

AT A MEETING of the HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY held at the Borough Council Offices, Eastleigh on 8 December, 2010

PRESENT:

Councillors: R. Smith (Chairman); I. Beagley; A.S. Carew; C. Carter; K. Chapman; Sam Darragh; A. Evans; L. Fairhurst; J. Frankum; A. Fraser; D. Harrison; F. Jonas; R. Kimber; T. Knight; P. Marsh-Jenks; R. McIntosh; J. Moulton; E. Neal; F. Pearce; R.H. Price; D. Simpson; M. Tucker; A. Weeks.

130 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D. Fuller and J. West.

131 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.

All Members declared a personal interest in the item about the review of HFRA Members Allowances (Minute 143 refers) but were advised by the Clerk that they need not treat this as a prejudicial interest and therefore could speak and vote during the course of any debate in the normal way.

132 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Authority held on 15 September, 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

133 DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations to this meeting.

134 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

There were no Members' questions.

Councillor Sam Darragh reported progress by the Members' Steering Group towards achieving the South East Charter for Member Development. She reminded those Members who had not so far completed the self-assessment action plan to do so as successful achievement of the Charter was dependent on this. The Authority were advised that the planned date for the Charter assessment was 19 January, 2011. Also, Councillor A. Evans reported on his attendance at a Retained Duty System Seminar in London on 23 November, 2010 and went on to congratulate those involved in organising the Celebrating Success awards last month.

135 **CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Tim Knight as a new Member of the Authority following the sad death of Councillor David Kirk earlier this year.

The Chairman reported his delight at attending this year's Celebrating Success event on 23 November, 2010 at Winchester Guildhall. He had presented the twenty-five year long service awards on behalf of the Authority. Over 250 guests had been invited to the occasion including the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, the High Sheriff of Hampshire and the Mayors of Southampton and Winchester. In addition to Long Service and Good Conduct medals being presented, recognition had been given to Winchester Fire Station who were awarded the Service's 'Beacon Station' status. External organisations were also given special mention for their work in support of the Service, including the Beaulieu Estate and G.E. Aviation.

The Chairman reported on the challenges presented in recent days by another spell of adverse weather. He took this opportunity to place on record his sincere thanks for the sterling work undertaken by the Service both in continuing their important fire and rescue activities, but also in supporting the police and ambulance services.

Finally, the Chairman made mention of the recent visit by the Investors in People assessors and was pleased to advise the Authority that the initial feedback had been very positive with the final report available shortly. The assessment provided assurance that staff communications and investment in training continued to remain positive and well focused.

136 **VACANCIES AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES**

The Chairman reported that Councillor Tim Knight was to fill the two outstanding Conservative Party Member vacancies on the Governance and Performance Review and Scrutiny Committees with effect from 8 December, 2010. This was noted by the Clerk.

137 **ACTIVITY REPORT**

The Authority received and noted 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 31 July to 22 October 2010.

138 **PRESENTATION BY MR. A. BOWERS ON URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE – EXERCISE ORION**

Area Manager Andy Bowers gave a presentation to the Authority on 'Exercise Orion' and showed a DVD produced by the BBC on this major international multi-agency search and rescue exercise which had been funded by the European Union. It was noted that the practical part of the exercise had taken place between 6th-10th September, 2010 at Fort Widley on Portsdown Hill, near Portsmouth. It had involved a simulated earthquake scenario with the epicentre under Fort Widley. As well as firefighter crews from Hampshire, officers from Hampshire Constabulary and others, including eight international teams had

taken part. A copy of the presentation given at the meeting appears at Item 9 in the Minute Book. Members congratulated HFRS for their part in staging a most realistic disaster and welcomed the many important operational learning points identified.

