



**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 14 December 2018 from 10.30 am - 11.53 am**

**Membership**

Present

Councillor Brian Grocock (Chair)  
Councillor Michael Payne (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Andrew Brown  
Councillor John Clarke  
Councillor Sybil Fielding  
Councillor Vaughan Hopewell  
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora  
Councillor John Longdon  
Councillor Jackie Morris  
Councillor Francis Purdue-Horan  
Councillor Mike Quigley MBE  
Councillor Kevin Rostance  
Councillor Parry Tsimbirdis  
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler  
Councillor Malcolm Wood

Absent

Councillor Eunice Campbell-Clark  
Councillor Mohammed Saghir  
Councillor Jason Zadrozny

Also in attendance

Paddy Tipping, Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner

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

John Buckley - Chief Fire Officer, NFRS  
Wayne Bowcock - Deputy Chief Fire Officer, NFRS  
Craig Parkin - Assistant Chief Fire Officer, NFRS  
Malcolm Townroe - Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Fire Authority  
Charlotte Radford - Treasurer to the Authority  
Becky Smeathers - Head of Finance  
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

**31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Eunice Campbell-Clark - City Council business  
Councillor Mohammed Saghir - personal  
Councillor Jason Zadrozny - unwell

### **32 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

### **33 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2018 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **34 CHAIRS' ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair of the Authority and Chief Fire Officer have provided a briefing note to all local MPs and met with the majority of them to discuss the current issues and concerns facing the Service, including the funding pressures on the sector, broadening expectations placed upon the Service and the pay and conditions for staff. Discussions have been positive and it is hoped that MPs will remain supportive, as the future of local government funding is determined next year.

Last winter, in partnership with the City Council, Framework and the Red Cross, the Service successfully provided support for rough sleepers when overnight temperatures were predicted to fall below zero, by providing overnight accommodation for rough sleepers at London Road Fire Station. This winter this facility will be extended to three further fire stations Highfields, Carlton and Retford. This approach is supported by Broxtowe, Gedling, Rushcliffe and Bassetlaw Councils. The Service continues to offer support across the County and City to other charities and agencies in supporting the homeless including referrals from community engagement and supporting shelters through its Business Support Team in Fire Protection.

The sale of Service branded poppy pins has been a huge success with 420 pins sold and the profit of £1300 being donated to the Royal British Legion.

### **35 MEMBERSHIP**

#### **RESOLVED**

- (1) to note that Councillor Parry Tsimbiridis has been appointed to the Authority by Nottinghamshire County Council in place of Councillor Yvonne Woodhead;**
- (2) to confirm the appointment of Councillor Parry Tsimbiridis to the Community Safety Committee, Personnel Committee, and Strategic Inclusion Board.**

### **36 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID YEAR REVIEW 2018/19**

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance, presented the detailed Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2018/19 report, which includes:

- Economic update;
- review of the Treasury management strategy;
- review of the investment portfolio;
- review of the borrowing strategy;
- review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential limits;
- interest rate forecasts.

Councillor Jonathan Wheeler suggested, with regard to investment income, whilst limitations are set for the Authority, in future income could be generated by working in partnership with local councils so strategies to enable this need to be considered.

**RESOLVED to note the report.**

**37 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2018/19 TO 2021/22 AND BUDGET GUIDELINES 2019/20**

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance, presented the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2021/22 and Budget Guidelines 2019/20. The report requests that the Authority set general guidelines within which the Finance and Resources Committee can develop a detailed budget proposal over 2019/20.

The report provides detailed information on:

- the current financial position;
- external funding;
- revenue budgets;
- proposed guidelines.

The full Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2018/19 to 2021/22 is attached to the report.

In response to members' queries, the strategy states that the Authority's reserves would fall below the £3.9 million threshold by 2021 if £1.6 million were to be used from general fund reserves, highlighting the need to work towards a balanced financial position. The future financial position is difficult to predict. It was proposed that and plans need to be developed to consider commercial opportunities should be explored to ensure that reserves are protected.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) to approve the Medium-Term Financial Strategy as set out in Appendix A to the report;**
- (2) to task the Finance and Resources Committee with providing guidance to the Fire Authority in February in respect of;**
  - (a) the options for Council Tax, limited to either a Council Tax freeze or an increase in Council Tax within the referendum limit;**
  - (b) the options for addressing any budget deficit to enable the Fire Authority to approve a balanced budget, as required by law.**

**38 RESERVES STRATEGY 2018/19 TO 2021/22**

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance, presented the report which seeks the Authority's approval for the Reserves Strategy for 2018/19 to 2021/22. This strategy is a new requirement within the National Framework Agreement and whilst it was largely already in place, information is now maintained in one document to illustrate that reserves are being used within a planned approach.

A copy of the Strategy, including revised details of reserve risk analysis, is attached to the report.

Member's questions were responded to as follows:

- (a) Brexit has been identified as a new risk and £200,000 has been included in the general fund to cover any unforeseen impact. It is possible that it may result in higher than projected interest rates which will result in the cost of borrowing increasing. In addition, there may be an impact on currency exchange rates and therefore the cost of vehicle and equipment parts which are produced abroad. Once the outcome is known, this risk can either be amended or removed;
- (b) All grant funding has been allocated as open-ended so there will be no requirement to return any currently unspent funds;
- (c) Earmarked reserves are set aside for specific use such as a planned project, and should be spent within planned expenditure;
- (d) Once the reserves are spent it will be very difficult to build them up again so any spending of reserves needs careful consideration.

Member's comments included:

- (e) Whilst it may appear that the Service is cash rich with reserves, overall it ranks within the lowest quarter when compared to other Services and only has a working balance.

#### **RESOLVED to approve**

- (1) the Reserves Strategy 2018/19 to 2021/22 as shown at Appendix A to the report;**
- (2) the propose minimum level of working balances of £3.9m for 2019/20.**

#### **39 CAPITAL STRATEGY 2019/20**

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance, presented the Capital Strategy 2019/20 report which sets out in detail the governance arrangements around capital accounting, development of the capital programme and capital financing.

#### **RESOLVED to approve:**

- (1) the Capital Strategy as attached to the report at Appendix A;**
- (2) the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy for 2019/20 as attached to the report at Appendix B.**

#### **40 COLLABORATION UPDATE**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the Collaboration Update report which informs the Authority of the current and proposed collaboration activity and achievements with the Police and other Emergency Services.

The report sets out in detail the mutually beneficial achievements to date which include sharing mobile resources such as the Welfare Unit with the Police, learning and development resources, prevention, emergency planning, the use of estates with the Police and Ambulance Service, and most recently the potential for a Joint Fire Control Centre with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Authority members' questions were responded to as follows:

- (a) Mechanisms are in place for front line staff to forward their ideas for further collaboration opportunities. Occasionally, where collaborative working is taking place, there have initially been concerns and caution exercised by staff from each organisation, but once there is an understanding of each other, relationships are strengthened;
- (b) Where facilities are rented to collaboration partners such as the Police, rates are set following a local valuation review. It should be noted that this is a mutual arrangement and NFRS also has potential to use and be charged for Police facilities, such as those at Sherwood Lodge.

The Police and Crime Commissioner, Paddy Tipping, commented that both Police and Fire and Rescue funding is all public money and that the value of collaboration is that everyone benefits by getting more for a lower cost, and commended the very good collaboration relationships with NFRS.

**RESOLVED to note the report.**

#### **41 COMMITTEE OUTCOMES**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provides the minutes of the following sub-committees:

Community Safety Committee 12 October 2018  
Finance and Resources Committee 19 October 2018  
Human Resources Committee 09 November 2018  
Policy and Strategy Committee 16 November 2018

**RESOLVED to note the report.**

#### **42 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining 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 outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.**

#### **43 EXEMPT MINUTES**

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2018 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

**44 JOINT FIRE CONTROL**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the Joint Fire Control report.

**RESOLVED to approve the recommendations as set out in the report.**

**45 AMENDMENTS TO THE PERMANENT ESTABLISHMENT**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which requests approval for amendments to the permanent establishment.

**RESOLVED to approve the recommendation as set out in the report.**

**46 RESILIENCE UPDATE**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the resilience update report.

**RESOLVED to approve the recommendations as set out in the report.**