

NON CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES
MINUTES OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM HELD ON 25 APRIL 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
 George O'Reilly, T/Area Manager Protection
 Elizabeth Curtis, Communications & Marketing Manager
 Sue Walsh, Executive Assistant
 Alex Probyn, Observer

Apologies: None.

		Action
63/24	<p>Minutes of the Meeting held 20 March 2024</p> <p>The non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2024 were approved as an accurate record.</p>	
64/24	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>None.</p>	
65/24	<p>Action Points from Matrix</p> <p><u>201/22 Primary Authority Scheme Update</u> This would be discussed in further detail under Item 8. Action complete.</p> <p><u>240/23 IT Outsource Re-tender Business Engagement Presentation</u> This would be discussed in further detail under Item 7. Action complete.</p> <p><u>49/24 Gender Pay Gap</u> This would be discussed in further detail under Item 14. Action complete.</p>	
66/24	<p>Revenue and Capital Budget 2023/24 and Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2026/27 Monitoring at Month 12</p> <p>The Finance Manager provided a verbal update on the current position.</p> <p><u>P12 Revenue Budget Monitoring</u> There was an expected underspend of £528,000 which is £61,000 more than the underspend of £465k forecast at P10 and reflects movement across all departments. The underspend position has meant that the drawdown of £636,000 to fund the budget was not required. It also supported project costs of £200,000 and allowed other reserve drawdowns to be reduced. CFO suggested outlining the measures which have been taken throughout the year to manage finances and CMM recommended a message to staff to acknowledge their work and flexibility in reaching this position. SLT held a discussion around the baseline budget.</p>	

	<p><u>Savings</u> 89% of savings delivered, 11% of savings had not been achieved. These all related to Procurement savings and CRM and were removed from the 24/25 budget.</p> <p>Carry forward bids in excess of £170,000 have been received. SLT approved the carryforward spend as outlined by the Finance Manager.</p> <p><u>P12 Capital Budget Monitoring</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital budgets for 23/24 were updated during the 24/25 budget setting process and the movement from P10 is not relevant • Estates underspent by £877,000, of which £904,000 was slippage, £21,000 spend in advance and £6,000 overspend (this is small amounts allocated to projects with no other spend for employee time during 23/24) • Engineering capital underspent by £609,000, of which £617,000 was slippage, £14,000 spend in advance and £6,000 underspend. • 23/24 capital funded by £626,000 capital receipts and £2.644m drawdown from capital programme reserve. <p><u>Reserves</u> Closing reserves balance £12.711m prior to any carryforward / outturn underspend allocations.</p> <p><u>ITG Strategy</u> Underspend/slippage of £4.168m compared to original budget and movement of £930,000 since P10.</p>	
67/24	<p>Call Over</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"> - Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 - Delivery of DBS checks for ESFRS – Timeline and Costings - Corporate Risk Register Review Quarter 4 2023/24 - Contaminants Working Group Update 	
68/24	<p>Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024</p> <p>ADoR/T provided an overview of Opinion on East Sussex Fire Authority's internal control environment and report on the work of Internal Audit for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.</p> <p>On the basis of the audit work completed, the Orbis Chief Internal Auditor, as East Sussex Fire Authority's (ESFA) Head of Internal Audit, is able to provide reasonable assurance that the Fire Authority has in place an adequate and effective framework of governance, risk management and internal control for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024.</p> <p>SLT's attention is drawn to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reports received a partial or minimal assurance opinion • A review of Office 365 Implementation - Governance was still in progress at the time of writing this report 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned audits of MBOS Controls Assurance and Oracle / Firewatch Interface where deferred to 2024/25 due to changes in the project delivery timeline A planned audit of HR / Payroll was cancelled. Assurance for both management and the Head of Internal Audit can be drawn from the delayed 2022/23 HR / Payroll audit which was completed in 2023/24. <p>All key performance indicators for the Internal Audit Service have been met or exceeded during the year. It is planned to take this report to Scrutiny & Audit Panel on 16 May 2024 and therefore outstanding reviews will need to be finalised in advance of the 3 May deadline.</p> <p>SLT:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> noted the Head of Internal Audit's opinion on the Fire Authority's internal control environment for 2023/24; noted that the outstanding review will need to be finalised by the end of April considered that the Fire Authority's system for internal audit had proved effective during 2023/24 	
69/24	<p>Records Retention Schedule Phase 2 Implementation</p> <p>DCFO sought approval to reallocate £245,000 of existing IT strategy budget to the Records Retention Schedule Phase 2 Implementation project (£197,000 of forecast budget shortfall plus a further £48,000 of contingency) following approval in principle of the business case for that project at the Strategic Change Board held on 9 April 2024. This reallocation is proposed to be met from forecast underspend in 3 other IT Strategy funded projects.</p> <p>The report and recommendations arising from the scoping study included the proposed plan and approach to address the 83 Very High and High risks identified, along with some of the lower rated risks where logical to do so.</p> <p>The business case requested £197,000 for resources to progress the rollout of the risk remediation plan, £145,000 of which is proposed to be met from headroom forecast to be available from the parallel MS Roadmap Adoption Ring 3 (SharePoint) rollout. Indeed, that parallel SharePoint rollout is one of the primary enablers required to support remediation of a series of the Very High and High Records Retention risks.</p> <p>Until the design phase of the SharePoint rollout is completed (by September '24) and the total cost of implementation is confirmed that £145,000 of forecast budget headroom remains an estimate, so there is an element of risk committing that funding to Records Retention. However, SCB agreed that the Records Retention Phase 2 Implementation and the MS Roadmap Adoption Ring 3 SharePoint rollout are mutually dependent on one another, so it is both logical and necessary to progress both in parallel, sharing funding and resources.</p> <p>So, assuming use of £145,000 from MS Roadmap Adoption Ring 3, there remains £52,000 of the £197,000 requested for Records Retention Phase 2 to find. In addition, SCB proposed that a further £48,000 contingency be added to the approval requested, making the forecast funding shortfall a total of £100,000.</p> <p>After consultation with the ADoR/T and consideration of the current overall Portfolio funding position, it is proposed that the forecast £100,000 funding shortfall is met by reallocating existing IT Strategy budget as follows:</p>	

