

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

26 NOVEMBER 2018

PRESENT: Councillor C Lamb (Chair)
Councillor A Atkin (Vice-Chair)
Councillors: R Taylor, C Ross, T Hussain, S Ayris,
M Clements, P Haith, C Hogarth, C Ransome and Dr A Billings

CFO J Courtney, QFSM, DCFO M Blunden, ACFO A Johnson,
S Booth and AM S Helps
(South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service)

A Frosdick, M McCarthy, L Noble, I Rooth and M McCoole
(Barnsley MBC)

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T Damms,
Councillor J Satur, A Brown, N Copley and D Terris

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Lamb congratulated DCFO Blunden, on behalf of the Authority, on his recent appointment to the position of Chief Fire Officer of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service which would commence in January 2019. He thanked DCFO Blunden for his commitment and support to the Authority and to the public of South Yorkshire.

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

Members provided a summary of the visits attended since the last Authority meeting held on 15 October 2018 as follows:- Edlington Fire Station to observe a Chief Fire Officer's commendation which had been awarded to Firefighter Ian Lindsay, who had carried out an act of bravery which epitomised operational discretion at an incident, and the passing out of the Achieving Respect and Confidence (ARC) Course at Edlington Fire Station.

Councillor Ransome referred to an Authority meeting held some 12 months previously, where a discussion had ensued in relation to national insurance contribution payments for firefighters and civilians.

DCFO Blunden stated that SYFR had paid the national insurance contributions to all members of staff. The HMRC had recognised that this was an error on their part, and they had contacted everyone across the country who had not received the payments or where the payments had not been logged against their account.

The Director of Support Services added that the expectation had been that the HMRC would amend their records, but they had requested SYFR to amend the records accordingly for each individual. The HMRC would honour any payments that had been made by SYFR to reconcile the individuals' accounts.

7 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

None.

8 TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC, OR COMMUNICATIONS SUBMITTED BY THE CHAIR OR THE CLERK AND TO PASS SUCH RESOLUTIONS THEREON AS THE STANDING ORDERS PERMIT AND AS MAY BE DEEMED EXPEDIENT

None.

9 MINUTES OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2018

Councillor Ayris expressed concern at the brevity of the minutes of the last meeting, in particular around the '2018/19 Financial Performance Report: An Update', where Members had asked a series of questions for clarification.

The Monitoring Officer considered that the style of minute writing was proportionate to what had been discussed at the meeting. It was imperative that the minutes should be meaningful to any individual that had not been in attendance at a meeting and that decisions were captured rather than the discussions which had taken place.

Councillor Lamb added that the webcasts of the Authority meetings, which were published on the Authority's website, were helpful and accessible to both members of the public and Authority Members. Councillor Lamb was happy with the content of the minutes presented.

Councillor Ransome sought clarity that the business continuity plans for firefighting arrangements during a period of Industrial Action had been subject to a tender exercise.

Councillor Lamb stated that it had been determined at the last Authority meeting not to go out to tender, due to there being no other competitors within the market. He queried whether it would be possible to grow the market, to enable tendering to become a viable option in the future.

DCFO Blunden reported that the current stance was that it was a single supplier market. There were currently 11 other fire and rescue services within the country which engaged their services with the same organisation as SYFR, to provide similar firefighting resilience arrangements during Industrial Action. In January 2019, SYFR's Procurement Team would visit those 11 fire and rescue services to compare the work undertaken and to ensure that there were no other competitors within the market. A tendering exercise, under procurement rules, would be undertaken if any other organisations were identified.

The Monitoring Officer stated that the decision taken by Members had been both lawful and compliant with the regulatory regime in the circumstances.

Councillor Lamb referred to a discussion held at a previous Authority meeting in relation to the firefighters' kit. Through collaboration with West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and others, it had been possible to stimulate this single supplier market by taking a different approach to provide options and choices with a view to potentially achieving greater levels of efficiency. He suggested that SYFR officers consider stimulating the market for business continuity plans for firefighting arrangements during a period of Industrial Action, rather than the decision that had been taken at the last Authority meeting.

Councillor Ayris queried when the meetings in relation to SYFR's staffing duty systems and the consultation process on the IRMP would be held with AM Carlin and Members. He also queried, in relation to the closure of the trading company SSUK, whether an update on the revised financial position and the total amount that had been transferred back to the Authority would be presented to the Authority meeting to be held in January 2019.

ACO Johnson commented that the proposals around the IRMP would be presented at a one-agenda item Corporate Advisory Group to be held on 4 December 2018. Members had been notified of the date and time by e-mail.

