



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES

of meeting of the Authority held on **21 SEPTEMBER 2012** at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge, Nottingham from 10.30 am to 12.23 pm

Membership

	Councillor D Pulk	(Chair)
	Councillor B Grocock	(Vice-Chair)
^	Councillor C Barnfather	
	Councillor S Carroll	
^	Councillor J Collins	
	Councillor B Cooper	
	Councillor B Cross	
	Councillor S Fielding	
^	Councillor J Hemsall	
	Councillor E Kerry	
	Councillor A Norris	
	Councillor K Rigby	
	Councillor D Smith	
	Councillor T Spencer	
	Councillor G Wheeler	
	Councillor M Wood	
	Councillor L Yates	
	Councillor J Zadrozny	

Members absent are marked ^

22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barnfather, Collins and Hemsall.

23 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were made.

24 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2012, copies of which had been circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

25 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair reported on the following matters:

- (a) the Chair advised members that they had been given a copy of a report released by the Chief Fire Officers Association, 'Fighting Fires or Fire fighting - The Impact of Austerity on English Fire and Rescue Services'. In this report the Chief Fire Officers Association, as the professional voice of the service, set out the value that fire and rescue services contributed to society and outlined the scale of financial pressures that Chief Fire Officers were facing. It set out a range of deliverable policy options that Government could take to ensure the wider social impact was sustained. The matter would be looked at in more detail by the Policy and Strategy Committee in due course;
- (b) the Chair reported that he and the Chief Fire Officer, along with representatives from other Fire Authorities had attended a memorial service in London to commemorate all fire-fighters who had died in service in the Second World War and subsequently.

26 FINAL ACCOUNTS 2011/12

A representative of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) asked the following question of the Chair regarding this item;

'following substantial losses incurred by the Authority of £539,000 and the loss of £5 million income from the sale that never was of Dunkirk, the Chair of the Fire Authority said there would be an independent and transparent inquiry into the calamitous outcome and that no stone would be left unturned to establish the reasons how this could happen. Can the Chair please explain at what point we are at with the inquiry and what actions have been taken to this waste of taxpayers' money ever happening again? Also when will the findings be made public?'

The Chair responded to the question as follows:

'a working party with representatives from all political groups, agreed an extensive remit for an inquiry into all aspects of the proposed Dunkirk site sale and subsequent court proceedings, and an experienced person was appointed last December. Shortly after he began this review, elected members received strong legal advice that because of threatened further legal action, the inquiry should be suspended. In view of this advice, members agreed to the suspension, and this remains the position at present. Due to legal reasons, I am not prepared to comment further.

Consideration was given to a report of the Treasurer, copies of which had been circulated, presenting the final accounts of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Authority for approval by the full Fire Authority.

The Treasure advised the meeting that the Authority had set a revenue budget of £46.4 million for 2011/12 and the year end position showed an under spend of £1.612 million against this budget (a variance of 3.5%) which was £14,000 higher than the predicted under spend due to minor accounting adjustments.

The General Reserve for the Authority, following the addition of the 2011/12 surplus of £1.594 million stood at £7.119 million at 312 March 2012, giving the Authority a sound financial position going forward into the budget process.

Councillors Cooper and Wheeler requested that more information be made available to the meeting on the current position with regard to the site of the former Dunkirk Fire Station. The Chair stated that he had already advised the meeting that the Inquiry was currently suspended and the reasons for that. The Chief Fire Officer replied that the site was a surplus asset and was for sale. He would be meeting with Nottingham City Council later that day to discuss marketing the site.

Councillor Kerry asked if there was confidence that the accounting system was sufficient to cope with the various regimes of accounting requirements. The Head of Finance and Resources said that he was confident that significant work had been undertaken and that the system was improving year on year and was able to cope with the demands being placed on it.

Councillor Zadronzny expressed concerns about the levels of reserves in the accounts. The Treasurer advised that the under spend had taken place against a backdrop of known reductions with changes to Government grant being the most substantial ever and emphasised the importance of putting a lock on spending wherever possible. Much of the under spending was linked to salaries and the freeze on recruitment and deletion of posts.

The Chair congratulated colleagues in the Finance Team who had produced the final accounts.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the amended Annual Governance Statement for 2011/12, contained within the Statement of Accounts be approved**
- (2) that the Statement of Accounts attached to the report be approved;**
- (3) that the financial results for the year by Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (Trading) Limited be noted.**

27 EXTERNAL AUDITORS GOVERNANCE REPORT 2011/12

Consideration was given to a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer and the Treasurer, copies of which had been circulated, presenting the External Auditors' Annual Governance Report to members and seeking members' approval of the management representation letter to External Auditors.

The report was presented by John Cornett of the External Auditors. Mr Cornett commented on three issues:

- the large number of reserves held by the Authority;
- weaknesses in network passwords;

- IT systems back up.

Mr Cornett gave thanks to the Finance Team for their work on the accounts.

The Chair thanked the external auditors for his positive comments and asked the Head of Finance and Resources to pass the thanks onto the Finance Team.

The Head of Finance and Resources confirmed that the areas of concern identified by the external audit were being addressed.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the External Auditors' Annual Governance Report be noted;**
- (2) that the management representation letter to the External Auditors as set out in Appendix B to the report be approved.**

28 BUDGET GUIDELINES 2013/14

Consideration was given to a report joint report of the Chief Fire Officer and the Treasurer, copies of which had been circulated, informing members of the likely budget position for 2013/14 and requesting that the Fire Authority set general guidelines within which the Finance and Resources Committee would develop a detailed budget proposal for 2013/14 to 2015/16.

RESOLVED that the Finance and Resources Committee develop the Authority's draft budgets for 2013/14 to 2015/16 and make recommendations to the Fire Authority at the appropriate time considering all the relevant factors.

29 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

Consideration was given to a report of the Treasurer, copies of which had been circulated, providing members with an update on treasury management activity during the 2011/12 financial year.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

30 NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Fire Officer, copies of which had been circulated, presenting to members the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Annual Report 2011/12, updating communities and stakeholders on the Service's progress during the previous year and providing updates on Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's performance information and a financial summary.

RESOLVED that the publication and circulation of the Annual Report 2011/12 be approved, ensuring discharge of the Authorities' duties as contained within the statutory requirements of the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004 and supporting National Framework.

31 THE FIRE AND RESCUE NATIONAL FRAMEOWRK FOR ENGLAND

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Fire Officer, copies of which had been circulated, advising the Fire Authority of the publication of the new National Framework and implication for Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the issue of the new National Framework be noted;**
- (2) that the key points as identified in the report be acknowledged;**
- (3) that the Chief Fire Officer be tasked with meeting the Framework's expectations and incorporating this within the future plans for the Authority.**

32 COMMITTEE AND BOARD OUTCOMES

Consideration was given to reports of the Chairs of the following committees and board, copies of which, including minutes of those meetings, had been circulated:

- (a) Performance Monitoring Committee 6 July 2012;
- (c) Finance and Resources Committee 13 July 2012;
- (d) Community Safety Committee 27 July 2012;
- (e) Human Resources Committee 27 July 2012;
- (f) Strategic Equalities Board 29 June 2012.

RESOLVED that the reports and the business undertaken by the Committees and Board be noted.