

Minutes of a meeting of the Combined Fire Authority held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 12 February 2020.

PRESENT

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

Cllr. S. Barton	Mr. W. Liquorish JP CC
Mr. I. E. G. Bentley CC	Mr. M. T. Mullaney CC
Cllr. Hemant Rae Bhatia	Ms. Betty Newton CC
Cllr. K. Bool	Mr J. Poland CC
Mr. G. A. Boulter CC	Mrs. C. M. Radford CC
Cllr. L. Fonseca	Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC
Mr. D. Harrison CC	Cllr. A. Thalukdar
Mr. J. Kaufman CC	Mrs. M. Wright CC

In attendance

Rick Taylor, Chief Fire and Rescue Officer  
Alison Greenhill, Treasurer  
Lauren Haslam, Monitoring Officer  
Richard Hall, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer  
Callum Faint, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer  
Mark Drinkwater, Fire Brigades Union  
Adrian Robinson, Fire Officers Association  
Anna Poole, Democratic Services Officer

64. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Mr. N. J. Rushton CC.

65. Declarations of Interest.

Councillor S. Barton and Mr. D. Harrison CC each declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10 – Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-24 – Public Consultation Results as members of the Integrated Risk Management Plan Project Board.

66. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items.

67. Chair's Announcements.

The Chairman's Announcements were tabled at the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes. The announcements covered the following matters:

- HMICFRS
- Award for Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service

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

It was reported that no questions had been received.

69. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the CFA meeting on 22 January 2020 were considered.

It was moved by Councillor Singh Johal and seconded by Councillor Thalukdar that the minutes should be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Combined Fire Authority held on 22 January 2020 should be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

70. Minutes of the Corporate Governance Committee meeting held on 20 November 2019.

The minutes of the Corporate Governance Committee meeting held on 20 November 2019 were considered.

It was moved by Councillor Singh Johal and seconded by Councillor Bool that the minutes be noted.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee held on 20 November 2019 be noted.

71. Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2020-21.

The CFA considered a report of the Treasurer which sought approval for the budget for 2020/21 and the proposed budget strategy and capital programme for the period to 2022/22. A copy of the report and the subsequent supplementary report, both marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that, unusually, the settlement figures had not been received as this was still to be laid before Parliament. Assumptions in preparing the budget had been made; if the figures were to change following consideration by Parliament then an extraordinary meeting of the CFA would need to be called. The funding review which would assess authorities' needs was expected this summer. It would include three debates concerning Public Sector funding, Fair funding and Business Rates Retention.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- i. The situation had created a level of uncertainty, impeding ability to plan ahead as the budget was for one year only; the budget allocated previously gave a three-year outlook, enabling more efficient planning.
- ii. Outcomes from the inspection following the Grenfell enquiry had not been included in the base figures as it was not yet clear if additional work was required. The

Home Office had suggested the allocation of funding for two years to deal with the issues associated with Grenfell.

- iii. No further clarity had been received for the figures included in the budget for the Fire Fighters Pension Scheme which were indicative grant figures for 2021/22. It was expected that more funding would be received than had been included in the budget; funding for beyond 2020/21 was unclear.
- iv. Funding for the New Dimensions Grant was announced on a six-monthly basis so planning for delivery was challenging. Funding for the next six months had been announced, but it was not known whether the funding for the following six months would be confirmed. The current scheme had been introduced for ten years and would be reviewed in 2024.
- v. The service's treasury activities were carried out by Leicester City Council on the Authority's behalf as this gave efficiencies of scale and the Authority's Treasurer was also the Finance Director at the City Council.

Following members comments it was agreed that the allocation of £250,000 for the conversion of the canteen space at Fire Service headquarters would be subject to the production of a robust business case and consideration by the CFA for viability, prior to funding being agreed.

Members highlighted that, since the ceasing of the Rate Support Grant, the Police/PCC had been allocated additional funding although Fire and Rescue Services had not been. Officers welcomed members support with highlighting this, by the lobbying of colleagues and MPs.

