



Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 27 July 2022.

PRESENT

Councillor H. R. Bhatia (in the Chair)

Cllr. S. Barton	Mr. M. T. Mullaney CC
Cllr. K. Bool	Ms. Betty Newton CC
Mr. B. Champion CC	Mr. J. T. Orson CC
Cllr. L. Fonseca	Mrs. P. Posnett MBE CC
Mr. D. A. Gamble CC	Mrs B. Seaton CC
Mr. K. Ghattoraya CC	Mr. C. A. Smith CC
Mr. B. Lovegrove 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, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
 Gemma Duckworth, Democratic Services Officer

20. Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. N. Bannister CC, Mr. S. Bray CC, Councillor A Byrne, Mr. D. Grimley CC, Mr. R. Hills CC and Mr. N. Rushton CC.

21. Declarations of Interest.

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

Mrs. B. Seaton CC declared a non-registrable personal interest as she was in receipt of a pension from the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority.

22. Urgent Items.

The Chairman agreed to receive a verbal update from the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer (CFO) on the major incident which had been declared by Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service on 19 July 2022 as a result of the hot weather.

There had been a significant increase in calls to the Service on 18 July with a further escalation the following day. Assurance was given that, despite the Service being extremely stretched, officers coped very well and the CFO commended the way that control staff had stepped up to respond to the number of calls.

A number of Fire and Rescue Services across the country had also declared major incidents and resources had therefore been committed across a number of areas. Leicestershire had relied on mutual aid from Derbyshire and Lincolnshire.

On 19 July, the Service had received 1119 emergency calls and over 150 fire engines had been mobilised across LLR. It was pleasing to note that there had been no injuries, death or loss of property. One firefighter had reported a heat stress injury but had not needed to visit hospital and was now back at work.

Members wished to record their thanks to staff; the CFO was recording a vlog for this purpose and would include the thanks of the members.

In response to a query, it was stated that there were lessons to be learnt from the incident. Debriefing meetings, both within the Fire and Rescue Service and multi-agency, were being arranged to consider this. The Service was also future planning for climate change. Two new vehicles had been ordered and would assist with tackling fires in harder to reach areas.

Social media was promoting the risk of fire to farmers during the harvesting season, in particular the use of the 'What3words' App which gave a precise location of where someone was in the case of an emergency.

23. 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:

- HMICFRS Inspection
- Recruitment of Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
- New Fire Engines.

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

It was reported that no questions had been received.

25. Minutes.

The minutes of the CFA meeting held on 15 June 2022 were considered.

It was moved by Councillor Bhatia and seconded by Councillor Bool that the minutes of the CFA meeting held on 15 June 2022 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the CFA meeting held on 15 June 2022 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

26. Revenue and Capital Outturn 2021/22.

The CFA considered a report of the Treasurer which provided the final revenue and capital outturn figures for 2021/22 and sought approval to carry forward funds for specific

purposes. The figures would be subject to External Audit review before the annual Statement of Accounts was submitted for approval to the CFA. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 7' is filed with these minutes.

The final outturn showed an underspend against the updated revenue budget of £321,000 and £3,609,000 slippage on the capital programme. In response to a query around dealing with slippage, it was stated that this was partly due to Covid-19. This had resulted in delays with the delivery of new vehicles and although the Service had a good relationship with the suppliers, there were limitations as to remedying this due to global supply chain issues. Assurance was given that when monitoring of the current financial year was undertaken, consideration would be given to what had been spent and where there had been slippage.

In terms of staffing vacancies within the Estates Team, these posts had now been filled and additional staffing had been appointed to help with work on updating the Estate as a whole.

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

RESOLVED:

That:

- a) the revenue and capital outturn position for 2021/22 (subject to the external audit) be noted;
- b) the carry forward of £3,609,000 of capital funding into 2022/23 be approved;
- c) the transfer of the £321,000 revenue underspend to the Estates Strategy reserve to provide additional resources towards the new Learning and Development facility be approved; and
- d) the transfer of £573,000 of government grant accounted for in 2021/22 to an accounting reserve to enable the offsetting of collection fund deficits that are recognised in 2022/23 and future years be approved.

27. External Auditor's Annual Report to the Year Ending 31 March 2021.

The CFA considered a report of the Treasurer which presented the External Auditor's Annual Report 2020/21. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes. The report summarised the audit work for the year ended 31 March 2021.

An unqualified opinion had been issued in December 2021. It was reported that there had been a new approach to Value for Money reporting in that it was now a requirement to provide a narrative commentary on any arrangements. It was also necessary to identify any significant weaknesses; these would be reported and recommendations made. No weaknesses had been identified.

However, Mazars were still unable to issue the annual audit certificate due to waiting for National Audit Office guidance. This had now been received and it was anticipated that the certificate would be issued in the coming weeks.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Councillor Bhatia and seconded by Councillor Bool. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the External Auditor's Annual Report 2020/21 be noted.

28. Workforce Planning and Service Establishment.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which provided information on workforce planning and total establishment numbers within the Service. Permission was sought to increase the establishment in preparation for the withdrawal and introduction of changes to the Day Crewing Plus duty system. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

There would be an establishment change of 42 in the first instance and recruitment would be undertaken in accordance with a recruitment proposal plan. Public consultation around the IRMP would also be taken into account.

The recommendations contained within the report were moved by Councillor Bhatia and seconded by Councillor Bool. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That:

- a) An establishment change from 348 to 390, accounting for organisational structure changes and to meet the establishment needs as a result of attrition, retirement and the change to the Day Crewing Plus duty system be approved; and
- b) Authority be delegated to the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer to recruit the required number of employees needed to meet the increase of the establishment as a result of moving away from the Day Crewing Plus duty system.

29. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2022-27.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which sought approval for the proposed Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Scheme 2022-27. The Equalities Annual Report 2021-22 was also presented. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

The achievements made in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion were commended. It was stated that the Service had won an award for its work in this area and had undertaken lots of activity around positive action. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer thanked for his support in aiming to make the Service a more diverse workforce.

It was noted that the Senior Leadership Team was keen to undertake a cultural view of the Service; this was being carried out independently with the support of the City Council. Assurance was given that EDI was being improved but would continue to be reviewed continually.

The recommendations contained within the report were moved by Councillor Bhatia and seconded by Mrs Newton CC.

RESOLVED:

That:

- a) The draft EDI Scheme 2022-27 be approved for wider consultation and publication;
- b) The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer be authorised to make any necessary amendments prior to publication;
- c) Approval be given for progress against the plan to be presented to the Corporate Governance Committee on a six monthly basis; and
- d) The content of the Annual Equalities Report 2021-22 be acknowledged.

30. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority will be held on 21 September 2022 at 10.00am.

10.00 - 10.54 am
27 July 2022

CHAIRMAN

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