



## NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

### MINUTES

of meeting of the Authority held on **25 JUNE 2010** at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge, Nottingham from 10.30 am to 11.45 am.

#### Membership

Councillor D Pulk	(Chair)
Councillor M Wood	(Vice-Chair)
Councillor V Bobo	
Councillor S Carroll	
Councillor B Cooper	
Councillor B Cross	
Councillor V Dobson	
Councillor S Fielding	
^ Councillor A Foster	
Councillor P Griggs	
Councillor B Grocock	
^ Councillor J Hemsall	
Councillor H James	
^ Councillor T Pettengell	
Councillor K Rigby	
^ Councillor T Spencer	
Councillor G Wheeler	
Councillor J Zadrozny	

Members absent are marked ^

#### **13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Foster (on other City Council business), Hemsall, Pettengell and Spencer.

#### **14 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of interests were made, but Councillor Zadrozny and Frank Swann, Chief Fire Officer, subsequently declared interests in agenda item 11 relating to Auditing and Inspection Regimes (minute 23), details being recorded in that minute.

#### **15 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Jason Zadrozny to his first meeting of the Fire Authority and looked forward to working with him during the next few months. He reported on meetings and visits he had made since the last meeting which included the Local Government Association Fire Forum at which a Senior Government Official had talked about Regional Control Centres and the likelihood that an announcement on their future would be made shortly, possibly at the Fire and Rescue Conference the following week. He had also attended the Fire Congress when possible cuts to budgets had been mentioned, but nothing would be known until the spending review in the Autumn.

Letters had been received from Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, and Greg Clark MP, Minister for Communities and Local Government, regarding the abolition of Comprehensive Area Assessments and reducing further the inspection burden. It was considered likely that some other inspection regime may replace it at some time but, as yet, no announcement had been made.

Details of expenditure exceeding £500 had now to be made available to the public. The Authority had undertaken 3,326 separate transactions over £500 in the last year and these would appear on the internet in the next few days.

The Fire and Rescue 2010 Conference was being held at Harrogate on 29 and 30 June and the Chief Fire Officer and 4 councillors were attending. All arrangements had been made but, if anything changed, they should let the Chief Fire Officer's Personal Assistant know. The away day for members had now been arranged for the morning of 7 July 2010 and he hoped that as many councillors as possible would attend.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the Chair's announcements be noted and the Chief Fire Officer write a letter on behalf of the Authority thanking Councillor Longdon for his service during the last year;**
- (2) that the Chief Fire Officer inform councillors about the workshop to be held at the Fire Service HQ in Gloucestershire on 11 and 12 August 2010 when changes and challenges in the leadership of front line services would be considered;**
- (3) that the Chief Fire Officer write to Andy Beale, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, and his wife congratulating them on behalf of the Authority on the birth of a baby daughter.**

## **16 MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 28 May 2010, copies of which had been circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair;**
- (2) that, further to minute 8 (2), it be noted that Councillor Rigby would inform the Clerk of any changes in membership of Committees on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group.**

## **17 MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUTHORITY**

**RESOLVED that the appointment of Councillor Zadrozny to the Authority in place of Councillor Longdon be noted.**

## **18 APPOINTMENTS TO THE REGIONAL CONTROL CENTRE (RCC) COMPANY AND REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD**

Consideration was given to a report of the Clerk, copies of which had been circulated.

Phil Coates of the Fire Brigades Union asked the following questions regarding the Regional Control Centre -

'Given the announcement from Central Government and the subsequent acknowledgement by NFRS that no Fire Authority will be forced to move to the regional fire control would the Chair of the CFA confirm -

1. That the combined Fire Authority in Notts will not now seek to move to the new centre unilaterally or as part of a revised regional initiative.
2. That the project has now ceased in Nottinghamshire.
3. Will he also make a statement to clarify the situation for the benefit of the fire control staff currently employed within NFRS and end the ongoing uncertainty around this project and the future of those employees?
4. In view of the desire for renewed openness displayed by Central Government would he also publish all the costs incurred up to this date as well as ongoing and future costs that Notts CFA will still be liable for?'

In response, the Chair said that the Government had, as yet, made no announcement about RCCs and until such time as one was made, the RCC would go ahead. Unilateral decisions would not be taken on 'hearsay' announcements and the Authority would continue to fulfill its obligations and provide the best possible service. The ongoing process with trade unions would continue and the East Midlands process and procedures were considered as best practice by other authorities. This Authority had adhered consistently to TUPE and used the Joint Partnership Forum and staff had been kept fully informed. The costs of RCCs was being met entirely by the Government and, therefore, there had been no cost to this Authority. Any costs in the future would be part of our normal accounting procedures.

