

NON CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES
MINUTES OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2025

Present: Dave Norris, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
 Hannah Youldon, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
 Duncan Savage, Assistant Director of Resources/Treasurer
 Doug Marshall, Assistant Director of People Services
 Matt Lloyd, Assistant Director of Response and Risk Reduction
 Justine Cadogan, Assistant Director of Digital, Technology & Change
 George O'Reilly, T/Area Manager Protection
 Elizabeth Curtis, Communications & Marketing Manager
 Sue Walsh, Executive Assistant
 Madelyn Stevens, Observer

Apologies: Mark Matthews, Chief Fire Officer

		Action
01/25	<p>Minutes of the Meeting held 11 December 2024</p> <p>The non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2024 were approved as an accurate record.</p>	
02/25	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>CFO acknowledged the work achieved so far – last FA on 6 Feb: Budget, IRMP and IT Outsource Re-tender – all done and gone through. Looking forward – HMI de-brief /report publication. Pensions assurance.</p>	
03/25	<p>Action Points from Matrix</p> <p><u>191/24 Strategic Review of Training</u> ACFO stated that a formal report would be brought back to SLT in March in order to provide a response to the Enfuse report (Strategic Review of Training Phase 1) which would include a Delivery Plan and recommendations. ADoRRR provided an update on Phase 1, noting that the matrix had now been handed over to STC for them to work to and update going forwards. SLT also considered the financial and budget aspects, particularly the overtime overspend. Both ACFO and ADoRRR agreed that driving down overtime costs in operational training would be a key component of work going forward and part of the action plan.</p> <p><u>242/24 Lewes Crewing</u> This would be discussed in further detail under agenda item 10. Action complete.</p>	<p>ADoRRR Mar 25</p>
04/25	<p>Revenue and Capital Budget 2024/25 and Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 Monitoring at Month 9</p> <p>The Finance Manager provided a verbal update on each Directorate.</p> <p>The overall position of Response and Risk Reduction budget against forecast at period 9 was shared and discussed.</p> <p>Prevention forecast had reduced by £37,000 since last month due to applying grant income to costs centres and updating forecasts with financial positions. The Fire Cadets latest forecast also reflected a saving of £15,691.</p> <p>Protection vacancies have contributed to a forecast underspend of £89,540 and the Protection Uplift grant is forecast to be £64,000 overspent due to the</p>	

	<p>reduction in grant funding for 2024/25.</p> <p>The Financial Breakdown on Operational Pay was reviewed and the Finance Manager noted the current issue with Payroll miscodings which would be looked into as a priority.</p> <p>Establishment, Crewing Shortages, Overtime and On Call Comparisons were also reviewed. ADoR/T formally thanked ADoRRR for his work and progress in these areas.</p>	
05/25	<p>Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan Update</p> <p>ADoR/T provided a verbal overview on the latest position following the last Policy & Resources Panel meeting on 16 January 2025 and noting that the final Local Government settlement was still expected.</p> <p>ADoR/T shared details around the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Hardship Fund proposal and also outlined the anticipated costs. The financial position looked difficult and would mean early discussions for in-year savings. £2.6m of savings were required but also factoring in the 4% pay negotiations and National Insurance Contribution Statement, it totalled nearly £4m. ADoR/T recommended starting the Star Chambers process early this year.</p> <p>The likely target for 2025-26 were for £0.5m savings (which would include the sale of Mayfield Fire Station). ACFO was keen to evolve Star Chambers going forwards with regards to identifying savings across the organisation in an holistic approach rather than solely by Directorate and set series of savings targets on things which were in our control.</p> <p>Areas of focus would be on the Non-Pay Spend Review and Oracle. Finance and Procurement were working towards a go live date of 17 April 2025 and were confident of delivering Phase 2. Phase 3 is Payroll, which there was currently less clarity on in terms of go live at present. It was agreed to maintain project management and project support going forwards.</p> <p>SLT held a broader discussion on the potential timeline for devolution and noted that there was a great deal of uncertainty, reduction in funding, grant allocation and timings outside of our control.</p>	
06/25	<p>Call Over</p> <p>The following report was not called over, and therefore all recommendations contained within it were agreed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual Pay Policy Statement 2025-26 	
07/25	<p>IRMP 2020-2025 Implementation Project Close Down</p> <p>ADoRRR presented SLT with the Close Down Report for the 2020-2025 IRMP Project Plan, recognising this close-down report is not the closure of the current IRMP as the IRMP 2020-2025 remains in place until the CRMP 2025-30 is approved and supersedes it.</p> <p>The IRMP 2020-2025 comprised of 33 workstreams, of which 23 are now completed and a further 4 closed. There are 6 residual workstreams currently open, however these are proposed to be handed over to the appropriate directorate as part of business as usual.</p>	

