

REPORT OF THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH FIRE AUTHORITY

TO: Cambridgeshire County Council

FROM: Chairman, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

DATE: 28 March 2017

1. FIRE AUTHORITY BUDGET 2017/18

1.1 At its meeting on 9 February 2017 the Fire Authority considered a report on its budget, reviewed the Budget Book 2017/18 and approved the following recommendations:

- an Authority budget requirement of £27,987,000
- an Authority precept of Authority Tax from District Authorities and Peterborough City Authority of £18,375,558
- an Authority Tax for each band of property, based on the number of band D equivalent properties notified to the Fire Authority by the District Authorities and Peterborough City Authority (275,166) ranging from Band A at £44.52 to Band H at £133.56
- approval of the Prudential and Treasury Indicators as set out in the Budget Book (page 9),
- approval of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement as set out in the Budget Book (pages 8 to 13),
- approval of the Capital Programme as detailed in the Budget Book (page 6),
- approval of the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement as detailed in the Budget Book (page 14).

1.2 By way of background, the Draft Revenue Support Grant (RSG) settlement was received on 15 December 2016 and the Budget Book assumed that there would be no change when the final settlement is received (subsequently confirmed as no change). The final business rate estimates received were £200,000 less than originally anticipated. This will slightly change the way in which the capital programme is financed (use of some reserves).

1.3 After discussion at the Policy and Resources Committee meeting in December 2016, the Authority consulted on the option of increasing council tax by 1.9%. The consultation received 100 responses, of which 73% agreed with a proposed increase (a 5% increase on last year's consultation figure).

1.4 Full details of the Budget Book can be found on the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service website.

2. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER BUSINESS CASE

- 2.1 On 31 January 2017 the Policing and Crime Bill (the Bill) was granted Royal Assent. As Council will be aware the measures within the Bill are enabling rather than mandatory, recognising that local leaders are best placed to determine the sort of collaboration that is in the best interest of their local communities. Police and Crime Commissioners can lead on the development of a local business case which examines the options set out in the legislation.
- 2.2 At their meeting in October 2016 the Authority received an update from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Cambridgeshire in which he made clear his intention to be an 'early adopter' with a preference for the governance model. In this model the PCC would become the new governance mechanism for fire with both the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer directly accountable to him. The PCC would also be known thereafter as the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.
- 2.3 The Authority in response to this made clear their support of the option within the Bill for the PCC to become a member of the Fire Authority. They also welcomed the opportunity to work in close collaboration with the PCC in the development of his business case to explore both the governance and single employer options and in particular the following;
- A joint commissioning process is undertaken to appoint a suitable consultancy firm.
 - Joint agreement of the terms of reference for the consultants to work to, emphasising the need for a local, bespoke consultancy study that focuses on the needs of Cambridgeshire.
 - The proposed joint Steering Group has a remit to oversee, shape and inform the development of the business case and its recommendations.
 - The Steering Group is tasked with setting out the scope of both a governance and single employer model, which is bespoke to the local requirements of Cambridgeshire.
 - The Authority receives regular reports of the work of the consultancy firm that is appointed and of the decisions of the Steering Group.
- 2.4 The commissioning process concluded with the appointment of PA Consulting Group being contracted to produce the business case. It is anticipated that the first draft will be available mid to late April 2017.

3. BLUE LIGHT ESTATES COLLABORATION

- 3.1 Following the Government consultation to explore opportunities to increase joint working between the emergency services the Service, which has a proven track record of collaboration with emergency services and other public and private bodies, has continued to build upon and add to its portfolio of collaborative work.
- 3.2 Discussions at strategic and operational level have progressed through formalised governance boards to determine where further collaboration might

lead to improved outcomes for the community, improved efficiency or effectiveness, financial savings, economies of scale or increased resilience.

- 3.3 In terms of estates, the most recent development has been the agreement made by the Authority and PCC to jointly review police and fire property holdings in the Huntingdon area to consider the benefits and opportunities for collaborative working and potential efficiencies that can be made with shared buildings. Initial discussions centred around the well developed fire service plans for a new fire station, training centre and headquarters building on the St John's Wood site in the town. As the PCC offered alternatives to this, the Authority put its development at St Johns Wood on hold whilst a full strategic estates review was completed. The outcomes of this review are due to be presented to the Authority in June 2017.

