

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 16 June 2021.

PRESENT

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

Mr. N. D. Bannister CC	Cllr. L. Fonseca
Cllr. S. Barton	Mr. D. J. Grimley CC
Cllr. Hemant Rae Bhatia	Mr. R. Hills CC
Cllr. K. Bool	Ms. Betty Newton CC
Mr. G. A. Boulter CC	Mr. J. T. Orson JP CC
Mr. S. L. Bray CC	Cllr. Elaine Pantling
Mr. L. Breckon JP CC	Mr. C. A. Smith CC
Mr. B. Champion CC	Cllr. M. Valand

In attendance

Callum Faint, Interim Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
 Lauren Haslam, Monitoring Officer
 Alison Greenhill, Treasurer
 Paul Weston, Interim Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
 Mick Grewcock, Interim Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
 Matthew Wallace, Director of Estates, Leicester City Council
 Colin Sharpe, Deputy Director of Finance, Leicester City Council
 Sean Connor, Senior HR Partner, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service

1. Election of Chairman.

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

It was moved by Councillor K. Bool and seconded by Mr. B. Champion 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.

Mr. N. J. Rushton CC – in the Chair

2. Election of Vice Chairman.

It was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Mrs. M. E. Newton CC that Councillor. E. Pantling be elected Vice Chairman of the CFA.

The motion was put and carried unanimously.

There being no other nominations, the Chairman declared Councillor E. Pantling elected as Vice Chairman of the CFA.

3. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Mr. Lovegrove CC and Mr Ghattoraya CC.

4. Declarations by interests.

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

Mr. J. T. Orson CC declared a personal interest as he was a neighbour of the Democratic Services Officer.

No further declarations were made.

5. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items.

6. 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:

- Whole-time Recruitment Campaign
- Recognising Covid-19 Secondments
- Promotions in the Service

7. Member Questions.

It was reported that no questions had been received.

8. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the CFA meeting held on 10 February 2021 were considered.

It was moved by Mr. N. Rushton CC and seconded by Mrs. M. E. Newton CC that the minutes of the CFA meeting held on 10 February 2021 should be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the CFA meeting held on 10 February 2021 should be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

9. To consider the minutes of the Corporate Governance Committee meeting held on 20 January 2021.

The minutes of the Corporate Governance Committee meeting held on 20 January 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 20 January 2021 be noted.

The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Corporate Governance meeting held on 20 January 2021 be noted.

10. Schedule of Nominations and Appointments for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

The CFA considered a report of the Monitoring Officer concerning the Schedule of Nominations and Appointments for the Municipal Year 2021/22 for the Combined Fire Authority. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 10" and the supplementary report, is filed with these minutes.

It was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling 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 supplementary report, be approved.

The Motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the following appointments to Committees for 2021/22 be agreed:

Corporate Governance Committee

**5 Conservative (4 County and 1 Rutland) 3 Labour (1 County and 2 City)
1 Liberal Democrat (1 County)**

Cllr. K. Bool (Chairman)
Mr. N. Bannister CC
Mr. K. Ghattoraya CC
Mr. R. Hills CC
Mr. J. T. Orson CC
Mrs. B. Newton CC
Cllr. L. Fonseca
Cllr. M. Valand
Mr. S. L. Bray CC

Employment Committee

**5 Conservative (4 County and 1 Rutland) 3 Labour (1 County and 2 City)
1 Liberal Democrat (1 County)**

Mr. N. Bannister CC
Cllr. K. Bool
Mr. B. Champion CC
Mr. D. Grimley CC
Mr. B. Lovegrove CC
Mrs. B. Newton CC
Cllr. E. Pantling
Cllr. S. Barton
Mr. G. A. Boulter CC

Local Pension Board

Mr. J. T. Orson CC (Chairman)
Cllr. H. Rae Bhatia

Equality Champion 2021/22

Ms. B. Newton CC

Outside BodiesLeicestershire Safer Communities Strategy Board 2021/22

Mr. N. Bannister CC

LGA Fire Services Commission 2021/22

Mr. N. Bannister CC

11. Urgent Action taken by the Monitoring Officer and Treasurer - Recruitment of the Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer.

The CFA considered a report of the Monitoring Officer concerning the urgent action taken by the Monitoring Officer and the Treasurer, following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, to put in place arrangements for the appointment of the Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer following the departure of the previous post holder. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 11", is filed with these minutes.

