



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

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Fire and Rescue Services HQ, Bestwood Lodge,  
Arnold Nottingham NG5 8PD on 25 September 2015 from 10:30 to 11:53am**

### **Membership**

#### Present

Councillor Brian Grocock (Vice Chair)  
Councillor John Allin  
Councillor Chris Barnfather  
Councillor Eunice Campbell  
Councillor Jon Collins  
Councillor Roger Jackson  
Councillor Neghat Nawaz Khan  
Councillor Mike Pringle  
Councillor Yvonne Woodhead  
Councillor Michael Payne  
Councillor Ken Rigby  
Councillor Gordon Wheeler  
Councillor Malcolm Wood  
Councillor Liz Yates

#### Absent

Councillor Darrell Pulk (Chair)  
Councillor John Clarke  
Councillor Dave Liversidge  
Councillor Gail Turner

### **Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

John Buckley	-	Chief Fire Officer
Wayne Bowcock	-	Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Craig Parkin	-	Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Malcolm Townroe	-	Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority
Peter Hurford	-	Treasurer to the Authority
Sue Maycock	-	Head of Finance
Helen Brooks	-	KPMG External Auditor
Cath Ziane-Pryor	-	Governance Officer

## **20    APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Darrell Pulk (on Fire and Rescue Authority business)  
Councillor John Clarke  
Councillor Gail Turner

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair, Councillor Brian Grocock, Chaired the meeting.

## **21 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

## **22 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair's announcements included:

- (a) since the last meeting of the Fire Authority, two firefighters have tragically lost their lives whilst off duty. Firefighter Darren Bryan, based at Retford and Firefighter Steve Cotterell, based at Mansfield.

Everyone in attendance stood for a minute's silence to honour Darren and Steve.

- (b) consultation is under way regarding the blue light collaboration which could include alternative governance arrangements for fire services under the Police Crime Commissioners or locally elected mayors. Consultation is to close on 23 October 2015. The Chair and the Lead Opposition Member are to undertake a response on behalf of the Authority, although it is possible for individual members to respond to the consultation in their own right;
- (c) the new tri-service control, operating for Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Services, is now live and using the new control system. There is still some work to be done but the transition has gone well thanks to all the staff who have worked hard to deliver the project;
- (d) Human Resources Committee has agreed that the Armed Forces Corporate Covenant Pledge, supporting serving and ex-Armed Forces staff, should be signed. This was then done at the meeting;
- (e) the Fire Authority's Treasurer of eight years, Peter Hurford, is retiring at the end of September 2015. On the behalf of the Authority, the Chair thanked Peter for his guidance, scrutiny and support and presented a certificate of thanks on behalf of the Authority. Members echoed the Chair's comments;

Following a large fire at the Rushcliffe Arena members of the Authority thanked all crews who had attended the incident. Thanks were also put forward on behalf of Rushcliffe Borough Council by Councillor Gordon Wheeler.

## **23 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2015 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair presiding at the meeting.

## **24 ANNUAL REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which informs members of the recent review of the Authority's governance arrangements. The Annual Governance Statement is included within the report, as is the Local Code of Corporate Governance.

Members welcomed the report and the review which provides assurance that the Authority is operating effectively.

### **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the Annual Governance Statement is approved and signed by the Fire Authority Chair and the Chief Fire Officer;**
- (2) for a report on the Local Code of Corporate Governance to be taken to the Policy and Strategy Committee for review and revision as appropriate.**

## **25 FINAL ACCOUNTS 2014/15**

Peter Hurford, Treasurer to the Authority, delivered the report which presented the final accounts for the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Authority for approval.

For the sake of completeness, an amendment, which has no significant impact on the accounts, was tabled prior to consideration of the item.

