

**NON CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES
MINUTES OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 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
 Matt Lloyd, Assistant Director of Response and Risk Reduction
 Doug Marshall, Assistant Director of People Services
 George O'Reilly, T/Area Manager Protection
 Elizabeth Curtis, Communications & Marketing Manager
 Sue Walsh, Executive Assistant
 Alyson Lumb, Executive Support Officer

Apologies: None

		Action
207/24	<p>Minutes of the Meeting held 15 October 2024</p> <p>The non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2024 were approved as an accurate record.</p>	
208/24	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>None.</p>	
209/24	<p>Action Points from Matrix</p> <p><u>128/24b Revenue and Capital Budget 2024/25 and Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 (Projects)</u> DCFO advised that this work was ongoing, and the PMO was currently re-focussing and preparing for the forthcoming SLT Workshop on 18 November 2024. DCFO was supportive of the conversation by Assistant Directors and would bring back any relevant matters to SLT as required. Action complete.</p> <p><u>151/24 HMICFRS Standards of behaviour – Handling of misconduct in FRS</u> This would be discussed further under agenda item 18. Action complete.</p> <p><u>166/24 Mayfield Consultation Focus Group Update</u> This would be discussed further under confidential agenda item 8. Action complete.</p> <p><u>188/24 Corporate Risk Register Review 2024/25 Quarter 2</u> SLT had provided updates for CR8, CR9, CR10 and CR20 which had now been included within the report, which would be taken to the Scrutiny & Audit Panel on 14 November 2024. Action complete.</p> <p><u>190/24 Wholetime Vacancy Management and Trainee Course</u> ADoPS provided a verbal update on this position, noting there was now further clarity due to the improved data available. There was an increased risk around vacancy management, this included 3 predicted vacancies and other unconfirmed vacancies which may follow. The recruits course would now be for 4 trainees (from 6). Further work would be carried out during December to consider the external transfer pool and when best to commence a recruitment process. SLT considered the options available which also included consideration of existing Fire Cadets, staff and volunteers who had indicated</p>	

	<p>their interest in becoming firefighters. ADoPS would meet with GM's to review in more detail.</p>	<p>ADoPS Dec 24</p>
<p>210/24</p>	<p>Revenue and Capital Budget 2024/25 and Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 Monitoring at Month 7</p> <p>The Finance Manager provided a verbal update on the current position, as at the end of October, noting this would be comparable over a 3-month period between July-October where changes would be seen.</p> <p>SLT reviewed the overall spend slide for the service (pre-restructure) then took a more in depth look at the updated summaries for each Directorate (with the exception of P&I). ADoRRR provided an update on Safer Communities which covered establishment, crewing, protection and overtime; which was forecast to be 24% higher. A £200,000 underspend was predicted for On-Call.</p> <p>There was an underspend in Operational Support & Resilience by £296,000 which included an underspend on fuel of £34,000. SLT also reviewed the Corporate Summary overview and included Treasury Management which led to a discussion on future options and costs of borrowing, in addition to continuing to save it to offset against other expenditure.</p> <p>ADoOSR was preparing an update report on Future Foundations for the next meeting, which would provide further clarity on the budget. CFO requested that a budget for SLT Development be created as part of future budget setting. It was noted that this would be included within Star Chambers.</p> <p>ADoR/T reminded SLT to report any underspends and to continue to work on reducing them. CFO recommended sending out a written message to this effect, noting the timing would be critical. ADoOSR had already liaised with Managers to this effect.</p> <p>ADoR/T provided a summary around Spend Controls, and the work being done with budget holders to consider future spend and a move towards realistic outcomes.</p>	<p>ADoOSR Dec 24</p>
<p>211/24</p>	<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"> - Communications Campaign, Change and Project Support Plan 2025 - Laptop and Mobile Phone Lifting - Station Lifting Project 	
<p>212/24</p>	<p>Communications Campaign, Change and Project Support Plan 2025</p> <p>The Communications and Marketing Manager outlined the range of Prevention and Protection campaigns.</p> <p>The report includes evaluation reports from key activities for 2024 and sets out plans for 2025 which will be based on local risk, Service' Performance Indicators and legislative change. It also highlights resourcing plans for change programmes and projects to support Service priorities.</p> <p>SLT agreed the 2025 targeted Prevention and Protection campaigns based on local risk, Service' Performance Indicators and legislative change. SLT noted</p>	

