

**NON CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**  
**MINUTES OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM HELD ON 20 JUNE 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  
 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  
 Paul Markwick, Observer

**Apologies:** Liz Ridley, Assistant Director of Planning & Improvement

		Action
102/24	<b>Minutes of the Meeting held 23 May 2024</b>  The non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2024 were approved as an accurate record.	
103/24	<b>Matters Arising</b>  <u>90/24 Outcomes of data availability and dashboards initiative</u> SLT noted that work would continue to be taken forward as part of the wider data strategy, and included in the implementation plan for the data warehouse. The work on performance measures is integral to our efforts to be increasingly data and intelligence-led.  <u>93/24 Training at STC</u> DCFO had met with Nick Skelton, ESCC regarding the ongoing position, in order to find a short, medium and long-term way forward. A new Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer had been appointed, who would be introduced to the new Training Centre Manager. Regular site meetings would re-start in order to re-frame the relationships. SLT discussed the focus on core training, live burns and burn licence conditions and recognised the importance of ensuring a co-ordinated approach. CFO requested a formal report back at the next meeting and had also briefed the Chair who wished for this to be discussed at a future Members Seminar. ADoR/T stated this ongoing issue would be logged to understand the full risk from an Estates perspective and would also be picked up as part of Corporate Risk Review.	
104/24	<b>Action Points from Matrix</b>  <u>76/24 SLT Workplace Visit</u> This had now been arranged at HQ for 16 July 2024. Action complete.	
105/24	<b>Revenue and Capital Budget 2024/25 and Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27 Monitoring at Month 2</b>  The Finance Manager stated that this was the first report to SLT for the 2024/25 financial year and highlights the findings from the Month 2 monitoring undertaken on the Revenue Budget 2024/25 and 5 year Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2028/29. A net revenue overspend to the sum of £1,673,000 has been identified.	

	<p>The Capital Strategy has been increased to £30,229,000 to include slippage of £1,624,000 and allocation of spend in advance of £35,000 from 2023/24.</p> <p>SLT discussed training and reviewed the bids to corporate contingency. Commitments approved during 2024-25 total £422,000, leaving a contingency balance of £593,000. The contingency budget is currently forecast to achieve budget allocation, therefore SLT assume this remaining amount will be spent. It was noted this position was less than ideal so early on in the financial year. Meetings were in place to provide assurance, monitoring of the position and check that the assumptions for forecast are correct; in order to be in a better position next month.</p> <p>SLT agreed the proposed use of the contingency to offset various pressures across the budget totalling £382,000, reducing the overall forecast overspend to £1,291,000. The remaining contingency budget would be £239,000.</p> <p>ADoR/T also clarified that Protection Grant had been lower than expected, which had been reduced on a national basis from £12m to £10m. Given the current forecast underspend on the Protection budget, due to vacancies, it was not proposed at this point to use contingency to top up the Protection Grant to its budgeted level.</p> <p>SLT reviewed the Wholetime Establishment Variances and ADoPS provided clarity on establishment figures. There was a recommendation that the Safer Communities pressure of £52,000 (on-call) would also be funded from contingency. Overtime was £10,000 higher this May than at the same time last year.</p> <p>Officers have reviewed the capital plans for 2024/25 and report underspend on delivery of projects to the value of £596,000 (6%), particularly with regards to the Engineering Capital Projects 2024/25.</p> <p>The position on reserves shows an opening balance of £13,309,00. The forecast net drawdown from reserves is £6,215,000, an increase of £3,213,000 compared to the planned drawdown of £3,002,000. This results in an estimated closing balance of £7,094,000.</p> <p>The Authority currently has cash investments of £12,080,000. Current borrowing is £9,417,000 with loans subject to fixed interest rates. Loans totalling £402,000 will be repaid during the year. Additional borrowing of £5,188,000 is currently expected and cashflow will need to be monitored closely to ensure the Authority borrows at the right time.</p> <p>SLT noted the risks to the revenue budget and the projected overspend, the Capital Programme, the reduced net forecast drawdown from reserves and grants available and the spending plans, together with the monitoring of savings taken in 2024/25, the ITG strategy position and current year investments and borrowing.</p> <p>SLT also approved allocation of £382,000 from contingency (at section 6.4); approved the allocation of staff underspends to Future Foundations; and agreed what spend control measures should be in place for 2024/25.</p>	
106/24	<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>- Non-Pay Spend Review – Terms of Reference</li> <li>- JFC Outturn Report 2023-24</li> </ul>	
107/24	<p><b>Corporate Risk Register Review Quarter 1 2024/25</b></p> <p>ADoR/T stated that this report discusses the first quarter position for 2024-25 and details the corporate risks identified and how they have or are being mitigated.</p> <p>CR1 – Health &amp; Safety compliance – SLT considered whether to lower the risk and agreed to keep under review.</p> <p>CR3 - Ability to meet developing legislative requirements evolving from central fire safety regulatory reviews - T/AMoP provided a brief update on the current position, recent departures and the position on training agreements for Protection staff.</p> <p>CR7 - Inability to respond effectively to a cyber incident – CMM enquired as to whether this risk required updating and when any results may be due. ADoR/T provided an update on the position and DCFO stated that Cyber Security would be involved in the next round of the HMICFRS Inspection programme.</p> <p>CR8 - Failure to deliver key corporate projects – SLT requested a review following the commencement of the new PMO.</p> <p>CR10 - Risk of loss of live fire training at Service Training Centre – DCFO requested an update which SLT discussed and agreed to clarify the specific risks impacted. ADoPS would re-draft the comments on the register and circulate to SLT for approval.</p> <p>CR21 Data Management - Records Retention Schedule – this has been added to the Corporate Risk Register with a risk score of 9 (Moderate).</p> <p>SLT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) agreed the Quarter 1 Corporate Risk Register including changes made since Q4 2023/24;</li> <li>b) noted the update for CR3 – Ability to meet legislative requirements evolving from centra fire safety regulatory reviews and requested an update for CR8 – Failure to deliver key corporate projects</li> <li>c) identified any further information or assurance required from Risk Owners</li> </ul>	<p><b>ADoPS Jul 24</b></p>
108/24	<p><b>Review of Risk Management</b></p> <p>ADoR/T provided an initial overview, noting that the review was carried out by Sue Nugent, Risk Manager at Devon &amp; Somerset FRS and a Director of the Fire &amp; Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC). It concluded that risk management is well established in the Service at operational level, as a tool to assess and manage health and safety risk in training and service delivery response, and as is Project risk management.</p> <p>Based on the benchmarking results for each section, five sections achieved level 2 - happening, the other two sections level 3 - working.</p> <p>Policy and Strategy, People and Risk Handling and Assurance section scores</p>	

