



Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 9 February 2022.

PRESENT

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

Cllr. S. Barton	Mr. D. J. Grimley CC
Cllr. Hemant Rae Bhatia	Mr. R. Hills CC
Cllr. K. Bool	Mr. B. Lovegrove CC
Mr. G. A. Boulter CC	Ms. Betty Newton CC
Mr. S. L. Bray CC	Mr. J. T. Orson JP CC
Mr. B. Champion CC	Cllr. Elaine Pantling
Cllr. L. Fonseca	Mrs B. Seaton CC
Mr. K. Ghattoraya CC	Cllr. M. Valand

In attendance

Callum Faint, Chief Fire and Rescue Officer  
 Lauren Haslam, Monitoring Officer  
 Colin Sharpe, Deputy Director of Finance, Leicester City Council  
 Paul Weston, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer  
 Karl Bowden, Interim Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer  
 Manjora Bisla, Finance Manager  
 Georgina Coop, Area Manager  
 Gemma Duckworth, Democratic Services Officer

65. Apologies for absence.

An apology for absence was received from Mr. N. Bannister CC.

66. 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.

67. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items.

68. 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:

- Covid-19
- Refugees

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

It was reported that no questions had been received.

70. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the CFA meeting held on 2 December 2021 were considered.

It was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling that the minutes of the CFA meeting held on 2 December 2021 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the CFA meeting held on 2 December 2021 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

71. Minutes of the Corporate Governance Committee meeting held on 24 November 2021.

The minutes of the Corporate Governance Committee meeting held on 24 November 2021 were considered.

It was moved by Councillor K. Bool and seconded by Mrs. M. E. Newton CC that the minutes of the Corporate Governance meeting held on 24 November 2021 be noted.

The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Corporate Governance meeting held on 24 November 2021 be noted.

72. Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer and the Treasurer seeking approval for the budget for 2022/23 and the proposed budget strategy and capital programme for the period to 2024/25. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

It was noted that there had been a £7m reduction in the revenue spending grant over the last ten years. Following representations, those CFAs with the lowest Council Tax were being allowed an increase of up to £5. This would generate an additional £1.2m. Despite this, it was stated that Leicestershire would still have a relatively low Council Tax at £74.29 for a Band D property.

The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer acknowledged the potential impact on some communities, but reported that the additional funding would enable the CFA to meet a variety of cost increases, build better capacity in support services, increase financial resilience and, from 2024/25, meet the expected costs from the removal of Day Crewing Plus.

With regard to the capital programme, a three year programme was proposed and funding was provided for operational vehicles, property works, firefighting equipment and ICT developments. It was stressed that no borrowing or leasing would be required.

The forecast reserves position at 31 March 2022 was presented. Reserves totalled almost £17m. Also highlighted were the risks on this year's and future budgets.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) Members were generally in agreement of the £5 Council Tax increase but expressed concern that the impact on some taxpayers, particularly those in lower value properties in the City, would be far greater. It was felt important to publicise the actual cost for each banding (as many properties would be charged less than £5), rather than simply focussing on the larger properties in Band D, to which the £5 applied.
- ii) An increase in funding from Government was required and assurance was given that lobbying had been undertaken to ensure a review of the funding position. A fair funding review had been promised by Government but this had been delayed due to Covid-19. However, it was possible that there could be some information within the planned fire reform White Paper.

The recommendations contained within the report were moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling. The Motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- a) The budget strategy described in the report and the formal (technical) budget resolution for 2022/23 be approved;
- b) The capital programme described at paragraph 9 be approved, and the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer be authorised to commit expenditure on schemes;
- c) The changes to the earmarked reserves described in section 11 be approved;
- d) It be noted that no comments were received from stakeholders on the draft budget;
- e) It be noted that the Treasurer's view that reserves are adequate during 2022/23, and that estimates used to prepare the budget are robust;
- f) The medium-term financial strategy and forecasts presented at Appendix 6, and the financial challenges ahead, be noted;
- g) The treasury strategy and prudential indicators described in paragraph 14 of the report and Appendices 3 and 4, be approved;
- h) The proposed capital strategy described in paragraph 15 of the report and Appendix 4 be approved, and that the CFA would not wish to undertake commercial investment be confirmed;

- i) The equality implications arising from the budget, as described in paragraph 16 of the report, be noted;
- j) The scheme of virement described at Appendix 5 to the report be approved; and
- k) The addition of posts to the establishment as detailed in paragraph 8 of the report be approved.

