

CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH FIRE AUTHORITY: MINUTES

Date: Thursday 20th June 2019

Time: 2:00 – 4.16pm

Present: Cambridgeshire County Council:

Councillors: B Ashwood, D Giles, L Harford, S Kindersley, J Gowing, M McGuire, K Reynolds (Chairman), T Rogers, J Scutt, M Shellens and M Smith

Peterborough City Council:

Councillors: A Bond, J Goodwin, M Jamil and D Over (Vice-Chairman)

Officers Present: J Anderson, C Strickland, M Warren, S Ismail and R Sanderson

88. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN/WOMAN

It was resolved that Councillor K Reynolds be elected Chairman of the Fire Authority for the ensuing municipal year 2019-20.

89. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN/WOMAN

It was resolved that Councillor Over be elected Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority for the ensuing municipal year 2019-20.

90. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bywater and Gardener.

91. MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD 7TH FEBRUARY 2019

The minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held 7th February were agreed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

92. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Ashwood to the meeting following her recent appointment and welcomed back Councillors Giles and Goodwin who had been absent from recent meetings due to illness.

Judicial Review

Both the Chairman and the Vice Chairman attended the High Court on 5th and 6th June to hear the legal arguments of both parties with reference made to the judge's opinion of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (P&CC) business case.

Thanks to the Vice Chairman

The Chairman thanked his Vice Chairman who he highlighted had done a sterling job standing in for the Chairman when health issues had prevented him from attending to

all his duties. He also thanked Councillor McGuire who also filled in for any gaps that his temporary absence had caused.

As an update from the last seminar which had included a presentation on the 'FireBreak' scheme, it was highlighted that a number of successful courses had been undertaken. The recent pass out parade at Wisbech had been well attended, with the next one scheduled for 28 June 2019 at Cottenham. He urged Members to not only attend such occasions if their schedules allowed, but to promote the scheme wherever and whenever possible.

Wholetime recruitment campaign was due to launch in September 2019 as part of the proactive Workforce Planning Strategy,

On-Call recruitment was continuing and an update on activities was included at agenda item 8. A Fire Authority seminar on the subject would be arranged in the autumn.

Staffing - Calum Faint had secured an Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACO) position in Leicestershire and would serve with their Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Rick Taylor, another Cambridgeshire personality. This confirmed what the Committee already knew, that Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) was one of the best Fire Authorities in the country with the skills the staff learnt being very much in demand. He praised the quality and dedication to public service within the work force across all ranks and roles including support staff.

93. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

94. CONFIRMATION OF FUTURE COLLABORATION PLANNING

The Chairman explained that regarding the concerns on the continued delay with regard to the Monks Wood site for which the Authority had committed significant resources in both time and money in moving the project up to the planning application stage, he had hoped that the Police and Crime Commissioner (P&CC) would be attending today's meeting to answer questions on his intentions regarding releasing land, future collaboration on capital projects and governance issues. Unfortunately the P&CC had given his apologies due to other commitments.

It was agreed in discussion that it was important to understand the reasons for delay from the P&CC himself, as the delay was also impacting on the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the Fire and Rescue Service in terms of its training capability. At the moment there was no hot fire training facility locally and currently the Service was required to share Northamptonshire's facility. The P&CC should at the same time also be invited to share his views on the value of Fire Authority training.

The Chairman suggested calling a further extraordinary Fire Authority meeting and inviting the P&CC to again attend. If it was still the case that he was unable to attend or if his intentions were still unclear, then other plans would need to be made. In further discussion it was suggested that a better approach would be to approach him for dates and times to allow the P&CC as much flexibility as possible in terms of being able to attend.

It was resolved:

That the P&CC should be written to and asked to propose dates within a reasonable time scale when he would be able to attend and speak to the Fire Authority.

95. ON CALL CREWING UPDATE

The On-Call service has been experiencing fundamental issues regarding recruitment and retention of staff, which was a national, rather than a local issue. This impacted on both the availability of appliances to attend incidents due to there being insufficient firefighters to crew them locally, requiring utilisation of neighbouring fire appliances to provide cover, and also the general sustainability of the service in its current form. The report updated the Fire Authority on recent progress made to improve the On-Call service and the next steps the Service wished to pursue to continue the momentum.

