AT A MEETING of the HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY held at the Borough Council Offices, Eastleigh on 7 December, 2011.

PRESENT:

Councillors: R. Smith (Chairman); I . Beagley; A.S. Carew; C. Carter; K. Chapman; M. Cooper; Sam Darragh; L. Fairhurst; J. Frankum; D.Fuller;D.Harrison; F. Jonas; R.J. Kimber; T. Knight; R. McIntosh; K. Morrell; J. Moulton; E. Neal; R.H. Price; Mrs. M. Tucker; J. West.

204 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Evans; F. Pearce; Mrs. J. Hancock and D. Simpson.

205 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that, where they believed they had personal or personal prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting, they should, normally at the time of the debate, declare their interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct, consider whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 12 of the Code.

Councillor R. Smith declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Item 12 being a current trustee of the Blue Lamp Trust (Minute 215 refers).

206 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Authority held on 21 September, 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

207 **DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations to this meeting.

208 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT**

There were no Members' questions.

Councillor R. Price reported on a conference on equality issues, organised by the Asian Firefighters' Association. Because it covered diversity matters generally in the fire service, he questioned the conference title and felt that it might attract more delegates if it was changed to more accurately reflect the main themes covered. Councillor Price also made mention of an on-line petition to try and persuade Government to debate "saving lives and sprinklers" in the House of Commons. He encouraged Members to sign it.

Councillor Sam Darragh gave an update on the recent work of the Members' Development Group. It was noted that a Members' Awareness Day in relation to this was being arranged towards the end of May, 2012. Further details would be provided to Members in due course.

209 **CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chairman reported on the forthcoming retirement of David Howells, Director of Corporate Services at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service in January 2012 , after more than twenty-one years in the post. The Chairman paid tribute to David's commitment and professionalism which had contributed to many of the successes of the Service. He would be greatly missed and was wished a long and happy retirement. The Chairman presented David with a small gift on behalf of the Authority. The Group Spokespersons' and other Members paid their individual tributes and David thanked the Authority for their gift and kind words.

The Chairman reported his attendance at the Service's annual 'Celebration of Success'. It provided the opportunity to acknowledge some of the achievements of individual members of staff and teams within the Service and to recognise some of the excellent partners and partnerships formed within Hampshire.

The Chairman said that a consultation document will shortly be issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government inviting comments on a new 'National Framework' for the fire and rescue service. This will set out the Government's priorities and policies for the fire and rescue service for the next four years. Given the timescales involved, a report on this would be presented to the next Authority meeting in February, 2012.

Finally, mention was made that a further "Sprinklers Debate" for Authority Members was being arranged for 17 January, 2012 and that further details were to follow.

210 **VACANCIES AND APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES**

Following the County Council's appointment of Councillor Mark Cooper to the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (in place of Councillor Alan Weeks), the Authority was invited to make an appointment to a Liberal Democrat vacancy on each of the Performance Review and Scrutiny and Finance and General Purposes Committees. It was reported that New Forest District Council had asked over the past few days for an appointment to be made to the Member vacancy (in place of Councillor Weeks) on the New Forest Crime and Disorder Partnership.
RESOLVED:

(a) That Councillor M. Cooper be appointed to serve on both the Performance and Review and Scrutiny Committee and Finance and General Purposes Committee in place of Councillor A. Weeks.

(b) That Councillor D. Harrison be appointed to serve on the New Forest Crime and Disorder Partnership in place of Councillor A. Weeks.

(c) That Councillor D. Harrison no longer serve as a HFRA Member on Eastleigh Crime and Disorder Partnership and that the resulting vacancy be appointed by the Authority at a later date.

211 **ACTIVITY REPORT**

The Authority considered the report of Chief Officer (Item 8 in the Minute Book) highlighting prevention, protection and response activities in each of the group areas covering the period 13 August until 28 October, 2011.

Members raised various points and comments on the report . The Chief Officer was made aware from information provided by Members that there appeared to be some confusion in some recent media reports on arson figures in Hampshire. He undertook to investigate the position further and to arrange for a press release by the Service to clarify the position, if this was felt to be appropriate.

212 **ANNUAL REPORT 2010 TO 2011**

The Authority received a short oral update by the Chief Officer on the annual report 2010 to 2011. It included information on key performance indicators, an update of progress to reduce the effects of fires and other emergency incidents on the environment and a summary of the accounts. Members congratulated the Service on what had been achieved . It would be the intention to publish the final report on the website and to prepare a press release on the item.