	<p>a) £35,000 from Multi Factor Authentication – for which the forecast total cost is only £10,000 versus an approved budget of £45,000</p> <p>b) £65,000 from Pager & Alerter Replacement – for which the current forecast cost is only £184,000 versus a budget allocation of £434,000</p> <p>ADoOSR raised a query around the Pager & Alerter costs. Following further discussions, SLT noted that the final costs of the 3 projects from which the £245,000 was proposed to be reallocated where not yet confirmed. On that basis, SLT agreed that the £245,000 to meet the forecast budget shortfall for Records Retention Schedule Phase 2 Implementation, should be met initially from the 2024/25 Corporate Contingency and that if the headroom in other IT Strategy projects was confirmed then it should be met as follows:</p> <p>a) MS Roadmap = £145,000</p> <p>b) Multi Factor Authentication = £35,000</p> <p>c) Pager & Alerter Replacement = £65,000</p>	
70/24	<p>Delivery of DBS checks for ESFRS – Timeline and Costings</p> <p>ADoPS provided an update following the approval in August 2023 by SLT to implement a 3-year plan to ensure all staff within ESFRS have an up to date DBS check.</p> <p>Within the previous SLT report that articulated the plan to ensure all staff within ESFRS have a DBS check, a 5-year plan was proposed with a costing model to ensure all staff are checked within three years.</p> <p>To provide full clarity, ADoPS stated that the total cost is £16,914 and existing budget is £3,100 then additional funding is £13,814, an increase of £11,276 on the funding agreed from the Workforce Transition budget in 24/25.</p> <p>SLT approved a refreshed approach to the implementation plan utilising £13,814 from the 2024/25 workforce transition budget.</p>	
71/24	<p>Corporate Risk Register Review Quarter 4 2023/24</p> <p>ADoR/T noted that the report outlines the Quarter 4 position for 2023-24. It details the corporate risks identified and how they have or are being mitigated.</p> <p>CR7 Inability to respond effectively to a cyber incident has been revised from 8 (Moderate) to 6 (Moderate).</p> <p>ADoR/T requested further details from SLT on some of the corporate risks via email, which was clarified by the Finance Manager.</p> <p>Subject to the above, SLT agreed the Quarter 4 Corporate Risk Register including changes made since Q3 2023/24 and identified any further information or assurance required from Risk Owners.</p>	
72/24	<p>Firefighters' Pension Schemes (FPS) Age Discrimination, Remedy and Immediate Detriment Briefing Note</p> <p>Further to the recent communication from Local Government Association (LGA) relating to McCloud/Sargeant judgement on Age Discrimination and the ongoing process of correcting pension scheme members records and payments,</p>	

