



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM  
FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**MINUTES**

of meeting of the Authority held on **4 SEPTEMBER 2009** at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham from 10.35 am to 12.15pm.

**Membership**

Councillor D Pulk (Chair)  
Councillor P Griggs (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor V Bobo  
Councillor B Cooper  
Councillor S Fielding  
Councillor A Foster  
Councillor B Grocock  
Councillor J Hemsall  
^ Councillor H James  
Councillor K Longdon  
Councillor T Pettengell  
Councillor K Rigby  
Councillor K Rostance  
^ Councillor T Spencer  
Councillor L Sykes  
Councillor G Wheeler  
Councillor M Wood  
Councillor M Wright

Members absent are marked ^

**16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors James and Spencer.

**17 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

The Chief Fire Officer, Mr Frank Swann, declared a personal interest in agenda item 10 (minute 26) -Chief Fire Officers Association European Working Group insofar as the report related to expenses to be incurred by him in engaging with Europe on behalf of the Fire and Rescue Service nationally.

## **18 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 26 June 2009, copies of which had been circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

## **19 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **(a) Graham Jackson**

The Chair referred to the recent death of Graham Jackson, former County Councillor until 2005 and Chair of the Fire Authority for 8 years from 1997 when the Shadow Authority was formed up until 2005. He was a member of the National Executive for a number of years as well as being very influential in the region. He played a major role in easing the process from Shadow Authority to the Joint Authority and the tensions suffered in other areas did not arise in Nottinghamshire. He started the modernisation programme from which the Authority was benefiting today. His funeral would be held at Wilford Hill on 7 September 2009.

Members paid tribute to the work of Graham Jackson and the Authority observed a minutes silence in his memory.

### **(b) Health and Safety statement**

The revised statement had been approved by the Policy and Strategy Committee on 31 July 2009 and the Chair and Vice-Chair would sign it today.

### **(c) Annual Report 2008/09**

Copies of the Annual Report 2008/09 were available and reflected the work of the Authority during the 12 months period April 2008 to 31 March 2009.

### **(d) The Fire Fighters Charity – Fundraising**

John Buckley, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, was running the Nottingham Half Marathon on 13 September to raise funds for the Fire Fighters Charity. The Chief Fire Officer, Mr Frank Swann, and the Strategic Support Officer, Mr Guy Bramley, were bike riding for 150 miles on Sunday 6 September 2009 to also raise funds for the Charity. They were cycling between each retained fire station in Nottinghamshire, starting at Misterton and finishing at East Leake at around 7.30pm. Members wished them well with their fund raising activities.

### **(e) Regional Control Centre**

Members were to be invited to a half day training session at the new Regional Control Centre on 27 October. The Chair and Vice-Chair would attend a full day's training on the same day. Further details would follow in due course. The other 4 Fire Authorities in the region would also be present. It was hoped that another half day might be arranged at a later date for those members unable to attend.

**(f) Awards Evening**

The Awards evening, which was attended by the Lord Lieutenant and the Sheriff of Nottingham, would be held on the evening of 1 October at Fire Brigade HQ. Medals were to be presented for long service to Fire Authority staff and the Chair urged members to attend.

**20 EXTERNAL AUDITORS' GOVERNANCE REPORT 2008/09**

Consideration was given to a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer together with the External Auditors' Governance Report for 2008/09, copies of which had been circulated.

John Cornett, District Auditor was present for this item.

Mr Cornett said that he planned to issue an unqualified opinion on the accounts, subject to the clearance of outstanding matters. The position was encouraging and positive as the accounts presented were of a high standard and supported by good quality working papers. There were no errors to be brought to the attention of the Fire Authority. There was an adequate internal control environment and with regard to the use of resources he was satisfied with the judgements and the arrangements to secure value for money. He confirmed that the audit had been completed within the agreed fee.

The two areas of risk considered by the audit were the Regional Control Centre transition and progress towards the adoption of the International Financial Reporting Standards. Progress in these areas would continue to be monitored.

Following questions from members, Mr Cornett confirmed that under the use of resources the scoring system was much harder than in previous years and to gain a 2 was equivalent to the old 3. The scores were still provisional as they were subject to the national quality assurance process and the final scores would be published on 14 September 2009. It was possible that under this process the score of 3 for managing resources could be moderated to a 2 but he was willing to defend it. Without wishing to prejudice next year's scores he was confident that, if the Authority delivered on its plans, there would be a positive change in the scores.

