

# SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

19 FEBRUARY 2018

PRESENT: Councillor L Burgess (Chair)  
Councillor A Atkin (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors: S Ayris, A Buckley, P Haith, C Hogarth,  
M Maroof, C Ransome, J Satur and Dr A Billings

CFO J Courtney, QFSM, DCFO M Blunden, ACFO A Johnson,  
S Booth and V Smith (South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service)

A Brown, N Copley, M McCarthy, M McCoole, L Noble and  
S Bradley (Barnsley MBC)

M BATTERY (Office of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime  
Commissioner)

Apologies for absence were received from  
Councillor M Clements and Councillor T Damms

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

3 URGENT ITEMS

None.

4 ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

None.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS IN RELATION TO  
ANY ITEM OF BUSINESS ON THE AGENDA

None.

6 REPORTS BY MEMBERS

Members provided a summary of the visits and meetings attended since the last  
Authority meeting held on 22 January 2018.

Councillor Burgess and Councillor Atkin had visited Dearne Fire Station on 16 February 2018, where HRH Prince Charles had been in attendance, in recognition of the excellent work undertaken by SYFR and SYP through the Princes' Trust.

7 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

None.

8 TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC, OR COMMUNICATIONS SUBMITTED BY THE CHAIR OR THE CLERK AND TO PASS SUCH RESOLUTIONS THEREON AS THE STANDING ORDERS PERMIT AND AS MAY BE DEEMED EXPEDIENT

None.

9 MINUTES OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2018

Councillor Maroof requested that his apologies be recorded for the last Authority meeting.

Councillor Ayris queried whether there had been a delay in presenting the Barnsley Fire Station tender report to the Authority.

The Director of Support Services stated that the report would form part of the progress report on South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Property and Procurement Services, to be presented at today's meeting.

Councillor Haith requested that the minutes be amended, in relation to the Facilities Management procurement, to indicate that Members proposed the implementation of the foundation living wage.

Councillor Ransome queried whether SYFR's implications had been identified from the findings within Dame Judith Hackitt's report.

ACFO Johnson stated that Dame Judith Hackitt's interim report had identified the work to be undertaken; workshops had been arranged to assist with the completion of the work.

Councillor Ayris queried whether Members had been provided with the LGA Tax Implications Workshop slides.

DCFO Blunden stated that Councillor Clements had been provided with the workshop slides. He would forward the workshop slides to L Noble, for circulation to all Members.

RESOLVED – That:-

- i) Members to be provided with the LGA Tax Implications Workshop slides.
- ii) Subject to the above amendments, Members agreed that the minutes of the Authority meeting held on 22 January 2018 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

10 2018/19 ANNUAL REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX SETTING

A report of the Clerk and Treasurer and the Chief Fire Officer and the Chief Executive was submitted to seek Authority approval to the 2018/19 budget and to set the Council Tax and precept by 28 February 2018.

Councillor Satur queried the decrease in the Control Staff budget for 2018/19 in comparison to 2017/18.

The Director of Support Services stated that he would provide Members with a detailed analysis of the Control Staff budget for 2018/19.

Councillor Ayris expressed concerned at the increase of supplies and services related costs, and he requested a breakdown of the legal costings. He queried why additional funding was required for Support Services.

The Director of Support Services stated that he would provide Members with a breakdown of the legal costings in relation to the supplies and services related costs.

DCFO Blunden added that SYFR had the sufficient capacity and skill set required. However, additional staff would be required to enable existing officers to concentrate solely on the inspection process to ensure that all of the information was drawn upon and presented correctly.

The Deputy Clerk referred to the Member related allowances and expenses, and the recommendation to review Allowances every four years. Dr D Hall from LG Research & Consultancy had recently been commissioned to undertake an independent review of the Members allowances scheme; the recommendations would be presented to the Authority for consideration / decision.

The Director of Support Services apologised for the typographical error in the 'Other Expenses (including BMBC Service Level Agreement)' table.

