



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY held on Wednesday, 19 September 2018 at Lecture Theatre - Sadler Road, Winsford, Cheshire at 10.30 am

PRESENT: Councillors B Rudd (Chair), D Bailey, M Barker, D Beckett, M Biggin, B Dooley, D Flude, P Harris, G Hayes, E Johnson, N Jones, D Mahon, J Mercer, K Mundry, S Nelson, S Parker, R Polhill, T Sherlock, M Simon, M Tarr, J Weatherill and S Wright

The Police and Crime Commissioner David Keane was also in attendance

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Recording of Meeting

Members were reminded that the meeting would be audio-recorded.

B Apologies for Absence

Councillor G. Merry submitted her apologies.

C Chair's Announcements

The Chair advised that Councillor Allin Dirir had sadly passed away on 22nd July 2018, aged 79. Allin was an elected member at Warrington Council and served on the Fire Authority from June 2016.

The Chair advised that firefighter Paul Smith had sadly passed away suddenly whilst off duty on 18th August 2018, aged 54. Paul joined the Service as part of the newly formed Runcorn on-call team from it's commencement in September 2013.

A minute's silence was observed at the meeting.

Members were requested to note the content of the Chair's announcements which included details of events Members had attended since the last meeting of the Fire Authority which included the official opening of Safety Central by The Princess Royal on 10th September 2018.

D Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

E Minutes of Fire Authority

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 18th July 2018 be approved as a correct record.

F Minutes of Performance and Overview Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Performance and Overview Committee held on 5th September 2018 be noted.

G Minutes of the Staffing Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 17th September 2018 be noted.

2 ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER - YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2018

Ged Small, Engagement Manager for Grant Thornton (the External Auditor) introduced the report and provided an overview of the content arising from the audit of the Authority's financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2018. The letter summarised the content of the Audit Findings Report that was presented to the Fire Authority at its meeting on 18th July 2018 (minute 2 refers).

Ged confirmed that Grant Thornton was satisfied in all significant respects that the Authority had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31st March 2018.

RESOLVED: That

[1] The content of the Annual Audit Letter for the year ended 31st March 2018 be noted.

3 ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive which presented and sought approval of the Annual Report for 2017-18 and its publication on the Service's website. The draft report incorporated statutory information on the Statement of Accounts together with summary information on key areas of Service performance during the last financial year.

Once approved, an electronic copy of the Annual Report would be published on the Service's website by 30th September 2018. This was the statutory deadline for the publication of the Statement of Accounts. Publication would be announced through social media channels and via mainstream media. This year the print circulation would be reduced and deliver a cost saving.

RESOLVED: That:

[1] The Annual Report 2017-18, as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved along with its publication.

4 DRAFT INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2019-2020 (IRMP 16)

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive which sought approval of the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan for 2019-20 (IRMP 16) for consultation. The draft IRMP outlined a range of new and ongoing projects, as well as the detailed risk analysis and planning processes that had been carried out in order to ensure current and future projects continued to meet the Authority's objectives and future financial challenges. The draft IRMP also provided some indicative timescales regarding the development of the Whole Service Review, the outcomes of which may be subject to public consultation as part of future integrated risk management planning.

Members were advised on the proposed consultation programme that would run for 13 weeks and would allow public, staff and stakeholders the opportunity to comment on and shape the proposals. Emerging issues and interim findings from the consultation would be presented to the next meeting of the Fire Authority on 12th December 2018. A formal report on the outcomes from the consultation would be presented to the Fire Authority on 13th February 2019.

RESOLVED: That:

[1] The Integrated Risk Management Plan for 2019-20 (IRMP 16), as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved for formal internal and external consultation.

5 FIRE STATION MODERNISATION PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Governance and Commissioning which provided information about the condition of certain fire stations; described the process to assess the works required at each of the fire stations; outlined a suggested approach to the delivery of a modernisation programme; and sought the allocation of funding to commence the programme. The report was not concerned with the four new fire stations, or Chester, Crewe, and Warrington fire stations. It focused on the remaining 21 fire stations.

Members were advised that it was the intention to manage and monitor the delivery and performance of the programme at the Estates and Property Committee and the Performance and Overview Committee. The programme would be expected to be delivered over five and a half years.