The resolutions contained with the report were moved by Councillor Singh Johal and seconded by Councillor Thalukdar. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That

- a) the budget for 2020/21, and the budget strategy described in the report, be approved subject to changes which reflect final rates figures notified by billing authorities, as now reported by the Treasurer (and which are reflected in this resolution).
- b) It be noted that the final position has improved due to receipt of rates figures for 2020/21 from billing authorities. Therefore, it has been possible to add a further £190,000 to the budget, which will be added to general fund reserves for strike cover.
- c) the capital programme described at paragraph 9 in the report be approved, and the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer be authorised to commit expenditure on schemes;
- d) the earmarked reserves described at paragraph 11 in the report, be noted;
- e) it be noted that no comments have been received on the draft budget from consultees;

- f) the aggregate of the taxbases communicated by billing authorities for 2020/21 is 329,412.37, be noted. [Item T in the formula in Section 42B of the Act].
- g) the following amounts be calculated for the year 2020/21 in accordance with Section 42A and Section 42B of the Act:
- i. 39,653,000 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 42A(2) of the Act.
  - ii. 17,266,135 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 42A(3) of the Act.
  - iii. £22,386,865 being the amount by which (a) above exceeds (b) above, calculated by the Authority in accordance with Section 42A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax Requirement for the year. [Item R in the formula in Section 42B of the Act].
  - iv. £67.9600 being the amount at (c) above (Item R) divided by the amount at 2.6 above (Item T), calculated by the Authority in accordance with Section 42B of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
- h) the Authority, in accordance with section 40 of the Act, issues precepts to each billing authority stating:-
- i. the amounts shown in the appendix to this resolution as the tax payable for each band;
  - ii. the amounts shown in the appendix as the precept payable by each authority.
- i) the view of the Treasurer that reserves are adequate during 2020/21, and that estimates used to prepare the budget are robust, be noted;
- j) the treasury strategy and prudential indicators described in paragraph 14 of the report, and Appendices 3 and 4 attached to the report, be approved;
- k) the proposed capital strategy described in paragraph 15 of the report and Appendix 4 attached to the report, be approved, and it be confirmed that the CFA would not wish to undertake commercial investment;
- l) the equality implications arising from the budget, as described at paragraph 16 of the report, be noted;
- m) the scheme of virement described at Appendix 5 to the report, be noted;
- n) under Section 52ZB of the Act, it be determined that the relevant basic amount of council tax for 2020/21 is not excessive in accordance with principles issued

under section 52ZC of the Act and expected to be approved by Parliament (being an increase of less than 2%); and that in the event that the local government finance settlement has not been approved by 12<sup>th</sup> February, the making of this determination be delegated to the Chief Fire Officer;

- o) should the Chief Fire Officer not be able to make the determination referred in (n) above, that resolutions (a) to (m) above shall be deemed not to be approved, and an emergency meeting of the CFA shall be convened.

72. Pay Policy Statement 2020-21.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer concerning the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service's Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

In response to questions, members were informed that staff allocated a car for work purposes could also use it for private purposes; they did contribute towards fuel and running costs through taxation, which had caused significant concern to staff due to the level of the tax burden. The option to use the car for private purposes did not include travel to and from work as this was regarded as business travel as they may be required to respond to an incident during the journey time.

It was moved by Councillor Singh Johal and seconded by Mr. Harrison CC that the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Pay Policy Statement 2020-21 be approved.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Pay Policy Statement 2020-21 be approved.

73. Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-24 - Public Consultation Results.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer regarding the outcome of the public consultation on the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-24 proposals. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 10', is filed with these minutes.

Mark Drinkwater, Leicestershire Brigade Secretary of the Fire Brigades Union informed the CFA that he was concerned:

- that the IRMP proposals were vague;
- that only 83 responses had been received to the consultation;
- about the use of the word 'flexibility' within the IRMP, the application of this to a fire fighter and how this could be applied in the future;
- about a lack of detail within the IRMP, showing how proposals would be implemented;
- that no alternative had been presented to Proposal 7 – Use of Day Crewing Plus, for the public to consider when responding to the consultation.

A full copy of the statement made by the Fire Brigades Union to the CFA is filed with these minutes.