In response to Councillor Rigby's request that the RCC should be discussed at the next meeting of the Authority as there were a number of questions to be asked, the Chair suggested that this would be done if, and when, an announcement was made by

Government. They had given assurances that RCCs would be efficient but, if the Chief Fire Officer subsequently believed that the RCC did not give a service either equal or better than currently in existence, he would provide his professional advice to the Authority. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that any change in the arrangements for RCCs would automatically come back to the Authority as it was responsible for mobilising resources. If, in due course, there were options to consider on the RCC, the Fire Authority would make the decision. Staff had been very patient and had made decisions based on moving to the RCC and it would not be helpful to them if things changed at the last minute.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the Chair and Councillor Griggs continue to represent the Fire Authority interests on the Local Authority Controlled Company for the Regional Control Centre;**
- (2) that the Chair and Vice-Chair continue to represent the Fire Authority on the Regional Management Board.**

## **19 ANNUAL REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Fire Officer, copies of which had been circulated, on a review of the Authority's governance arrangements recently carried out by the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources. The Authority was a market leader in risk management and was confident that the processes were good. However, in an environment of 'cut backs', it would be vital to ensure that it retained utmost priority. Risk management was taken very seriously and councillors were part of the strategy which was developed at 'away days' and was monitored by the Finance and Resources Committee.

**RESOLVED that the contents of the annual governance statement be approved.**

## **20 FINAL ACCOUNTS 2009/10**

Consideration was given to a revised report of the Treasurer, copies of which had been circulated, together with the Statement of Accounts 2009/10. The Treasurer reported an underspend of £862,000 against the budget, a variance of 1.9%, which had been added to working balances. In addition, a net £797,000 had been added to earmarked reserves, and this amount included a sum of £584,000 for which approval was now being sought. The Treasurer also pointed out the net deficit position on the Balance Sheet of £316,164,000 and said that this was entirely due to pension liabilities of £342 million, most of which was firefighters pensions where the net cost was met by the Government.

Following a lengthy discussion and a number of questions from councillors, the position on firefighters' pensions in 2009/10 was that nearly £11 million had been paid out in benefits but only £6 million had been received in contributions from the employer and from employees. The balance was met by the Government. The Government was currently holding a review into public sector pensions, the result of which would be awaited with interest.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the Statement of Accounts for 2009/10 be adopted;**

- (2) that the year end transfer to earmark reserves of £584,000 be approved;
- (3) that the use of the earmarked reserves of £2,978,000 to support expenditure on the projects listed in paragraph 2.40 of the report be noted.

## **21 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT TEAM (SMT) BUSINESS PLAN**

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Fire Officer, copies of which had been circulated, updating councillors on progress made against priorities identified within the 2009/10 business plan and outlining priorities identified by the SMT for 2010/11.

**RESOLVED that the following areas of focus identified by the Strategic Management Team for 2010/11, as set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report, be noted and supported -**

- fire cover review;
- finance;
- website;
- performance;
- regional control centre;
- workforce planning;
- communications;
- community safety.

## **22 UK RESCUE ORGANISATION ANNUAL RESCUE CHALLENGE AND CONFERENCE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Fire Officer, copies of which had been circulated.

**RESOLVED that the attendance of the Chair of the Community Safety Committee, Councillor Fielding, at the UK Rescue Organisation Annual Rescue Challenge and Conference at Eastleigh, Hampshire, from 30 September to 2 October 2010 be approved as part of an ongoing programme of councillor training and development.**

## **23 AUDITING AND INSPECTION REGIMES**

Councillor Zadrozny and Frank Swann, Chief Fire Officer, declared personal interests in this item in view of their involvement with the Improvement and Development Agency which did not preclude either from speaking nor Councillor Zadrozny from voting.

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Fire Officer, together with a letter from the Audit Commission dated 28 May 2010 giving formal notification that the process of inspections was to cease and new guidance would be given, copies of which had been circulated.

Councillor Wheeler reported that the Performance Monitoring Committee was holding a workshop at 9.00 am on 9 July 2010 when this would be discussed.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) that the ongoing maintenance of the existing performance indicators with reports to the Performance Monitoring Committee be supported and approved;

- (2) **that the decision to proceed with the operational assurance peer review assessment by the Chief Fire Officers' Association and the Improvement and Development Agency be supported and approved.**

**24 STRATEGIC EQUALITIES BOARD OUTCOMES**

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Fire Officer, together with the minutes of the Strategic Equalities Board meeting held on 19 May 2010, copies of which had been circulated. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the review of the recruitment process had now been completed and amendments to the process locally were being introduced.

**RESOLVED that the business and actions of the Strategic Equalities Board meeting held on 19 May 2010 be noted.**

**25 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION ANNUAL FIRE CONFERENCE 2010**

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Fire Officer, copies of which had been circulated.

**RESOLVED that the outcomes of the Local Government Association Conference held in Manchester on 9 and 10 March 2010 be noted and the event continue to be supported in the future.**