

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

27 JULY 2020

PRESENT: Councillor R Taylor (Chair)

Councillors: S Ayris, A Buckley, T Cave, R Frost, P Haith,
C Hogarth, P Price, S M Richards, C Ross and Dr A Billings

CFO A Johnson, DCFO C Kirby, ACO T Carlin, S Slater,
S Locking and L Murray
(South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service)

M McCarthy, G Kirk, L Noble, I Rooth and G Richards
(Barnsley MBC)

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

A Mullen
(RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP)

Apologies for absence were received from
Councillor T Damms, Councillor C Ransome, N Copley,
M Potter and S Booth

1 APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies 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

Cllr Haith reported that she had recently visited Red Watch at Edlington and was impressed with the improvements to the station to facilitate the return to the 2-2-4 duty system.

The Chair thanked the Service for inviting him to join the new recruits graduation event virtually which recognised all the hard work done in difficult circumstances.

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

The Deputy Clerk informed the Authority that the following question had been received from Mr Caukwell.

“Following the commitment made by former Chief Fire Officer James Courtney at a Rotherham Scrutiny Board to reinstate the second pump at Rotherham Fire Station after an increase to the Fire precept, was this proposal ever debated by the Fire Authority?”

As this was an operational matter, the Chief Fire Officer was asked to respond.

A Johnson replied that it could not be evidenced that the increase in the precept would be committed to Rotherham 2. The draft IRMP would be submitted to the September meeting of the Fire Authority and this would contain a definitive review of resources for Members’ consideration.

It was agreed that a written response would be sent to Mr Caukwell.

9 MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 22 JUNE 2020

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Annual meeting of the Authority held on 22 June 2020 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

10 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 22 JUNE 2020

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Authority held on 22 June 2020 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

11 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT Q1 2020/21

A report of the Director of Support Services was presented which gave details of financial performance for Quarter 1, 2020/21.

The report looked at the revenue outturn as opposed to the budget for the first Quarter and showed an updated reserves position and an updated capital programme.

The 2020/21 approved operating budget was £54.850m, funding was £55.321m resulting in a planned contribution to reserves of £0.471m. The Authority was projecting a net operating spend of £53.029m, funding of £55.530m resulting in an overall forecast potential underspend of £2.501m.

The approved capital programme was £10.504m, following the 2019/20 outturn report which was approved 29 June 2020, the programme had been adjusted to £11.082m.

Overall there was a potential increase of £1.8m which was a combination of the potential in-year surplus, the budgeted surplus, offset by the agreement to create the new Service Improvement Reserve of £646k, less the £9m for the capital programme, any SSCR contributions and the contributions to the MRP reserve.

It was noted that the current outturn position was only an early indicator, there was still a number of risks that could affect the position. These included:

- The full and ongoing costs of Covid 10 response and recovery.
- Potential future loss of revenue funding from a temporary and prolonged reduction in the council tax and business rates base and future collection fund surpluses.
- The full cost of the Hatfield Moor fires.
- The operational and financial impact from the McCloud and Sargent Remedy hearing.
- The additional cost of completing both major and minor work due to loss of production from social distancing etc.
- Outstanding pay disputes for both Uniformed and Support Staff pay awards that were likely to exceed the current pay budget assumptions.
- The full extent on the national and local economy of the UK leaving the European Union.

Section A of the report showed all the potential over- and underspends forecasted for Quarter 1 in each category. The main change was employee costs, especially to wholetime staff.

Employee costs showed a projected underspend of £1.7m. This was mainly due to a drop in the projected staffing level which had been approved in February 2020. This was now unlikely to be achieved due to the current circumstances.

There were slight overspends in some areas such as overtime and flexi duty costs and projected underspends in current Close proximity Crew staff and vacant posts.

The Executive Team had recently held a three-day workshop to discuss workforce planning and the Chief Fire Officer updated the Authority on this.

As a result of the Workshop and discussions around the budget, staffing and establishment it had been decided to recruit through a number of means to up to 41 posts on the operational side. This would be done through recruit courses, transfers in, promotions in and internal promotions. This would all still be within budget and would resource up to SYFR's establishment.

S Slater reported that there had been a significant overachievement in income which was mainly to do with the Covid 19 grant from government; this had been slightly offset by the loss of income from catering facilities.

There had also been changes in estimated funding. The situation was being monitored closely by BMBC due to the potential loss of funding from council tax and business rates. The COVID 19 reserve was there to support this if the situation materialised.

With regard to reserves there was a new reserve for service improvement to bring the general reserve back down to £5m.

Members were informed that the reserves position detailed within the report excluded any costs arising from the potential risks that could emerge.

With regard to the capital programme, following the outturn of 2019/20 this had slightly increased due to delays caused by COVID 19. These included some replacement vehicles, the replacement of Barnsley Fire Station and the work involved in returning two Fire Stations to the 2-2-4 duty system; there could be some costs relating to contracts for this work.

Cllr Richards questioned when the Authority would see the review of workforce planning arrangements so Members could understand what was being done to encourage staff to progress and how this would work within the Authority.

The Chief Fire Officer replied that it was intended to bring an Effective Improvement Plan to the Authority to include recruitment of both operational and support staff and would be looking at what the barriers were to progression and what support was needed.

The Investment Plan, that would probably be submitted to the next meeting of the Corporate Advisory Group, and would look at how to support firefighters and support staff as a whole when joining the organisation to encourage further development and ensure safety.

At this point, due to a technical issue, the Chair left the meeting. Cllr Haith took the Chair.

Cllr Cave asked what the modern approach was to what used to be called integrated professional development.

A Johnson replied that workforce development would come forward as part of the Investment Plan with the recognition that if the Service didn't develop and value their workforce they couldn't ensure that the workforce was competent, safe and

engaged. Additional resources would be put back into the system to ensure this happened.

In response to a question from Dr Billings, it was confirmed that the £609,474 referred to in Appendix A was the Covid 19 grant. There had been an initial payment of £276k followed by a further £1m+ to bring the grant total to £1.3m. The amount shown in the Appendix was the amount that had been spent, a further amount had been put aside for recovery.

With regard to the Estates programme, Cllr Haith asked how contractors could be challenged on the true cost to them of Covid 19.

L Murray reported that there had been an approach regarding Barnsley Fire Station and also on the contract for the refurbishment of Aston Park and explained to Members how these had been dealt with in different ways.

With regard to sub-contractors and their eligibility for COVID 19 grant funding or loans, Cllr Ayris queried what checks were done when firms were trying to offload costs onto SYFR.

L Murray replied that she would defer this to a Procurement colleague and circulate a response after the meeting.

RESOLVED – That Members:

- i) Note the underlying estimated revenue performance which was showing a potential operating underspend of £2.501m for the financial year ended 31st March 2021.
- ii) Note the underlying and significant financial risks likely to be facing the Service and Sector during the remainder of this financial year and into 2021/2022.
- iii) Note the latest estimated change in General and Earmarked Reserves as set out in Section C of the report.
- iv) Note the adjusted capital programme for the financial year ending 2020/21, which was in line with expectations following the approval in June 2020 of the 2019/20 financial outturn position.
- v) Request that when the report on the Workforce Development Strategy was available that it would be submitted to an Authority meeting.

12 PROGRESS REPORT ON ESTATES AND FACILITIES SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

A report was submitted to provide members with details on progress to improve the Estates and Facilities within South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue together with major work and projects that were currently underway and their present status.

L Murray confirmed they were running at full capacity and their focus since March had been to keep essential services going during the lockdown period of the pandemic followed by the gradual reopening of sites during the last few weeks with the emphasis being on safety.

With regard to collaboration, an Outline Business Case for moving forward the current collaborative operating model in estates and facilities had been considered by all key stakeholders.

This had subsequently led to a discussion between the Chief Fire Officer, Chief Constable, Chair of the Fire Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner resulting in a decision that further consideration and evaluation be given to an alternative proposal for moving towards a “Lead Organisation” model in addition to analysis of other options.

Joint working with SYP continued to be successful in the delivery of the Fleet Workshop collaboration project at Rotherham Fire Station.

In addition to the formal collaboration activity, the teams were also increasingly working together as a result of the joint leadership in place.

With regard to the estates and facilities projects, the Barnsley Fire Station project commenced on 13th July 2020 following the transfer of the crews to Cudworth and the temporary fire station at Barugh Green. Surveys were being carried out before demolition began.

With regard to the stations improvement programme for the four stations being converted from CPC, work at Edlington and Low Edges had been completed. The second phase had begun at Aston and work at Tankersley would begin in September; completion was expected December/January.

In terms of the wider capital programme the tender for the works at Rivelin would be issued shortly.

All facilities management contracts were working well and there were no issues to report.

RESOLVED – That the Authority:

- i) Note the contents of the report.
- ii) Endorse the ongoing, positive progress and improvements made so far in Estates and Facilities as part of the Service’s improvement journey and its continuation as an effective and efficient support service of SYFR.

13 DIGITAL AND ICT DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020 - 2021

The Digital and ICT Development Plan 2020-21 was submitted for Members’ consideration.

Members were informed that following a review of SYFR's digital and ICT processes by Shaping Cloud in 2019 and the undertaking and significant completion of Digital Transformation Phase 1 (DT1), SYFR were now planning to embark on the next phase of innovation in Digital and ICT with the creation of a new and ambitious Development Plan for 2020/21. Details of the progress against DT1 was included as an appendix to the report.

S Locking, ICT Manager at SYFR, informed Members that despite the difficulties created by the Covid-19 pandemic, SYFR had managed, through the use of modern technology, to maintain governance processes and procedures throughout the organisation with the use of electronic signatures, Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

The report gave details of all the projects in the Plan, including the Emergency Services Network Implementation. SYFR had been nominated as national lead organisation for the Systel mobilising system. This work would be funded by a Home Office grant which had recently been received.

Members noted that SYFR had achieved the Cyber Essentials Plus Accreditation.

The Senior Management Team had requested a benefits realisation review of DT1 which would be completed in the next few weeks.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Authority endorse the new Digital and ICT Development Plan 2020-2021.
- ii) That a report on the progress made against the Plan be submitted to the January meeting of the Authority.

14 COVID-19 UPDATE: SYFR'S RESPONSE, RECOVERY AND LEARNING

DCFO Kirby gave an update on SYFR's response and recovery to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members were informed that as lockdown was implemented much of the Service's community work had to stop, but it had been possible to deliver Home Safety Checks to the most vulnerable in the community.

As lockdown eased talks were ongoing with operational crews and representative bodies as to how the Service could re-engage safely in all aspects of community work.

The Service Recovery Group, chaired by the DCFO, had agreed a recovery strategy which focused on the main objectives around welfare support for staff and preparing buildings, policies and people for a gradual return to work.

The Local Resilience Forum was still meeting weekly where ideas were shared with key partners across South Yorkshire.

It was noted that the introduction of the 14-day quarantine after visiting Spain could affect staffing levels and this would have to be managed.

Increased internal control measures had been introduced including the requirement for firefighters to wear facemasks in fire engines. This was due to the fact that as lockdown eased risks increased.

The Authority watched a video, produced by Corporate Communications, which showed the work SYFR had been involved in over the last few months.

The Chair thanked C Kirby for the update and asked that the Authority's thanks be conveyed to all SYFR staff for all their work protecting and providing for the community during this time.

15 APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER TO THE AUTHORITY

A report was submitted relating to the appointment of a Monitoring Officer to the Authority.

Members were informed that Andrew Frosdick, the Authority's Monitoring Officer and Executive Director (Core Services) Barnsley MBC had retired at the end of May 2020. The Council had appointed Garry Kirk, Service Director, Legal and Governance, as its Monitoring Officer.

