

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

4 JANUARY 2016

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

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

D Terris, A Frosdick, J Bell, F Foster, R Winter, M McCarthy,
L Noble and M McCoole (Barnsley MBC)

An apology for absence was received from Councillor E Hughes

1 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was noted as above.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

3 URGENT ITEMS

None.

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

RESOLVED – That the following agenda items be considered in the absence of the public and press:-

Item 17 'Proposals for Change – Fire Control'.

Item 18 'Employment Tribunal Outcome'.

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

None.

6 REPORTS BY MEMBERS

Councillor Haith wished to convey the Authority's thanks to the firefighters involved in the recent flood actions throughout the country.

Councillor Atkin had recently attended the opening of the Dementia Café at Adwick Fire Station. Councillor Atkin wished to thank all of the volunteers involved in the

project, and he looked forward to this being rolled out into community rooms across the County.

Councillor Buckley had attended the Excellence in Fire and Emergency Awards on 4 December in London. A total of 150 brigades had entered the competition, and the Service had been one of five brigades to reach the finals for its Stronger Safer Communities Reserve Fund. Councillor Buckley hoped that the scheme would continue and it would be entered into the competition next year.

7 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

None.

8 TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

M McCarthy referred to various correspondence received, which had been shared and acknowledged by Members.

9 MINUTES OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2015

Councillor Ayris queried whether any progress had been made with Systel, the computer system provider for emergency and non-emergency telephone calls.

DCFO Roberts commented that the final development had been delivered before Christmas and would be updated onto the system this week, which was hoped to provide a significant improvement.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Authority meeting held on 30 November 2015 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

10 MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SPECIAL AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2015

Councillor Richards, Chair of the Audit Committee, gave thanks to Members, Independent Members and R Winter for attending the Audit Committee meeting on 14 December, where Members had agreed all 19 recommendations.

Councillor Richards referred to communication received since the meeting from an Independent Member, who had requested to decline or to not be part of Recommendation 18, and also that Councillor Ayris had suggested an amendment to one of the recommendations; Members were provided with a copy of the suggested amendment.

A Frosdick informed Members that the Authority did not have the capacity to amend the minutes of another committee, and that any comments on the suggested amendment would need to be raised as a motion within the Standing Orders at the next Audit Committee meeting. A Frosdick commented that if the subject matter was to be debated, then 7 days' notice would be required prior to the meeting to be considered at the next Authority meeting.

Councillor Andrews thanked the Audit Committee for their work and for the lessons to be learned from it. In response to the recommendations, Councillor Andrews made the following statement:-

'The reasons the overtime payments were paid was to ensure proper cover of the Service by senior managers during the duration of the dispute. This was to ensure protection of the public and proper oversight of the contingency arrangements. I believed that a previous precedent had been set and that delegated authority was in place for myself and for the CFO to agree this. It was also following advice from the CFO on what levels of cover were required to fulfil the public protection responsibilities we have. People have asked me why this was not reported to Members at the time. As I explained I believed delegated authority was in place and I assumed these actions would be appropriately reported. Clearly, with hindsight this was not done and should have been and Members given the opportunity to consider them. There are clearly lessons for us to learn. I regret and I am sorry that this process did not happen as it should and obviously for the uncertainty and damage to confidence that has resulted. I am pleased to have this opportunity to explain things more fully and I welcome the decision of the CFO to reimburse the Service, albeit nothing unlawful took place, as the investigation has shown.

The most important thing now is for the Service and the Committee to implement the Audit Committee's recommendations and for us, together, to rebuild trust and confidence that may have been lost. It is my intention to ensure this work is implemented over the weeks and months ahead, and I look forward to us working on this together'.

Councillor Richards commented that the Audit Committee would oversee the implementation of the recommendations and that any issues would be reported by exception to the Authority, to ensure that Members were clear that the Audit Committee undertook its responsibilities seriously and to ensure that the recommendations were fully implemented.

Councillor Atkin accepted all 19 recommendations and this was seconded by Councillor Furniss.

RESOLVED – That Members noted that the Audit Committee would monitor the recommendations to completion.

