



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES of the meeting of the Authority held on **28 FEBRUARY 2014** at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham NG5 8PD from 10.34 am to 12.55 pm

Membership

Councillor Darrell Pulk (Chair)
Councillor Brian Grocock (Vice Chair)
Councillor Chris Barnfather
Councillor Eunice Campbell
Councillor Ian Campbell
Councillor John Clarke
^ Councillor Jon Collins
Councillor Stephen Garner
Councillor Colleen Harwood
Councillor Michael Payne
^ Councillor Ken Rigby
Councillor Tony Roberts
Councillor David Smith
Councillor Tim Spencer
Councillor Gordon Wheeler
Councillor John Wilmott
Councillor Malcolm Wood
Councillor Liz Yates

Members absent are marked ^

54 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Jon Collins
Councillor Ken Rigby

55 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Craig Parkin – minute item 67.

56 CHAIRS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (a) the Chair informed the Meeting of the death of former Fire Authority member Bob Cross. The Chair and Deputy Chief Fire Officer both attended his funeral. The Chair expressed thanks for Bob's dedication to public service and in particular to the Fire Authority, despite suffering poor health for many years and sent condolences to his family. The Meeting observed a minutes silence in tribute to Bob;
- (b) the Chair advised Members that, together with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Equalities Officer, he had been to an interesting meeting in London attended by Sir Ken Knight to discuss his review of Fire and Rescue Services, 'Facing the Future'. A formal response to the Review is still awaited from Brandon Lewis, the Minister for Fire;
- (c) the Chair congratulated Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer on his continued work with Nottingham Trent University which has recently been featured in the Fire Magazine;
- (d) the Chair reminded the Meeting of the role played by Nottingham Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) in the recent flooding which had taken place in the south of England. NFRS sent a team of firefighters down to Berkshire to help out during the flooding crisis and a high volume pump belonging to NFRS was used in Somerset. The Chair gave thanks to fire-fighters from NFRS who had attended;
- (e) the Chair advised the meeting that Frank Swann the Chief Fire Officer, will retire at the end of March this year and this was his last full Fire Authority meeting. Frank has served 32 years in the Fire Service. He has been with NFRS since 2003 and has been Chief Fire Officer since 2007. During his time as Chief Fire Officer Frank has achieved many things for NFRS. He has been successful in increasing the fleet's capability, increasing the equipment on the fleet, transforming many of the Services' stations, reducing sickness levels amongst staff, achieving good relationships with trade unions and steering the organisation through recent budget cuts . Recently NFRS has reached the highest 'Excellent' level of the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework, which recognises the way in which it delivers services and employs people. Last year NFRS hosted the Federation of European Fire Officer Association's event with Fire Chiefs representing 19 different countries across Europe attending. Frank is a key player in the Fire-fighters Charity, raising funds himself and motivating others to do so. Frank was awarded the Queen's Fire Service Medal in the New Years Honours List. This recognition comes at the end of a long and distinguished career in the fire and rescue service. The Chair thanked Frank for his dedicated service.

57 MINUTES

The Authority confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2013 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

58 PRUDENTIAL CODE FOR CAPITAL FINANCE 2014/15

Peter Hurford, the Treasurer to the Fire Authority, presented his report informing members of the Authority's obligations under the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance and seeking the approval of Members to the proposed capital plans, prudential limits and monitoring processes set out in the report.

Councillor Brian Grocock, the Vice Chair expressed thanks to the Treasurer for his continued excellent work on treasury matters.

RESOLVED that the following Prudential Limits for 2014/15 be approved:

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Estimate of Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream | 5.4% |
| Estimate of the Incremental Impact of the New Capital Investment Decisions on the Council Tax (Band D) | -£0.41 |
| Estimate of Total Capital Expenditure to be Incurred | £6,281,000 |
| Estimate of Capital Financing Requirement | £26,996,000 |
| Operational Boundary | £26,346,000 |
| Authorised Limit | £28,981,000 |
| Upper limit for fixed rate interest exposures | 100% |
| Upper limit for variable rate interest exposures | 30% |
| Loan Maturity: | <u>Limits:</u> |
| Under 12 months | Upper 20% Lower 0% |
| 12 months to 5 years | Upper 30% Lower 0% |
| 5 years to 10 years | Upper 75% Lower 0% |
| Over 10 years | Upper 100% Lower 0% |
| Over 20 years | Upper 100% Lower 30% |
| Upper Limit for Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer than 364 Days | £2,000,000 |

59 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2014/15

Peter Hurford, the Treasurer to the Fire Authority, presented his report informing the meeting of the Fire Authority's Treasury Management Strategy for 2014/15 and seeking approval of the Fire Authority's Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2014/15.

The Authority has appointed Capita Asset Services (previously known as Sector) as its external treasury management advisor.