Dr Billings queried whether additional learning could be drawn from SYP in respect of the inspection regime. The Policing and Fire Minister had been very clear with SYP around establishing greater use of reserves, rather than increasing the precept. He sought reassurance that the Authority was content to receive 10% of the general reserves, in comparison with most local authorities which received 4% - 5% or lower, and Police were looking towards those amounts as a percentage of the revenue budget.

The Treasurer stated that, having considered the risks moving forward in terms of the fair funding review that local government was subject to, together with Brexit and other risks in future years, the strategy to use the cumulative reserves to fund the one off capital investment was a prudent and sensible approach. It was difficult to compare organisations in relation to general reserves i.e. SYFR had encountered greater funding cuts compared to South Yorkshire Police.

The Director of Support Services referred to the expectation that by 2020, subject to the capital investment being spent in line with the profile within the report, that SYFR's reserves would go from £25m to between £5m - £8m; it was entirely prudent to use the reserves for capital investment purposes. He considered that SYFR had been very transparent in terms of the reserves review.

Councillor Burgess thanked the officers for the detailed report.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Be provided with a detailed analysis of the Control Staff budget for 2018/19.
- ii) Be provided with a breakdown of the legal costings in relation to supplies and services related costs.
- iii) Noted that the recommendations from the independent review of the Members allowances scheme would be presented to the Authority.
- iv) Approved the Authority's 2018/19 Revenue Budget at Appendix A to the report.

**All Members voted in favour of the Authority's 2018/19 Revenue Budget, with the exception of Councillors Ransome and Ayriss, who voted against the decision.**

- v) Approved the updated 2018/19 to 2019/20 Capital Programme as set out in Appendix B to the report.

**All Members voted in favour of the updated 2018/19 to 2019/20 Capital Programme, with the exception of Councillors Ransome and Ayriss, who voted against the decision.**

- vi) Approved the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy at Appendix C to the report.

**All Members voted in favour of the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy, with the exception of Councillors Ransome and Ayriss, who voted against the decision.**

- vii) Approved a Council Tax increase of 2.97% for 2018/19.

**All Members voted in favour of a Council Tax increase of 2.97% for 2018/19, with the exception of Councillors Ransome and Ayriss, who voted against the decision.**

11 SYFR AND SYP COLLABORATION UPDATE

DCFO Blunden stated that the Police and Fire Collaboration Board had not met since the last Authority Meeting; he would provide a report to the next meeting.

Members noted that the interviews for the Joint Head of Estates position would be held on 5 and 6 March 2018. Two internal applications had been received from SYFR and SYP for the Joint Head of Fleet position; confirmation of the interview dates was awaited. The Joint Community Safety Team, headed by AM Helps, continued to operate at the Lifewise Centre.

DCFO Blunden had provided L Noble with the notes of the Collaboration Workshop, for circulation to Members.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Be provided with a Police and Fire Collaboration Board report to the next Authority meeting.
- ii) Noted the verbal update.

12 STRONGER SAFER COMMUNITY RESERVE SPRINKLER FUND

A report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer and the Director of Service Delivery was submitted to request Members support for two bids from DMBC in partnership with St Leger Homes (Doncaster) and RMBC.

ACFO Johnson confirmed that the two bids had been assessed against the criteria for the Stronger Safer Community Reserve Sprinkler Fund (SSCR), and had met the criteria for the people most vulnerable.

Members noted that if the two bids were approved, a total of £813,000 would be committed from the £1,000,000 SSCR sprinkler funding, which would leave £187,000 remaining in the fund.

RESOLVED – That Members agreed to fund the two Fire Sprinkler Projects from the Stronger Safer Community Reserve (SSCR) Sprinkler Fund.

13 PROGRESS REPORT ON SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE PROPERTY AND PROCUREMENT SERVICES

A report of the Director of Support Services was submitted, which was the latest in a series of update reports presented to the Authority on a bi-monthly basis since June 2017, regarding SYFR Property and Procurement Services.

It was noted that the condition surveys, which had been undertaken across the SYFR estate, had indicated that it was in a reasonable state; £10m would be invested into SYFR properties over the next 2 to 3 years through a planned maintenance programme.