11 2016/17 DRAFT BUDGET

A report of the Clerk, Treasurer and Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was presented which set out the implications of the provisional finance settlement together with the latest draft budget for 2016/17.

On 17 December 2015 the provisional settlement had been announced, and the current indications were that the Authority would lose almost £1.7m in settlement funding in 2016/17 when compared to 2015/16. This figure showed a favourable variance of almost £0.4m when compared to the forecast reported in November 2015.

The Government had announced that the Council Tax referendum limit would remain at 2% for 2016/17, and had confirmed that it was not offering a council tax freeze grant in 2016/17. Members noted that it was hoped the final settlements would be received in the upcoming weeks, and that a report seeking final approval would be brought to the February 2016 Authority meeting.

Councillor Richards commented that other fire authorities installed cold alarms, and she queried whether there was provision for this in the budget.

ACFO Blunden commented that SYFR endeavoured to work in collaboration with the four metropolitan boroughs to deliver Winter Warm Packs to the most vulnerable which included the provision of blankets and heating machine top up cards together with the referral onto partner agencies for loft and cavity installation etc.

Councillor Richards requested further information on the work of the four metropolitan boroughs on the Winter Warm Packs.

M Topham referred to the proposals presented to the Authority in the Autumn to work in collaboration with Humberside Fire and Rescue on HR and occupational health matters. Internal consultation exercises had now been completed at each Service and the outcomes were being considered with a view to reporting back to a future Authority meeting. Consideration was being given to whether there was scope for occupational health to be outsourced, whether it should be a joint service, or for both organisations to maintain standalone occupational health units.

Councillor Andrews suggested that the Authority write to the Treasury to establish whether SYFR could be classed as a social care authority which brings with it some financial advantages.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Agreed that the Authority write to the Treasury to establish whether SYFR could be classed as a social care authority.
- ii) Received the report and considered the issues raised.
- iii) That Councillor Richards be provided with further information on Winter Warm Packs.

12 FRA BUSINESS PLAN - PERFORMANCE MEASURES: JULY 2015 - DECEMBER 2015

A report of the Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority was presented to provide Members with the seventh update on the progress against the agreed FRA Business Plan Performance Measures for July 2015 – December 2015, and to invite comments on the content and reporting format.

Members noted that the performance measures remained the same, with the exception of performance measure 1.5 'Establishment of the Stronger Safer Communities Reserve'.

A Frosdick informed Members that the Business Plan could be amended if appropriate, to incorporate additional information.

Members agreed that pre-meeting rooms could be made available for each political party if required.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Noted the six-monthly update.
- ii) Provided feedback on the reporting format.

13 METROPOLITAN FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES BENCHMARKING REPORT - 2014/15

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was submitted to provide Members with an Annual Benchmarking Report that compared South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR) to its peers. The report benchmarked against demographic information and current performance measures, as well as providing resourcing comparisons.

Members noted that SYFR was one of the larger geographical areas to be covered. SYFR covered a very similar sized area to London Fire Brigade, although SYFR covered this area with only 40 appliances which was 303 fewer.

Councillor Richards referred to the high proportion of BME and female firefighters in the London Fire Brigade, and she suggested that SYFR should endeavour to recruit a higher proportion of BME and female firefighters, perhaps using the Fire Cadets Scheme. Councillor Richards queried how SYFR compared in relation to response times with other counties who had a similar geographical make-up.

DCFO Roberts commented that SYFR was laying the foundations for the recruitment of BME and female firefighters. SYFR was ranked 16th out of the 45 Fire and Rescue Services which recorded average times. Members noted that Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue provided a good benchmark for SYFR in relation to population and the geographical area. DCFO Roberts referred to the additional work to be undertaken with fire cadets on the youth engagement and the Star Children's Trust, to be discussed in further detail.

Councillor Furniss commented that it was inappropriate for SYFR to be compared to the London Fire Brigade due to its size and population. Councillor Furniss suggested that the recruitment of BME and female firefighters be discussed further at the Corporate Planning Workshop on 12 January.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the contents of the report.