The actions for the completion of the residual workstreams are as follows:

- 1 1.1 Operational Resilience Plan (ORP) - requires the approval of the Fire Authority IRMP Project Implementation Closedown report on 6 February 2025, after which it will be considered complete.
- 2 1.3 On-Call Enhancements - requires the approval of the Fire Authority IRMP Project Implementation Closedown report on 6 February 2025, after which it will be considered complete.
- 3 5.15 Rope Rescue provision – will form part of the Special Capability Review under the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-30.
- 4 5.20 Water Rescue Provision – will form part of the Special Capability Review under the CRMP 25-30.
- 5 5.21 New Environmental Protection Unit – will be handed over to Appliances, Equipment, Policy Implementation Group (AEPIG) under business as usual.
- 6 5.22 New Fire Investigation Unit – will be handed over to AEPIG under business as usual.

In addition, the wider On-Call Review and Spare Appliance Review will now form part of the CRMP 25-30.

The latest financial forecast indicates an improved position of £449,000 in revenue savings made. However, it shows a shortfall of £26,000 against the target savings forecast for 2023/24 under the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Tranche 1 and 2 workstreams. The net outcome is a forecasted additional £423,000 in savings beyond the February 2023 baseline and the assumptions in the MTFP up to 2028/29.

Further clarity was requested around the cost for upgrading the fire alarm system, which will be addressed as part of the Mayfield Implementation Plan.

SLT:

1. Agreed the route to closure of the 6 open workstreams
2. Agreed to the change of the ORP to be delivered through the Core Station Policy resulting in a minimum of 14 appliances being always available, noting the trial approach for 12 months with the Rye appliance. Also, subject to the Fire Authority approving the revenue budget on 6 February 2025, the investment of up to £500k into the Operational budget will support the delivery of 18 available appliances.
3. Agreed the 2020-2025 IRMP Implementation Project is closed with a formal report submitted for the Fire Authority meeting on 6 February 2025 and a Gateway 5 Closure Report (GW5) submitted to Strategic Change Board also in February 2025.
4. Noted that the recommendation is to close down the IRMP 2020-25 Implementation Project - the IRMP 2020-25 remains in place until the CRMP 2025-30 is approved and supersedes it. The close down report is not the closure of the current IRMP.
5. Noted that the IRMP 20-25 evaluation process will continue and lead into the CRMP process informing the range of options that will be submitted to Fire Authority in March 2026.

	<p>6. Noted that the formal IRMP 20-25 evaluation will be scrutinised and monitored through Strategic Response and Resilience Board and form part of the performance monitoring process through the Assurance, Performance Governance Group (APGG).</p>	
<p>08/25</p>	<p>Day Crewed Duty System Crewing Options - Lewes</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to consider and provide options for working to solve the crewing issues at certain DCDS stations – specifically Lewes where nobody applying to transfer their lives within the agreed 5-minute stand-by response time.</p> <p>This report seeks local approval for some changes that are identified as cost neutral, or even providing some savings, within the current budget, but better support resolving the issues at certain DCDS stations.</p> <p>SLT had a discussion around firefighter recruitment and accommodation pods and whether this could be achieved within the existing budget provision for Lewes. Installation of 2 accommodation pods was agreed at this time but this would be reviewed and if approved, any additions would be made as required through ADoRRR and ADoR/T as part of this review. This would also be included in Core Station Policy but briefed in a different way.</p> <p>SLT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Agreed to the installation of two accommodation pods into an identified location at Lewes Fire Station (option 1). b) Agreed the alternative contracts for staff working at Lewes if they are using the pods as their on-call/non-positive response property at 10% enhancement plus turnouts. c) Run as a trial for 12 months and then consider feasibility at all DCDS stations if the system is successful. d) Carry out recruitment process for DCDS stations only, ensuring all crewing/living options are considered for those applying. 	
<p>09/25</p>	<p>Internal Audit Strategy and Plan 2025-26</p> <p>ADoR/T and Jodie Hadley, Principal Auditor provided a verbal update on the suggested position with regards to and Internal Audit Annual Opinion.</p> <p>There was a discussion around uncompleted audits for 2024-25, the essential, high-risk areas where audits will be required during 2025-26 and what scope there is for other audits. SLT agreed that clarity was required on where assurance is needed and what the expectation of Internal Audit would be. It was also acknowledged that there are other areas where this assurance could be provided through Aristi and the HMI Inspection process for instance.</p> <p>JH stated that IA was there to support our work and not create additional workload, at any stage of the process.</p> <p>ADoR/T would prepare and circulate a list of potential audits for 2025/26 for SLT to review, consider and feedback on. This would include a breakdown of days allocated to ESFRS (approx. 70 days) and the number of audits already set and assist in helping to scope out other potential areas for audit. It was noted that some days would be held on a standby basis in order to provide any post-HMI Review assurance, or similar support throughout the year.</p>	<p>ADoR/T Feb 25</p>

	<p>The following topics were initially considered:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Future Audits 2025-26</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disciplinary Audit – policy changes</td> <td>Future Foundation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Payroll Audit</td> <td>Oracle – Accounts Payable/Receivable</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Overtime</td> <td>Data Management and Record Retention</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Driving Standards</td> <td>Capital Programme Delivery and Estates</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Turnout & Attendance</td> <td>Procurement/Estates – 2026/27?</td> </tr> </table>	Future Audits 2025-26		Disciplinary Audit – policy changes	Future Foundation	Payroll Audit	Oracle – Accounts Payable/Receivable	Overtime	Data Management and Record Retention	Driving Standards	Capital Programme Delivery and Estates	Turnout & Attendance	Procurement/Estates – 2026/27?	
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10/25	<p>Annual Pay Policy Statement 2025-2026</p> <p>SLT considered their recommendation to approve the Fire Authority’s Pay Policy Statement for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, in line with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.</p> <p>This report does not propose any changes to the Fire Authority’s existing policies on pay or its pay scales. It reflects the previous Pay Policy updated to reflect the outcomes of national pay settlements, the decisions of the Principal Officer Appointment Panel (in relation to Principal Officer’s pay) and changes to the Firefighters and Local Government Pension Schemes.</p> <p>SLT agreed to recommend to the Fire Authority to approve the Pay Policy Statement set out in Appendix A.</p>													
11/25	<p>NJC for LARFS – Employers’ initial consultation on FBU Pay Claim 2025</p> <p>DCFO advised that following a response from Surrey FRS on Question 8, all information had now been received. DCFO would circulate a final draft response for comments by close of play today, ahead of submitting our response ahead of the deadline on 24 January 2025.</p>													
12/25	<p>SLT Forward Plan 2025 and FA/Members Seminar Forward Plan</p> <p>SLT noted the forward plans for 2025, which was a useful overview for the coming months.</p> <p>ADoR/T stated that the Annual Internal Audit & Opinion 2024-25 would not be ready for the Scrutiny & Audit in April. This would now come to SLT in May ahead of going to Panels in July.</p> <p>It was agreed that On-Call would be added as an item for the Members Seminar on 15 September.</p>													
13/25	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p><u>Contaminants Research – post Grenfell Tower</u> DCFO confirmed this would be taken through HWSC and that Louie Wellfare would provide additional detail on containments to compliment the work already underway and via the Contaminants Working Group. ACFO and the Strategic Health Safety & Wellbeing Manager provided an update on Health Monitoring.</p>													

	<p><u>Ukraine (Convoy 8) – request from the Home Office</u> ESFRS have offered our B Class Foam which as a service, ESFRS is no longer allowed to use and we have to pay to dispose of it. Currently awaiting a response from National Resilience.</p> <p><u>Annual Governance Statement 2024-25</u> CFO wish to ensure that ESFRS aligned with the improvement actions which SLT confirmed was in place, noting that ADoR/T was yet to complete his area.</p> <p><u>FRS Inspection Programme & Framework commencing June 2025</u> DCFO advised that further HMI thematic reviews would expected later in the year and there would be a change in Service Liaison Lead going forwards, although a replacement had yet to be identified.</p> <p><u>KPI's</u> The ESO would support this piece of work and assist in providing assurances by the agreed deadline of 31 March 2025.</p> <p><u>International Women's Day – 8 March 2025</u> ACFO would lead on this in support of GM Kaye Lax, GIN and Positive Action.</p>	
14/25	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on 13 February 2025</p>	