

NON CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES
MINUTES OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM HELD ON 22 AUGUST 2024

Present: Dave Norris, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Mark Matthews, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Hannah Youldon, Assistant Director of Operational Support & Resilience
Liz Ridley, Assistant Director of Planning & Improvement
Julie King, Assistant Director of People Services (incumbent)
George O'Reilly, T/Area Manager Protection
Elizabeth Curtis, Communications & Marketing Manager
Sue Walsh, Executive Assistant
Tom Walby, Observer

Apologies: Dawn Whittaker, Chief Fire Officer
Duncan Savage, Assistant Director of Resources/Treasurer
Matt Lloyd, Assistant Director of Safer Communities
Doug Marshall, Assistant Director of People Services (designate)

		Action
143/24	<p>Minutes of the Meeting held 17 July 2024</p> <p>The non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2024 were approved as an accurate record.</p>	
144/24	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>None.</p>	
145/24	<p>Revenue and Capital Budget 2024/25 and Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 Monitoring at Month 4</p> <p>The Finance Manager reported on the Revenue and Capital Budget 2024/25 and Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2028/29 provisional outturn.</p> <p>A net revenue overspend to the sum of £1,180,000 has been identified and there was movement of £493,000 from the period 2 report. However, following decisions made by SLT, this is only £86k lower overall. The main overspends are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £0.926m – Safer Communities Groups (£0.855m if take the contingency into account) • £0.230m – Service Training Centre • £0.138m – Future Foundations / Vacancy Management <p>Additionally overspends on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £0.093m - Unfunded pensions • £0.052m - Hydrants <p>We're also forecasting £100,000 additional income from Treasury Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reserves levels as at 31 March 24 were higher than when the budget was set • Interest rates have remained high although we are seeing these drop following BoE base rate reduction 	

