



Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 21 June 2023.

PRESENT

Mr. N. J. Rushton CC (in the Chair)

Mr. R. G. Allen CC  
 Mr. R. Ashman CC  
 Cllr. S. Barton  
 Mr. S. L. Bray CC  
 Mr. J. G. Coxon CC  
 Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC

Mr. K. Ghattoraya CC  
 Cllr. S. Harvey  
 Ms. Betty Newton CC  
 Cllr. Abdul Osman  
 Mr. C. A. Smith CC  
 Cllr. D. Singh Patel

In attendance

Callum Faint, Chief Fire and Rescue Officer  
 Paul Weston, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer  
 Colin Sharpe, representing the Treasurer  
 Fiona McMillan, representing the Monitoring Officer  
 Karl Bowden, Area Manager  
 Gemma Duckworth, Senior Democratic Services Officer

11. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Mr. N. Bannister CC, Mr. B. Harrison-Rushton CC, Councillor M Sood, Mr. B. Champion CC, Councillor H Rae Bhatia, Councillor A Byrne and Mr. D. Grimley CC.

12. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare an interest in respect of items on the agenda.

Mr. R. Allen CC, Mrs. B. Newton CC, Mr. J. Coxon CC, Mr. S. Bray CC, Mr. N. Rushton CC, Mr. K. Ghattoraya CC, Mr. D. Grimley CC, Mrs. H. Fryer CC, Mr. R. Ashman CC and Mr. C. Smith CC declared an 'other registrable' interest in Agenda Item 17 (Training Facility – Service Leadership and Development Centre: Project Update) as the proposed site is currently owned by Leicestershire County Council.

13. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items.

14. Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman's announcements were circulated in advance of the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes. The announcements covered the following matters:

- Community use defibrillators

- Western Fire Station, New Parks
- CRMP Project

Following recent changes in membership of the CFA, a contribution from additional members on the CRMP project was welcomed. Mr Ghattoraya CC and Councillor Barton would be involved.

It was agreed that a future meeting of the CFA would be held at Western Fire Station.

15. Public Participation/ CFA Rules of Procedure Rule 9 - Member Questions.

It was reported that no questions had been received.

16. Minutes.

The minutes of the CFA meeting held on 1 June 2023 were considered.

It was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Mrs. B. Newton CC that the minutes of the CFA meeting held on 1 June 2023 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the CFA meeting held on 1 June 2023 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

17. Schedule of Nominations and Appointments for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

The CFA considered a report of the Solicitor and Monitoring Officer which set out the Nominations and Appointments to the Committees of the Combined Fire Authority for the Municipal Year 2023/24. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 7', is filed with these minutes.

It was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Mrs. M. E. Newton CC that the membership of the Corporate Governance Committee, the Employment Committee and the Local Pension Board; and the appointment of the Equality Champion and a CFA representative for the Leicestershire Safer Communities Strategy Board and the LGA Fire Services Commission, as set out in the report, be approved.

The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the following appointments to Committees for 2023/24 be agreed:

Corporate Governance Committee

**5 Conservative (4 County and 1 City) 2 Labour (1 County and 1 City) 1 Liberal Democrat (1 County) and 1 Independent (Rutland)**

Mr. R. Allen CC (Chairman)

Mr. N. Bannister CC  
 Mr. D. Grimley CC  
 Mr. K. Ghattoraya CC  
 Cllr. H. Rae Bhatia  
 Mrs. M. E. Newton CC  
 Cllr. S. Barton  
 Mr. D. Gamble CC  
 Cllr. S. Harvey

Employment Committee

**5 Conservative (4 County and 1 City) 2 Labour (1 County and 1 City) 1 Liberal Democrat (1 County) and 1 Independent (Rutland)**

Mr. N. Bannister CC  
 Mr. B. Champion CC  
 Mr. R. Allen CC  
 Mr. J. Coxon CC  
 Cllr. A. Osman  
 Mrs. M. E. Newton CC  
 Cllr. S. Barton  
 Mr. S. Bray CC  
 Cllr. S. Harvey

Local Pension Board

Mr. N. Bannister CC (Chairman)  
 Cllr. S. Barton

Equality Champion 2023/24

Mrs. B. Newton CC

**Outside Bodies**

Leicestershire Safer Communities Strategy Board 2023/24

Mr. N. Bannister CC

LGA Fire Services Commission 2023/24

Mr. N. Bannister CC.

18. Service Delivery Update.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which gave an update on the key service delivery performance for the period April 2022 – March 2023. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) In response to a query around non-fire incidents, it was stated that these included special services, which involved assisting partner agencies, gaining entry to

properties and dealing with suicides. There had also been a number of false alarms, some of which had been malicious.

- ii) It was reported that on-call availability remained an issue nationally and could be attributed to factors such as changing demographics, increased employment commitments, lifestyle changes and training and commitment. LFRS had undertaken work to try to address these challenges by offering flexible contracts, employer recognition events and revising the training offer to make it more condensed.
- iii) The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer provided an update on a fire which had recently occurred in the Wigston area. This had involved ten appliances and two ariels. LFRS had, however, now left the site and undertaken the necessary handover.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mr Rushton CC and seconded by Mrs Newton CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the update provided on the key service delivery matters for the period April 2022 to March 2023 be noted.

19. Annual Report and Statement of Assurance.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented the Annual Report and Statement of Assurance for 2022 – 2023. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

Members wished to record their thanks to officers for the high level of service demonstrated over the period.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mr Rushton CC and seconded by Mrs Newton CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the content of the Annual Report and Statement of Assurance for 2022 – 2023 be noted.

