27 July 2015 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

10 NEW MEMBER - FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

A report of the Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority was submitted to inform Members of the resignation of Councillor Ross from the Fire and Rescue Authority with effect from 2 September 2015. Councillor Ross' replacement was Councillor Ayris, Liberal Democrat Member for Graves Park, who had taken up office immediately.

Councillor Andrews expressed his thanks on behalf of Members to Councillor Ross, who had been on the Fire and Rescue Authority since May 2010. Councillor Ross had been a hardworking and valuable Member of the Authority. The Authority wished him well for the future.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Noted the resignation of Councillor Ross from the Fire and Rescue Authority with effect from 2 September 2015.
- ii) Noted the nomination of Councillor Ayris to serve on the Authority with immediate effect.
- iii) Agreed that Councillor Ayris sat on the bodies set out at paragraph 3 of the report.
- iv) Nominated Councillor Munn as Lead Member for Business Continuity.

11 FRA GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE / DISSOLUTION OF WORKFORCE AND ORGANISATIONAL (WOD) BOARD

A report of the Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority was presented which provided Members with options for consideration in respect of the dissolution of the Workforce and Organisational (WOD) Board.

Members had previously requested that consideration be given to the role and remit of the WOD Board and Joint Liaison Forum (JLF), to determine whether there was duplication/overlap in their remit.

Staff/people and Equality and Inclusion items previously submitted to WOD Board would be included on the FRA's forward register. However, Members were informed that they could refer any item for further discussion to either Scrutiny or Stakeholder Engagement Board.

Councillor Cave suggested that in future, equality and inclusion should be a standing item on every agenda for the Fire and Rescue Authority and also the Stakeholder Engagement Board.

Councillor Atkin referred to the terms of reference for the JLF, which stated that meetings would be chaired by a Member of the Fire and Rescue Authority. Councillor Atkin had understood that an agreement had been reached for the chairmanship to be rotated on an annual basis between a Member of the Fire and Rescue Authority and a Trade Union representative.

Councillor Richards referred to the Audit Committee, which had oversight of governance. The Audit Committee would establish a small task and finish group in February/March 2016 to establish how the new governance arrangements were operating with a view to submitting a report to the Annual Meeting in June 2016.

RESOLVED – That Members approved:-

- i) The dissolution of the Workforce and Organisational Development (WOD) Board in its current form with immediate effect.
- ii) The retention of Joint Liaison Forum but with revised Terms of Reference to reference the annual rotation of the Chair.
- iii) Referral of strategic items (staff/people and Equality Inclusion) from the WOD Board work programme to Fire and Rescue Authority.
- iv) Membership of Scrutiny Board.
- v) Establishing a Task and Finish Group to undertake a short review of the Fire and Rescue Authority's existing Boards, to identify any potential gaps.
- vi) Equality and inclusion to be included as a standing item on every agenda for the Fire and Rescue Authority and the Stakeholder Engagement Board.

12 NOMINATIONS FOR SCRUTINY BOARD

A report of the Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority was submitted which requested the nomination of two Members to sit on the Scrutiny Board. Councillor Richards had had to step down as membership was in direct conflict with her new role as Chair of Audit Committee. Councillor Ross had left the Fire and Rescue Authority with effect from 2 September 2015.

RESOLVED – That Members nominated Councillors Cave and Ayris to sit on the Scrutiny Board.

13 AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

A report of the Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority was submitted for Authority consideration and approval.

Members noted that best practice guidance recommended that Audit Committees produce an Annual Report for consideration by its full Authority.

RESOLVED – That Members considered the Annual Report of its Audit Committee and subject to any change made, agreed to publish it on the Authority's website.

14 JULY 2015 PROJECTED OUTTURN REPORT

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive & Clerk and Treasurer was submitted which informed Members of the projected spend for the 2015/16 financial year based on the July 2015 outturn position and any information gathered during August.

The outturn position currently projected an underspend in the region of £580,000. Members noted from the previous 2015/16 outturn report, a number of challenges that would dominate the financial year.

Councillor Atkin commented that the amounts highlighted within the report titles were confusing, as they referred to both positive and negative figures.

F Foster commented that the report would be rectified.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the contents of the report.

15 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER ONE - 2015/16

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive & Clerk and Treasurer was presented which provided Members with details of corporate performance for quarter one of 2015/16, and set out the current position for South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue's suite of Local Performance Indicators.

Members noted that in quarter one of 2015/16 there had been 23 fewer Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs) compared to the same quarter in 2014/15, which was almost a 13% reduction; the Service had encountered the lowest number of ADFs per 10,000 domestic properties out of the Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Services during quarter one.

Councillor Ransome referred to a number of fires which were attributable to cheaper electrical goods, and she queried what testing was undertaken by the Service.

DCFO Roberts commented that the Service did not carry out electrical testing within the home, but as part of the home safety checks, fire crew personnel would undertake an assessment of the property to ascertain how safe it was. It was noted that generally, after product recall, only 10% to 20% of the products were returned.

Councillor Ransome suggested that a letter be sent to electrical companies regarding the problem.

CFO Courtney commented that if a particular model of an appliance had shown to be the cause of a number of fires, then the Chief Fire Officers Association would approach the manufacturer to establish whether they could do something about that item. Work was undertaken nationally to identify recurring trends and to also address the problem.

Councillor Ayris referred to fires in non-domestic properties and he questioned what the Authority did to work with commercial organisations to minimise the risk of fire.

DCFO Roberts referred to the ongoing work of the Service undertaken on the Authority's behalf. The Service positively engaged with businesses to try to improve their safety knowledge of their building, and work was ongoing to provide education sessions and raise awareness around the issues. In relation to the increase in incidents, the Service continued to try to engage with every business within South Yorkshire.

Councillor Richards referred to the recent seminar for businesses in the area to look at the sprinkler systems and installation. Councillor Richards referred to special service incidents, and added that she was a member of the Sheffield Safer and Sustainable Communities Board; a plea had been made at a recent meeting for fire crews not to break down doors if there was an alternative way to gain entry into a property.

CFO Courtney commented that fire crews would only break down a door if all other ways of gaining entry had been exhausted.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

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

16 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 item 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.

17 STRONGER SAFER COMMUNITIES RESERVE ROUND 2

A report of the Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority was submitted to consider a further six projects for funding based on their revised bids.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Approved funding for the projects.
- ii) Agreed to the release of funds to projects, subject to completion of service level agreements.
- iii) Considered the use of residual funds.

CHAIR