<p>Salary and overtime pressures were discussed in regard to the overall wholetime position. From the Grey book funding for 330 posts, 339 posts were paid in July, of which 5 people were on FTC. SLT agreed that those 5, should be included as part of the 12 long term absences.</p> <p>The Capital forecast was for an underspend of £2.289m. The Estates capital budget has been increased by £566,000 although their underspend was currently £1.719m, due to slippage in the Fort Road and Roedean projects and completion of others. It was noted that the Green book pay offer had been rejected, which would also impact the budget. DCFO confirmed that the Gold Book Pay Award had already been agreed in January 2024 but this would be left in for 2024/25.</p> <p>The Capital Strategy has been increased to £30,793,000 to include slippage of £1,624,000 and allocation of spend in advance of £35,000 from 2023/24, along with £566,000 for Estates capital projects.</p> <p>Officers have reviewed the capital plans for 2024/25 and report underspend on delivery of projects to the value of £2,289,000 (20%).</p> <p>A separate report will be brought to SLT in September, setting out options for increased spend controls designed to mitigate the revenue pressure. Work has already started on the non-pay review which should identify any re-occurring underspends year on year. Engagement from Assistant Directors and other Senior Managers would be required.</p> <p>The Finance Manager would check the underspend figure for Communications. CMM noted that the printing contract was being re-evaluated. In addition, clarity on £4000 for Live Fire Training was also requested (Appendix 4).</p> <p>ADoPS stated that the overspend of £101,000 in the training budget related to external training. This was often underspent, but noted that at Quarter 1, 40% of the total budget had already been used, so they may be little or no underspend in this area this financial year.</p> <p>The COT Manager would be asked to bring an update on the Strategic Review of Training Programme at SLT in October. The current overspend for on-call training was £68,000, with the overall budget set at £144,000.</p> <p>Surge Protection Grant Funding, it was noted that a total of £70,000 would be drawn down this financial year, which may not be needed if vacancies last longer or are filled as planned. GOR requested an amendment.</p> <p>An overspend of £5,000 is expected in Performance (previous forecast £5,000 overspend). This is due to a vacancy factor of 1% applied to the pay budget.</p> <p>Of savings, 92% have been delivered including £138,000 FF/Vacancy management savings.</p> <p>The position on reserves shows an opening balance of £13,309,00. The forecast net drawdown from reserves is £6,648,000, an increase of £3,646,000 compared to the planned drawdown of £3,002,000. This results in an estimated closing balance of £6,660,000. SLT held a general discussion on use of Reserves and Capital. ADoOSR requested better visibility of earmarked reserved.</p>	<p>ADoR/T Sep 24</p> <p>ADoPS Oct 24</p>
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	<p>SLT noted the risks to the revenue budget and the projected overspend, the risks to the Capital Programme, and the increased net forecast drawdown from reserves, together with the grants available and the spending plans, monitoring of savings taken in 2024/25, ITG strategy position and current year investments and borrowing.</p> <p>SLT agreed to reallocate £45,000 from the LCS posts against the FF savings for 2024/25. Therefore, SLT approved that the remaining £65,000 of underspends be transferred to contingency and approved that the allocation of £4,000 from contingency be put towards ORH modelling, which would be pivot in reducing spend in Safer Communities.</p> <p>Going forwards, user acceptance testing was being undertaken on EPM (part of Oracle) which would be used to assist budget monitoring and non-pay spend. It was anticipated that go live would take place on or around 4 September 2024. The next Revenue and Capital Budget report would be brought to SLT in October, to allow the Finance Team to move the budget monitoring across to new system during September.</p>	
146/24	<p>Call Over</p> <p>All the main reports were called over for discussion at the meeting.</p>	
147/24	<p>Fleet and Equipment Strategy 2025-30</p> <p>ADoOSR sought approval from SLT for the Fleet & Equipment Strategy 2025-2030 and provided an overview of the 6 main themes. Year 1 and 2 costs and apprentices were discussed by SLT. ADoOSR would provide a verbal narrative and reassurance to Members at the Fire Authority meeting on 5 September 2024. Future sustainability options and use of smaller appliances were also considered.</p> <p>The deliverables within the draft strategy take into consideration findings of the 3rd round of HMICFRS Inspections and the 2023 HMICFRS State of the Fire and Rescue Service Report published in May 2024.</p> <p>The additional cost of delivering and implementing the Strategy and all of its component parts has been indicatively costed at £0.359m across both revenue and capital for which, at this stage, there is no funding in place.</p> <p>A growth bid will be submitted as part of the Star Chamber process this autumn and will be subject to prioritisation alongside other pressures, bids and savings as we develop proposals for a balanced budget for 2025/26 and Medium-Term Finance Plan (MTFP). Once the budget and MTFP are approved the Strategy's Action Plan can be finalised on the basis of what is affordable.</p> <p>SLT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Discussed and determined whether the Service wishes to pursue all activity within the Strategy at this time recognising the continuing pressure on the overall budget. ii) Approved the Fleet & Equipment Strategy 2025-2030 to go forward to the Fire Authority meeting for sign off on 5 September 2024. iii) Noted that a growth bid for the funding required to fund the Strategy's Action Plan will be submitted as part of Star Chambers and that the 	

	<p>activity and deliverables outlined in the Action Plan will be refined in the light of available funding.</p> <p>iv) Noted that regular reports on the delivery of the Fleet & Equipment Strategy will be presented to the Response & Resilience Boards and to the Assurance, Performance and Governance Group.</p>	
148/24	<p>Prevention and Protection Strategy 2025-27</p> <p>T/AMoP sought approval from SLT Prevention & Protection Strategy 2025-2027 and explained that this was presented as a 2-year strategy instead of 5-year strategy due to further reviews which will likely be needed next year.</p> <p>SLT noted the comments from ADoR/T provided via email prior to meeting and considered a check and balance on the finance assessment and uplift grant before the report was taken to the Fire Authority on 5 September 2024.</p> <p>It was recommended to remove the plan element of the strategy but increase the term to 5 years, acknowledging that it comes with some uncertainty and would be reviewed again within this timeframe. It was also recommended that similar wording be used to that in the Fleet & Equipment Strategy for consistency. SLT also considered the operational impact to the forthcoming GT Phase 2 report, which were likely to require additional resources.</p> <p>The deliverables within the draft strategy take into consideration the findings of our previous HMICFRS Inspection Reports for East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service as well as the national thematic HMICFRS Reports relating to culture and behaviours. We continue to implement the agreed lower risk recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report (all very high and high risk recommendations have been delivered) and prepare for the imminent release of the Phase 2 full report.</p> <p>SLT approved the Prevention & Protection Strategy would be increased to 5 years (2025-2030) and to go forward to the Fire Authority meeting for sign off on 5 September 2024. SLT also noted that regular reports on the delivery of the Prevention & Protection Strategy will be presented to SLT.</p>	
149/24	<p>Annual Performance Outcome Report 2023-24</p> <p>ADoP&I provided SLT with details of East Sussex Fire Rescue Service's performance for the period April – March 2023/24.</p> <p>The year end results for 2023/24 demonstrate an improvement of performance across a number of areas with 13 indicators achieving their targets, five being within the agreed tolerance and four falling outside of the agreed tolerance.</p> <p>59% indicators of targets had been met and Performance measures were achieving target.</p> <p>SLT noted the 32% increase in accidental dwelling fires in the Lewes area and wished for there to be a clear narrative around fire deaths. This led to a discussion around the time of day when accidental dwelling fires are most likely to occur and also outdoor deliberate fires.</p> <p>ADoPS would pick up on any comments from Members around sickness figures and re-enforce the narrative message. Tolerance request would be kept under review in order to provide an accurate representation.</p>	