	<p>range from 20% to 36%. This indicates there is room for improvement in these areas particularly in terms of refreshing risk management policy, implementing a risk management framework and developing staff risk management skills.</p> <p>The next phase of risk management is entirely dependent on allocating resources and responsibilities for designing, implementing and monitoring a risk management framework, with risks, controls and mitigating actions fully mapped and allocation of responsibility to appropriate managers.</p> <p>The action plan sets out a 6-month programme of work to address the issues identified as key to improving our risk management practice. The Service does not have the capacity to implement the action plan and so it is proposed to recruit a suitably qualified temporary resource the cost of which is expected to be £40,000 - £50,000. This can be funded from the provision within the Finance revenue budget (£30,000) with the balance funded from the Insurance Reserve.</p> <p>The Service is also expecting to receive some support from FRIC which is currently working to improve its service offer to its members. The external resource will also be expected to coach and upskill in house staff. During the 6-month implementation period, there will be a further review of means by which the Service can secure the skills and capacity it needs to deliver an effective risk and insurance function on an ongoing basis, in the light of the difficulties in developing a shared service with other FRS.</p> <p>SLT enquired further around timeframe, existing programmes and funding. ADoR/T would continue discussions as a priority as getting the right person would be paramount.</p> <p>SLT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) approved the Risk Report and Action Plan</li> <li>b) approved the recruitment of a suitable external resource for 6 months to implement the Action Plan</li> <li>c) noted that delivery of the Action Plan will be monitored through Assurance, Performance &amp; Governance Group</li> <li>d) noted that ongoing capacity to deliver an effective risk management and insurance function will be subject to further review</li> </ul>	
109/24	<p><b>Review of Catering Provision at Service Training Centre</b></p> <p>ADoPS sought agreement from SLT to the recommendation not to re-tender for catering at STC at the end of the current contract term and to stop providing catering for courses held at STC.</p> <p>This report provides options available upon the expiry of the current contract to provide catering services at Service Training Centre. The report sets out potential savings that can be achieved through differing options:</p> <p><b>Option 1</b> Withdrawal of catering facility replaced by payment of subsistence</p> <p><b>Option 2</b> Withdrawal of catering facility replaced by payment of subsistence – meal deal style, concerns on wastage etc.</p>	