It was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling that the urgent action taken by the Monitoring Officer and Treasurer to put in place arrangements for the recruitment of the Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer following the departure of the previous post holder, be noted.

The Motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the urgent action taken by the Monitoring Officer and Treasurer to put in place arrangements for the recruitment of the Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer following the departure of the previous post holder, be noted.

12. Urgent Action taken by the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer - Firefighter Pension Scheme Age Discrimination Remedy.

The CFA considered a report of the Interim Chief Fire and Rescue Officer concerning the urgent action taken, following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, related to the fire fighters' pension scheme as a result of the recent court ruling concerning age discrimination. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 12" is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that without action this presented risks to the Combined Fire Authority which needed to be addressed immediately and could not wait for consideration at its next meeting. Taking action had mitigated the risk of litigation by the Fire Brigades Union.

It was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling that:

- a. The urgent action taken by the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer to mitigate the risks presented by recent court rulings relating to the Scheme, pension calculations and paying of pensions, be noted.
- b. The specific actions taken by the Interim Chief Fire and Rescue Officer, be endorsed, these being:
 - i. Cessation of the tapering of members on to the Firefighter Pension Scheme 2015 with immediate effect;
 - ii. Allowing Pension Scheme members who were approaching retirement and any ill health related cases the choice to have retirement benefits calculated in their legacy scheme or in the Fire Pension Scheme 2015;
 - iii. A retrospective review of the calculations for pensioners who retired after 1 April 2015 on the grounds of ill health with a view to moving them back into their legacy scheme at an early stage, where appropriate;
 - iv. A retrospective review of all retired members since 1 April 2015 with a view to moving them back to their legacy scheme, where appropriate.
- c. A further report be presented to a future meeting when further advice and guidance is received to enable the Local Pension Board and the CFA to consider the wider implications.

The Motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That

- a. The urgent action taken by the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer to mitigate the risks presented by recent court rulings relating to the Scheme, pension calculations and paying of pensions, be noted.
- b. The specific actions taken by the Interim Chief Fire and Rescue Officer, be endorsed, these being:
 - i. Cessation of the tapering of members on to the Firefighter Pension Scheme 2015 with immediate effect;

- ii. Allowing Pension Scheme members who were approaching retirement and any ill health related cases the choice to have retirement benefits calculated in their legacy scheme or in the Fire Pension Scheme 2015;
 - iii. A retrospective review of the calculations for pensioners who retired after 1 April 2015 on the grounds of ill health with a view to moving them back into their legacy scheme at an early stage, where appropriate;
 - iv. A retrospective review of all retired members since 1 April 2015 with a view to moving them back to their legacy scheme, where appropriate.
- c. A further report be presented to a future meeting when further advice and guidance is received to enable the Local Pension Board and the CFA to consider the wider implications.

13. Pension Fund Scheme Manager and Treasurer Arrangements.

The CFA considered a report of the Treasurer concerning the on-going arrangements for the role of Treasurer and seeking approval to a change in the nominated Firefighters' Pension Fund Scheme Manager. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 13" is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that Alison Greenhill had been appointed as the Chief Operating Officer at Leicester City Council at the beginning of March 2021. She would, however, retain the statutory responsibility of s151 Officer role for the CFA for the foreseeable future, although, in practice, due to the heavy workload, she would be supported in her role by the Deputy Director of Finance / Deputy s151 at the City Council.

Regarding the Fire Fighters' Pension Scheme, it was a requirement that the Pension Scheme Manager be named; this would now be Colin Sharpe, Deputy Director of Finance / Deputy s151.

It was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling that

- a. It be noted that the Director of Finance / s151 officer at Leicester City Council (the formal Treasurer to the CFA) proposes to formally delegate her powers to the Deputy s151 officer.
- b. The Deputy Director of Finance / Deputy s151 officer at Leicester City Council, be approved as the Scheme Manager for the Firefighters' Pension Scheme, with immediate effect; and
- c. Article 9.4 (g) of the Constitution be varied to read: "The Treasurer will usually undertake the role of Scheme Manager for the Firefighters' Pension Schemes on behalf of the CFA, subject to any limitations imposed by the CFA. However, the CFA may alternatively formally delegate this role to another senior officer of LFRS or a constituent authority."

The Motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That

- a. It be noted that the Director of Finance / s151 officer at Leicester City Council (the formal Treasurer to the CFA) proposes to formally delegate her powers to the Deputy s151 officer.
- b. The Deputy Director of Finance / Deputy s151 officer at Leicester City Council, be approved as the Scheme Manager for the Firefighters' Pension Scheme, with immediate effect; and
- c. Article 9.4 (g) of the Constitution be varied to read: "The Treasurer will usually undertake the role of Scheme Manager for the Firefighters' Pension Schemes on behalf of the CFA, subject to any limitations imposed by the CFA. However, the CFA may alternatively formally delegate this role to another senior officer of LFRS or a constituent authority."

14. Training Facility - Service Leadership and Development Centre: Project Update.

The CFA considered a report of the Interim Chief Fire and Rescue Officer concerning the progress made with land acquisition and design of the Fire Behaviour Unit and clarifying the impact that the desired training delivery model had on the existing estate. Members also received a presentation from the Director of Estates and Building Services at Leicester City Council. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 14 and the presentation, is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that officers would continue negotiations regarding the site at Desford, to be used as a dirty training facility, as this was preferable to having one in a more urban area. A new more modern fire behaviour unit would be far more environmentally friendly and more sympathetic to neighbours compared to the old ones still in use.

It was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling that

- a. The process of acquiring land suitable for fire behaviour training continues with the need to pursue and consider alternative sites, be noted;
- b. The fact that research and learning from interaction with other fire and rescue services had better informed and influenced the production of initial design plans for the fire behaviour unit, be noted;
- c. The use of new technology had changed the way in which learning and development was delivered so allowing better use of the existing estate, be noted; and
- d. A further progress update be presented to the CFA at its meeting on 22 September 2021.

The Motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That

- a. The process of acquiring land suitable for fire behaviour training continues with the need to pursue and consider alternative sites, be noted;
- b. The fact that research and learning from interaction with other fire and rescue services had better informed and influenced the production of initial design plans for the fire behaviour unit, be noted;
- c. The use of new technology had changed the way in which learning and development was delivered so allowing better use of the existing estate, be noted; and
- d. A further progress update be presented to the CFA at its meeting on 22 September 2021.

15. Whole-time Recruitment.

The CFA considered a report of the Interim Chief Fire and Rescue Officer seeking approval of the strategy to recruit firefighters to meet the needs of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service up to the end of 2022/23. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 15" is filed with these minutes.

In response to questions the following issues were raised:

- i. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the increased use of technology had enabled LFRS to reach more sections of the community. LFRS was at the leading edge of Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) with levels of diversity in recruitment and the workforce. Practices undertaken would be shared with other FRS. However, whilst success was recognised, the Interim Chief Fire and Rescue Officer acknowledged that there was always room for improvement and more would be done.
- ii. The Service always recruited the right people with the right skills who could undertake the job. However, the process of recruitment needed to be repeated so as to continue to increase diversity and ensure that the workforce represented the community served.

It was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling that the

- a) Firefighter recruitment strategy for 2021/22 and 2022/23 (set out in paragraphs 14-17 of the report) be approved;
- b) Fact that analysis showed that the selection methods used in the recent recruitment campaign had not negatively impacted on diversity statistics, and particularly the increased success of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic applicants in progressing through the recruitment process, be noted.

The Motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the

- a) Firefighter recruitment strategy for 2021/22 and 2022/23 (set out in paragraphs 14-17 of the report) be approved;
- b) Fact that analysis showed that the selection methods used in the recent recruitment campaign had not negatively impacted on diversity statistics, and particularly the increased success of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic applicants in progressing through the recruitment process, be noted.

16. Service Delivery Update.

The CFA considered a report of the Interim Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which gave an update on the key service delivery performance for the previous year, April 2020 to March 2021. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 16" is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that significant improvements had been made during a very challenging year. It was hoped that the performance would be continued. The Interim Chief Fire and Rescue Officer recognised the efforts of staff and volunteers in achieving this level of performance.

