



Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 24 June 2024.

PRESENT

Mr. R. G. Allen CC	Mr. K. Ghattoraya CC
Cllr. S. Barton	Cllr. M. March
Mr. B. Champion CC	Ms. Betty Newton CC
Mr. J. G. Coxon CC	Mr J. Poland CC
Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC	Councillor N. Porter
Mr. D. A. Gamble CC	

In attendance

Callum Faint, Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
 Paul Weston, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
 Judi Beresford, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
 Fiona McMillan, on behalf of the Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
 Gemma Duckworth, Senior Democratic Services Officer

81. Election of Chairman.

The Democratic Services Officer invited nominations for the position of Chairman.

In his absence, it was moved by Mr. J. Poland CC and seconded by Mr. R. Allen CC that Mr. N. J. Rushton CC be elected Chairman of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA).

There being no other nominations, the Democratic Services Officer declared Mr. N. J. Rushton CC elected as Chairman of the CFA.

82. Election of Vice Chairman.

It was moved by Mr. R. Allen CC and seconded by Mrs. H. Fryer CC that Mrs. M. E. Newton CC be elected Vice Chairman of the CFA.

The motion was put and carried unanimously.

There being no other nominations, the Chairman declared Mrs. M. E. Newton CC elected as Vice Chairman of the CFA.

In the absence of the Chairman, Mrs M. E. Newton CC was appointed Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

Mrs. M. E. Newton CC – in the Chair

83. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Mr. N. J. Rushton CC, Mr. N. Bannister CC, Mr. B. Harrison-Rushton CC, Mr. D. Grimley CC, Councillor A Osman, Councillor S Harvey and Mr. S. Bray CC.

84. Declarations of Interest.

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

No declarations were made.

85. To advise of any other items which the Chair has decided to take as urgent.

There were no urgent items.

86. 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:

- Annual Excellence Awards
- Women in Fire Conference
- Variable Response Vehicles
- HMICFRS Inspection

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

It was reported that no questions had been received.

88. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

The minutes of the CFA meeting held 14 February 2024 were considered.

It was moved by Mrs. M. E. Newton CC and seconded by Mr. J. Coxon CC that the minutes of the CFA meeting held on 14 February 2024 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the CFA meeting held on 14 February 2024 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

89. Schedule of Nominations and Appointments for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

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 2024/25. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

It was moved by Mrs. M. E. Newton CC and seconded by Mr. R. Allen 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 2024/25 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. A. Osman
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. N. Porter

Equality Champion 2024/25

Mrs. B. Newton CC

Outside Bodies

Leicestershire Safer Communities Strategy Board 2024/25

Mr. N. Bannister CC

LGA Fire Services Commission 2024/25

Mr. N. Bannister CC.

90. 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 year April 2023 – March 2024. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) It was noted that the Service had experienced a significant increase in the number of non-fire related incidents, with a key area of support being the gaining of entry into premises to assist in accessing casualties. It was also reported that between April 2023 and March 2024, the Service had attended 93 fatalities at a variety of incidents, 68 of which were as a result of assisting partner agencies/gaining entry/suicide. In response to a query around the level of support for firefighters attending these incidents, the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer gave assurance that lots was in place, including TRIM, counselling, internal mental health practitioners and the Firefighters Charity.
- ii) In terms of the prevention work being undertaken, this was carried out when an incident was not being responded to. Special attention was given to vulnerable groups and further work was undertaken with those who had previously been the victim of a fire. A further report around this would be presented to a future meeting of the CFA. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated that it was necessary to balance the work of firefighters to ensure that statutory duties were being carried out and any prevention work was not at the detriment of something else. He commented that LFRS had very good performance and it would be difficult to do much more with the resources available.

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

RESOLVED:

That the report and key achievements over the period be noted.

91. Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service - Strategic Workforce Plan.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented the new Strategic Workforce Plan document, which supported the implementation of the Service's People Strategy and Corporate Risk Management Plan (CRMP). A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 11', is filed with these minutes.

It was acknowledged that LFRS had a more inexperienced workforce which would need significant support. Nationally, there were difficulties in recruiting to ICT and Finance roles within the Fire Service.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) It was noted that 83.8% of the LFRS workforce was white, with only 23% being female. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated that lots of work had been

undertaken to attract different groups to the Service but this remained a challenge. An Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Manager was now in post, along with a Positive Action Officer who would work with local communities to promote the Fire Service. It was felt that elected members also had a role to play and it was important to continue to engage with the workforce and communities.