CFRS had undertaken extensive analysis to determine how best to utilise the On-Call resources available leading to the identification of nine strategic On-Call stations as listed in paragraph 5.1. Those identified were considered to contribute the most to the response model and if kept available, would ensure CFRS was able to meet its Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) targets. In terms of improving the service offered by the other non-strategic On-Call stations options being considered included:

- A phased response: to allow firefighters at non-strategic stations to provide availability outside of the current five minute response requirement with a trial proposed to be undertaken during the summer.
- Alternative appliances and crewing models: following the purchase of three smaller appliances which having been assessed as fit for purpose, would move to stations with low call rates, in low risk areas struggled with providing a crew of four. The next phase would be to engage with staff and their representatives exploring alternative crewing models for non-strategic stations. Following this consultation the intention was to undertake a trial of the proposed solution with the outcomes to be considered for inclusion in the next IRMP. The CFO stressed that he still had a preference for five riders to crew each appliance but currently this was not proving possible due to the recruitment difficulties already highlighted.
- The possible removal of 13.5 metre (when fully extended) ladders from some or all of the On-Call stations. Evidence suggested that the ladders were rarely used operationally by On-Call stations yet crews spent a disproportionate amount of valuable training time on them. The Service intended to continue to analyse data and engage with On-Call firefighters to determine if removal of the ladders at some or all On-Call stations would enhance the effective use of valuable training time without exposing the local community to increased risk.

In discussion:

- Reference was made to representations received by e-mail addressed to the Committee that morning from the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) suggesting that the report should be withdrawn as it had not been the subject of prior consultation and raising concerns of safety for the public and firefighters. One Member considered that it was appropriate to hear more details of the concerns of the FBU and also to know the views of the other Union. In response it was made

clear that the report was only for information and the Fire Authority was not being asked to make any decisions at the current time and that Officers would be taking forward proposals to the next Negotiating Committee. Any decisions required, subsequent to negotiations, would need to come back in a report to the full Fire Authority. The Chairman reiterated for clarification that the Fire Authority was not prepared to undertake separate meetings with the two Unions. In reply to a question on whether a combination of a phased response and the removal of the ladders could be looked at, this was an option that would be looked at along with others.

- One Member expressed concern that the list of strategic stations in paragraph 5.1 bore no relation to the size of the local population and the number of fires, highlighting that Huntingdon, St Neots and Cambridge were not included. Officers explained that location of strategic on call stations were decided based on location and volume of calls across the authority area over a rolling five year period. It did not include whole time stations.
- Regarding the unions not being prepared to discuss issues in the same room, on being asked if members of the Fire Authority could help by speaking to employees, officers welcomed any assistance that could be provided.
- In terms of seeking volunteers it was suggested that both the Combined Authority and Police and Crime Commissioner should be approached regarding whether publicity could be undertaken to see whether any volunteers could be found from their employees.
- On whether the experience of other authorities using 13.5 metre ladders could be utilised in terms of best practice, Officers agreed to speak to other Fire Authorities (FA) regarding their use / impact, while also highlighting that some FA's did not have them on all appliances. **Action: Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Jon Anderson**

It was resolved:

To note the progress made and the associated next steps.

96. DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2018-19

This report provided a draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2018/19 for approval based on the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy CIPFA/ Society of Local Authority Chief Executives SOLACE framework to deliver good governance for the Authority's approval. In accordance with the current Authority Terms of Reference the AGS had already been reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28 May 2019 where no changes were suggested.

Page 25 of the document set out the following actions to be taken to deal with the significant governance issues identified for 2018-19:

- Progression with property portfolio collaboration opportunities with particular focus on operational training facility provision;
- Continue to engage with the ongoing Judicial Review process and be prepared to act on the outcome once known;

- Prepare for the next cycle of the comprehensive spending review whilst continuing to implement reductions in the budget as detailed within the efficiency plan, submitted to CLG in October 2016;
- Continue to monitor and manage the use of Miquet, a recently implemented asset and equipment management system, to ensure policies and procedures are in place to support employees deliver its benefits;
- Continue to embed the revised planning framework to ensure the priorities contained within the IRMP and action plan are implemented;

In discussion:

- One Member suggested in relation to paragraph 5.3, setting out the governance requirements an authority must ensure were in place, that the last bullet reading “high quality services are delivered efficiently and effectively” should be top of the list and that the word “timely” should be inserted before efficiently and effectively.
- Officers were congratulated on what was a well written and clearly worded document that could be used as a basis of a good practice document for other authorities.

It was resolved:

To approve with any amendments required from the comments made, the AGS attached at Appendix 1 to the report for external publication.

