

**NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES  
MINUTES OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM HELD ON 21 FEBRUARY 2024**

**Present:** Dawn Whittaker, Chief Fire Officer  
 Dave Norris, Deputy Chief Fire Officer  
 Mark Matthews, Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
 Duncan Savage, Assistant Director of Resources/Treasurer  
 Hannah Youldon, Assistant Director of Operational Support & Resilience  
 Liz Ridley, Assistant Director of Planning & Improvement  
 Julie King, Assistant Director of People Services  
 Matt Lloyd, Assistant Director of Safer Communities  
 Elizabeth Curtis, Communications & Marketing Manager  
 Sue Walsh, Executive Assistant  
 Alyson Lumb, Executive Support Officer  
 Keith Morris, Observer

**Apologies:** None

		<b>Action</b>
<b>21/24</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the Meeting held 24 January 2024</b></p> <p>The non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2024 were approved as an accurate record.</p>	
<b>22/24</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>None.</p>	
<b>23/24</b>	<p><b>Action Points from Matrix</b></p> <p><u>245/23 NFCC Council Meeting (Pensions report)</u> This would be discussed in further detail under agenda item 8. Action complete.</p> <p><u>246/23 Sharepoint (AOB)</u> ADoR/T would hold a meeting on 27 February 2024 to discuss the approach for GW2 which was due to be taken to the Strategic Change Board in April, this would be managed as a business led/focussed project. The comms message had been drafted and following the addition from ITG, would be included into this weeks' Service Brief. Action complete.</p>	
<b>24/24</b>	<p><b>Revenue and Capital Budget 2023/24 and Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2026/27 Monitoring at Month 10</b></p> <p>ADoR/T and the Finance Manager reported on the findings of the Month 10 monitoring undertaken on the Revenue and Capital Budget 2023/24 and Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28.</p> <p>A net revenue underspend to the sum of £465,000 has been identified and been offset by various pressures. There are a number of other small variances which contribute to the underspend.</p> <p>The movement since P8 is a reduction of £423,000. Many departments have seen movements of under £30,000, with the following significant reductions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection vacancies and Primary Authority Income (£70,000)</li> <li>• Ill health pension and unfunded pensions (£66,000)</li> <li>• Allocation of Project Management cost to Projects (£61,000)</li> <li>• Additional Treasury Management interest receivable (£50,000)</li> </ul>	

Safer Communities are forecasting an overspend of £813,000, with the forecast overspend in Groups totalling £1,020,000. The forecast within Groups has increased by £48,000 since P8. Further work is required to review the forecast and management action is required in reviewing staffing and overtime forecasts.

ADoR/T shared his thoughts on the increase in underspend and commented that we should not expect to see significant further change between now and the end of the financial year. For month 12, we will report on the agreed KPIs for budget management. ADoSC provided an update on Safer Communities and ADoOSR shared details of the forthcoming centralised crewing arrangements and the impacts this would have on current efficiencies. ADoSC stated that a breakdown of overtime expenditure would be incorporated into the next Safer Communities Action Plan update, due at SLT in April and would ensure that the budget matches the spend. There was a general discussion on the crewing and overtime policy which would shortly be implemented and that improvements already being seen, following the more agile use of standby crews.

It was stated that individual budgets were for each Directorate to use as agreed through budget setting, but there was a collective responsibility to manage pressures corporately through SLT. CFO re-confirmed that should any budget need to be permanently reduced, this would be done so via an agreed process, not on an assumed basis or due to having an underspend. There would however be a re-baselining of budgets throughout the year, which would be managed and agreed by SLT. ADoR/T provided an overview of the improved current position and continued role of budget managers across the organisation.

ADoP&I queried why Communications vacancies were listed separately to other vacancies, it was agreed that this would be reviewed. ADoOSR felt that a collective overview of budgets was needed in addition to the individual Directorate view, which may be achieved by Finance attendance at the quarterly Assistant Director meetings. Finance and Procurement Government Training was being developed and would be delivered through face to face / virtual training for budget managers and via e-learning modules for others.

Officers have reviewed the capital plans for 2023/24 and report slippage on delivery of projects to the value of £4,154,000 (46.5%) and spend in advance of £228,000. In addition, underspend of £478,000 is expected against capital schemes. The underspend has reduced by £226,000 since P8 which relates to Estates projects.

The position on reserves shows an opening balance of £14,460,00. The forecast net drawdown from reserves is £5,322,000, a reduction of £1,971,000 compared to the planned drawdown of £7,293,000. This results in an estimated closing balance of £9,138,000. There would be a review of cashflow on projects going forwards, which would be closely scrutinised. There was a short discussion on planned borrowing to support the capital programme. ADoR/T confirmed that over 5 years capital investment of £23.882m was planned, supported by £14.343m of new borrowing of which the bulk was in the next 3 years (2024/25 = £6.684m; 2025/26 = £5.156m; 2026/27 = £2.542m).

SLT noted the risks to Revenue Budget and the projected underspend, forecast slippage and risks to the Capital Programme and the ITG strategy position together with the reduced net forecast drawdown from reserves,

	grants available and spending plans together with monitoring of savings taken in 2023/24; and current year investments and borrowing.	
<b>25/24</b>	<p><b>Call Over</b></p> <p>The following reports were not called over, and therefore all recommendations contained within them were agreed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategic Review of Training – Phase 1</li> <li>- Operational Planning and Policy Briefing Note</li> </ul>	
<b>26/24</b>	<p><b>Resources within the Payroll and Pensions Team</b></p> <p>ADoPS stated that the report sought approval to continue to employ an additional resource for 12 months from 1 April 2024, funded from the Pensions Administration Reserve.</p> <p>The workload and demands within the Payroll and Pensions team continues to be excessive due to the ongoing demand of pensions work within the Service and it is foreseeable that this work will continue through the financial year 2024/25.</p> <p>There is also ongoing pressure due to the impact of both the FPS Pension Age Discrimination Remedy process and the second options exercise for part time workers (following the Matthews/O'Brien case).</p> <p>ADoPS said that the figures noted within the recommendations did not include finder fees, but clarified that no further money was required as it formed part of the grant. ADoR/T suggested that both contracts be extended as this would support the expected additional work required for MBOS Project. ADoR/T's view was that there was sufficient headroom in the Pension Admin Reserve to cover this. SLT agreed to this suggestion, the exact numbers would be confirmed outside of meeting.</p> <p>SLT:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Noted the report, specifically relating to the current work demands for the Payroll, Pensions &amp; HR Assurance Manager and pensions team.</li> <li>2. Approved in principle, to extend both temporary roles within the Payroll and Pensions team for 12 months from 1 April 2024 at the current days per week.</li> <li>3. Approved in principle, the funding of this additional resource from the Pensions Administration Reserve, subject to confirmation of the amount required.</li> </ol>	
<b>27/24</b>	<p><b>Strategic Review of Training – Phase 1</b></p> <p>ADoPS provided SLT with an update on the Strategic Review of Training – Phase 1 that commenced on 5 February 2024.</p> <p>The strategic review of training will be delivered across two phases. The first phase will have a focus on operational training, the second phase will incorporate and include the training delivery model across the Service and will include a holistic review of all corporate training with the aim to ensure that all training delivery is appropriate and that we have the available resources and funding to deliver it.</p>	

	<p>The review commenced on 5 February 2024 and a series of meetings and workshops are being arranged with key stakeholders. The review will take 6 weeks and the review team will then develop their findings and recommendations with the review sponsor, and discuss with team within ESFRS before completing their final report.</p> <p>The recommendations from the review will be considered alongside the wider Future Foundations report due in the first week of March. An implementation plan will then be developed and introduced during 24/25. The recommendations and accompanying implementation plan will inform the decision to progress the previously agreed commitment in the estates capital programme with regard to the live fire training unit and multi-purpose training hubs.</p> <p>SLT noted the scope of the strategic review of training – Phase 1 and contract awarded for the required consultancy support to Enfuse Group Ltd. @ £48k</p>	
28/24	<p><b>Pensions Update</b></p> <p>ADoPS and the Payroll, Pensions &amp; HR Assurance Manager have been working to provide an update on those affected by the pension change for FPS members, which was currently with FBU colleagues for their comments. Immediate Detriment.</p> <p>ADoPS attended the Pension Update Session on 20 February 2024 which provided an overview on 4 key areas (the presentation would be shared upon receipt).</p> <p><u>Immediate choice</u> This had been paused on 25 January 2024 and weekly meetings were taking place to resolve this. Real term interest had reduced from 8% to 4.8% There was an urgent need to understand the level of impact on priority IHR cases. Feedback from pension administrators has been requested but only 4 out of the 13 have responded to date. SLT discussed the impact to ESFRS and how quickly could we proceed if the pause was to be lifted. ADoPS confirmed that HR were ready to progress with the 2 cases. SLT considered the effects on whether the deadline would or could be extended and the risk of litigation.</p> <p><u>Implementation support</u> Regular coffee mornings and drop-in sessions were being extended to meetings and training.</p> <p><u>Injury to feelings</u> It was noted that the deadline for claims had now passed and that there will be no injury to feelings payments if a claim had not been submitted.</p> <p><u>Advice on pension re-instatement</u> CFO's would shortly be sent a paper with specific questions regarding pension re-instatement. The LGA would request a prompt response.</p> <p>ADoPS agreed to brief Vice-Chair Cllr Carolyn Lambert for NJC purposes.</p>	
29/24	<p><b>Operational Planning and Policy Briefing Note</b></p> <p>ADoOSR/GM Ops P&amp;P shared SLT with an overview of the following areas; The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill (Martyn's Law); Right Care Right Person and Major Decants Protocol.</p>	

	SLT noted the contents of the 3 briefing notes.	
<b>30/24</b>	<p><b>SLT Forward Plan and FA/Members Seminar Forward Plan</b></p> <p>SLT noted the forward plans for 2024, which was a useful overview for the coming months.</p> <p>There were a number of IWD events in place for w/c 5 March 2024. In addition, ADoPS was attending Hastings College on 1 March 2024 and CFO presenting at an NHS Trust event at St Wilfrid's Hospice in Eastbourne on 8 March 2024. A Listening Lunch was scheduled for 27 February 2024 in addition to coffee mornings for GIN Leadership work.</p> <p>There was a short discussion around the Social Media report and whether this needed to come to SLT for discussion on cyber security and comms, or whether it was in fact a policy update for consultation.</p> <p>Strategic Workforce Plan Update would be brought in March by ADoPS. Fires in Tall Buildings would come to SLT in April by ADoOSR</p> <p>IRMP Implementation Update for Scrutiny &amp; Audit – Lead Officer was ADoSC</p> <p><u>Members Seminar - 27 March</u> – remove Artificial Intelligence (keep Comms Strategy) and add in Preston Circus with GM Doug Marshall and SM Tom Walby.</p> <p><u>Members Seminar – 21 May</u> – removed White Paper and include Mayfield Station options.</p>	
<b>31/24</b>	<p><b>NILO Update</b></p> <p>Fire NILO Embed; Regional Lead Fire NILO; and CBRN Regional Fire Lead Rob Baker-Johnson, provided an official sensitive overview on current regional threat and risks, which remains at Substantial.</p> <p>The SE Region has a number of national strategic infrastructures which could be subject of a CBRN attack, which included maritime threats and HazMat. JFC are kept regularly up to date with any relevant details. High level details of operations and structure were also shared.</p> <p>ADoOSR noted that the lessons learnt from the exercises needed to be fed back through NILO and back into FRS's through Officer Training. SLT discussed how this could be ensured and Rob Baker-Johnson would do the same.</p> <p>CFO shared details of The Standard Tier Consultation on the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill, also known as Martyn's Law, which was launched on 5 February 2024 and would run for 6 weeks. SLT thanked Rob Baker-Johnson for his time.</p>	
<b>32/24</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><u>Culture Review – Ambulance Trust</u> This would be picked up and discussed at the Culture Club. <i>NB. Subsequently re-named to the Culture Compass Group.</i></p> <p><u>Communications and Stakeholder Workshops</u> would be offered to going forwards. Draft SLA within the Comms Team being progressed and would be</p>	

	<p>shared for comment in due course.</p> <p><u>50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Fire Authority</u> SLT discussed various events to mark the occasion throughout the coming year, including the possibility to link this in with the Merryweather Project and refurbishment of Preston Circus. CFO would contact NARF and the Old Friends Groups for their reflections. It was noted that this year also marked 100 years since the death of Sydney Wise following an accident at Bexhill.</p> <p><u>FBU Engagement</u> All events had now been completed and comments were due to be fed back next week. Corporate workstreams were driving the work.</p> <p><u>Strategy/Business Plan</u> DCFO requested a measured approach be taken regarding the refresh, ensuring that links to policy and manual notes included, ahead of the document review. It was noted that the Strategic Change Board work was slipping to the right.</p> <p><u>Say So Launch</u> DCFO provided his feedback following the launch on 19 February 2024, which had been well attended. ADoPS and the HR &amp; OD Manager were SPOCS and would receive any details via the portal. SLT requested receiving a quarterly management report providing a high-level overview broken down into themes.</p> <p><u>Enfuse Group</u> DCFO advised that the Milestone 2 reports had been received, Milestone 3 was due on due on 26 February 2024 and Milestone 4 Roadmap was anticipated during w/c 4 March 2024.</p> <p><u>Human Nature</u> ADoR/T commented on the recent planning approval for the North St Quarter in Lewes, which had impacts onto Lewes Fire Station.</p> <p><u>HMICFRS positive practice masterclass</u> This would be taking place on 29 April 2024 in Birmingham. ADoR/T had offered to attend and another place would also be offered to HR. SW to collate responses and confirm attendance.</p> <p><u>CFO Wayne Brown's funeral</u> was due to take place on 1 March at Southwark Cathedral in London. West Midlands &amp; LFB allocation would be first, but each FRS had been offered 3 places. CFO would attend to represent ESFRS.</p> <p><u>South Wales FRS</u> SLT noted the unprecedented use of Welsh Government powers of intervention (S22 of the 2004 Act) to take over the FRA. CFO offered her thoughts around the devolved Welsh Government and wider governance issues.</p>	
33/24	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting will be held on 20 March 2024</p>	