The following points were made and highlighted;

- (a) Sue Maycock, Head of Finance, and the Finance Team were praised for operating in a highly professional manner in providing the accounts which have been closely examined by Helen Brooks from the external auditors KPMG;
- (b) Neil Timms, former Strategic Director of Finance and Resources, is to be thanked for his help, thoughtfulness and interesting ideas;
- (c) the accounts were completed earlier this year and provide an underspend of approximately £5,000;
- (d) overall there is a £6.5 million reserve which is higher than the risk assessment recommends but which is held in preparation for the forthcoming financial restraints;
- (e) there is an earmarked reserve of 3.9 million;
- (f) pension scheme liabilities are currently met by Central Government and it is expected that this will continue. Once the pension liability is withdrawn from the balance sheet, the assets of the Authority are greater than the liabilities;

Member's comments and questions were responded to as follows:

- (g) the Authority has an appetite towards reserves and has risk assessed potential financial impacts and submitted this report to the Finance and Resources Committee;

- (h) a £4 million reserve is considered prudent on the basis of pending risk, in readiness of the grant reductions and the need to alter existing arrangements;
- (i) the level of resources held by this Fire and Rescue Authority is considerably less than some others. The value of earmarked reserves is about average and is reviewed every year to ensure relevance is maintained. If not relevant, funds can be transferred to general use;
- (j) it is acknowledged that some members do not support the Authority's approach to maintaining reserves at the current level;
- (k) the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee, along with the Treasurer, have implemented identified savings as soon as possible in preparation of the budgetary cuts.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) to approve the Statement of Accounts for 2014/15 as attached at appendix A to the report;**
- (2) for members to note the financial results of the 2014/15 year for Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue (Trading) Limited as attached as appendix B to the report.**

## **26 EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE 2014/15**

Sue Maycock, Head of Finance, introduced Helen Brooks Director of KPMG External Auditors, who summarised the External Auditor's 'Report to those Charged with Governance 2014/15', informing the Authority that the Auditors had issued an unqualified finding with one non-trivial error relating to a 2013/14 comparative figure in the accounts which did not impact on the 2014/15 accounts. Helen Brooks noted that with regard to the key financial statement risks, none had been identified beyond the standard risks. There is a yearly review of how the Service considers value for money and this continues to be adequate.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) to note the contents of the External Auditors' ISA 260 report which is attached as appendix A to the report;**
- (2) to approve the management representation letter to the External Auditors are set out in appendix B to the report.**

## **27 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

Peter Hurford, Treasurer to the Authority, presented the report which updates members on the Treasury Management activity during the 2014/15 financial year.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) budgets were set within the Prudential Code and all targets were met except one which related to borrowing. The Authority had not undertaken any additional borrowing as it had not been necessary;
- (b) all self-imposed targets have been met.

**RESOLVED to note the contents of the report.**

## **28 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2015/16 TO 2017/18**

Peter Hurford, Treasurer to the Authority, presented the report which brings together the formerly considered strategies into one overarching medium term financial strategy.

**RESOLVED to adopt the Medium Term Financial Strategy and continue to review this annually.**

## **29 ROLE OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER AND THE TREASURER**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, introduced the report which informs the Authority of review of the Director of Finance role and the role of the main Financial Officer.

The report details the financial principles and the outcome of a review of the delegation profiles and of the roles of Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, following changes to the Service's Management Structure.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) to note the arrangements in place for the compliance with CIPFA's recommendations for the role of the Chief Finance Officer;**
- (2) to approve and adopt the key financial principles and delegation profiles set out in appendix A to the report.**

## **30 APPOINTMENT OF TREASURER**

Malcolm Townroe, Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority, presented the report of the Chair of the Appointments Committee, which had met on 11 September 2015.

The members were informed that following national and local advertising, nine applications had been received, all of which received detailed consideration.

It was made clear by Conservative and Liberal Democrat members of the Authority that although they did not have any personal issues with the recommended individual, they did not support recommendation 9.1 of the report on the principal that the recommended individual had left the service with a generous redundancy package and was now proposed to be re-engaged as a Treasurer.