73. Day Crewing Plus.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which provided an update on the further activity undertaken regarding the withdrawal from the Day Crewing Plus (DCP) duty system and the preferred proposed option. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

A Shift Working Group had previously been formed with the aim of reviewing all relevant data to understand the impact of moving away from DCP and to create a number of recommendations of what other systems or shifts could be put in place to ensure a suitable level of fire cover was maintained within the budgetary constraints of the Authority.

A workshop had taken place in September 2021 on the four recommended proposals put forward from the Shift Working Group. Officers had held a series of pre-consultation events across the service to discuss the proposals and to seek alternative solutions. However, feedback had been minimal.

The increase of the Council Tax precept would enable a total additional £1.8m to be reinvested into frontline and support services to maintain the current levels of response following the withdrawal of the DCP duty system.

The Shift Working Group had reconvened in January 2022 to consider a revised proposal, taking into account the additional funding. This preferred option had been presented to the Senior Management Team and it was proposed that this would be subject to full public consultation as part of the Integrated Risk Management Plan consultation process in 2023/24.

The proposed recommendations contained within the report were moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- a) The work undertaken within the Shift Working Group to establish the move away from the Day Crewing Plus Duty System be noted;
- b) The preferred option within Appendix B of the report be approved;
- c) The Service be authorised to undertake consultation on the option contained within Appendix B for consideration and inclusion in the Integrated (Community) Risk Management Plan 2023/34 public consultation.

74. Pay Policy Statement 2022/23.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer seeking approval of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service's Pay Policy Statement for 2022-23, for subsequent publication on the CFA's website. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

The proposed recommendation in the report was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service's Pay Policy Statement 2022-23 be approved for subsequent publication on the CFA's website.

75. Annual Equalities Report 2020-21.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which sought approval for the draft Annual Equalities report for 2020-21. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

Members commended the work that had been undertaken in relation to promoting equalities across the Service and the impact that this had had on whole time recruitment. A query was raised around engaging with community organisations so that an officer from the CFA could attend to promote working for the Service. In response, it was noted that a recruitment team would be established to engage with communities. This would now be possible due to having the available budget.

The proposed recommendation in the report was moved by Mrs. M. E. Newton CC and seconded by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the draft Annual Equalities report for 2020-21 be approved.

76. Firefighter Apprenticeship Delivery.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which provided details of the Service's intention to establish the necessary systems and processes required to deliver the Firefighter Apprenticeship Scheme internally, with effect from August 2022. The proposed changes to the delivery model of the Firefighter apprenticeship for all new recruits joining Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service were also highlighted. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 12' is filed with these minutes.

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service currently used the Fire Service College (FSC) as an external provider to deliver the Firefighter Apprenticeship to new recruits. However, it was proposed that the Service became an employer provider of the Firefighter Apprenticeship and moved away from using the FSC. This would ensure that the initial training was delivered using LFRS methods and would enable the Service to provide more reliable, regular and more flexible on the job support to learners. It was also anticipated that the cost of delivering the apprenticeship would be equivalent to the amount that could be gained from the apprenticeship levy. There would be a cost saving of £4,000 per recruit as a result of not attending a residential course at FSC.

It was expected that 13 new recruits would join LFRS in the second half of 2022, although it was noted that there were more people who were appointable to the Service. In view of the additional budget that would be available to fund training and assessment of the firefighter apprenticeships, the CFA supported the appointment of these additional staff. This would help with replacing the predicted number of retirements over the coming years.

Members agreed that the proposal was a very positive way forward and the use of apprentices was a good investment in the service. Assurance was given that any new recruit was appointed via the usual Terms and Conditions of service and once training had been completed, the recruit was awarded a nationally recognised Level 3 qualification.

The proposed recommendation was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- a) the CFA approves that the Service takes the action required to become an employer provider of the Firefighter Apprenticeship; and
- b) Approval be given to appoint additional new recruits who had already been assessed as being appointable.