20. Revenue and Capital Outturn 2022/23.

The CFA considered a report of the Treasurer which detailed the final revenue and capital outturn figures for 2022/23 and sought approval to carry forward funds for specific purposes. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

The figures would be subject to External Audit review before the annual Statement of Accounts was submitted to the CFA for approval.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) It was noted that business rates had overspent by £102,000 due to the review of the rateable value of one of the stations. This had resulted in a backdated payment from April 2017 which was currently being challenged and could result

in a future refund. The Treasurer reported that there was a fairly good rate of success in receiving a refund and an update would be provided to a future meeting.

- ii) Following a review of the existing vans within the Service, the majority were still in good condition and did not need to be replaced. As a result, the Treasurer reported a saving of £200,000 had been identified which would contribute towards the funding of the new mobilising system. An update on this would be provided to the next meeting of the CFA.
- iii) Earmarked reserve transfers were proposed – the £395,000 revenue overspend would be funded from the Budget Strategy reserve. The £763,000 balance of the Covid-19 Collection Fund Deficit reserve would be transferred to the Budget Strategy reserve. The 2023/24 budget had identified Collection Fund surpluses from Council Tax and Business rates which had eliminated the need to retain a separate Covid-19 Collection Fund Deficit reserve.

The recommendations contained within the report were moved by Mr Rushton CC and seconded by Mrs Newton CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That:

- a) The revenue and capital outturn position for 2022/23 (subject to the external audit) be noted;
- b) The carry forward of £5,171,000 of capital funding into 2023/24 be approved;
- c) The transfer of £395,000 from the Budget Strategy Reserve to fund the Revenue Overspend be approved; and
- d) The transfer of £763,000 from the Covid-19 Collection Fund Deficit Reserve to the Budget Strategy Reserve for use in future years be approved.

21. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Spotlight Report into Culture of the Fire Service and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service's Position.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which provided an update on activity and actions within LFRS following an internal Cultural Survey report and the publication of His Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary's and Fire and Rescue Services review into the culture of Fire and Rescue Services nationally (referred to as the Spotlight Report). Details were also provided of the key themes emerging from the internal Cultural Survey and LFRS's position against the findings of the Spotlight report. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) It was noted that there had been a low response to the Cultural Survey from minority groups. Focus groups were being established to undertake work with these groups. A further report would be produced around how to deal with culture in the Service.

- ii) One action plan would be produced to incorporate internal and national recommendations for LFRS. It was pleasing to note that the Inspectorate's comments on LFRS were generally positive, but it was acknowledged that there was still work to be done. A report highlighting progress on the action plan would be presented to the Corporate Governance Committee.
- iii) It was acknowledged that further consideration needed to be given on how to engage with ethnic minority groups. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer gave assurance that a number of different methods were being used to ensure this was the case, but it was essential that the Service listened and acted on any feedback received in order to be able to change attitudes.

The recommendations contained within the report were moved by Mr Rushton CC and seconded by Mrs Newton CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- a) The findings of the Cultural Survey and the activity being undertaken to meet the requirements of the HMICFRS Spotlight report be noted; and
- b) A further update report and action plan be presented to the Corporate Governance Committee to monitor and scrutinise progress.

22. Health and Wellbeing Provision to Employees.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which provided an update on the health and wellbeing activity provided to employees of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 12' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) In terms of preventative support, the Service had introduced a Suicide Prevention and Response package by way of a short video which was now mandatory for staff to view. It was also noted that a suicide prevention helpline was being introduced and the Service had two wellbeing dogs.
- ii) In response to a query around support for staff during the cost of living crisis, the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer commented that although there was possibly more support that could be provided, staff could work additional hours to increase their salary.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mr Rushton CC and seconded by Mrs Newton CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the extensive health and wellbeing provision made for all employees of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service be noted.

23. Revision to the Calendar of Meetings.

The CFA considered a report of the Solicitor and Monitoring Officer which informed the CFA of proposed changes to the calendar of meetings for 2023/24. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 13' is filed with these minutes.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mr Rushton CC and seconded by Mrs Newton CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the changes to the calendar of meetings be noted.

24. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority will be held on 26 July 2023 at 10am.

25. Exclusion of the Press and Public.

It was moved by Mr Rushton CC and seconded by Mrs Newton CC that under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that it will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information during consideration of the following item of business as defined in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Act detailed below:

- Training Facility – Service Leadership and Development Centre Project Update

That in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that it will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information during consideration of the following item of business as defined in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Act detailed below:

- Training Facility – Service Leadership and Development Centre Project Update, as defined in Paragraph 3 and 10; and

That, in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

26. Training Facility - Service Leadership and Development Centre Project Update.

The CFA considered an exempt report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which provided an update on the progression of the land acquisition for the Fire Behaviour Unit and training facility. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 17' is filed with these minutes.

The recommendations contained within the report were moved by Councillor Osman and seconded by Councillor Barton. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- a) The progression for the purchase of land to accommodate the learning and development training centre and combined vehicle workshops be noted; and
- b) Approval is given for the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer to have access to £150,000 of reserves for the progression of undertaking the preliminary works for continued surveys and preparation for the draft planning application to progress the learning and development training centre and combined vehicle workshops build.

10.00 - 10.42 am  
21 June 2023

CHAIRMAN