Adrian Robinson, Chief Executive of the Fire Officers' Association, informed the CFA that:

- FOA had worked closely with officers since last June to maintain the situation with the use of DCP at some stations;
- DCP was fit for purpose, liked by fire fighters, and offered the best option for the Service and for communities;
- There was a group of fire fighters (predicted to be 50+) waiting to join the DCP duty system;
- removal of the DCP system would create financial hardship for some fire fighters;
- The Health and Safety Executive had stated that any Fire and Rescue Service bringing in an alternative system must comply with the Working Time Regulations unless a Collective Agreement could be reached;

A full copy of the statement made by the Fire Officers' Association to the CFA is filed with these minutes.

The Monitoring Officer advised the CFA that, in light of the judgement on the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, legal advice had been sought from a specialist and the outcome was awaited. A report on the legal implications of continuing with DCP and the risks that could arise would be considered by the CFA, possibly via an extraordinary meeting, in advance of the AGM in June. This was a complex issue and it would take some time to ensure that the CFA was provided with the best quality information on which to base its decision about the use of DCP going forward. The Monitoring Officer added that it would be premature to make a final decision on the continuing use of DCP whilst the legal advice was awaited and suggested that the comments of the FBU and FOA were noted so that these could be taken into account when the CFA consider the issue in the future.

The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer informed members that senior officers engaged with all staff on the issue of DCP regardless of whether they were represented by a trade body. He added that the level of response received to the consultation reflected the norm for this type of activity.

Members were informed that the IRMP set out the principles to deliver a service against a dynamic organisation, and these principles needed to be flexible in order to meet a variety of demands on the Service. An Equality Impact Assessment had been completed on the IRMP proposals.

In response to discussion, members raised the following:

- (i) That the wording in the consultation should be 'tested' in future before full roll-out of the consultation. Members expressed concern that some suggestions made by the IRMP Project Board on the design of the consultation had not been taken on board;
- (ii) Input from the Trade Unions into the design of the consultation, possibly through the IRMP Project Board, would be welcomed;
- (iii) The different method of calculating response times was welcomed;
- (iv) That the inclusion of an item on DCP on every CFA agenda would be welcomed.

The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer informed members that the Trade Unions had been invited to attend the IRMP Project Board set up to develop the proposals for consultation but had not taken up this offer.

Members welcomed the clarity on the outstanding legal aspects of DCP provided by the Monitoring Officer and recognised that any decision made at the meeting to support all seven of the IRMP proposals did not affect future consideration of the use of DCP and the related issues.

It was moved by Councillor Singh Johal and seconded by Mrs. Wright CC that

- (a) the report and the supporting appendices be noted, and the seven proposals in the 2020-2024 IRMP be approved; and
- (b) Day Crewing Plus to be included on every CFA agenda.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- (a) the report and the supporting appendices be noted, and the seven proposals in the 2020-2024 IRMP be approved; and
- (b) Day Crewing Plus to be included on every CFA agenda.

74. Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Financial Resource - Update.

The CFA considered a report of the Treasurer which provided an update on the work being undertaken with the Fire and Rescue Service Finance Team following difficulties experienced during the 2018/19 accounts preparation and the related audit process. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 11', is filed with these minutes.

The Treasurer assured members that there had been no errors within the accounts provided for audit. The concerns raised by the external auditors had related to the depth of experience within the Finance Team.

An experienced Financial Manager had been engaged to provide support and training to the Finance Team and officers were working collaboratively throughout the year with the new auditors to ensure that issues were raised and addressed as they arose.

It was moved by Councillor Singh Johal and seconded by Mr. Harrison CC that the report giving an update on the support in place for the Fire and Rescue Service Finance Team be noted.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report giving an update on the support in place for the Fire and Rescue Service Finance Team be noted.

75. On-Call Review Project - Update.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer concerning the progress made with the On-Call review project. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 12', is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that the project had been started as the On-Call availability had slipped below 50%. A range of actions, set out in the report, had been taken to address this, all of which had been taken with the consent of staff. Staff were congratulated on their efforts and support of the project. Each proposal would now be evaluated to explore what would work best in which area.

Employers were praised for their support of staff who were On-Call Fire Fighters and the impact of this on the employer and the workplace was recognised. The Service was currently working with a number of employers and an employer recognition scheme would be reintroduced.