Councillor Hogarth queried whether asbestos containing materials (ACM) would be removed from the buildings, prior to demolition.

The Property Manager confirmed that ACM and other hazardous materials would be removed from the buildings, prior to the buildings being cut or demolished; surveys would be undertaken to govern the way in which the materials would be removed.

Councillor Ayris requested that regular progress reports be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee. He queried how Property and Procurement Services fit with the overall strategy in relation to jointly managing SYFR assets with SYP.

The Director of Support Services confirmed that best value for consultant costs remained at the forefront. A key emphasis for the role of the Joint Head of Estates would be strategy development and taking forward the asset management plans which SYFR and SYP required together with strategic collaboration, to be implemented as soon as possible.

Dr Billings welcomed the broad approach that was outlined within the report and the potential appointment to the Joint Head of Estates position. He considered that SYFR was ahead of SYP in this area. However, he felt it was imperative for both organisations to work together in order to identify opportunities.

Councillor Haith welcomed the progress made, in particular the customer centric focus. She queried whether there was a timeline for the completion of the outstanding repairs and maintenance work at the fire stations.

The Director of Support Services referred to the high proportion of work that was underway around the Facilities Management contract. The Property Manager had worked closely with ACFO Johnson and her team in preparation for the recent visit of HRH Prince Charles to Dearne Fire Station. A different approach had been adopted around the community clear up event, together with a concerted effort to get Dearne Fire Station ready, which would be replicated across the SYFR estate.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Noted that regular progress reports would be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee.
- ii) Noted the contents of the report.
- iii) Endorsed the ongoing, positive progress being made in Property and Procurement Services as part of their improvement journey towards becoming an efficient and effective Support Service of SYFR.

#### 14 PAY POLICY STATEMENT

A report of the Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority was presented to provide the revised Pay Policy Statement for the Authority for 2017/18 as required under the Localism Act 2011.

DCFO Blunden stated that the present SYFR Senior Management Team did not claim an allowance for telephone and internet connections, if Managers had a second residence.

Councillor Haith commented that, when the last Pay Policy Statement report had been presented to the Authority in 2017, she had requested a comparison of the figures from the previous year to be included in future reports; she requested that a comparison be included in future reports. She requested SYFR pay the foundation living wage in the future.

Councillor Hogarth requested that the report be amended under the 'Contribution to Service Priorities' section, to include the 'People - Valuing People – Those we serve and employ' box.

DCFO Blunden confirmed that the report would be amended prior to publication.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Noted that a comparison of the previous year's figures to be included in future reports.
- ii) Requested SYFR to pay the foundation living wage in the future with the financial implications of this brought back to Members for approval.
- iii) Noted that the report to be amended, prior to publication, under the 'Contribution to Service Priorities' section to include the 'People - Valuing People – Those we serve and employ' box.
- iv) Approved the Pay Policy Statement.

## 15 REVIEW OF COUNTER FRAUD FRAMEWORK POLICIES

A report of the Director of Support Services was submitted to present the recently revised Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, the Anti-Bribery Policy, the Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy, the Prosecution Policy and the Fraud Response Plan. The documents had been revised as part of the periodic review process to ensure such policies were up to date, to reflect best practice and any changes in the legislation.

Councillor Ayris requested that the date of the next review should be included in the report; he suggested a timescale of every 18 months, unless changes were made to the legislation.

The Director of Support Services stated that the expectation was to keep the documents under constant review with a periodic annual review process; he would include the date of the next review in the report.

M Buttery raised an issue on behalf of Dr Billings, who had left the meeting. She made an offer, on behalf of SYP, for them to have sight of the documents in order to achieve quality assurance.

The Director of Support Services agreed that it would be advantageous for SYP to have sight of the documents.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Noted that the date of the next review would be included in the report.
- ii) Noted that SYP would have sight of the documents in order to achieve quality assurance.
- iii) Approved the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, the Anti-Bribery Policy, the Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy, the Prosecution Policy and the Fraud Response Plan and continued to endorse the Authority's overall 'zero tolerance' approach.
- iv) Agreed that through the Authority's Audit and Governance Committee, the effectiveness of these policies and strategy would be monitored via the work of the Corporate Anti-Fraud Team in the Internal Audit Service.