	<p>resourcing plans for change programmes projects and additional internal campaigns.</p> <p>T/AMoP provided thanks to the Communications Team for their efforts and support.</p>	
213/24	<p>Health Safety & Wellbeing Strategy 2023-25</p> <p>ADoOSR presented the refreshed Health Safety & Wellbeing Strategy 2023-25 to SLT for their consideration, prior to this being submitted as evidence for the forthcoming HMICFRS Inspection.</p> <p>ADoOSR highlighted the changes which had been made since the last edition, following a review which had been undertaken in 2023. The only real variation has been the extension to the workplan which sits within the Strategy. In order to follow Governance procedures with regards to this extension, it had been brought to SLT for approval.</p> <p>SLT agreed the 2-year extension (2023-25) and requested that a refresh Strategy would be developed in the Spring ready for April 2025. It was noted that Lead Members would need be updated. Better alignment of this strategy against the People Strategy would be made going forwards. It was agreed to keep them aligned but separate going forwards.</p> <p>ADoR/T would speak to Democratic Services with regards to any Fire Authority implications, due to Strategies forming part of the Fire Authority Constitution. ADoR/T would also seek advice on whether this should be included as part of the agenda for the Scrutiny & Audit Panel on 16 January 2025, noting this was an extension to the timeline only, rather than a full refresh. <i>NB. Democratic Services later advised that due to the timing, this would need to be tabled at the Fire Authority meeting on 5 December 2024.</i></p>	
214/24	<p>Internal Audit Report – Turnout & Attendance Arrangements</p> <p>ADoPS reported on the findings of the internal audit review of Turnout & Attendance Arrangements and the proposed actions to be taken as a result to improve governance and control.</p> <p>This internal audit was undertaken as part of the agreed plan for 2024/25. It followed on from an internal review of turnout and attendance claims at certain day crewed stations which found that there were numerous inconsistencies and widespread non-compliance.</p> <p>The audit gives a partial assurance opinion makes 5 findings of which 4 are medium risk and 1 is low risk. The main actions agreed by the Service are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updates to Manual Note HR01_19_v5 - Development of tip sheets and a communication pack - The institution of sample checking of claims forms by the Payroll, Pensions & HR Compliance team - Training for station and supervisory managers through the induction process and officer training days <p>All actions are targeted for completion by 30 April 2025 and will include consultation with staff and representative bodies on changes to the manual note.</p>	

	<p>SLT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) commented on and approved the management response to the audit report so that it can be finalised (ii) agreed that the target dates for implementation are changed to 30 June 2025 (iii) noted that the report will be taken to Scrutiny & Audit Panel on 16 January 2025 <p>It was also agreed that appropriate staff communications would be prepared to fit in around the publication of this report. CMM would contact HR to check on the position. SLT discussed the performance elements and be careful not to link to any ongoing investigations. Timelines and Employee Engagement Road Map links were also considered.</p>	
215/24	<p>Fort Road Update</p> <p>ADoOSR provided a verbal update on the current position and future timescales:</p> <p>This period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tender Evaluation (60% Price, 40% Quality) undertaken. • Tender report created recommending preferred Contractor. • Received BAT Survey report – none observed. • External Comms issued. <p>Next period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AD (DS) signs off tender report – urgent requirement. • Prepare contract and associated docs. • Seek solution on insurance matter – awaiting DMO. • Appoint Contractor and agree mobilisation on-site. • Update Financial model to reflect latest incurred costs. • Review Consultants proposed cashflow spend (Construction only). • Finance to request grant funding as soon as Contractor starts on-site. • Contractor to provide Construction Phased Plan. <p>There were outstanding issues to address which included sign-off of the tender report and formal notification of winning bidder and losing bidder. An insurance matter had also been raised and advice from FRIC on the next steps was currently awaited.</p> <p>ADoOSR outlined the key dates and anticipated timeline for the construction period. The anticipated commencement on-site, subject to resolving the outstanding issues, was currently 29 November 2024, with an anticipated practical completion date of 29 September 2025. Provision for a potential extension had also been factored in.</p> <p>A report, considering the future use of Bexhill Fire Station and other estate locations would be brought to SLT in due course.</p>	
216/24	<p>Laptop and Mobile Phone Lifing</p> <p>ADoR/T outlined the proposed approach and costs to replace end of life laptop and mobile phone estate. The current HP laptops are 7 years old and can no longer be sourced. The legacy mobile phones can no longer be security patched and the lower specification models previously supplied do not work well with wi-fi calling.</p>	

	<p>The recommendation moving forward is ITG budget annually for a turnover of Samsung mobile phones rather than run replacement projects every 3-5 years.</p> <p>SLT approved the proposal for laptop replacement, including docking stations, the proposal for replacement of mobile phones, and the transfer of £107,000 from the underspend on the Station Lifting project bringing the total budget available for the Laptop & Mobile Phone Lifting Project to £417,000. SLT noted that the proposal for an annual mobile phone turnover budget will be submitted through Star Chamber.</p>	
217/24	<p>Station Lifting Project</p> <p>ADoR/T outlined the proposed approach and costs to replace end of life equipment on all stations, HQ and STC.</p> <p>This includes network switches, PA systems and amplifiers, UPS and batteries. All of these items are now end of life with limited supplier support.</p> <p>SLT accepted the proposal for station lifting, including replacing all network switches, UPS/batteries and PA equipment, and approve the requested funding from the ITG Strategy Budget.</p>	
218/24	<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. The following was agreed</p> <p>Meetings 5 December - Fire Authority – Final Accounts 16 January – Scrutiny & Audit Panel –Internal Audit– Internal Communications & Feedback report from Elizabeth (following SLT in Dec). 24 April – Scrutiny & Audit Panel - Primary Authority Partnership (PAP) Update (instead of January, and following SLT in March)</p> <p>Members Seminars <u>20 November</u> The Mayfield Options/Consultation Outcome would be the main focus of the agenda, aside from the presentation and tour of the new station. <u>21 January</u> Topics would remain as Benenden and Protection Update <u>26 March</u> SLT agreed to cover HMICFRS Inspection (DCFO) and Fort Road (ADoOSR)</p>	
219/24	<p>HMICFRS Misconduct Report – Recommendations Update</p> <p>The HR & OD Manager provided an update on the current outstanding recommendations, of which there were 4 remaining, as 11 recommendations have now been completed.</p> <p>SLT considered the 4 recommendations no. 2 (Probationary Staff), no. 6 (Managers Training Programme), no. 13 (approach to hearing appeals) and no. 15 (shared learning from misconduct cases). DCFO would consider this last recommendation in his role as SIRO.</p> <p>SLT discussed the Service's position around recommendation 3 and agreed that compulsory moves would not be suggested.</p>	