- ii) It was stated that, due to the small number of staff in the Service from minority groups, there was a significant impact when there was any fluctuation. Assurance was given that the diversity of the workforce increased following every recruitment campaign, but there was still further work to do. The Service attended a number of public events and also visited schools and colleges to talk to young people about becoming a firefighter. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer reiterated that every effort was being made to increase diversity within the Service, but this was an issue for other Fire and Rescue Services.
- iii) In response to a query, it was stated that there was still a requirement for any potential firefighter to undertake a physical test. As a result, it was more difficult to appoint someone if they were unable to carry out the requirements of the job. Nationally, consideration was being given to what the test involved to ensure that it was more proportionate and discussions would take place with the Fire Brigades Union to ascertain what employees felt should be included in any physical test.

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

RESOLVED:

To note:

- a) the positive progress in the Service's approach to workforce planning;
- b) the areas of focus for the Service in relation to workforce planning, namely operational skills such as incident command, blue light driving and essential technical skills in support services.

92. External Audit - Annual Report for the Year Ending 31 March 2023.

The CFA considered a report of the Treasurer which presented the External Auditor's Annual Report 2022/23. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 12', is filed with these minutes.

Gavin Barker from Mazars attended the meeting to present the report. Members wished to place on record their thanks for the work Mazars had undertaken over the last four years.

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

RESOLVED:

That the External Auditor's Annual Report 2022/23 be noted.

93. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority will be held on 24 July 2024 at 10am at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters.

94. Exclusion of the Press and Public.

It was moved by Mrs Newton CC and seconded by Mr Poland 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 items of business as defined in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Act detailed below:

- Appointment Process – Head of Corporate Financial Services/Treasurer (Section 112 Officer)
- Mobile Phone Masts on Service Property
- Employment Tribunal Outcome
- People Programme of Work and Equalities Plan 2024-27

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 items of business as defined in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Act detailed below:

- Appointment Process – Head of Corporate Financial Services/Treasurer (Section 112 Officer)
- Mobile Phone Masts on Service Property
- Employment Tribunal Outcome
- People Programme of Work and Equalities Plan 2024-27

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

95. Appointment Process - Head of Corporate Financial Services/Treasurer (Section 112 Officer).

The CFA considered an exempt report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which recommended that the role of Head of Corporate Financial Services/Treasurer (Section 112 Officer) be brought 'in house', following indication that the current arrangement would end in the Autumn due to capacity pressures, and detailed the proposed recruitment process and timeline for appointment of the role to the CFA. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 16', is filed with these minutes.

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

RESOLVED:

That:

- a) approval is given to bring the role of Head of Corporate Financial Services/Treasurer/Section 112 Officer in house as a substantive member of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Leadership Team and to make any consequential changes to the Constitution as necessary;
- b) an interim arrangement be put in place to ensure suitable and sufficient continuity of provision;
- c) an Employment Committee be convened to undertake the recruitment exercise and to recommend the appointment of a candidate to the Combined Fire Authority at its meeting on 24 July; and
- d) it be noted that this role will also fulfil the role of Pensions Manager for the Service.

96. Mobile Telephone Masts on Service Property.

The CFA considered an exempt report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented the options for the future of existing telephone masts across the Service's estate. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 17', is filed with these minutes.

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

RESOLVED:

That:

- a) the renewal of lease agreements at all four stations be approved; and
- b) the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer be authorised to proceed with:
 - i) entering into an Agreement under the Electronic Communications Code 2017 for all four sites with Michael Aubrey telecoms;
 - ii) assigning the current agreements to Michael Aubrey telecoms; and
 - iii) Michael Aubrey telecoms negotiating sub-licences with the operators, to maintain the existing funding levels.

97. Employment Tribunal Outcome.

The CFA considered an exempt report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which detailed the outcome of two Employment Tribunal hearings. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 18', is filed with these minutes.

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

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

98. People Programme of Work and Equalities Plan 2024-27.

The CFA considered an exempt report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which provided an update on the People Programme of Work, which gives a detailed update on the actions taken throughout the year, and in response to the recommendations in the HMICFRS Inspection reports. An update was also provided on the development of the new Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 19', is filed with these minutes.

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

RESOLVED:

To note:

- a) the progress against the action plan and programme of work being implemented across the Service;
- b) the new Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme which has been developed as part of the People Programme and which will be managed via the Corporate Governance Committee.

10.00 - 11.37 am
24 June 2024

CHAIRMAN