	<p>It was suggested that an additional narrative be included in the Complaints Received section with regards to any bullying or discrimination related complaints and include details on how it was dealt with, by whom and what happened next.</p> <p>SLT enquired whether any feedback was received on the Every Contact Counts document. CMM stated that it was a feel-good piece for crews and use on social media. There was a discussion on evaluation to promote/receive public feedback and use going forward.</p> <p>SLT considered the performance results and progress towards achieving the Service's purpose and commitments.</p>	
150/24	<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>The latest position on Work Experience Policy (interim report) would be looked in to with a view on when it would be brought to SLT.</p> <p>Sustainability would be removed from the FA agenda on 5 September and IRMP Implementation Update would not be taken to the S&A Panel in November, but instead there would be 3 Strategy refresh reports.</p> <p>There was a discussion on the Members Seminar planned for 20 November, noting it was unlikely that Preston Circus would be ready enough to host it. Fort Road and Mayfield Consultation (part 2) would remain on the agenda with CMM to lead on the latter as the P&I Team would not be available.</p> <p>DCFO would speak to CFO around having a Future Foundations update for Members at an appropriate time.</p>	
151/24	<p>HMICFRS Standards of behaviour – Handling of misconduct in FRS</p> <p>SLT held a verbal discussion on the content of the HMICFRS Standards of behaviour report, its 15 recommendations and actions and in particular, those which came in with immediate effect and recommendations 5, 8 and 13a which had a deadline of 1 November 2024.</p> <p>HR were in the process of preparing details of our progress on each of the recommendations noting that the report issued the requirement for each FRS to give due regard to the recommendations and develop action plan for publishing.</p> <p>Core Code of Ethics, further comms work would follow in due course. ADoPS recommended this be brought to SLT at regular intervals going forward.</p>	ADoPS Nov 24
152/24	<p>SLT Development</p> <p>SLT held an initial conversation about the formalisation of a Senior Leadership Development Programme going forwards. This would be formally brought back to SLT in September for a full discussion, along with the HR&OD Manager.</p>	ADoPS Sep 24
153/24	Any Other Business	

	<p><u>Last SLT meeting for Liz Ridley</u> DCFO recorded his thanks to ADoP&I on behalf of SLT, for all of the MTFPs and CRMPs and everything else which had been achieved during her time with ESFRS and wished ADoP&I all the best in her new role.</p> <p><u>Last SLT meeting for Julie King</u> DCFO offered ADoPS many thanks for her 30yrs of service including the latter years as a valued member of SLT.</p> <p><u>Learning Pool</u> CMM was currently upskilling other team members to provide and utilise this service.</p> <p><u>Fort Road</u> ADoOSR confirmed that planning permission had now been granted for ESFRS. The tender is now live and there is an expectation of awarding the contract at the end of October, with a view to starting works in November.</p> <p><u>Departures</u> It was noted that Paula Wheatley and Craig Williams had both recently tendered their formal resignations and would be leaving ESFRS shortly.</p>	
154/24	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on 18 September 2024</p>	