

**NON CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**  
**MINUTES OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM HELD ON 21 MAY 2025**

**Present:** Mark Matthews, Chief Fire Officer  
David 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  
Alyson Lumb, Executive Support Officer  
Michael McCarthy, Observer

**Apologies:** None

		Action
79/25	<p><b>Minutes of the Meeting held 23 April 2025</b></p> <p>The non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2025 were approved as an accurate record</p>	
80/25	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>CFO acknowledged the recent Bicester Motion incident and provided an overview of the arrangements and service position to date. SLT also checked in on the welfare of our own staff and firefighters.</p> <p>DCFO provided an update on the Fire Strategy and Reform Unit visit which had taking place earlier at Hove and Eastbourne. 21 members of the team had attended and would particularly focus on contamination risks and wider research possibilities.</p>	
81/25	<p><b>Action Points from Matrix</b></p> <p><u>191/24 Strategic Review of Training</u> ADoRRR stated Part A would be discussed in further detail under confidential agenda item 8. Part B was not yet finalised so would now be brought back to SLT in June.</p> <p><u>45/25 Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2025-26</u> ACFO provided a verbal update on this matter under agenda item 10, ahead of a formal report being brought to SLT in June. Action complete.</p> <p><u>66/25 Oracle Fusion Implementation – Phase 3 Payroll Integration Funding &amp; Delivery Plan</u> This would be discussed in further detail under agenda item 12. Action complete.</p> <p><u>67/25a Wholtime Trainee Firefighter Course Options Appraisal (2025 course)</u> This would be discussed in further detail under agenda item 9. Action complete.</p> <p><u>68/25 Crewing Overview</u> This would be discussed in further detail under confidential agenda item 8. Action complete.</p>	<p><b>ADoRRR Jun 25</b></p>

82/25	<b>Call Over</b>  All the main reports were called over for discussion at the meeting.	
83/25	<b>Wholetime Trainee Firefighter Course Options Appraisal and Workforce Planning</b>  ADoRRR stated that this report presents 3 delivery options for a Wholetime Trainee Course in 2025/26 that marries up with the current recruitment timeline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Joint course with SFRS</li> <li>- Hybrid course with FSC</li> <li>- Internal ESFRS course</li> </ul> The paper also provides clarity over when a Wholetime Course could be delivered and the indicative costings.  ADoPS also provided an update on the current retirement profiling. There was a discussion over Workforce Planning and risk appetite and what would need to be included within the forthcoming report. Details would be reviewed at the 6-weekly meetings, which were in the process of being set up and would also include details of assumptions (FTCs and ridership etc), timelines and alternative options such as migration and transfers.  SLT also sought assurance that should Option 3 be approved, that there would be sufficient staff and trainers available at STC. ADoPS confirmed that appropriate resourcing was in place and the recruitment plan was underway. Arrangements were in place for quality assurance.  SLT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) approved that ESFRS runs an internal Wholetime Trainee Course for 16 starting in September 2025, that would see new Wholetime Firefighters arrive on station in December 2025.</li> <li>(b) approved Option 3 – Internal ESFRS Course</li> <li>(c) noted the workforce planning assumptions behind the retirement profile modelling.</li> </ul>	<b>ADoPS Jul 25</b>
84/25	<b>Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2025/26</b>  ACFO provided a verbal update on the position and noted that ESFRS were seeking an additional extension to the deadline to end of June 2025 (instead of 30 May 2025). ACFO also raised an additional issue, which would require further work for Assistant Directors and GM's, once the financial issues had been resolved.  In order to tie in with MHCLG publication date of 30 June 2025, this report would need to be brought back to SLT next month. Due to the current risk of meeting this deadline, ADoRT would sense check what may be required, in order to start populating details in advance. ESO provided some helpful suggestions and noted there was still some time post-SLT to fully finalise the document ahead of publication.	<b>ACFO Jun 25</b>
85/25	<b>Strategic Pensions Support</b>  ADoPS provided a verbal update on the latest position, in lieu of a written	

	<p>report and confirmed that following further review, this could now be funded internally.</p> <p>Due to the Annual Benefit Statement not being available in March 2025, ESFRS had reported a formal breach to West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) along with other FRS's who were in a similar position. This breach was due to WYPF awaiting software which is required to ensure accuracy of payments are correct and tested. Despite mitigation plans being in place to minimise future breaches, this remained a high risk for the service, because ESFRS needed to ensure the data was available to WYPF by the 30 June 2025. If all 500+ data sets for each individual were not updated and made available, the reason for the breach would have changed (ESFRS not being able to provide data) and this would need to be reported as a breach or a request for an extension along with the plan for remediation in both cases.</p> <p>WYPF required accurate and up to date data from ESFRS to run their report. SLT discussed the resourcing available to process over 500 records within the available timescale. ADoPS was reasonably confident, noting that some cases were more complicated than others, and acknowledged this was also a current risk. ADoPS would monitor closely and ensure regular updates to SLT.</p> <p>A new Pensions Manager had now been appointed and would be available 1 day a week, prior to commencing full time on 26 June 2025. There had also been other changes within the Pension Team, but it was noted that there was a need to review and update the documentation and procedures, as some of which were available were outdated. ESFRS had also contacted West Midlands FRS, who were able to provide support 1 day a week for the priority areas. By way of waiver under procurement standing orders, another resource was currently being used in the same way for 10hrs a week.</p> <p>A Firefighter Pension Scheme Monitoring Framework would be created to ensure regular oversight in due course.</p> <p>ADoR/T provided a financial update and confirmed that the proposed resources could be funded from the current revenue budget and the Pension Admin Reserve. ADoPS would receive support from other SLT Members in order to progress the plan meet deadlines and timelines. It was agreed that if an additional resource was needed for data entry, this should be identified and a proposal brought forward promptly as there was flexibility within the current budget to support this.</p> <p>SLT noted the second options deadline and enhanced communications, which had alleviated the situation. A bi-weekly newsletter was now being sent to those who want to receive it, which had also assisted.</p>	
86/25	<p><b>Oracle Fusion Implementation – Phase 3 Payroll Integration Funding &amp; Deliver Plan</b></p> <p>ADoR/T sought approval from SLT for funding and resourcing of Phase 3 of the Oracle Fusion Implementation Programme, which focuses on delivering the payroll function integrated with FireWatch via Flosuite, along with the roll out of Redwood and an agreement of a new collaborative agreement with East Sussex County Council.</p> <p>The financial model for Phase 3 is based around two potential go-live scenarios. Scenario 1, which assumes Hypercare runs until September 2026, projects total programme costs at £1,178,630. Scenario 2, which extends</p>	

	<p>Hypercare to December 2026, increases this forecast to £1,273,024. Against an approved budget of £923,000, these scenarios present funding gaps of £225,630 and £350,024, respectively.</p> <p>This phase will also involve significant change management, with the rollout of Redwood user interfaces to support procurement self-service and the digitisation of payroll-related tasks, such as online expenses, currently managed via paper forms. These changes require controlled user training, stakeholder engagement, and governance oversight.</p> <p>The proposed go-live date remains provisional and is based on ongoing discussions with ESCC, currently targeting the April to May 2026 window.</p> <p>There is also a resourcing risk around the current Project Manager, whose contract ends in June 2025. As Phase 2 is due to be completed in July 2025, the Project Manager must remain in place to ensure continuity and a smooth transition into Phase 3.</p> <p>ADoR/T would make contact with Norfolk FRS who have implemented Oracle, but not integrated it with FireWatch, in order to consider this alternative option.</p> <p>Although this was being monitored by the Strategic Change Board to ensure risks were being review by the correct governance procedures, ADoR/T would also seek to reassure SLT that all risks have been updated on the Corporate Risk Register. There would be a further discussion outside of SLT to review and separate out elements of the PMO Manual note and to clarify that all the necessary processes and procedures were in place.</p> <p>The Project Manager would review the risk in terms of FireWatch and ensure this included the future FireWatch (cloud based) upgrade to version 7.8.</p> <p>SLT:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approved up to £350,000 funding to be allocated from corporate contingency.</li> <li>2. Endorsed the recruitment of a new Payroll SME with fire service expertise and the related backfill post, both contained within the additional budget allocated.</li> <li>3. Endorsed continuity funding for the Project Manager role to lead delivery through Phase 3 and manage organisational change.</li> <li>4. Agreed to refresh the current collaboration agreement of the formal Oracle service delivery model with ESCC Prioritise agreement to a formal Oracle service delivery model with ESCC, including SLAs, escalation procedures, and governance.</li> </ol>	<p><b>ADoR/T Jun 25</b></p> <p><b>ADoR/T Jun 25</b></p>
<b>87/25</b>	<p><b>SLT Forward Plan 2025 and FA/Members Seminar Forward Plan</b></p> <p>SLT noted the forward plans for 2025, which was a useful overview for the coming months.</p> <p>ADoR/T also took the opportunity to remind SLT that the deadline for Corporate Risk Review updates was 30 May 2025.</p>	