The CFA agreed that a note of thanks be sent to On-Call Fire Fighters and the employers who supported them in delivering a service.

It was moved by Councillor Singh Johal and seconded by Mr. Shepherd CC that

- (a) the progress made with the On-Call Review project and the impact it has had on the On-Call appliance availability which had increased by 8% in the last 12 months, be noted;
- (b) a note of thanks be sent, on behalf of the CFA, to On-Call Fire Fighters and the employers who supported them in delivering a service.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- (a) the progress made with the On-Call Review project and the impact it has had on the On-Call appliance availability which had increased by 8% in the last 12 months, be noted.
- (b) a note of thanks be sent, on behalf of the CFA, to On-Call Fire Fighters and the employers who supported them in delivering a service.

**76. Service Delivery - Update.**

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which highlighted the key service delivery matters since the CFA meeting held on 27 September 2019. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda item 13", is filed with these minutes.

In response to questions, the following points were raised:

- i. Some emergency calls received could be duplicate calls for one incident;
- ii. Flood recovery work was not a statutory duty of Fire and Rescue Services, although they had a moral duty to support such activity. Officers welcomed members lobbying MPs and Parliament regarding funding for this activity;
- iii. Tactical Response Vehicles were used for a variety of incidents. The CFO assured members that the use of TRVs did not impact on the quality of the service provided. Trained fire fighters were sent to every call, and once they arrived and the situation had been assessed, it may be identified that additional resource was required. This was the case for full fire engines as well as TRVs.



Members commended officers for the Prevention Activity, listed in the report, that had been carried out and also for receiving the award from the Asian Fire Service Association for positive action carried out.

It was moved by Councillor Singh Johal and seconded by Mr. Shepherd CC that the:

- (a) update provided on the key service delivery matters since 27 September 2019 be noted;
- (b) continued positive increase in On-Call availability following the introduction of Tactical Response Vehicles be noted;
- (c) award received for positive action from the Asian Fire Service's Association be noted;
- (d) high level of effective response in a period of increased demand be noted.

**RESOLVED:**

That the

- (a) update provided on the key service delivery matters since 27 September 2019 be noted;
- (b) continued positive increase in On-Call availability following the introduction of Tactical Response Vehicles be noted;
- (c) award received for positive action from the Asian Fire Service's Association be noted;
- (d) high level of effective response in a period of increased demand be noted.

77. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2020-25.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which sought approval to consult on the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme for 2020-25. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 14', is filed with these minutes.

Mrs. Newton CC, the CFA's Equality Champion, commended the Equality Officer for his work in this area and highlighted that the work had won a positive action award from the Asian Fire Service Association. She asked members to publicise the consultation throughout their networks and informed members that there were two areas of concern – the number of women in the Service and the reduction in BAME representation, especially given the diversity of the area.

It was moved by Councillor Singh Johal and seconded by Mr. Poland CC that the:

- a) draft equality scheme 2020-25 be approved for wider consultation and publication;
- b) Chief Fire and Rescue Officer be authorised to make any necessary amendments prior to publication.

**RESOLVED:**

That the

- a) draft equality scheme 2020-25 be approved for wider consultation and publication;
- b) Chief Fire and Rescue Officer be authorised to make any necessary amendments prior to publication.

78. Calendar of Meetings 2020-21.

The CFA considered a report of the Solicitor and Monitoring Officer which sought approval for the dates for meetings of the Combined Fire Authority, the Corporate Governance Committee and the Local Pension Board for 2020-21 (as set out in the appendix to the report). A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 15', is filed with these minutes.

It was moved by Councillor Singh Johal and seconded by Councillor Bool that the calendar of meetings 2020-21, (attached at the Appendix to the report), setting out the dates for meetings of the Combined Fire Authority, the Corporate Governance Committee and the Local Pension Board for 2020-21, be approved.

**RESOLVED:**

That the calendar of meetings 2020-21, (attached at the Appendix to the report), setting out the dates for meetings of the Combined Fire Authority, the Corporate Governance Committee and the Local Pension Board for 2020-21, be approved.

79. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 17 June 2020 at 10:00am at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Birstall.

10.00 - 11.30 am  
12 February 2020

CHAIRMAN