4. SHIFT SYSTEMS

- 4.1 A review of risk within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough identified that call rates are highest during daytime hours, predominately between 8am and 8pm. This is also the well documented time when the Service has difficulties crewing On-call appliances. The net result is a reduction of frontline fire engines available at a time when call rates are at their peak.
- 4.2 The Service has aimed to mitigate this effect by the creation of the Tactical Delivery Group (TDG) and the payment of existing staff to stand by at key stations to increase availability. Whilst this has provided certain mitigation to the issue, the model is reactive, heavily reliant on the good will of staff and comes at a financial cost.
- 4.3 The Authority previously made a decision to improve the rescue capability of our frontline fire engines as the usage of the rescue vehicles at Cambridge and Dogsthorpe has significantly reduced. These vehicles are currently primary crewed by 20 posts operating on the five watch shift system at a cost of circa £800,000 per annum. The Service felt that if agreement could be reached with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) to allow for the redeployment of these posts it would enable an improvement in day time fire engine availability without significantly increasing the cost of doing so; commencement of negotiations was agreed at the Authority meeting in October 2016.
- 4.4 As a result of constructive negotiation activity, the FBU team has brought forward a viable shift pattern, currently operated by another fire and rescue service, which is based on a four day on, four day off 12 hour shift pattern. However although the shift pattern is viable, there remain some hurdles to its adoption and no current agreement has been found on this matter.
- 4.5 With this in mind, the negotiation teams have been discussing an alternative arrangement since mid-January. This option would significantly alter the scope of the negotiations by, in essence, removing the current five watch system plus the TDG and replacing it with a system that would place 156 staff on a rotating shift pattern. This option would therefore impact on more staff and will need to be fully analysed. Notwithstanding the progress made, the current position at

time of writing remains that no agreement has been reached on any shift system. In order to enable any changes to be implemented by January 2018, it is essential that a collective agreement is in place ready for Authority agreement by May 2017.

5. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (IRMP) 2017 to 2020

- 5.1 The IRMP is a public facing document covering a minimum of a three year period and represents the output of the IRMP process for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The integrated risk management process is supported by the use of risk modelling, a process by which performance data over the last five years in key areas of prevention, protection and response is used to assess the likelihood of fires and other related emergencies from occurring. This, together with data from other sources such as the national risk register and our business delivery risks, is then used to identify the activities required to mitigate risks and maximise opportunities, with measures then set to monitor and improve performance.
- 5.2 The IRMP document reviews the Service's progress to date and highlights initiatives that will be explored to further improve the quality of service delivery and importantly to further reduce the level of risk in the community within a balanced budget. The document represents the central improvement plan for the Service and as such sets the strategic direction and performance measures that can be used to manage its implementation. Once approved, an action plan is developed that defines the specific objectives that will be undertaken.
- 5.3 Performance against the IRMP is regularly reviewed and held to account through the Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.4 The main points to note are;
- Fire calls continue to fall despite an increase in population.
 - Difficulties in the retention of On-call firefighters have resulted in fire cover not matching demand during the day time. During the day is the busiest time for fire calls and when on-call availability is at its worst.
 - An ageing demography presents challenges for the Authority in continuing to drive down fire related deaths and injuries.
 - The retirement profile provides opportunity for the Authority to actively drive workforce reform.
 - Further opportunity for the Authority to continue to build upon successful collaborations for efficiency, improved resilience and delivery.
- 5.5 As a result of the points in paragraph 5.4 above, the Service proposed the following areas of work to mitigate these risks or maximise the opportunities;
- Diversification of the role of the fire service to provide greater value to the public by increasing our work with health and social care, together with assisting police colleagues to provide a more coherent response to certain types of incidents.

- Working with representative bodies and staff to better align resources to demand and in addition considering a range of alternative ways to support the retention of On-call staff.
- Further extend our safe and well visits to reach more of the vulnerable in our communities.
- Review our recruitment and promotion processes to ensure we remove any barriers that might affect us recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce.
- Through the Blue Light Interoperability Board, explore the opportunities for shared estate and shared resources where there is a clear case to do so.

5.6 The Authority approved the draft IRMP as presented to its meeting on 9 February 2017, including the appended planning framework. The Council may also wish to know that the Service feels that although they provide an accurate reflection on performance, the current response measures could be confusing to the public. They are therefore proposing to consult the public and stakeholders on a single response measure across urban and rural areas set out on page 35 of the IRMP document

<http://www.cambsfire.gov.uk/about-us/consultations.aspx>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Documents	Location	Contact
Fire Authority Minutes 2016/17	Fire Service HQ Hinchbrook Cottage Huntingdon	Michelle Rowe 01223 699180 Michelle.rowe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk