



EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

POLICY & RESOURCES PANEL

THURSDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2011 at 10:00 HOURS

MEMBERS

East Sussex County Council

Councillors Livings, Ost, Scott, Sparks, Thomas and Waite.

Brighton and Hove Council

Councillors Pidgeon and Rufus.

You are requested to attend this meeting to be held at East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, 20 Upperton Road, Eastbourne, at 10:00 hours.

AGENDA

759. To (a) confirm all participating Members have undertaken to observe the Authority's Code of Conduct, (b) check if any wish to amend their written declarations of interests under Part 3 of the Code and (c), in relation to matters on the agenda, seek declarations of any personal or personal & prejudicial interests under Part 2 of the Code.

760. Apologies for Absence.

761. Notification of items which the Chairman considers urgent and proposes to take at the end of the agenda/Chairman's business items.

(Any Members wishing to raise urgent items are asked, wherever possible, to notify the Chairman before the start of the meeting. In so doing they must state the special circumstances which they consider justify the matter being considered urgently).

762. To consider any public questions and petitions.

[763.](#) Non-confidential Minutes of the last Policy & Resources Panel meeting held on 14 July 2011 (copy attached).

764. Callover.

There are no items on the agenda to be reserved for callover.

765. Exclusion of the Press and Public

To consider whether, in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, the press and public should be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that, if the public and press were present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information. **NOTE:** Any item appearing in the confidential part of the Agenda states in its heading the category under which the information disclosed in the report is confidential and therefore not available to the public. A list and description of the exempt categories are available for public inspection at East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, 20 Upperton Road, Eastbourne, and at Brighton and Hove Town Halls.

766. Confidential Minutes of the last Policy & Resources Panel meeting held on 14 July 2011 (copy attached). (Exempt categories under paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Local Government Act 1972).

767. Update on Feasibility Study into Control Room Options for West and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Services – confidential report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive (copy attached). (Exempt categories under paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Local Government Act 1972).

ABRAHAM GHEBRE-GHIORGHIS
Monitoring Officer
East Sussex Fire Authority
c/o Brighton & Hove City Council

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Minutes of the meeting of the POLICY AND RESOURCES PANEL held at East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, 20 Upperton Road, Eastbourne, at 10.00 hours on Thursday 14 July 2011.

Members Present: Councillors Healy, Livings, Pidgeon, Rufus, Scott, Sparks, Thomas and Waite.

N.B. Councillor Healy attended the meeting in place of Councillor Ost having been nominated by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the relevant Group spokespersons.

Also present:

Mr. G Walsh (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), Mrs. D. Williams (Assistant Chief Officer – Corporate Services), Mrs. C. Rolph (Assistant Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development), Mr. D. Savage (Deputy Treasurer), Ms. L. Woodley (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Mr. W. Tricker (Strategic Finance and Procurement Manager) and Mrs. K. Ward (Clerk).

744. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 744.1 (a) It was noted that all participating Members had undertaken to observe the Authority's Code of Conduct;
- (b) It was noted that no Member wished to amend their written declarations of interests under Part 3 of the Code;
- (c) It was noted that, in relation to matters on the agenda, Councillor Scott declared a personal interest as his brother-in-law works for the Fire & Rescue Service. It was noted that no other Member wished to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interests under Part 2 of the Code.

745. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

- 745.1 Councillor Livings was elected as Chairman of the Panel.

746. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 746.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Ost.

747. ANY OTHER NON-EXEMPT ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN/CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

- 747.1 There were no urgent items.
- 747.2 It was noted that the numbering of agenda items was incorrect and would not correlate with the Minutes which had been renumbered accordingly.

748. **TO CONSIDER ANY PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

748.1 There were none.

749. **NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES PANEL HELD ON 26 MAY 2011**

749.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (Copy in Minute Book).

750. **CALLOVER**

750.1 Members reserved the following items for debate:

751. Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring 2011/12

752. Collaboration / Merger

753. Future of the Way Forward Working Group

751. **REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2011/12**

751.1 Members considered a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and the Treasurer that informed Members of issues arising from the monitoring of the 2011/12 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme as at 31 May 2011. (Copy in Minute Book).

751.2 The Deputy Treasurer reminded Members that it was early in the financial year and the forecast outturn would be subject to change. The figures showed that there was a predicted underspend of £682,000, £400,000 of which was a contingency provision for the now cancelled Regional Control Centre project. This underspend would change depending on the outcome of the joint control room review which was underway with West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.

751.3 It was reported that the projected underspend also included a figure of £259,000 for fire pensions. No ill-health retirements in 2010/11 meant no charges on that budget for 2011/12. Annual provision for ill-health retirement was a prudent approach and it was anticipated that provision may be drawn on in the near future. The Deputy Treasurer assured Members the situation was reviewed on an annual basis.

751.4 Councillor Rufus asked how vulnerable transport costs were and whether the Authority had ever considered using electric vehicles. ACO Williams reported that energy was procured through East Sussex County Council, although it was difficult to project energy costs when the market was so volatile. Work carried out on Service buildings was starting to provide efficiencies and improvements were generating savings. Concern was expressed that electric vehicles would probably not be adequate for operational vehicles, but possibly an option for support vehicles and although this issue had been reviewed previously, it was kept under review.

751.5 Officers were asked to re-investigate the possibility of using hybrid vehicles and to report back to a future meeting.

751.6 **RESOLVED – That**

- i. the 2011/12 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme monitoring position as at 31 May 2011 be noted; and
- ii. Officers investigate the viability and various options available with regard the use of hybrid vehicles within the support vehicle fleet.

752. **COLLABORATION/MERGER**

- 752.1 Members considered an oral update from the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 752.2 ACO Williams advised that the public consultation commenced today, 14 July 2011 and 5 responses had already been received which were favourable. Opinion Research Services (ORS) were carrying out the key public consultation events and Officers were undertaking a programmed visit to all stations touring round the stations to talk to staff. The full business case together with supporting documentation was available on the Authority's intranet and internet site. ACO Williams highlighted the importance that the Authority was seen to be transparent about the merger.
- 752.3 An outline of matters being considered in the due diligence processes including ICT, Property, Insurance, Operational and Fleet Review was given. Council Tax Equalisation and provision of financial information from the DCLG was being progressed. It was expected that DCLG would present proposals on the Formula Grant which would inform the financial aspect of the merger/collaboration.
- 752.4 Councillor Sparks asked Officers what the position would be on moving forward should the finances be of concern. ACO Williams reported that the position was uncertain as it was dependent on so many factors such as the consultation outcomes, grant figures for a joint control, formula grant figures, council tax equalisation between East and West Sussex and other issues. However, should full merger not go ahead, closer collaboration would still continue. Final decisions on the full business case including due diligence outcomes and impact of any formula grant information would need to be made in December 2011.
- 752.5 **RESOLVED – That the oral report be noted.**

753. **FUTURE OF THE WAY FORWARD WORKING GROUP**

- 753.1 Members considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that sought views on the current remit of the Way Forward Working Group in the light of the future strategic agenda facing the Fire Authority. (Copy in the Minute Book).
- 753.2 DCFO Walsh informed Members that the Way Forward Working Group had been established in 2003 to provide a basis for discussion on innovative ways of delivering the Fire & Rescue Service in East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove as a Member/Officer working group.

- 753.3 The original Terms of Reference of the Way Forward Working Group reflected the new role to oversee the detailed preparation of the Fire Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plans which were then expanded to cover the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services and the modernisation agenda.
- 753.4 In recent years, changes had been made which transferred some of the Working Group issues for Member/Officer discussions to various working groups chaired by Members and matters arising from Audit of the Authority's arrangements were reported directly to Scrutiny & Audit.
- 753.5 Councillor Healy, a member of the Way Forward Working Group felt that the current process was too repetitive and that perhaps the Authority had outgrown the Group. Councillor Healy felt a better process would be for reporting on relevant IRMP issues to go to the Scrutiny & Audit Panel as it had the ability to call in Officers and representative bodies to scrutinise decisions.
- 753.6 Councillors Rufus and Scott both felt the Way Forward Working Group was useful particularly as the Unions were in attendance and had an opportunity to give their views and opinions on matters arising from IRMP reviews. Councillor Rufus felt it important that Councillors still had the opportunity to hear both Officers and representative bodies together with the thought processes behind issues being discussed.
- 753.7 **RESOLVED** – That Principal Officers and Group Leaders discuss the options available and report back to a future meeting.
754. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**
- 754.1 **RESOLVED** – That items 755, 756, 757, and 758, be exempt under paragraphs 3 & 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 and accordingly are not open for public inspection on the grounds that they include information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

The meeting concluded at 12:04 hours.

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

Day of

2011