In response to questions, the following issues were raised:

- i. The invitation to tender for the new Aerial Ladder Platform closed last week and only one tender had been received. This would be assessed against the specification. The delivery schedule would be determined by the factory, and this was expected to be around 12-18 months. The 42-meter turntable ladder would increase the service officered to the community.
- ii. No residential buildings in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland area had been clad like the Grenfell Tower; although it was recognised that this had been more than just a cladding issue.
- iii. Fire Protection Teams would be working with property owners to address the issues; the Service had a good track record of using legal powers to enforce action although preferred to use education and discussion rather than enforcement action.
- iv. Following the Grenfell enquiry, LFRS had increased resources in the Fire Protection area and had established two more Inspection Officers on a temporary basis following receipt of grant funding from the Government.
- v. Home Fire Safety Checks were now more focused on the most vulnerable. A nurturing approach had been taken with the community, working with partners to ensure that the most vulnerable were supported.
- vi. The work around high-rise buildings had been detailed in the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and was a potential area of growth. LFRS was also a statutory partner for Building Control, so they were consulted on the design of new buildings. The increase in Fire Protection Officers enabled the Team to respond to and meet demand. Whilst this was supported by Government grant funding, the CFO would welcome this being added to the base budget for the Fire Authority.

Members commended the Interim CFO and his staff for completing the Fire Safety Audits of 109 high-rise premises, to meet the needs of the National Building Risk Review

following the Grenfell fire. The Interim CFO stated that all issues identified would be followed-up with property owners to ensure that concerns were addressed.

It was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling that the update provided on the key service delivery matters for the period April 2020 – March 2021, be noted, particularly

- a) The positive increase in performance for 2020/21 in Prevention and Protection;
- b) The significant increase in On-Call appliance availability; and
- c) The professional approach taken by the Service in supporting the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the update provided on the key service delivery matters for the period April 2020 – March 2021, be noted, particularly

- a) The positive increase in performance for 2020/21 in Prevention and Protection;
- b) The significant increase in On-Call appliance availability; and
- c) The professional approach taken by the Service in supporting the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

17. On-Call Review Project.

The CFA considered a report of the Interim Chief Fire and Rescue Officer concerning the outcomes of the On-Call review project, following the update given at its meeting in February 2020. A copy of the report marked “Agenda Item 17” is filed with these minutes.

In response to questions, the following issues were raised:

- i. It was predicted that, post-Covid, there would be opportunity to recruit more on-call firefighters as it was expected that more people would continue to work from home. A range of options would be explored in order to attract more recruits, including offering the opportunity for those working from home on their main employment to work from a fire station, whilst being on-call.
- ii. On-Call firefighters were trained in the same techniques and equipment as wholetime firefighters. The initial training lasted for 10 weeks and this was followed by 24 months of supported training enabling them to build on their skills and increase their role. It was proposed to reduce the 24 months to a more intensive 10 months, following requests from on-call firefighters. A range of flexible options for training would be offered to enable the on-call staff to fit it in alongside their main employment and home life.
- iii. There would be a measured approach to delivering the outcomes detailed in the report which would be balanced against organisational capacity, over the next 12 months.
- iv. Regarding diversity in on-call recruitment, most on-call stations were located in rural areas in the county. As there was requirement for on-call firefighters to live

near to the station, the opportunity to increase diversity was limited as residents in rural areas were predominately white British. The blended approach to recruitment adopted by LFRS – i.e. taking new starters, on-call migrations and transferees from other FRS, was the best approach to meet the demand for firefighters, improve diversity of the workforce and to bring in a range of skills and experience to the Service. Approximately 30% of On-Call staff were also wholetime firefighters.

It was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling that outcome of the On-Call Review Project and the impact it has had on the On-Call appliance availability, which increased from 56.7% (2018-19) to 76.9% (2020-21), be noted

The Motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the outcome of the On-Call Review Project and the impact it has had on the On-Call appliance availability, which increased from 56.7% (2018-19) to 76.9% (2020-21), be noted.

18. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 28 July 2021.

19. Exclusion of the Press and Public.

It was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton 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 items of business as defined in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Act detailed below:

- Appointment of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2;
- Mobilising System 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 items of business as defined in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Act detailed below:

- Appointment of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2;
- Mobilising System 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.

20. Appointment of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer.

The CFA considered a report of the Employment Panel concerning the appointment of a Chief Fire and Rescue Officer. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 21" is filed with these minutes.

It was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Mrs. M. E. Newton CC that Callum Faint be appointed as the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer.

The Motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That Callum Faint be appointed as the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer.

21. Mobilising System.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer concerning the Mobilising System and the risks it presented to Service delivery. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 22" is filed with these minutes.

It was moved by Mr. N. J. Rushton CC and seconded by Councillor E. Pantling that the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer be authorised to explore options for the future that also include the ability to seek, tender and procure a replacement system.

The Motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer be authorised to explore options for the future that also include the ability to seek, tender and procure a replacement system.