97. FIRE AUTHORITY ANNUAL REPORT AND STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2018-19

This report presented the draft Annual Report and Statement of Assurance 2018/19 for approval and publication to meet the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework and to ensure the Service continued to provide information on its activities to both the communities it serves and its key stakeholders. To enable the report to be published within a reasonable timescale, a draft text version of the report, without design and graphics, was presented for approval with a number of sections still to be finalised.

The following additions were proposed:

- As the accounts were not finalised until the end of July, it was not proposed to publish the annual report until after that date and any amendments to the accounts information were made. Some of the audit information in section 4 would be updated after the accounts were finalised, following updated comments from the external auditors.
- The format followed the same as previous years and the final design would look very similar to the 2017/18 document; being in full colour and including photographs. An additional section detailed outcomes of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection (as set out on page 43).

In discussion:

- As an oral update the second round of inspection results had been received with the Authority only one of two out of thirty fire authorities that did not need any areas of improvement. The Authority members responded with a round of applause. Members asked that there should be effective communications issues to highlight this good new story and encourage more people to read the final version.
- Regarding efforts to recruit more Women and Black, Asian and other minority ethnics and the events undertaken, a question was raised regarding the feedback received from the people who wished to join from the events and also a request for the ethnic and gender breakdown of the 21 new recruits from the November intake. **Action: Matthew Warren Deputy Chief Executive to email details to Cllr Scutt**
- One member suggested that what was missing from the document was any information on response times. It was explained that the new Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) would be considering the whole issue as there was a need to review and re-align rural and urban response times to the call stations as currently there were 45 stations and 45 different standards.

It was resolved:

To agree the draft Annual Report and Statement of Assurance 2018/19 attached at Appendix 1 to the report, subject to the additions highlighted, and that any additional significant changes added following the meeting to be agreed by the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chairman.

98. ANNUAL REVIEW OF INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (IRMP) PERFORMANCE

The IRMP is a public facing document covering a three year period and represents the output of the IRMP process for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough reviewing the Service's progress to date, highlighting initiatives to further improve the quality of operational service provision and further reduce the level of risk in the community. The IRMP delivery was set out in the following four areas for management and monitoring purposes in line with our strategic aims:

- Community Safety Excellence,
- Operational Excellence,
- People
- Value for Money.

The report provided an update in respect of the refresh of the IRMP for 2018-19 with detail being provided in respect of the above four areas.

Officers were praised for the FireBreak initiative highlighting the positive message it provided and the need to involve more schools who were clearly interested and this would be further facilitated through a newsletter going to every school.

It was resolved:

To note the report.

99. AREAS FOR SCRUTINY CONSIDERATION

In discussion the following were suggested:

- Community Safety and evaluation of benefits
- Risk Based Inspection Programme
- Health and Wellbeing
- Best practice from second tranche Inspection results and what the Authority could learn from them
- Looking to learn from areas of bad practice identified from Reviews of other services to ensure that the Authority avoided such areas.
- Best practice consultation with representative bodies.

100. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER BODIES

Councillor Barbara Ashwood highlighted that with regard to her appointment on Policy and Resources Committee she was double booked as a result of County Council commitments for the next four meetings so would be seeking a replacement from her group.

As no changes were proposed at the current meeting,

It was resolved to:

To agree the appointments set out in the report and as reproduced as Appendix 1 to these minutes.

101. FIRE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES – 25th APRIL 2019

Members noted the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held 25TH April 2019.

102. FIRE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES – 28th May 2019

Members noted the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held 28TH May 2019.

103. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chairman explained that normally he tried to avoid moving meetings into private session, however under item 16 there were two items that on the advice of the monitoring officer should be discussed in private session.

It was resolved:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the discussion would contain exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended, and that it would not be in the public interest for this information to be disclosed as it was information relating to an individual and information relating to the Financial or Business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information).

104. JUDICIAL REVIEW PROCESS AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS

Details were given of the hearing with a decision expected before end of July.

There was discussion regarding a pre-action letter. **Action: Shahin Ismail to circulate to all Fire Authority.**

For the operational efficiency and effectiveness of consolidating training facilities on a single site, Monks Wood formed part of a logical collaborative strategy and would fulfill one of the main priorities of the Fire and Rescue Service. As there had been a large increase in the cost of the Monks Wood Site there was a need for a new business case.

It was resolved;

- a) Letter to be sent to the P&CC seeking meeting dates.
- b) A new business case should go forward to the next Policy and Resources Committee. *(Post meeting Note: this was changed to a special meeting of the Fire Authority)*
- c) Once considered by the Special Fire Authority meeting the Business case to be sent to the P&CC.

Chairman