139 **DRAFT BUDGET 2011/12**

The Authority considered the report of the Treasurer and Chief Officer (Item 10 in the Minute Book) on the draft budget for 2011/12. It was based on the strategy approved by Finance and General Purposes Committee at its meeting in October, 2010. The strategy incorporated the national spending review announcements which had set very tight constraints on the public sector over the next few years with formula grant reductions nationally of 25% over four years for fire authorities. The Treasurer reported the local government financial settlement had not yet been announced but was expected shortly. Also, tabled by the Treasurer at the meeting was amended Appendices C and D to the report (Item 10(i) in the Minute Book) which corrected the figures relating to the savings required. The Chief Officer reported that the reference in paragraph 9.4 of the report to the current year's capital programme, included £5m for a new fire station in Basingstoke and it should be amended to read £6m. Also, highlighted for Members was the risk of reduction and delays in the anticipated value of capital receipts as a result of the downturn in the property market. The Authority supported the report and the proposed recommendations as a sensible way forward at this difficult time. Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Authority sets a zero per cent council tax for 2011/12, in return for additional Government grant equivalent to a 2.5% council tax increase.
- (b) That the Authority consults on savings required to set a budget for 2011/12 with a zero percent council tax increase and on the draft medium term financial strategy which sets out options for 0% and 2.5% council tax increases for 2012-2015.
- (c) That the final budget and council tax be set, following consultation, at the Authority's meeting on 9 February, 2011.

140 **EQUALITY ACT 2010 – IMPLICATIONS FOR HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

The Authority considered the report of the Chief Officer (Item 11 in the Minute Book) on the Equality Act and its implications for Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Authority note the report and, in particular, the legislative changes presented by the Equality Act 2010.
- (b) That the Authority are aware of the proposed Public Sector Duties presented by the Equality Act 2010, and that they will become

enforceable in April, 2011.

141 **THE STATUTORY POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE AUTHORITY**

The Authority considered the report of the Clerk (Item 12 in the Minute Book) outlining the statutory powers and duties of the Authority both in respect of fire and rescue services in particular, and as a public body generally. Due to the significant number of legislative provisions to which public bodies are subject, the report sought to present the main areas of activity relevant to the Authority.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and taken into account in making decisions as to future service and budget planning.

142 **BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT**

The Authority considered the report of the Chief Officer (Item 13 in the Minute Book) about the Service's Business Continuity Management planning arrangements.

RESOLVED:

That the Authority note the content of the report and acknowledge the sustainability and sufficiency of the Service's Business Continuity Management planning arrangements.

143 **MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2011/12**

The Authority considered the report of the Clerk (Item 14 in the Minute Book) on the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2011/12.

Following a full discussion which included an alternative Member motor vehicle mileage rate option to the one presented in the report, the Authority concluded in favour of all allowances, including those for Member motor vehicles, being frozen at existing rates for the next two years. Notwithstanding this, Members asked the Chief Officer to investigate the existing mileage rates to seek to achieve consistency over this across the Service and the Authority. Accordingly, it was

- (a) That the Members' Allowances be frozen at existing rates for the next two years (2011/12 and 2012/13) at 2010/11 levels.
- (b) That the Chief Officer be asked to further investigate existing mileage rates for motor vehicles with a view to bringing back a proposal to the Authority on 9 February, 2011 which seeks to achieve consistency on mileage rates across the Service and the Authority.

144 **FIRELINK AND FIRECONTROL PROJECTS – UPDATE**

The Authority received and acknowledged the report of the Chief Officer (Item 15 in the Minute Book) on progress in relation to the Firelink (national radio scheme)

and the Fire Control Regional Control Centre. Councillor R. Price, the Fire Authority's representative gave a verbal update on the Local Authority's Controlled Company and reported that its next meeting had been arranged for 7 January, 2011.

145 MINUTES OF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 23 SEPTEMBER AND 22 NOVEMBER, 2010

The Authority received the Minutes of the meetings of the Governance Committee held on 23 September and 22 November, 2010 (Items 16(i) and 16(ii) in the Minute Book).

146 MINUTES OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 28 OCTOBER, 2010

The Authority received the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes held on 28 October, 2010 (Item 17 in the Minute Book) and adopted the recommendation to the Authority in relation to the mid-year Treasury Management report. The exempt recommendations to the Authority in relation to the disposal of Copnor Fire Station and the Vehicle Replacement Programme were also adopted.

147 MINUTES OF HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 9 NOVEMBER, 2010

The Authority received the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 9 November, 2010 (Item 18 in the Minute Book), subject to Councillor J. Frankum's apologies for absence for the meeting being recorded by the Clerk.

148 MINUTES OF PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 18 NOVEMBER, 2010

The Authority received the Minutes of the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18 November, 2010 (Item 19 in the Minute Book).