	<p><b>Option 3</b> Extend the catering contract by a further 18 months and factoring in management fee increases and food inflation of 2% from 25/26 onwards in line with the MTFP.</p> <p>It was recommended to SLT that catering services are no longer provided for learners at STC and that they will be reimbursed via expenses claims as detailed in Option 1.</p> <p>ADoSC noted previous concerns around ensuring sufficient calorific intake, particularly during BA training and the potential impact to the Finance Team in relation to payment of subsistence/claims. ADoR/T considered the provision of fridges, microwaves, vending machines on site and maintaining a dedicated seating area, if staff were to bring in their own food. The guidance around this would be re-checked.</p> <p>SLT agreed with Option 1 in principle, subject to finding out the full costs, and discussed moving to locally based training rather than central, in line with training review. ADoPS would advise should there be any changes following review of full costs. Provision of hardship payments was not agreed.</p> <p>It was agreed that appropriate comms/messaging would be shared, prior to this report being published, CMM would liaise with the Training &amp; Assurance Manager and SM Course Delivery.</p>	<p><b>CMM Jul 24</b></p>
<p><b>110/24</b></p>	<p><b>Estates Capital Programme – Wholetime Station Design Guide Schemes</b></p> <p>ADoR/T provided an overview on the latest position and the Estates Manager presented further background following approval of the business case, a priority for delivery within the Capital Programme 2024/25. Trail Group had been appointed and provided their final pricing for Bohemia Road.</p> <p>The total project outturn cost for all 3 projects is now forecast at £2.919m with a current budget approval of £1.716m. This consists of £135,000 of revenue and £2.784m capital.</p> <p>The Estates Manager outlined the recommendations, which SLT noted. SLT were also asked to recommend to the Policy &amp; Resources Panel on 18 July 2024 a variation to the Capital Programme through an increase in the scheme budgets by £1.068m (subject to final review) which would be funded as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design Guide Contingency = £0.5m</li> <li>• Reduction in Preston Circus capital budget = £0.18m</li> <li>• Unallocated Capital Programme Reserve = £0.206m</li> <li>• Sustainability capital budget = £0.075m</li> <li>• New borrowing = £0.108m</li> </ul> <p>There was a discussion around multi-purpose training hubs. The Estates Manager confirmed that the details for Bohemia Road MPTH were ready to go and could be shared with Trail Group almost immediately. If SLT were content to approve the recommendations in the Policy &amp; Resources Panel report and subject to a desktop review and any additional costs, this work could be carried out ahead of the other wholetime stations.</p> <p>Comms would link into refurbishment project in due course but would have full transparency on the work leading up to this. SLT noted the move to future</p>	

	projects going forwards and the facilities at the new WSFRS site in Horsham, Platinum House. SLT supported this approach in principle.	
111/24	<p><b>Estates Manager – proposal to recruit and market supplement</b></p> <p>ADoR/T sought approval to recruit to the vacant Estates Manager post in lieu of the current temporary seconded provision, and to note that in order to attract a good calibre of applicants a market supplement will be required.</p> <p>Since 2018 the role of Head of Estates / Estates Manager has been provided through a series of secondments from Surrey and Sussex Police and their wider supply chain and as a mix of job share and sole post.</p> <p>Recent market research suggests that to attract capable candidates a salary of between £55,000 and £80,000 would be required. This would require a market supplement of up to £20,000 which is significantly in excess of the maximum market supplement in place at JF7. It is recommended that a market supplement of £5,000 is approved, but with the risk that this may not elicit a suitable field of candidates.</p> <p>The cost of the supplement plus on costs (NI and pension) would be covered by the Estates revenue budget in 2024/25 (part year effect) and would be identified as a pressure through Star Chamber for the 2025/26 revenue budget.</p> <p>SLT noted that the current arrangement with of an Interim Head of Estates will cease in the Autumn of this year and replacement will need to be found. Sussex Police was being considered and ADoR/T would also be speaking to ESCC options around a possible shared resource/service.</p> <p>SLT approved the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) role of Estates Manager going out to advert for a permanent appointment with the additional £5,000 market supplement (and if unsuccessful, a further additional £5,000 market supplement)</li> <li>(ii) quantum of market supplement required to attract appropriate skill sets and experience</li> <li>(iii) use of selected recruitment agencies (in line with procurement regulations) to source prospective candidates</li> </ul>	
112/24	<p><b>Non-Pay Spend Review – Terms of Reference</b></p> <p>The Service has, since 2010/11, achieved £11.876m of operational and non-operational savings. The current MTFP includes additional approved savings of £2.171m. These savings have included non-pay items some driven by specific initiatives, the Procurement Strategy, or ad hoc savings identified through Star Chambers.</p> <p>Gross budgeted non-pay spend for 2024/25 is £16.9m which includes capital financing costs of £1.0m.</p> <p>Following the Finance Improvement Plan, the Finance Business Partners have been working closely with budget managers to improve how we manage our financial resources. It is clear however that there remain areas where there are persistent over and underspends and misalignment between budgets and actual spend / income. The Oracle Implementation will offer opportunities to improve our processes and our controls over spend and we will look to</p>	