Mr Cornett thanked the Treasurer and the Principal Accountant, Sue Cornish, and her team for their help and partnership approach taken to the process.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) that the contents of the External Auditors' Annual Governance Report 2008/09 be noted;**
- (2) that the management representation letter to the External Auditors be approved;**
- (3) that the Treasurer together with Sue Cornish and her team be thanked for their hard work on the audit;**
- (4) that, when the findings from other Fire Authorities were known, comparisons be made and best practice issues pursued;**

- (5) **that John Cornett be thanked for attending the meeting and for his work on the audit.**

**21 CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS**

**RESOLVED**

- (1) **that Councillor Rostance be appointed Chair of the Personnel Committee in place of Councillor Wheeler;**
- (2) **that Councillor Cooper be appointed to the Community Safety Committee in place of Councillor Sykes and to the Policy and Strategy Committee in place of Councillor Hemsall;**
- (3) **that membership of the Strategic Equalities Board comprise Councillors Cooper, Foster, Griggs, Hemsall and Pulk, but if any other member wished to attend they were very welcome.**

**22 CHANGE TO MEETING TIME**

**RESOLVED**

- (1) **that the start time for the meeting of the Performance Monitoring Committee on 2 October 2009 be changed from 10am to 11am;**
- (2) **that any future changes to Committee start times be approved by the Chair of the relevant committee.**

**23 INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2010 – 2013**

Further to minute 11 dated 26 June 2009, consideration was given to a report of the Chief Fire Officer, copies of which had been circulated. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the extensive consultation process was now complete and the results of this were set out in the appendix.

There was concern from members that the number of questionnaires returned from the public was very low (4%). The Chief Fire Officer accepted this but pointed out that this was the first time the exercise had been carried out in this way with the work done in-house, rather than using a costly external company. The Fire Authority's own approach would be developed further and this year's lessons learnt from.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) **that the progress of the Integrated Risk Management Plan process 2010-2013 be noted and a further progress report be submitted in December 2009 with the final report being submitted in February 2010;**
- (2) **that the importance of feeding back to all consultees on the contents of the Plan be accepted as vital and, in particular, it be noted that the Chair and Chief Fire Officer would visit all District Councils to explain what the Fire Authority was doing as it was vital that elected members were involved;**

- (3) that the Performance Monitoring Committee be asked to look into the reasons for the low return from the public and seek ways of improving this in future years, including best practice from other authorities.

#### **24 BUDGET GUIDELINES 2010/11**

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

#### **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the following guidelines be approved as a framework for the development of the Authority's budgets for 2010/11 to 2012/13:
- (a) continue to maintain a capital programme of approximately £5m on average in accordance with the sustainable capital plan;
  - (b) Council Tax increases to be in the range 0% to 3% for 2010/11 to 2012/13;
  - (c) any use of balances to be matched by planned reductions to take place in later years;
  - (d) existing budgets to be re-engineered where possible to take account of inflationary pressures;
  - (e) estimates of costs for Firelink and the Regional Fire Control to be produced as soon as possible and incorporated into budgets;
  - (f) Finance and Resources Committee identify and monitor opportunities for efficiency savings;
- (2) that the priorities for budget development would be:
- (a) Integrated Risk Management Planning outcomes;
  - (b) Financial stability;
  - (c) Partnership working;
  - (d) Equalities;
- (3) that it be noted that the Finance and Resources Committee would begin to consult stakeholders as the budget developed.

#### **25 ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISION (RTC) PROVISION – FINAL REPORT**

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

#### **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the final implementation of the RTC review with an anticipated conclusion date of December 2010 be approved;
- (2) that the placement of the service wide Specialist Rescue Teams at Highfields Fire Station, Beeston and Tuxford Fire Station be supported, it being noted that

**investment of approximately £750,000 was required to renovate the Fire Station at Tuxford in order to make it suitable to accommodate the additional whole time personnel;**

- (3) that the Finance and Resources Committee be kept informed of progress with the Tuxford development and any budget implications;**
- (4) that it be noted that the concept of a flood response unit at Newark Fire Station would also be explored as part of the overall strategy.**

## **26 CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION EUROPEAN WORKING GROUP**

The Chief Fire Officer left the meeting for this item.

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

### **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**

- (1) that the Chief Fire Officer be supported in his work to engage with Europe on behalf of the Fire and Rescue Service nationally on the basis of 6-7 days per annum;**
- (2) that the budget provision of a limit of £5,000 to cover travel, accommodation and subsistence be supported**
- (3) that the Chief Fire Officer be requested to report progress annually to the Policy and Strategy Committee on the work undertaken and on expenses incurred.**

## **27 COMMITTEE OUTCOMES**

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

- (a) Performance Monitoring Committee
- (b) Finance and Resources Committee
- (c) Community Safety Committee
- (d) Human Resources Committee
- (e) Policy and Strategy Committee

**RESOLVED that the reports be noted.**