

CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH FIRE AUTHORITY UPDATE

TO: Cambridgeshire County Council

FROM: Chairman, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

DATE: 14 October 2014

1. INDUSTRIAL ACTION

- 1.1 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004, imposes a duty on Fire and Rescue Authorities to put in place business continuity management arrangements to ensure that they can continue to exercise their functions in the event of an emergency so far as is reasonably practicable. It cannot be assumed that the Armed Forces will be available to provide cover in the event of industrial action by fire-fighters.
- 1.2 In July 2013, the Executive Council of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) announced its intention to ballot its members for strike action. On the 29th August 2013, the FBU announced a 78% positive return on its national ballot for strike action over Government proposed changes to the firefighter pension scheme.
- 1.3 Since obtaining the mandate for industrial action, and at the end of July 2014, the FBU have instigated 46 periods of strike action over 24 separate days.
- 1.4 In the lead up to each strike period the Service has implemented contingency arrangements that ensure normal attendance times to incidents are largely maintained. However in doing so day to day services have been significantly impacted as operational officers and support staff have been re-directed from their normal duties to support and deliver front line operations.
- 1.5 The cost of strike action to date after the deduction of wages from non-working staff is in the region of £297,975 in terms of lost productivity and the direct costs of implementing contingency arrangements. If the dispute continues for a prolonged period, the costs will increase proportionally and begin to negatively impact on Service budgets.
- 1.6 The Fire Authority's Overview & Scrutiny Committee is currently undertaking a member-led review of the effectiveness of the Service's business continuity arrangements which will report at the end of October.

2. NORTHSTOWE DEVELOPMENT – ALLOCATION OF SECTION 106

- 2.1 The Fire Authority received a report seeking approval to enter into further discussions with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) around the

potential alternative opportunities for the investment of Section 106 monies as a result of the Northstowe development.

- 2.2 While the Section 106 monies would enable the build of a new fire station without cost to the Authority, the Authority would have to fund the ongoing revenue costs associated with the station. Discussions were therefore taking place regarding the possibility of fitting sprinklers to all social housing (40% of the total homes) instead of building a new fire station.
- 2.3 Any additional Section 106 monies could then be given back to the Northstowe development which would not preclude an appliance or station in the future.
- 2.4 The Fire Authority have approved further discussions with the HCA and others around the opportunities for the alternative use of Section 106 monies, with final determination being made at a subsequent Fire Authority meeting.

3. FIRE AUTHORITY FIVE YEAR BLUEPRINT 2014/19 AND CORPORATE PRIORITIES 2014/15

- 3.1 The Fire Authority received a report on the Five Year Blueprint 2014-2019 and Corporate Priorities 2014/15 for the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service
- 3.2 The Service has set three corporate priorities for 2014/15 relating to:
 - Continued service improvement;
 - Preparation for the next Comprehensive Spending Review; and
 - Workforce development.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Document	Location	Contact
Fire Authority Minutes 2013/14	Fire Service HQ Hinchingsbrooke Cottage Huntingdon	Michelle Rowe 01223 699180 Michelle.rowe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk