

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

19 SEPTEMBER 2016

PRESENT: Councillor A Cave (Chair)
Councillor A Atkin (Vice-Chair)
Councillors: S Ayris, A Buckley, P Haith, S Howard,
E Hughes, C Ransome and G Weatherall

CFO J Courtney, DCFO J Roberts, ACFO M Blunden and
B Sandy (South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service)

D Terris, A Brown, D Cutting, M McCarthy, L Noble, I Rooth
and M McCoole (Barnsley MBC)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N Akther,
Councillor B Johnson, Councillor J Satur, J Bell, A Frostdick
and F Foster

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

RESOLVED – That the following items be considered in the absence of the public
and press:-

Item 16 'Comparative Contingency Costs'.

Item 17 'SYFR Executive Team Re-Alignment'.

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

None.

6 REPORTS BY MEMBERS

Councillor Hughes had attended a cheque presentation at the Real Junk Food Project in Doncaster. She gave thanks to the Service for the funding provided which had enabled the project to go from strength to strength.

Councillor Atkin had recently visited a number of fire stations where he had been warmly greeted by the crews. He had recently visited the Lifewise Centre at which his daughter had been present during a school visit; he had found the whole experience to be enlightening. Members had recently met with senior staff to discuss the IRMP and Efficiency Plan submission; Members would meet with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) tomorrow (20th September).

Councillor Howard referred to the regular communications received by Members in relation to the awards presented to the Service and the funding provided to projects. She suggested that it would be useful to find a way to celebrate the work moving forwards.

CFO Courtney commented that he would look into the matter.

Councillor Haith referred to the new Safe and Well Visits that would commence in Doncaster later this month. She gave thanks to the firefighters and community support officers who had undergone training to enable them to undertake the vital work.

Councillor Ransome referred to an email sent by the Clerk to the Authority to an Independent Member, which had been forwarded on for Members' attention. The email had stated that the Independent Member was prohibited from meeting with Councillors Ayris and Ransome; the Independent Member had queried where this was stated in the Constitution.

Councillor Ayris expressed concern at being referred to in the email without prior contact. He added that Councillor Ransome and himself had been assured by the previous Authority Chair, that they would be offered the same pre-meeting facilities as other political party Members prior to the Authority and committee meetings. At that time Councillor Ransome and himself had extended the invitation to Independent Members who did not have a pre-meeting facility.

Councillor Ransome commented that she had been informed, at her initial appointment onto the Authority, that they were political meetings, although she had not observed any political voting.

D Terris commented that, to adhere to the role of the independent members, it would be advisable that Independent Members were briefed separately rather than attending political meetings. She added that pre-meeting facilities should be made available for Independent Members should they so wish.

7 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

None.

8 TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

9 MINUTES OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 25 JULY 2016

Councillor Ayris reiterated his concerns in relation to the proposed changes to the Procedural Standing Orders. He added that all Authority Members had a duty to challenge, and he was concerned that the proposed changes would restrict that duty. Councillor Ransome agreed with his concerns.

Members noted that at the Fire Authority AGM on 27 June that the new governance arrangements had been agreed by all Members. L Noble commented that a full review of the FRA Constitution would be presented to Members at the Fire Authority meeting on 28 November.

Councillor Ayris referred to the recommendations from the 'Audit Committee – Internal Audit Report: Wirral Cladding and Roofing Ltd' to which he still had a number of unanswered questions. He enquired whether any further contact had been made with previous employees, and whether the view not to refer the matter onto South Yorkshire Police had changed in light of any further developments.

Councillor Ransome reiterated that not all of the Audit and Governance Committee Members had agreed not to refer the matter onto South Yorkshire Police.

R Winter referred to an update report on today's Audit and Governance Committee agenda following the last cycle of meetings where a number of further enquiries had been made. He added that from his perspective, that nothing further had come to light, and therefore there was no requirement to change the view that the matter did not need to be referred onto South Yorkshire Police.

Councillor Hughes requested an update on fitness testing.

DCFO Roberts commented that the FBU would be taking fitness testing to the Brigade Committee meeting on 21 September.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Authority meeting held on 25 July 2016 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

10 PRESENTATION ON EXTRICATION

The Authority received a presentation on extrication, from Firefighter North. Members noted the following key points:-

Road Traffic Collision (RTC) Statistics

The United Kingdom Rescue Organisation, the World Rescue Organisation and Internal Development Project (IDP) had released the following statistics on 30 June 2016:-

A total of 1,732 UK road deaths had been reported in 2015 which was a 2% decrease in comparison to 2014. Since 2002, road deaths in the UK had fallen by almost 50% which equated to almost 1,700 lives saved each year. The reduction had been attributed to by:-

- Safer vehicles – Supplementary Restraint System for occupants in cars.
- Safer roads – Speed cameras and speed humps.
- Education – Fire and rescue services community teams.
- Medical care – Equipment training and air ambulance.
- Fire service – Extrication techniques training and equipment.

The United Kingdom Rescue Organisation (UKRO) aimed to advance professional rescue, and to encourage rescue challenges at both regional and national level. Every team that entered the challenge must attend the national workshop to advance their skills and knowledge.

The World Rescue Organisation (WRO) ran an annual world rescue challenge in RTC extrication and trauma, which was open to all qualifying countries.

The Internal Development Project (IDP) ran from the UK with the aim to assist and share experiences with rescue and medical services around the world. Equipment was provided via fire aid, Blytheswood Care and FRS direct donations. The UKRO IDP Training Team was provided from the Fire Service and NHS to provide basic training to firefighters in RTC extrication techniques Level 1 to 4, together with medical training, training to fire service instructors in extrication instruction techniques, training national assessors in extrication assessing techniques, and facilitated an Annual National Challenge.

SYF&R and UKRO have had extrication teams in place for over 20 years, and had reached third place at the UK National Challenge in Belfast in 2000 which enabled World entry into Johannesburg, South Africa following which SYF&R had attended 7 World challenges.

Firefighter North's roles included UKRO Deputy Lead for Extrication, UKRO Head Assessor and Head of Quality Assurance, WRO Assessor and Quality Assurance and the Extrication Trainer and Assessor with the IDP. Members noted the following countries that had been supported to date:- Germany, Ghana, Hungary, Luxemburg, Moldova, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Spain, Serbia, Republic of Ireland and Singapore; consideration was being given to additional countries who had requested assistance.

The Service benefited from its investment into the organisation by the huge improvements in extrication techniques in recent years via UKRO, together with the new equipment that had been trialled at UKRO events for technical services, the extrication teams had cascaded new skills onto their own watches/stations which had resulted in more advanced and safer RTC techniques for firefighters and ultimately safer roads in the UK.

Members noted the Service's future with UKRO, WRO and IDP:-

- An SYF&R extrication team would compete in the regional and national events next year.
- J Lister from the Service had recently joined the UKRO as Rope Rescue Assessor.
- S Jeffries from the Service was interested in going forwards as the Extrication Command/Technical Assessor.
- The Service could also become involved in water, trauma and animal rescue disciplines.

Councillor Buckley commented that he had previously worked with Firefighter North at both Tankersley and Rotherham Fire Stations. He gave thanks to Firefighter North on behalf of the Authority, for being an excellent ambassador for the Service, and he hoped that his connections through the organisations would continue following his retirement in November.

Councillor Ransome gave thanks to Firefighter North for his presentation.

Councillor Cave also gave thanks to Firefighter North for an interesting and informative presentation, and she wished him the very best in his upcoming retirement.

RESOLVED – That Members received the presentation.

11 INDEPENDENT MEMBERS - AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

A report of the Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority was presented to request Members to consider postponing the appointment of an additional Independent Member (co-opted) to serve on the Audit and Governance Committee until the revised Committee, with its reduced membership, had been in place for one year. It had been agreed at the Authority's AGM on 27 June 2016 to significantly reduce the membership of the Committee from 10 to 5 elected Members.

Members noted that Independent Members had provided risk and financial management expertise and knowledge to the Committee since 2008. One of the three Independent Members' term of office would expire at the end of September 2016; Independent Members could serve a maximum of eight years.

Councillor Ransome commented that it would be prudent for transparency to the public, for the Committee to continue to consist of three Independent Members.

Councillor Ayris commented that he would like to retain the current proportionality of Independent Members on the Committee. He paid tribute to the Independent Members for their invaluable input which was vital to maintain scrutiny and challenge.

Councillor Howard gave thanks to C Marshall for all her work and commitment provided to the Committee over the last 8 years. She agreed that the Committee should consist of three Independent Members, and that appointment should be made to replace the outgoing Independent Member.

RESOLVED – That Members agreed to appoint an additional Independent Member (co-opted) to serve on the Audit and Governance Committee, to be reviewed in one year's time as part of the wider governance arrangements.

12 WEBCASTING

A report of the Deputy Clerk was presented to seek an extension to the webcasting of Authority and sub-committee meetings for 3 years to 2018/19.

Members noted that meetings of the Authority had been webcast since 2007, and that the current webcasting contract would expire at the end of August 2016. Over the last 12 months there had been 11,626 live and archived viewings of Authority meetings, which was a 34% increase over the 2014/15 figure of 8,691 live and archived viewings.

M McCarthy commented that both the Pensions Authority and the Sheffield City Region had agreed to extend the webcasting contract for an additional 3 years, subject to the agreement of partners.

Councillor Howard commented that webcasting of the Authority meetings could communicate to the public the good work provided by the Service, and inform staff that Members supported the work undertaken.

Councillor Buckley also agreed that webcasting provided openness and transparency for the public on the work undertaken by the Service, and the decision-making process of the Authority.

RESOLVED – That Members approved a 3 year contract for the webcasting of Authority meetings (to 2018/19) at a cost of £5,683.31 p.a. (ex-VAT).

13 JULY 2016 PROJECTED OUTTURN REPORT

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive and Clerk and Treasurer was submitted to inform Members of the projected spend for the 2016/17 financial year based on the July 2016 outturn position and any additional information gathered during August 2016.

Members noted the outturn position currently projected a potential overspend of £422,702, which was an increase of £28,837 from the projected outturn position in May which was reported to the July Authority meeting.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the contents of the report.

14 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 1 - 2016/17

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive and Clerk and Treasurer was presented to provide Members with details of the corporate performance for quarter one of 2016/17 and set out the current position for South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue's (SYFR) suite of Local Performance Indicators (LPis).

Members noted that in quarter one of 2016/17:-

- Primary fires had been 16.2% higher compared with the same quarter in 2015/16, and equated to 4.2% above the upper tolerance level.
- There had been 11 fewer accidental dwelling fires in the quarter in comparison with the same quarter in 2015/16. The launch of a high-visibility electrical fires campaign had taken place during May-July 2016 and had proved to be successful.
- Primary arson was 41% higher in the quarter compared with the same quarter in 2015/16.
- There had been 1,935 fires in adult prisons and young offender establishments in England and Wales during 2015 which was a 57% increase from 2014. SYFR were in discussions with the prisons to establish whether any further assistance could be provided.

Councillor Ayris referred to the Stakeholder Planning Board meeting, where Members had been informed of the faulty electrical goods issue. Members had been informed that the Service's Media Team had deferred the high-visibility electrical fire campaign due to Trading Standards issues; he queried the current position.

ACFO Blunden commented that Members had been informed at the Stakeholder Planning Board meeting of the success of the campaign that had commenced in November 2015 which had achieved a 37% decrease in the number of fires related to electrical appliances, together with the faulty goods campaign. The Service's Media Team were liaising with Trading Standards, who had the legal responsibility to deal with faulty goods, to establish what measures could be implemented when trading electrical products.

Councillor Weatherall expressed concern in the increase of prison fires experienced in South Yorkshire, which reflected a national trend. He considered that the lack of investment in the prison service had put SYFR under strain following the recent cuts made.

Councillor Haith queried whether the matter would be raised at the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) as a national issue.

ACFO Blunden commented that the District Commander was working closely with the prison management team and prisons in the Doncaster area, to ensure that the Service was called out for the right reasons, and to ensure that staff were as safe as possible when entering into such environments.

Councillor Buckley commented that Members had been informed at the recent Performance and Scrutiny Board meeting of a large number of instances where prison fires had already been extinguished upon the Service's arrival. He considered that potentially the Service was being used to highlight the problems encountered in the prison service.

Councillor Ransome referred to the partnerships, and she queried how the Service worked with South Yorkshire Police and the district councils.

DCFO Roberts commented that the partnership agenda remained strong within the four local authority areas in South Yorkshire, and that community safety partnerships, which were the main partnership forums, continued to be functional. There had been many changes in policing and within local authorities; the Service had found strength in the partnerships that had been beneficial to all parties.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Noted the contents of the report.
- ii) Scrutinised and commented on the information presented in the report.

15 AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

A report of the Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority was presented for Authority consideration and approval of the Audit Committee Annual Report 2015/16.

Members noted that in support of good governance and following the CIPFA Solace Code of Good Audit Practice, the Audit Committee produced an Annual Report for the Authority which outlined the role of the Audit Committee, the responsibilities undertaken by its Members and the programme of work engaged upon.

Councillor Ransome expressed concern in relation to the confidential reporting and whistleblowing policies that had last been reviewed and noted on 18 May 2015. She requested, in view of the events regarding the Chair's payments, Officers overtime payments and the Wirral Cladding and Roofing Ltd matters that the issue should come through to the Audit and Governance Committee.

Councillor Ayris referred to the Officer overtime payments and Wirral Cladding and Roofing Ltd issues, to which he considered that the outcomes had not been delved into deep enough. He considered that there were a number of unanswered questions that were not reflected within the Annual Report.

M McCarthy commented that a more regular report in relation to the confidential reporting and whistleblowing policies could be built into the Audit and Governance Committee's Work Programme if that was Members' wish.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- i) Considered the Annual Report of its Audit Committee.
- ii) Agreed to publish the Annual Report onto the Authority's website.

All Members voted in favour to publish the Annual Report onto the Authority's website, with the exception of Councillors Ransome and Ayris who voted against the decision.

16 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and the public interest not to disclose information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

17 COMPARATIVE CONTINGENCY COSTS

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was submitted to set out the comparative costs of providing 'contingency officers in charge of appliances' during periods of industrial action, relative to the utilisation of senior officers from the Service.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the report.

18 SYFR EXECUTIVE TEAM RE-ALIGNMENT

A report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was presented following a review of the SYFR Executive Team and the allocated roles therein that had been undertaken as a result of the changing expectations of Government.

RESOLVED – That Members agreed to the proposal outlined within the report.

CHAIR