The Director of Support Services reported that the SSUK close down plan was currently being worked through, with an anticipated final closure date around the end of January 2019. The draft accounts for the part year up to when the company had ceased trading was currently being prepared by the accountants, and showed a small profit for the year ended 25 August 2018. All outstanding income would be collected prior to closing down the company through Companies House. It was anticipated to obtain the monies from the one outstanding debtor this week, which would enable the year end transactions to be processed with regard to the recharge to SYFR. Following which, the VAT refund for the Authority was awaited from the HMRC before the bank account could be closed. It was dependant, upon receipt of

the VAT refund, whether the DS01 form could be submitted to Companies House by the end of November 2018, which would determine whether the January 2019 deadline to close down the company could be achieved.

Councillor Ayris queried whether the final detriment claim figures for SYFR staff for Close Proximity Crewing were known.

The Monitoring Officer reported that the matter had been resolved between the parties since the last Authority meeting, and that it was currently in the process of being signed off by the individual claimants. Upon receipt of the final confirmation, a report would be submitted to the Authority to present the terms of the settlement and the costs.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Noted that consideration would be given to taking a different approach to the business continuity plans for firefighting arrangements during a period of Industrial Action, with a view to stimulating the market and establishing other competitors.
- ii) Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2018 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

10 POLICE AND FIRE COLLABORATION BOARD

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was presented to provide an update on the collaborations which continued to progress across Fire – Fire partnerships and the South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (SYFRS) partnership.

Members noted that the service review for the Joint Community Safety Department was reaching a conclusion and approaching a project close. A strategy from the Joint Vehicle Fleet Management was awaiting final sign off from the Police and Fire Collaboration Board, which would next meet on 29 November 2018. Collaboration planning was being progressed by the Joint Estates and Facilities Management, with the Police and Fire Delivery Board, via a draft terms of reference and next steps.

Councillor Lamb commented that he looked forward to a greater collaboration between SYFR and SYP, and at a greater pace. He gave thanks to Dr Billings and the officers concerned for the work undertaken.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the contents of the report.

11 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2019-22

A report of the Clerk and Treasurer was presented to provide an early insight and understanding as to the likely financial performance and position of SYFR ahead of the proposed Annual Revenue Budget and Council Tax Setting report, which was due to be considered by Members at the Authority meeting to be held on 11 February 2019.

The Director of Support Services reported that the position had been heavily caveated post 2020, and that Members had been warned of the degree of uncertainty which existed principally around the impact of Brexit for UK finances and the possible impact upon the fire sector and SYFR. A Government funding consultation regarding the formula review had been underway for the past two years, the outcome of which would not be known until 2021.

In respect of the additional pension costs (employer contributions), the final reports from the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) had been expected to emerge at the beginning of November 2018; it was not anticipated that the figures would change. SYFR was planning in the event of no further support being received from Government, together with an RS reduction of 12%. SYFR was working with the Treasurer and the four local authorities to ascertain the information taken on board together with their medium term financial planning. There was a variation across the four local authorities, although the majority were in line with BMBC to plan for an RS reduction of 12% year on year. SYFR would undertake scenario planning to enable a variety of choices to be presented to Members. It was vital for SYFR to ensure that the IRMP and the financial plans were aligned, with the intention to minimise the impact on frontline services.

CFO Courtney outlined that the 2017/20 IRMP had been based upon the forecast at that time, which had included the provision of a 5th and 6th day crewing pump. Notwithstanding the amendment made in 2017, which sought to protect second pump appliances at Doncaster and Sheffield Central Fire Stations from the day crewing/night time retained proposals, as a result of the extent to which the financial situation had worsened, SYFR's position was that the proposal for the 5th and 6th day crewing pumps would be put on hold.

The general reserve was in place to support the budget process if required. In relation to the other ring fences around SYFR's earmarked reserves, the definitions and purposes of the individual reserves had been reaffirmed 12 months ago, to which nothing had changed. This was an evolving document which would change shape throughout the period of the MTFP; the use of the reserves fell within the remit of the Authority.

The Monitoring Officer referred to the fundamental legal duty of Members to set a balanced budget on a yearly basis. The MTFP enabled Members to plan ahead on a more coherent basis.

Councillor Ayris referred to the increase to the maximum council tax level of 3%. He suggested that it would be useful for Members to be provided with an illustration to demonstrate the outcome of different increases in terms of council tax.

The Director of Support Services confirmed that Members would be provided with a document which factored in such options. Members were reminded of the aggregation effect year on year across the MTFP and the difference that it made.

Councillor Atkin sought clarification that it was not foreseeable to reinstate the second night-time appliance at Rotherham Fire Station when the finances became available within the next 2 to 3 years.

CFO Courtney stated that SYFR was looking towards a worsened service in comparison to the service provided today. He did not consider that there would be an opportunity to revisit any of the proposals which had already been implemented, at any time in the future.

Dr Billings expressed his thanks for the comprehensive report. It was anticipated from a policing perspective, that an announcement would be made for a flat cash settlement on the assumption that the council tax precept was set at the maximum level, together with an announcement on the pensions increase in December 2018. He considered that SYP and SYFR required a carefully thought through set of savings proposals for future years, to be planned with greater precision, and that the collaboration with SYP and SYFR should be undertaken at a faster, deeper and more urgent pace.