77. Commercial Viability of Workshops.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which provided the outcome of the feasibility report produced on the commercial viability of the Service's Workshops function. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 13' is filed with these minutes.

In order to establish the feasibility for the existing workshops department to become a viable trading company, a series of soft market testing had been undertaken. It had been identified that services provided by a private company were not a like for like comparison with Leicestershire's in house service. It had been determined that no value would be gained in purchasing the service from an outside company as LFRS would still need to retain its existing staff due to the specialist equipment involved.

It was noted that although there were theoretical benefits for establishing a trading company from the workshops facility, and an amount of £105,000 income per annum was possible, the legislative requirements of providing a fire and rescue service, site security and additional costs associated with other contractual work would suggest an income of much less. This was further outweighed by the need to develop the existing facility to allow for a commercial business, to costs required to see any return on investment and the fact that this would not be realised until after a minimum of three years of working.

The proposed recommendation in the report was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the recommendations contained within the Commercial Feasibility of Workshops report (attached as Appendix A to the report) be supported, in that it is not commercially viable at this time to establish a trading company from the in-house workshops facility.

78. Firefighters' Pension Scheme - Age Discrimination Remedy Update.

The CFA considered a report of the Scheme Manager which provided an update on the developments concerning the age discrimination remedy/immediate detriment related to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme and which sought approval to offer personnel approaching retirement the option of an immediate detriment remedy. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 14' is filed with these minutes.

It was stated that since the last meeting, there had been little further national progress. Fire Authorities appeared to be taking differing approaches in that some were continuing to offer an immediate detriment remedy to upcoming retirements and those who had already retired; others were offering the former but not the latter; and others were offering neither. The most common approach was to offer a remedy to personnel approaching retirement.

The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer and Scheme Manager had considered how the CFA should best be advised to proceed. It was the view that a remedy should be offered to personnel approaching retirement but that action regarding those who had already retired should remain paused. The CFA should therefore continue not to adopt the Memorandum of Understanding.

The proposed recommendations contained within the report were moved by Mr. J. Orson CC and seconded by Councillor K. Bool. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- a) The update concerning the age discrimination remedy/immediate detriment related to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme be noted;
- b) Personnel approaching retirement may be offered the option of an immediate detriment remedy be approved; and
- c) Action regarding those who have already retired should remain paused be approved, and that the CFA should continue not to adopt the national Memorandum of Understanding.

79. 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 1 October – 31 December 2021. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 15' is filed with these minutes.

It was noted that the subject matters covered in the report included prevention, protection, response, performance and incidents of note. The continued positive increase within Community Safety and Fire Protection activities was noted, along with the number of alarms fitted by the Service.

The proposed recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the update provided on the key service delivery matters for the period 1 October – 31 December 2021 be noted, particularly

- a) The continued increase of both fire safety and fire protection visits
- b) The number of alarms being installed to ensure the safety of residents within the local community
- c) The positive feedback from the community in relation to the incidents attended by the Service.

80. Calendar of Meetings 2022/23.

The CFA considered a report of the Solicitor and Monitoring Officer seeking approval for the proposed dates for meetings of the CFA, the Corporate Governance Committee and the Local Pension Board for 2022-23.

The proposed recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the calendar of meetings for 2022-23, which sets out the dates for meetings of the CFA, the Corporate Governance Committee and the Local Pension Board, be approved.

81. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority will be held on 15 June 2022 at 10.00am.

82. Exclusion of the Press and Public.

It was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling 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, as defined in Paragraph 3; and

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, as defined in Paragraph 3; and

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

83. Training Facility - Service Leadership and Development Centre.

The CFA considered an exempt report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which provided an update on the progress of land acquisition for the Fire Behaviour Unit and developments undertaken to assess the potential to facilitate training delivery within the existing estate. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 20' is filed with these minutes.

The proposed recommendations contained within the report were moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

To note that:

- a) The process of progressing and prioritising a refined shortlist of sites suitable for fire behaviour training continues, to determine suitability; and
- b) That a further progress update will be presented to the CFA at its meeting on 15 June 2022.

10.00 – 11.02am  
09 February 2022

CHAIRMAN

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