The Treasurer suggested that Members tasked with treasury management scrutiny responsibilities have access to suitable training and a provisional date in July for a treasury management training seminar for members of the Finance and Resources Committee is being considered.

RESOLVED:

- (1) to note the Treasury Management Strategy 2014/15 as set out in the report;**
- (2) to approve the Minimum Revenue Provision policy 2014/15;**
- (3) that members of the Finance and Resources Committee are given the opportunity to undertake appropriate training.**

60 REVIEW OF RESERVES AND WORKING BALANCES

Peter Hurford, the Treasurer to the Fire Authority, presented the Chief Fire Officer's report seeking the approval of the Authority to the levels of working balances sufficient to meet the needs of the Authority during the 2014/15 financial year and beyond.

RESOLVED:

- (1) to note results of the review of risks shown at Appendix A of the report;**
- (2) to approve the minimum level of balances of £4,200,000.**

61 BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2014/2015 TO 2016/2017 AND OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TAX

Councillor Malcolm Wood, the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee presented the Chief Fire Officer's report presenting the Fire Authority with proposals for revenue and capital budgets for 2014/2015 to 2016/2017 to allow members to determine the level of council tax for 2014/2015.

The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee proposed that a 1.95% increase in council tax be adopted for the levy of precept and Council Tax for 2013/14. This was seconded by Councillor Brian Grocock the Vice Chair. When put to the vote, this proposal was agreed by 10 votes to 6. Councillors requested that their votes be recorded. Councillors E Campbell, I Campbell, Clarke, Grocock, Harwood, Payne Pulk, Smith, Wilmott and Wood voted in favour of the proposal and Councillors Barnfather, Garner, Roberts, Spencer, Wheeler and Yates voted against the proposal.

The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee proposed that a 1.95% increase in council tax be set as an indicator for the levy of precept and Council Tax for 2015/16 to enable further budget planning to take place. This was seconded by Councillor Brian Grocock the Vice Chair. When put to the vote, this proposal was agreed by 10 votes to 6. Councillors requested that their votes be recorded. Councillors E Campbell, I Campbell, Clarke Grocock, Harwood, Payne Pulk, Smith Wilmott and Wood voted in favour of the

proposal and Councillors Barnfather, Garner, Roberts, Spencer, Wheeler and Yates voted against the proposal.

RESOLVED

- (1) to agree a 1.95% increase in council tax and precept as set out in Appendix C of the report ;**
- (2) that 1.95% be set as an indicator of the level of council tax increase for 2015/2016 to enable further budget planning to take place;**
- (3) to approve the payment of Members Allowances for 2014/2015 in accordance with the existing published scheme.**

62 BALANCING THE BUDGET IN FUTURE YEARS

A representative from the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) asked the following three questions of the Chair regarding this item;

Question One

'although the report in itself does not recommend a reduction below 30 available pumping appliances, are the CFA, through its Chief Fire Officer, still comfortable that the number of pumping appliances could be reduced to 30 without compromising the safety of the community and fire-fighters? The FBU obviously have deep concerns about any cuts to frontline services and are strongly opposed to the downgrading of response in Nottinghamshire yet again.'

The Chair replied as follows:

'the Fire Authority relies on the advice of the CFO on how to organise its operational resources to best deliver the service to the community as well as meeting all of the legislative requirements under Health and Safety law which affect Fire-fighter safety.

The FA are equally concerned that we may have to take steps again to down size the organisation which includes the operational delivery, however given the budget challenges we face there are little alternatives.

In recommending consulting on the stations contained within this report, the CFO has given a professional view on a variety of factors which include activity levels, support from other stations, availability, total number of appliances, location and crewing. I am sure that all of these aspects will be something that the FBU would also consider relevant.

We can take comfort in the significant prevention work that has been undertaken by our employees and the results that are presented elsewhere on this agenda, however this does not make these decisions any easier and we recognise the FBUs concerns.

If the FA decides to consult on these proposals today then the public and the FBU will be fully engaged in the process and the outcomes will be brought back here for a decision in the future.'

Question Two

'can you confirm that the CFA have done everything in their power to query the allocation of monies made to Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service by Government and believe the removal of frontline appliances, Managers and Control Operators is the correct ultimate sacrifice?'

The Chair replied as follows:

'following the meeting of the Fire Authority in June 2013, I wrote on behalf of this Authority to request a meeting with the Minister to discuss how the funding issues were affecting Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service. The letter I received back unfortunately declined my request for a meeting until after the funding levels for the next two years had been confirmed. As you may be aware from elsewhere on this agenda, Nottinghamshire did not receive its final grant settlement amounts until 5th February 2014. I have since written to the Minister again requesting a meeting to discuss the funding issues and await his response.'

Question Three

'have Derbyshire and Leicestershire been consulted with regard to the proposal to have a single control room servicing three services prior to this report being published? If so, do they concur that this is a viable option to negotiate on?'