14 INDEPENDENT CULTURAL REVIEW

RESOLVED – That the report was withdrawn and a further report would be presented to the Authority in due course.

15 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER TWO - 2015/16

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive and Clerk and Treasurer was submitted to provide Members with details of the corporate performance for quarter two of 2015/16, and to set out the current position for South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue's (SYFR's) suite of Local Performance Indicators (LPIs).

Members noted that the performance report had been examined in detail at the Scrutiny Board meeting in November 2015; the Scrutiny Board now undertook a more themed approach to scrutiny and looked holistically at an area of service or a function.

Councillor Richards referred to the increase in deliberate fires across the whole of the Barnsley District, and said she was pleased that the issue was being addressed through the joint working with South Yorkshire Police and other partners.

Councillor Haith referred to Local Performance Indicator (LPI) 3.17 with a total of 33.33% of officers that had currently completed the Officer's Safety Critical Course at the end of quarter two, and queried when the 100% target would be reached. Councillor Haith also referred to Priority 2 – Operations LPIs which had incurred an increased time in attending dwelling fires. Councillor Haith queried whether the opening of the two new Sheffield Fire Stations would provide a reduction in attendance times.

DCFO Roberts commented that the Officer's Safety Critical Course was currently being reviewed to establish whether the course would continue in its current format or whether it would be tailored to senior management level and above. DCFO Roberts reported that, since the introduction of the Fire and Rescue Services Act in 2004, there had been no national standard for response times. Members noted that some improvement, although not a dramatic improvement, in response times was anticipated from the opening of the two new fire stations in Sheffield.

Councillor Buckley gave thanks to the Service for the revised presentation style of the performance report that had been requested by the Scrutiny Board. Members were requested to provide any additional comments on format and presentation to Councillor Buckley or ACFO Blunden.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Noted the contents of the report.
- ii) Scrutinised and commented on the information presented in the report.
- iii) Agreed to provide any presentation style comments on the performance report onto Councillor Buckley or ACFO Blunden.

16 MALTBY UPDATE

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was presented to update Members on the co-location of South Yorkshire Police and Fire and Rescue Services at Maltby Police Station.

Members noted that, if the proposed design and budget for the project were approved by both SYFR and South Yorkshire Police (SYP), then work would commence on site at Maltby Police Station in March 2016, with the aim for completion in September 2016, at which point the existing fire station at Maltby would become surplus to requirements.

M Wright commented that the co-location would provide improved response times to the areas around the East of Rotherham, Dinnington and Thurcroft, with associated benefits, and an improved working relationship with SYP. It was anticipated that there would be an increase in joint community engagement and safety work which would build upon the work undertaken at the Lifewise Centre and provide joint savings for the two services. The 'Scope Procure, Minor Works Framework' had been used to appoint Kier as the project management consultant, and would be a 'maximum works value contract' as adopted for Birley and Parkway. Kier would agree a price with RLB who would act as the Authority's quantity surveyor, and any cost overrun or savings would be funded or retained by Kier. Funding of £640,000 would be provided by SYFR and SYP would make a £8,000 minimum contribution towards facilitating the co-location and building access system.

M Wright had hosted a meeting in November 2015 with Yorkshire Ambulance Service's (YAS) and SYP's procurement ICT and property with a view to collaboration across all three services to provide for a standard approach.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Approved the proposals for the implementation of the project and to receive verbal updates at subsequent meetings.
- ii) Authorised the Head of Asset Management to dispose of Maltby Fire Station and to report back with offers received in due course.

17 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.

18 PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE - FIRE CONTROL

A report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Director of Service Development was submitted in relation to the proposals for change – fire control.

RESOLVED – That a majority Member decision was reached to approve the proposals contained within the 'Control Review – Proposals for Change' document.

19 EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL OUTCOME

A report of the Clerk to the Authority was presented to update Members on the outcome of legal proceedings in connection with the Employment Rights Act 1996 claims in connection with Close Proximity Crewing.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Noted the contents of the report.
- ii) Authorised the Monitoring Officer to lodge an Appeal against the Employment Tribunal Judgment if deemed necessary.

CHAIR