Members welcomed the proposed programme and asked if local contractors would be involved and whether modern technology would be used to deliver environmental improvements. In response, the Director of Governance and Commissioning confirmed that there would be a need for a mixture of procurement approaches and some of the contracts would be expected to attract interest from local contractors. Environmental improvements would be dependant on the suitability and cost at each site and expert guidance would be considered.

RESOLVED: That:

- [1] The Authority commit to the delivery of a fire station modernisation programme for the 21 fire stations covered by the report.**
- [2] The sum of £8.5m for the modernisation programme be included in the capital programme.**
- [3] The release of £3.5m to start the programme be approved.**
- [4] The intention to engage with Members at Estates and Property and Performance and Overview Committees in order to manage the programme and performance in delivering it be noted.**

6 ESTATES SHARING PRINCIPLES

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Governance and Commissioning which sought approval of the Estates Sharing Principles (the Principles). The Principles detailed at Appendix 2 of the report described certain expectations that might be relevant when the Fire Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner were considering the sharing of estates assets.

The Principles were intended to guide officers as estates sharing opportunities were developed. The Principles were not binding. Specific estates sharing proposals would need to be approved by the Fire Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner apart from the Use of Existing Estate arrangements as detailed within the report.

RESOLVED: That:

- [1] The Estates Sharing Principles, as detailed at Appendix 2 of the report, be approved.**

7 CREATING A JOINT FIRE AND POLICE FACILITY ON THE CREWE FIRE STATION SITE

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Governance and Commissioning which provided information about progress with the proposal to create a joint fire and police facility for Cheshire Fire Authority (Fire) and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire (the PCC) on the Crewe Fire Station site. The report sought authority to enter into suitable arrangements with the PCC to progress the project; sought the allocation of the funding to cover Fire's proportion of the cost of the joint fire and police facility; and sought authority to commit up to £200k to prepare initial designs, carry out suitable surveys/checks and prepare a cost plan.

It was reported that Fire and the PCC would build upon the existing general collaborative arrangements to produce a suite of legal agreements to regularise all stages of delivering a joint facility from feasibility through to long term operational use.

Both David Keane, Police and Crime Commissioner and Members welcomed the

proposal to create a joint fire and police facility on the Crewe Fire Station site.

RESOLVED: That:

- [1] The contents of the report be noted.**
- [2] The Authority commit to proceed with a joint fire and police facility on the Crewe Fire Station site.**
- [3] Officers be authorised to enter into suitable arrangements including written agreements with the PCC to enable the project to be progressed.**
- [4] The sum of £5m be included in the capital programme to cover the potential Fire Authority contribution to the cost of creating the joint fire and police facility.**
- [5] The anticipated cost of progressing the project to create initial designs, carry out suitable surveys/checks and prepare a cost plan be noted and the sum of £200k as the Fire contribution be committed.**

NOTE: Members did not need to debate the Financial Implications (contained in the report at Item 10) and did not need to move into private session.

8 NW FIRE CONTROL LIMITED GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Governance and Commissioning which advised on a proposal from Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) that would require a change to the governance arrangements of NW Fire Control Limited (the Company).

It was reported that the Company, which provided call handling and mobilising services, was jointly owned by Cumbria County Council, GMCA, Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and Cheshire Fire Authority. The Company governance arrangements were set out in its Articles of Association and the Articles stated that each owner was entitled to appoint two directors. The directors form the board and meet at least every quarter and currently, all directors must be elected members.

GMCA had advised that they now wished to appoint two officers as directors instead of elected members. GMCA was proposing the appointment of its Treasurer and Deputy Chief Executive, as directors.

Members were requested to consider the following two options:

Option 1 – To confirm that the Chair of the Authority had discretion to vote on behalf of the Authority on the proposal as he sees fit; or

Option 2 – To determine how the Chair was required to vote on behalf of the Authority on the proposal.

Councillor S Nelson moved and Councillor R Polhill seconded Option 1 and Councillor E Johnson moved and Councillor G Hayes seconded Option 2.

The two Options were contradictory and the Chair put Option 1 to the meeting and it was carried 12 votes in favour and 8 votes against with the Chair abstaining.

RESOLVED: That:

[1] The Chair has the discretion to vote on behalf of the Authority on the proposal as he sees fit.

9 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Minute 7 refers.

10 CREATING A JOINT FIRE AND POLICE FACILITY ON THE CREWE FIRE STATION SITE - FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report supplemented the report at Item 7 on the Agenda. The report covered the financial aspects of the proposal and was considered to be commercially sensitive.