The Chair replied as follows:

'the current requirement for the provision of dealing with calls for help and summoning personnel is laid down in Part 2, Section 7, paragraph 2(c), of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. It is a function of the Fire and Rescue Authority and one that this Authority currently delivers in house. The CFO could not approach either Derbyshire or Leicestershire without formally obtaining the approval of this Fire Authority to do so, and this is the request contained within this paper. We do not know what the response of these services may be at this time, but will formally write if approval is given by the FA today to explore this as an option. Only when we know the appetite of those Services will we know whether this may be worth taking forward. If this is ultimately ruled out then the FA will be faced with obtaining the requisite savings required from elsewhere within the service.'

The Chief Fire Officer presented his report outlining proposals, highlighting strategies and seeking approval for actions to ensure that the Authority is in the best position possible to set a balanced budget in 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Members were concerned about the issue of consultation with the public on proposals. Historically there had been very little response from the general public when the Authority has gone out to consultation. Members were in agreement that for the consultation to be meaningful it will need to be targeted. Members will need to be involved with the formulation and monitoring of the consultation process.

RESOLVED:

- (1) to task Officers with consulting on the potential of reducing operational resources from within the locations identified at paragraph 2.9 of the report and providing an options report to a future Fire Authority meeting on the outcomes;**
- (2) to task Officers with approaching partner Services with a view to implementing a single Control facility;**
- (3) to task Officers with reviewing the operational management structure;**
- (4) to approve Officers to use compulsory redundancy processes, where appropriate; in conjunction with voluntary redundancy, post conversions, and vacancy deletions;**
- (5) to task Officers to undertake an updated Fire Cover Review during 2015 with a view to considering a risk based attendance standard based upon high, medium and low risk outcomes;**
- (6) that the Policy and Strategy Committee be requested to help formulate and monitor the consultation process.**

63 OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY UPDATE 2013

Frank Swann, the Chief Fire Officer presented his report, updating the Fire Authority on the operational activity levels during the calendar year 2013.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the operational activity levels for 2013;**
- (2) to task the Chief Fire Officer with further reports on these outcomes to a future meeting detailing any recommendations.**

64 EXCELLENT LEVEL OF EQUALITY FRAMEWORK

Frank Swann, the Chief Fire Officer, presented his report setting out the final Peer Challenge Report following Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's assessment against the Excellent Level of the Equality Framework in December 2013.

The Chair thanked Matt Sismey and everyone else involved in what was a great achievement for NFRS.

RESOLVED to formally acknowledge the final peer challenge report and the progress made by the Service in relation to its equalities agenda.

65 INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014-2019

Frank Swann, the Chief Fire Officer, presented his report updating members on progress within the development of the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Plan 2014-2019 and the results of the associated consultation process.

RESOLVED to accept the outcomes of the consultation process and approve the Integrated Risk Management Plan attached to the report to be implemented from 1 April 2014.

66 APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

The Chair presented his report as Chair of the Appointments Committee seeking approval to the unanimous recommendation of the Appointments Committee to the appointment of Wayne Bowcock as the next Deputy Chief Fire Officer to the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service with effect from 7 April 2014.

RESOLVED to agree to the appointment of Wayne Bowcock as Deputy Chief Fire Officer with effect from 7 April 2014, as recommended by the Appointments Committee.

The Chair welcomed Wayne Bowcock to NFRS and congratulated him on his appointment.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Craig Parkin left the meeting prior to the consideration of the next item.

67 APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

The Chair presented his report as Chair of the Appointments Committee seeking approval to the unanimous recommendation of the Appointments Committee to the appointment of Craig Parkin as Assistant Chief Fire Officer to the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service with effect from 1 July 2014

RESOLVED to agree to the appointment of Craig Parkin as Assistant Chief Fire Officer with effect from 1 July 2014, as recommended by the Appointments Committee.

The Chair congratulated Craig Parkin on his appointment.

68 COMMITTEE OUTCOMES

The Chairs of the following committees, produced reports which included the minutes of those meetings:

- (a) Performance Monitoring Committee 24 January 2014;
- (b) Finance and Resources Committee 17 January 2014;
- (c) Community Safety Committee 10 January 2014;
- (d) Human Resources Committee 7 February 2014;
- (e) Policy and Strategy Committee 31 January 2014.

Councillor Michael Payne, Chair of the Human Resources Committee thanked the Officers involved with the Committee for their help in guiding the Committee through some difficult processes in the last financial year.

RESOLVED to note the reports and the business undertaken by the Committees.

69 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The Committee decided to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining agenda items in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

70 REDUCTIONS IN THE PERMANENT ESTABLISHMENT

Frank Swann, the Chief Fire Officer, presented his report informing Members of a reduction in the non-uniformed establishment arising from the approval of voluntary redundancy applications.

RESOLVED to endorse the permanent amendments to the establishment.