Members voted on the recommendations as follows:

- to approve the appointment of Mr Neil Timms as Treasurer and s151 Officer with effect from 2 November 2015:

9 in favour, 5 against;

- for Mr Mark Kimberley of Gedling Borough Council to be appointed interim Treasurer and s151 Officer for the period 1 October 2015 to 1 November 2015;

unanimously in favour.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) **to approve the appointment of Mr Neil Timms as Treasurer and s151 Officer with effect from 2 November 2015:**
- (2) **for Mr Mark Kimberley of Gedling Borough Council to be appointed interim Treasurer and s151 Officer for the period 1 October 2015 to 1 November 2015.**

### **31 FIRE COVER REVIEW 2015**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which informs members of the findings of the Fire Cover Review 2015, which is attached to the report.

It is noted that nationally, since the last review in 2010, Fire and Rescue Services are called to a fewer incidents but that there is a greater emphasis on providing fire safety education and prevention.

**RESOLVED that the report 'Fire Cover Review 2015' is presented to the Community Safety Committee for consideration.**

### **32 REVIEW OF SPECIALIST RESCUE PROVISION**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which informs members of the opportunity to update the delivery model and potentially revise current specialist rescue capability, following a review and feasibility study.

Nationally the Service is required to attend fewer incidents whilst the majority of specialist rescues continue to be the result of road traffic collisions.

It is noted that at this point there is no intention to remove any service, only to potentially deliver services differently.

**RESOLVED to support the Chief Fire Officer to carry out further analysis of the specialist rescue capability, to consult with workforce representatives and report back specific options to a future Fire Authority meeting.**

### **33 PAY POLICY**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which outlines statutory requirement for each Authority to annually provide a pay policy statement for staff of all grades.

**RESOLVED to approve the Statement of Pay Policy.**

**34 FIRE CONTROL COLLABORATION**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which updates the Authority on the current situation regarding Fire Control Collaboration with Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service.

Although much work has been done in preparation for collaboration, Leicester Fire Authority is no longer able to progress with the program.

Members of the Authority thanked the Chief Fire Officers and staff for their work towards the project and asked that it be noted that this Authority remained willing to collaborate with neighbouring services where possible.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) to note the inability to progress the control collaboration project with Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service;**
- (2) to dissolve the member led working group and governance structure which had been established to oversee the implementation and long-term delivery of the control function.**

**35 PROPERTY UPDATE**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which informs members of the response to the investigation into the disposal of Dunkirk Fire Station.

It is noted that in 2011 members of the Policy and Strategy Committee had requested an independent investigation into the disposal of the station and subsequent court case.

The report outlines the progression of the investigation and summarises the findings, with a redacted version of the investigation attached to the report.

The Chief Fire Officer referred to each of the issues and suggested changes to process and procedures within the Summary of findings and areas for improvement and further action. It is noted that on receipt of the independent report, the issues raised had been considered and changes applied.

It is noted that the remaining cost of the independent investigation had been paid in 2014/15 and not 2013/14 as stated in the report.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) to note the report;**
- (2) to task the Chief Fire Officer with ensuring that all areas considered for further improvement or further action, as identified within the report at 2.14 to 2.24, are implemented with immediate effect.**

**36     COMMITTEE OUTCOMES**

The report of the Chief Fire Officer provided the minutes of:

Community Safety Committee	03 July 2015
Finance and Resources Committee	10 July 2015
Human Resources Committee	17 July 2015
Policy and Strategy Committee	24 July 2015.

**RESOLVED to note the report.**

**37     EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item 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 outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, as defined in paragraphs 1 & 3 of Schedule 12A to the Act.**

**38     VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY APPLICATIONS**

The report of the Chief Fire Officer requested that members consider supporting the recommendations of the Human Resources Committee.

**RESOLVED to approve the recommendations within the report.**

**1.**