The Authority was therefore recommended to formally appoint Garry Kirk as Monitoring Officer to the Authority.

RESOLVED – That Garry Kirk be appointed as Monitoring Officer to the Authority.

16 ANNUAL REVIEW OF RISK MANAGEMENT 2019/20

The Authority considered the Annual Review of Risk Management 2019/20.

The report set out the Fire Authority and Service's arrangements for managing risk in accordance with the Authority's Corporate Risk Management Strategy. The report also detailed the governance arrangements around Corporate Risk Management and risk management developments during the year.

Members noted that it had recently been agreed to merge the Authority and Service's Risk Registers to allow easier oversight and scrutiny by the Audit and Governance Committee and the Authority. All Risk Registers were also considered by SYFR's Corporate Management Board.

The report contained details of risks opened which included:

- Brexit Uncertainty.
- McCloud and Sargeant Pensions Ruling.
- Covid 19.
- Close Proximity Crewing.

Risks that had been closed were around the General Data Protection Regulation, extreme weather events and two risks relating to Close Proximity Crewing.

With regard to the merging of the Risk Registers, Cllr Haith informed Members that there would be a discussion at the next Corporate Advisory Group in September to reassure Members that the correct process was being followed prior to any merger.

RESOLVED – That the Risk Management Annual Report be noted.

17 LEAD MEMBERS 2020/21

A report was submitted that gave details of Lead Member Appointments.

It was agreed that, given the outbreak of Covid 19 and the postponement of Annual Council meetings, the Lead Member appointments should remain as for 2019/20.

RESOLVED – That the Lead Member roles as detailed in paragraph 3 of the report be approved.

18 KEY ISSUES FROM THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD MEETING HELD ON 9 JULY 2020

The Authority considered a report that informed them of key issues arising from the last meeting of the Local Pension Board.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

19 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 JUNE 2020

RESOLVED – That Members note the draft minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 29 June 2020.

Actions Table

No.	Action	Timescale	Officer(s)	Status/ Update
1	To provide Members with feedback from the dedicated comprehensive spending review team for the sector.	When complete	CFO Johnson	
2	To provide Members with a briefing note to provide further clarity on the installation of the	ASAP	R Brason	A presentation will be made to the next Stakeholder Planning Board Meeting on 23 September 2020

No.	Action	Timescale	Officer(s)	Status/ Update
	sprinkler systems – to include the role and responsibilities of Government, SYFR, local authorities, builders developers etc.			
3	To present information to Members over the next 12 months to enable the Performance Management Framework to be shaped, prior to Authority approval.	CAG	ACO Carlin	On the CAG agenda for 8 September 2020 (provisional date)
4	To provide Members with an update on Power Bi at a future CAG meeting.	CAG	J Patrick	On the CAG agenda for 8 September 2020 (provisional date)
5	To provide sufficient detail on apprentices within the Financial Performance Reports.		S Booth	
6	To provide a report to seek Members' opinion on virtual and hybrid meetings.	Future FRA Meeting	M McCarthy	FRA 12-10-20
7	The Covid-19 Update report be referred to the Performance and Scrutiny Board for further scrutiny as the Covid-19 pandemic progresses.		GM Nicholson	Performance and Scrutiny Board meeting on 10 September 2020.

No.	Action	Timescale	Officer(s)	Status/ Update
8	Digital and ICT Development Plan 2020-2021 Update.	FRA 11-01-21	S Locking	
9	Question to the FRA from Mr Cawkwell.		CFO Johnson	CFO Johnson to provide a written response.
10	Answer to question from Cllr Ayris re. checks on extra costs from sub-contractors.	ASAP		Information provided to Members on 4 September 2020.
11	Workforce Development Strategy Report.	Future FRA meeting		

CHAIR

Please follow the link below for further information on the updates of the actions arising from the Fire and Rescue Authority meetings:-

<https://meetings.southyorks.gov.uk/ecSDDisplayClassic.aspx?NAME=SD1250&ID=1250&RPID=402996&sch=doc&cat=13039&path=13039&zTS=D>