## 16 SYFR ENTRY LEVEL APPRENTICE PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

A report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and the Director of Service Development was presented to inform Members of the SYFR entry level apprentice programme proposal.

Members noted the valid development pathways in place at SYFR i.e. SYFR Fire Cadets, Princes Trust Programme alumni and the volunteer cohort in addition to those not in education, employment or training (NEET) to the under 25's within South Yorkshire.

A target of 2.3% had been set by the Government for the SYFR headcount for new starters on apprenticeships in each year. For SYFR this equated to approximately 21 new starters on the apprenticeship programmes in each financial year.

Following the capacity issues that had arisen over the past 18 months from the reduction in support staff, Councillor Haith suggested, that the corporate risk assessment and business continuity implications section of the report be amended to include a risk on the impact to the current SYFR staff whilst undertaking the training of apprentices.

The Director of Support Services confirmed that he would amend the corporate risk assessment and business continuity implications section of the report accordingly.

Councillor Hogarth queried why the SYFR apprentices had been excluded from the living wage.



DCFO Blunden stated that the SYFR apprentices worked alongside the full time SYFR employees to learn their trade on a part time basis, together with further study at college; it would be cost prohibitive to pay the apprentices a full time wage. The apprenticeship rate was governed nationally.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Noted that the corporate risk assessment and business continuity implications section of the report be amended to include the risk on the impact to the current SYFR staff whilst undertaking the training of apprentices.
- ii) Noted the contents of the report and related Equality Analysis.
- iii) Approved the £125,000 investment for the Apprenticeship Programme delivery.

17 2017/18 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT: AN UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Director of Support Services, which was the fourth report in a series of reports to be presented to the Authority during the financial year. The report informed Members of the likely financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2018, an estimated revenue outturn position when compared to the annual budget set on 13 February 2017, an updated reserves position statement and an update on the capital programme, alongside a narrative commentary to provide an explanation of the key financial changes that were contributing to these.

Members noted a net increase in overall general reserves of £2.134m, based on the projections within the report, with £1.246m planned (budgeted) contribution to reserves, plus the in-year estimated surplus of £0.637m, and the notified additional funding of £0.251m.

Councillor Ransome referred to the agency staff that had been utilised at Central Headquarters to provide the canteen services provision. She queried the total number of staff that were employed at Central Headquarters.

The Director of Support Services stated that options for a permanent canteen provision at Central Headquarters would be considered, with the intention to reduce the overall cost. There was a potential opportunity to align the canteen arrangements for Central Headquarters with the Training and Development Centre.

The Property Manager would provide Members with the total number of SYFR staff employed at Central Headquarters.

Councillor Ayris queried whether the decision to remove injury pensions was discretionary.

DCFO Blunden stated that in 2014 the Authority had requested a review of the injury pensions payable to SYFR staff. The process had concluded at the end of 2017, whereby a number of individuals had been subject to appeal; a reduction in

the budget had resulted from the outcome of the appeals. CFO Courtney had the ultimate discretion for the injury pensions payable to SYFR staff.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Be provided with the total number of SYFR staff employed at Central Headquarters.
- ii) Noted and considered the latest estimated revenue performance which showed an underspend of £0.637m for the financial year ended 31 March 2018.
- iii) Noted the latest estimated increase in General Reserves of £2.134m for the financial year ended 31 March 2018.

18 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 JANUARY 2018

RESOLVED – That Members noted the draft minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 15 January 2018.

19 MINUTES OF THE YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION HELD ON 11 JANUARY 2018

Councillor Haith referred to the presentation that had been received from Humberside Fire and Rescue on the UN Campaign for Gender Equality HeforShe. Members' attention was drawn to the link <http://www.heforshe.org/en/our-mission>, if they wished to register for the campaign.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the minutes of the Yorkshire and Humber Employers' Association held on 11 January 2018.

CHAIR