

DRAFT

Minutes of a Meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority's Joint Consultative Committee held at the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, 12 Geoff Monk Way, Birstall, on Wednesday, 29th October 2014

PRESENT

Cllr S Corral – in the Chair	Mr G Vaux (FBU)
Mrs C Radford CC	Mr G Lynch (FBU)
	Mr D Thornton (FBU)
	Ms A Montague (Unison)

OFFICERS

Mr D Webb	Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
Mr R Chandler	Deputy Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
Mr G Goodman	Secretary to the Committee
Mrs J Green	Assistant Secretary to the Committee

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Mr M Wyatt CC.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED:

The Committee approved the Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th February 2014.

3. Matters Arising

Impact assessment update

DCFO Chandler reiterated that a review of the Day Crewing Plus duty system would not take place until the system had been running for a complete year. Mr Vaux (FBU) expressed some concerns around equality issues particularly in respect of women and single parents. CFO Webb asked for specific areas of concern to be provided.

The FBU discussed having involvement in the EIA and that a general report be produced to ascertain the effects of the DCP system and the feelings of members of staff involved. The FBU suggested a questionnaire to staff to gather this information.

4. Failure to Fully or Adequately undertake a Legal Consultation

Mr Vaux raised the concerns of the FBU. Fundamentally on the basis that Health and Safety of Staff had not been addressed and that there was a strong feeling that the Consultation does not comply with the 'Gunning Principles'.

Mr Vaux also said that it was felt the Consultation document implies broad sweeping statements that do not offer the public detailed information. He added that Staff are also confused and have little information available to assist in being able to make any formative decisions, adding that the FBU have serious concerns that the document is significantly misleading.

Gunning Principles: DCFO Chandler offered some clarity on the points raised by the FBU

Consultation must take place when the proposal is still at a formative stage:

It was emphasised that the Consultation is the formative stage and nothing is final. The Consultation is due to be concluded on 31st December 2014.

Sufficient reasons must be put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and intelligent response:

It was re-affirmed that the proposed changes were clearly laid out, why they were needed and what the impact was likely to be. In addition, early feedback has congratulated the document for being easy to read and understand.

Adequate time must be given for consideration and response:

Officers are confident this will be met in full.

The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account

Again Officers concluded that this will be done.

The Resilience Team – Mr Vaux raised the point that the Team had been unavailable since August 2014, therefore has already been disestablished. He further stated that this process was purely a money saving opportunity.

Officers refuted this statement stating the Team had not been disbanded and were now providing support to the Southern and Station proposed changes. Three vacancies are being held open pending a decision on the Team's future.

Reduction of one appliance from the City – The FBU felt the statement within the Consultation was misleading; there was no suggestion as to which of the three City Stations would lose an appliance. Officers again refuted the claim.

Members of the FBU questioned the openness and transparency of the whole process. It was confirmed by Officers that there are a wide range of Q & A's on

the SharePoint site, Officers conduct regular Early Bird Meeting' which all members of staff are invited to attend together with the latest information being circulated in the Weekly Update.

The FBU expressed concern that the public forums being run by Opinion Research Services (ORS) were held on an invitation only basis and each attendee was offered an attendance fee. CFO Webb confirmed expert advice had been sought on the best way to undertake these forum sessions. Dale Hall of ORS is an expert in this field and the point was re-iterated that these forums are independently focused and numerous other means have been offered for issues and queries to be raised by those not attending.

The FBU raised significant concerns about the independence and ability of ORS to undertake the consultation. It was recommended by CFO Webb that the FBU write down all their specific objections so that they can be sent to by ORS to answer.

The conclusion of the discussion was that as the Combined Fire Authority are the owners of the Consultation and approved it at its meeting on 25th September the CFA Chair confirmed it was felt all aspects have been adhered to in a legal and appropriate matter.

5. Failure to consider the Health and Safety of Employees

The FBU expressed their concerns with regards to the current proposals within the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and the failure of the Service to fully and adequately consider the health and safety of its employees. This statement is central to the concerns as the Service intends to ride 4 to a pump as normal practice.

CFO Webb offered his assurance that nothing in the Consultation is unsafe.

The CFA Chair concluded that he was satisfied that health and safety issues were sufficiently addressed.

6. What as Representative Bodies do you suggest to save money? (Asked by the Members)

The FBU were of the opinion that reductions in principal management and support should be explored and that the ratio of operational to support staff was higher than in other services.

The CFA Chair confirmed as an organisation we need to reduce the workforce as a whole.

The FBU confirmed they were happy for further meaningful consultation/negotiation to take place to explore other avenues. The FBU asked again for more openness and transparency when accessing information. The FBU would be happy to discuss everything across the Service. Officers were very clear that there was no lack of openness and transparency and that staff and representative bodies had numerous avenues to receive and comment on

proposals.

7. Employers Contribution Payments during Strike Action

CFO Webb informed the Committee that following a recent meeting of the CFA the decision taken was that the CFA would not exercise its discretionary powers to pay the employer's pension contribution for staff on strike during the current industrial action. Therefore if any staff wished to "buy back" their pensions they would have to pay both the employers and employees contributions not paid during the periods of industrial action.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The proposed date is 4th February 2015

**29th October 2014
14:00hrs – 16:18hrs**

CHAIR