213 **DRAFT BUDGET 2012/13**

The Authority considered the report of the Treasurer and Chief Officer (Item 10 in the Minute Book) on the draft budget for 2012/13. It was based on the strategy approved by Finance and General Purposes Committee at its meeting in October, 2011. The strategy incorporated the anticipated reduction in Government grant for the last two years of the Comprehensive Spending Review period, and the announcement of a further year of council tax free grant for 2012/13 (payable for that year only). For 2012/13, the focus was on continuing to deliver efficiencies that would reduce the base budget in line with projections for later years. The Authority supported the recommendations as the most sensible way forward at this time. Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED:

(a) That council tax for 2012/13 be frozen in return for a special Government grant (payable in 2012/13 only) which will be based on the equivalent of a 3.0% council tax increase.

(b) That the predicted underspend of at least £2.3m in the current financial year is added to the capital pay rent reserve to help close the council funding gap in 2014/15.

(c) That the draft budget and medium-term financial strategy, as set out in the report, be presented at the formal budget consultation meeting on 9 January, 2012.

(d) That, following consultation , the final budget and council tax be set at the Authority's meeting on 9 February, 2012.

214 REDUCING ENERGY COSTS AND IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The Authority considered the report of the Chief Officer (Item 11 in the Minute Book) on a number of initiatives being undertaken to reduce Fire Service energy costs and carbon footprint. The Chief Officer introduced the report and explained the good progress being made over the past few years in improving the energy efficiency in buildings, including Headquarters. Members noted that following the fitting of double glazing at Headquarters in January, 2011, current plans included improving the heating system,lighting and other refurbishment work. It was highlighted that the payback expected on energy efficiency projects of this nature was mostly under five years with the added benefit of carbon savings. The Authority was disappointed at the outcome from the work undertaken to assess the financial viability of installing solar photovoltaic systems. They noted the reasons for this as set in the report. Rather than support the proposed recommendation to periodically review the position on solar photovoltaic systems,the Authority wanted instead to receive a further report in six months time covering the financial viability of all appropriate energy saving measures (including solar photovoltaic systems). This is to include options for tackling the Service's least energy-efficient buildings. Members also asked that an item on this matter be included at a future Members' Awareness Session before the further report was brought back to the Authority.

RESOLVED:

(a) That, given the lack of a financially viable business case and the likely earlier registration deadline for reducing the level of feed-in tariffs, that no immediate action be taken to pursue the installation of solar photovoltaic systems.

(b) That the Chief Officer be requested to present a further report to the Authority in June, 2012 covering the financial viability of all appropriate energy saving measures (including solar photovoltaic systems) and that this include options for tackling the Service's least energy efficient buildings.

(c) That progress on the energy-saving initiatives outlined in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.6 of the report be noted.

215 BLUE LAMP TRUST – UPDATE

The Authority considered the report of the Chief Officer (Item 12 in the Minute Book) on the progress and impact made to date by the Blue Lamp Trust. Members welcomed the success of its first year of operation and the steps it was now taking to achieve its strategic aims and ambitions.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the progress made by the Blue Lamp Trust since its establishment be welcomed and acknowledged.

(b) That support continue to be provided for the Blue Lamp Trust and its aims and ambitions.

216 **LOCALISM ACT 2011**

The Authority considered the report of the Clerk (Item 13 in the Minute Book) about the Localism Bill which became an Act of Parliament on 15 November, 2011. The Clerk highlighted the main relevant statutory provisions for fire and rescue authorities, including the fact that new arrangements would be required for a code of member conduct .

RESOLVED:

(a) That the implications of the provisions in the Localism Act 2011 affecting fire and rescue authorities be noted.

(b) That a further report on implementation be brought to the Authority for consideration and decision at appropriate stages.

(c) That the Authority place on record their thanks and appreciation to Martin James, the independent Chairman of the Standards Committee for all his work under the existing arrangements.

217 **MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 29 OCTOBER, 2011**

The Authority received the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 29 October, 2011 and approved the recommendations on Treasury Management and on the Vehicle Replacement Programme 2012/13 to 2016/17 (Item 14 in the Minute Book).

218 **MINUTES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 10 NOVEMBER, 2011**

The Authority received the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 10 November, 2011 (Item 15 in the Minute Book).

219 **MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22 NOVEMBER, 2011**

The Authority received the Minutes of the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 November 2011. (Item 16 in the Minute Book).

220 **MINUTES OF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 23 SEPTEMBER AND 25 NOVEMBER, 2011**

The Authority received the Minutes of the Governance Committee meetings held on 23 September and 25 November, 2011.

221 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED:

That, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the following item of business, as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present during this item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local government Act 1972, and further that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

222 **VEHICLE REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME 2012/13 TO 2016/17 – EXEMPT REPORT AND MINUTE**

The Authority approved the exempt report and Minute of the Finance and General Purposes Committee regarding the Vehicle Replacement Programme 2012/13 to 2016/17. (Minute 271 above refers).