	<p>harness those once they become available.</p> <p>ESFRS proposes to carry out a systematic service wide review of non-pay spend over the next 3-6 months with the outcomes feeding into Star Chambers and the next version of the Procurement Strategy, and other Strategies and Plans where appropriate.</p> <p>SLT approved the Terms of Reference for the Non-Pay Spend Review.</p>	
<b>113/24</b>	<p><b>JFC Outturn Report 2023-24</b></p> <p>ADoOSR provided SLT with the JFC Outturn report for 2023/24</p> <p>The final outturn position was a 2.9% overspend of £96,751 against the agreed three-way shared costs budget, with underspends against the other shared costs reducing the overall overspend to £84,897.</p> <p>There is a refreshed work stream underway to finalise the roadmap for Joint Fire Control, which will lay out the future required development costs. Further workshops are to be held in July 2024 to finalise the roadmap for 2025/26 onwards prior to the Star Chamber process in September 2024.</p> <p>SLT noted the contents of the paper.</p> <p>On a related note, CFO commented that the HMI data return for emergency calls attended/ incidents area is blank and there was a difference in figures. ADoORS would pick this up with the JFC Management Team.</p>	<b>ADoOSR Jul 24</b>
<b>114/24</b>	<p><b>Strategic Performance Report Quarter 4 2024/25</b></p> <p>The Planning and Intelligence Manager presented the Strategic Performance Report for Quarter 4 2023/24 which is structured into 4 sections:</p> <p>Performance at a glance summary; Service Priority Areas; Performance measures needing improvement and Annual Performance Measures and those that are new.</p> <p>Priority 1 – Accidental Dwelling Fires – SLT requested that additional narrative be added prior to going the Panels to ensure this told the full picture.</p> <p>PI 40 SSRI's – it was confirmed that this data is reported at APGG and SLT but not shared at Panel meetings.</p> <p>SLT considered the Strategic Performance Report for Quarter 4 2023/24. ADoPS would check with Democratic Services regarding sickness figures.</p>	<b>ADoPS Jul 24</b>
<b>115/24</b>	<p><b>Wholetime Recruitment Plans</b></p> <p>ADoPS provided a verbal overview on the latest position and particularly crewing pressures, where the current daily ridership is 164. From the existing firefighter pool of 34, there were 12 employable people. SLT considered utilising the current FF pool that is due to expire or following a similar approach to the On-Call Assessment Centre, where they would go through a light touch recruitment process. The costs for this recruitment process could be absorbed through BAU if timing and other processes considered for HR Team and Instructors.</p>	

	SLT agreed to utilise the pool in the interim period and ADoPS would bring back a more detailed report to SLT next month.	<b>ADoPS Jul 24</b>
<b>116/24</b>	<p><b>Independent Advisory Group</b></p> <p>ADoPS provided a verbal overview on the history of IAG, examples of success and our suggested informal approach called Community Compass, which fits our requirements and would meet on a quarterly basis from October 2024. The recruitment pack was currently being finalised.</p> <p>SLT acknowledged the work carried out so far and liked the approach, noting that further work still needed to be done. It was agreed that there would need to be a diverse membership.</p>	
<b>117/24</b>	<p><b>SLT Forward Plan 2024 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>The Strategy refresh would be approved in principle, in terms of priority and funding.</p> <p>It was agreed that the IRMP Implementation Update would be moved from the July to September Scrutiny &amp; Audit Panel, noting that this meeting is a standalone one item agenda for the Accounts only. <i>NB. it was subsequently agreed to take the IMRP Implementation Update to the November Panel meeting instead.</i></p> <p>Capital Estates Review would be added to the P&amp;R Panel agenda for July.</p>	
<b>118/24</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><u>Fire Pride Conference</u> CFO feedback to SLT in follow up to the recent conference on 14 May 2024 mentioning core members, visible markers and engagement. It was proposed that it might be useful for GIN and FIREOUT networks to discuss these and wider issues. The importance of having both policy and position statements that were fit for purpose.</p> <p><u>Workforce Development to OpP&amp;P</u> ADoR/T noted the virement of the Direct Entry budget.</p> <p><u>Becky Cheng</u> would be leaving ESFRS on 17 July 2024.</p> <p><u>Have a Go Day</u> ADoSC, of the 28 people who had signed up, this had converted into 6 people progressing through to the next stage. It was noted that a year of the compressed process had not lead to a high conversion rate. Other sites or collaboration with partners would be looked into.</p> <p><u>HMICFRS Inspection</u> DCFO stated that the narrative for the pillar document was required by October. Collation of evidence would take place over the next few months in preparation for this next phase.</p> <p><u>Follow up actions</u> DCFO requested that SLT ensure any actions are clarified and passed onto managers in order to provide a consistent and cohesive message at subsequent meetings.</p>	



	<u>Chair of Fire Authority</u> CFO had held an initial briefing with the new Chair and provided an overview of workplace visits, forthcoming event, Mayfield Consultation and Trade Union affiliation.	
<b>119/24</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>  The next meeting will be held on 17 July 2024	