SYFR's contract with Bristol Uniforms for structural personal protective equipment (PPE) was an 8 year contract, which would reach a conclusion in October 2019. SYFR did not consider it to be sensible or best value at this stage to utilise the national framework for the fire kit which had been implemented by Kent Fire and Rescue Service; the market was ever-evolving with fire kit technology and innovation continuously taking place. The Bristol Uniform fire kit was designed to have an 8 year lifespan based upon 14 washes; the majority of SYFR fire kit had not reached this level of laundering. SYFR alongside West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, and potentially Humberside Fire and Rescue Service and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, were ascertaining how to influence and grow the market, with a view to achieving a best value deal for fire kit either nationally or locally, and to grow the market further. It was anticipated that SYFR would retain the current fire kit for a further 2 year period, with the expectation for a new fire kit which would be cutting edge and good value for money, to be implemented by 2022.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- a) Accepted the updated MTFP for the financial years 2019/20 to 2021/22 noting the contents of this report and in particular the scale of the budget deficit facing the Authority in 2020/21 and 2021/22 respectively.
- b) Agreed to work with SYFR Management to identify sustainable budget proposals over the next 12 months for reducing and meeting the estimated budget deficit of £2.3m in 2020/21 and £2.0m in 2021/22 respectively.
- c) Accepted the proposed approach for managing reserves as set out in Section C to this Report – paragraphs 46 to 50 in particular endorsing:-
 - i. The need to retain a minimum general reserve (including operational contingency) of £5m (c10% of the Net Revenue Budget).
 - ii. The earmarking of reserves in line with the intended purpose and the continued planned use of the capital investment reserve (committed schemes only) to fund approved capital investment needs.

- iii. Ring fence the uncommitted balance on the Capital Investment Reserve to help preserve the working balance and until such time as the Authority is in a position to present and approve a prudently balanced MTFP 2019-2022.
- d) Noted the up to date approved capital programme spending and financing projections 2018/19 to 2020/21.
- e) Agreed to only consider new, additional capital investment schemes for approval into the current capital programme if there is an identified urgent and essential operational need.
- f) Noted the known financial risks and events that will need careful consideration and management when setting the 2019/20 Budget and Council Tax.

12 LEAD MEMBERS / 'LINK' MEMBERS - PROPOSAL FOR CONSIDERATION

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive/Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority was presented to provide a hybrid proposal to retain some of the key Lead Member roles, but to also link up Members with a Service lead, in order to gain a greater understanding of the operational issues.

L Noble stated that the pilot process for the 360 Degree Appraisal for Members had almost concluded; she thanked those Members that had agreed to complete the appraisal forms. The outcome would be discussed with the Chair, who had gone through the process as a trial, and then presented to the Corporate Advisory Group in the New Year.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Considered the proposals outlined at paragraphs 4 and 7 of the report.
- ii) Agreed the nominations as listed in paragraph 4 and the table at paragraph 7 of the report.
- iii) Agreed the 'link' Member arrangements as detailed.
- iv) Agreed to go for re-assessment for Regional Charter at a later date (Autumn 2019).
- v) Gave consideration to the introduction of a 360 Degree Appraisal process for all Members.

13 INTRODUCTION OF STAFF WITHIN CO-LOCATED NEIGHBOURHOOD HUBS

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was submitted to outline the business case, costs and benefits associated with a project to introduce Fire Community Support Officers (FCSOs)/staff from within the Joint Community Safety Department (JCSD) within the co-located neighbourhood hubs.

AM Helps stated that the project, which would be funded through the Stronger and Safer Community Reserve (SSCR), would run over a three year period, and would co-locate four FCSOs/JCSD members of staff into each of the four South Yorkshire neighbourhood hubs.

The project would support the concept of problem orientating policing, which would focus attention on arson and deliberate fires. Associated costs, including the purchase of equipment and four suitable vehicles that were required for the three year period totalled £357,247.10.

Dr Billings welcomed the introduction of SYFR staff within the co-located neighbourhood hubs. He considered that this was a very good example of the collaboration between SYFR and SYP which was required to make a difference to the people of South Yorkshire.

Members noted that there would not be any additional cost implications for accommodation for the SYFR staff to be co-located within the neighbourhood hubs.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Noted the contents of the report.
- ii) Supported the concept and funding outlined in this project to enable staff to be located within co-located neighbourhood hubs for a period of up to 3 years, with the longer term aspiration for district based managers within Emergency Response taking the lead and responsibility for district based partnerships.

14 KEY ISSUES PAPER AND DRAFT MINUTES OF THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD HELD ON 8 OCTOBER 2018

Members were presented with a key issues paper arising from the Local Pension Board meeting held on 8 October 2018, together with the draft minutes of the meeting.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the key issues paper and the draft minutes of the Local Pension Board meeting held on 8 October 2018.

CHAIR