	<p>known as Remedy, this paper has been prepared to provide SLT with an update on the situation.</p> <p>The report reflects the current position for East Sussex Fire & Rescue Authority with regards to Age Discrimination and Cases in the Firefighters' Pension Schemes. It involves approximately 44 retirees and approx. 15 of those (who have retired since 2020) would be most affected.</p> <p>SLT considered the 3 options available:</p> <p>Option One: Continue with the freeze until the tax implications are clarified and a new GAD calculator is available.</p> <p>Option Two: Lift the pause and instruct the administrators to pay the arrears of the pension and tax-free lump sum with 8% interest and correct the pension going forward.</p> <p>Option Three: Lift the pause, instruct the pension administrators to pay the arrears and tax-free lump sum and correct the pension going forward, but exclude the 8% interest until a future date.</p> <p>Noting there were risks to all 3 options, SLT agreed in principle, to suggest Option 3 to the Policy & Resources Panel, subject to the awaited legal advice and information received from Pension Administrators which would help clarify the recommendation being put forward to the P&R following the discussions at SLT.</p> <p>CFO requested a copy of the template letter which would be sent out by our Pensions Administrator WYPF which the Payroll, Pensions and HR Assurance Manager agreed to follow up on.</p> <p>SLT noted the content of this paper and that a further report would be taken to the Policy & Resources Panel on 16 May 2024 for their decision on the various options. NB. <i>Following subsequent discussions, it was decided to withdraw this report from the Policy & Resources Panel on 16 May 2024.</i></p>	<p>ADoPS May 24</p>
72/24	<p>Gender Pay Gap 2023</p> <p>ADoPS provided SLT with an overview of the figures from 2023 as well as approval of report content for publication on the ESFRS website.</p> <p>The Services' Mean gender pay gap has reduced in 2023, further to the decrease seen in the 2022 report. The Median has seen a slight increase. With that in mind it is proposed to complete additional analysis this year to provide further insight to tailor activities in addition to our current commitments to address the gender pay gap at ESFRS.</p> <p>SLT approved the publication of the report content but requested further analysis be included.</p>	
73/24	<p>Contaminants Working Group Update</p> <p>ADoOSR stated that this report provided an update on progress made against the recommendations in the report that was presented to ESFRS on the measures that can be introduced to reduce the risk to firefighters from exposure to contaminants.</p>	

	SLT noted the content of the report and the progress that is being made.	
74/24	<p>Safer Communities Action Plan</p> <p>ADoSC provided a verbal update/presentation on the current/latest position and outlined the one-off pressures removed and one-off savings which had been added.</p> <p>Ongoing pressures due to potential funding shortage for ORP:</p> <p>Attempting to deliver ORP (15-18) within budget as no additional funding allocated is challenging (on call review and ORP review working up options). If this proves undeliverable within funding envelope, the issue will be surfaced through Star Chamber or expectation for ORP would need to be revisited.</p> <p>Considerable work has been undertaken by Finance, ADoSC and ACFO on Options to reduce further the unfunded SC pressure caused by Overtime and FTC's. Discussions took place on potentially using some of the underspend to bolster FCP to reduce spend on overtime (more cost effective). SLT agreed to consider this and requested that ADoSC and ADoR/T discuss the details based on introducing 4 further staff in the FCP on a trial basis. The evaluation criteria to substantiate or disprove the forecast of cost reduction must be established and agreed prior to final SLT approval.</p> <p>Forecasted pressure for 2024/25 is currently £578,000 due to sickness, FTC cover, overtime and training but ADSC was confident this would be reduced further as the changes through the action plan.</p> <p>Training/Occupational Health – recommendations on training with financial impacts; OH with financial impacts and training group/OH feedback. SLT held a lengthy discussion around the OH provision, resourcing and processes.</p> <p>OSR ADoOSR provided an overview of the initial actions taken on crewing with financial impacts/corporate workstreams and crewing workshop update. The 15 min standby rule had been reinforced and adoption of DCT for standbys prioritised. A refresh of DCT data was awaited then work towards using DCT for standbys by September 24. AFA Policy change – move to non-attendance at low risk commercial 24/7 went live on 1 April 24. This would be continuously reviewed.</p> <p>SLT acknowledged the good work taking place and the reassurances it provided. SLT requested that proposals continue to be developed and progressed and a further update be brought back in 6 months as a refresher on what is being monitored. The temporary increase in establishment via Workforce Planning was noted.</p>	ADoSC Oct 24
75/24	<p>SLT Forward Plan 2024 and FA/Members Seminar Forward Plan</p> <p>SLT noted the forward plans for 2024, which was a useful overview for the coming months.</p> <p><u>Scrutiny & Audit Panels</u> IRMP Implementation Update moved from May to July Primary Authority Partnership moved from May from July. IA Annual Report and Opinion 23/24 brought forward from July to May.</p> <p><u>Policy & Resources Panels</u></p>	

	Pensions report and Financial Services Collaboration agreement would be taken to the May meeting.	
76/24	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p><u>SLT Workplace Visits</u> It was agreed to offer a single date to HQ staff for an opportunity to have an in-person meeting with SLT.</p> <p><u>Protection</u> It was agreed that T/AM Protection would provide regular updates as part of Safer Communities Action Plan going forwards.</p> <p><u>SLT Skills Analysis</u> It was agreed to invite the HR & OD Manager to a separate session with SLT on development.</p> <p><u>NFCC Cultural Dashboard Methodology</u> SLT held a broad discussion on culture issues and the recently issued NFCC consultation.</p> <p><u>HMI Richard Jolley</u> DCFO would consider topics to cover ahead of planning this visit to ESFRS in July.</p> <p><u>PMO</u> Michael McCarthy had started in post this week and received an overview of projects from ADoP&I ahead of the Strategic Change Board for next month.</p> <p><u>50th Anniversary Celebration</u> which would be held on 4 July at Saltdean Lido with VIP guest of honour Peter Holland.</p> <p><u>Merryweather</u> – 90% of funding was now in place and an event would follow later in the year.</p>	SW May 24
77/24	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on 23 May 2024</p>	