220/24	<p>Employment Law Update</p> <p>The HR & OD Manager provided an overview on the Employee Rights Bill that was submitted to Parliament on 10 October 2024. The main areas were highlighted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of Neo Natal Care (pay and leave) - expected implementation April 2025. • Measures to prevent misuse of confidentiality clauses - no expected date • Continuous Employment – came into effect in September 2024. <p>Further detail on the Employment Rights Bill 2026 was also shared with SLT for their information and reference and included upcoming potential changes in the following areas. There are no expected dates for the below changes however, they are all expected to come into force after April 2025 and to be staggered throughout 2025 and 2026.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Rights • Trade Union Rights – Proposed change is that at least 50% of members must vote for a ballot for strike action • Family Friendly Rights • Equality at Work • Miscellaneous – Enforcement, A New Fair Work Agency provided with powers of enforcing the new proposed employee law changes and the right to fine for failure to comply <p>SLT noted Remote Working Regulations and working hours and whether this would have an impact on On-Call firefighters.</p> <p>The HR& OD Manager was asked to liaise with neighbouring FRS's with regards to their approach and also recent discussions on Sexual Harassment.</p> <p>It was also agreed that ADoPS would provide regular updates via the People Strategy Board and consider briefing GIN Members and similar networks.</p>	
221/24	<p>Culture Kickstart Workshop</p> <p>Rachael Griffiths (Training & Business Manager) from The Employment Solicitor presented a Culture Kickstart workshop for SLT, which was well received.</p>	
222/24	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p><u>4i Legacy System Decommissioning</u> ADoOSR advised that during the past year, the 4i Maresfield Secondary System had not been needed and it was unclear whether it would now re-boot. It was recommended to decommission the 4i hardware in November 2024 by disposing of it appropriately. The SIRO and Tactical Leads were comfortable with this approach, therefore SLT agreed in principal, to decommission this, subject to any requirements from PIT Team. It was confirmed that data extraction has been completed and 'Certified destruction' would be obtained.</p> <p><u>SLT Workshop</u> On 18 November 2024, SLT would focus on 3 main topics; Prioritisation, including clarity around PMO, the latest financial position including Star Chambers and SLT Development, going forwards into 2025. It was anticipated that the outcomes of the day would be summarised by way of a response for HMI Inspection evidence.</p>	

	<p><u>WFS Training & Development Event 2025</u> WFS had offered ESFRS 4 full places at their event in June 2025. ACFO reiterated our ongoing intention to support inclusion across the Service and WFS formed part of this. SLT discussed the potential benefits of hosting and partaking in regional events throughout the year and there was a suggestion to feedback at GIN Networks and also SLT, so that Senior Officers remained sighted on the positive impacts of our involvement. ADoOSR agreed to pick this element up going forwards. CMM noted there was a process in place for selection at the Training & Development, which was to formally register interest, this was also inclusive of male managers. SLT also commented on the WFS Corporate Membership and how ESFRS could best make use of it. ACFO approved payment of the Membership for next year and SLT was supportive of funding the 4 spaces offered.</p> <p><u>Excellence in Fire & Emergency Awards 2024</u> This event was taking place on 6 December 2024. Louisa Curtis has been nominated and wished to attend.</p> <p><u>Remediation Action Plans</u> This had been set up and would assist Local Authorities in fast tracking compliance of non-residential buildings. A meeting with BHCC was due to take place this week.</p> <p><u>Learning Pool Transition Succession Plan</u> Due to the changeover due to take place, there had been a request that no new courses be created until Jan 2025. SLT were supportive of this approach.</p> <p><u>Staff Suggestion Manual Note</u> CMM stated that this was due to be re-invigorated, as it had been out of date since 2012. CMM would progress this accordingly.</p> <p><u>West Midlands FRS</u> SLT discussed the recent Home Office intervention due to recent events.</p> <p><u>Government change</u> It was noted that FRS's would be moved from the Home Office back to MHCLG next year, possibly as soon as March 2025.</p>	
223/24	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on 11 December 2024</p>	