	<p><b><u>FA Forward Plan</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was noted that the Annual Corporate Plan would not be ready for this June's meeting. ADoR/T cautioned that this should be signed off by the Fire Authority as early in the year as possible. There was a discussion about taking this to Panels in July instead.</li> <li>The Productivity &amp; Efficiency Plan 25/26 would be taken to Panels in July (not FA in June) due to it going to SLT in June, later than anticipated.</li> <li>Primary Authority Partnership Enhancement - update title to Area Manager, not Group Manager.</li> <li>A CRMP Update would be brought to Panels on 17 July followed by a CRMP consultation update in September.</li> <li>HMICFRS Inspection report Update would go to S&amp;A Panels in July and set out AFI's if the full HMICFRS report was received in time.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Members Seminar – 21 May</u></b></p> <p>SLT re-confirmed the presentations planned for the HMICFRS and budget updates and Wildfire Preparedness and the order in which these would be delivered.</p> <p><b><u>Members Seminar - 21 July</u></b></p> <p>SLT agreed that there would be a car extraction demo plus a CRMP update which was outlined by DCFO.</p>	
<b>88/25</b>	<p><b>HMICFRS FRS Inspection Programme 2025-27</b></p> <p>ADoDTC provided a verbal overview and update on the changes to next HMI Inspection round. An HMI Team would be place by Spring 2026, ahead of anticipated Summer/Autumn 2027 programme. SLT considered raising this as a risk, so soon after Devolution and discussed other impacts to timetable.</p> <p>KLOE document would start to capture work from 1 June 2025 via the quarterly APGG meetings, this would be monitored going forwards.</p> <p>Further updates would be provided to SLT and Fire Authority Members to ensure clarity. T/AMoP would become the Executive Sponsor going forwards.</p>	
<b>89/25</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b><u>Devolution Update</u></b> DCFO provided SLT with an update on the Mayoral comparisons and transition challenges. This led to a general discussion around the timelines, potential impacts and future governance arrangements.</p> <p><b><u>Social Media – allyship and trolls</u></b> CMM and the Publicity &amp; Social Media Officer provided an overview of the current approach and recent examples which was considered by SLT in terms of our position going forwards. A zero-tolerance approach was suggested, together with challenging and engaging in a non-emotional way. Consideration was also given to marking all key dates throughout the year for inclusivity. It was agreed that should any social media directly affect a member of staff, this would be reported to the Duty Officer. Setting up corporate accounts for SLT members by title not name, was discussed as a way of others responding, not just Comms Team. CMM would create draft wording for responses.</p> <p><b><u>NFCC Support to PO's</u></b> Through The Fire Fighters Charity offer (£4,000 a year approximately for each Service) for Senior Officers experiencing bullying, trolling, complaints, targeting etc. SLT discussed the Handbook for FRS Senior Leaders with a view to supporting Senior Leaders in FRS's and the</p>	

	<p>best way in which to do this alongside the current Occupational Health offer. CFO would speak to Cllr Evans regards preparing a report to Members around support and training for PO's.</p> <p><u>Comms Officers at incidents</u> CMM stated that the current policy was that if a member of the Comms Team is unable to attend, the Duty Officer or CMM should be advised and there be a move to Plan B. SLT felt that there was a need, in some instances, for Comms to be at the scene of an incident, in a safe and secure environment as set out in the risk assessment.</p> <p><u>Helping Hoodies – Badge approval</u> SLT discussed this issue and agreed to check the legal position with the DMO to enquire whether there was any reason as to why using our logo on garments would not be appropriate. Subject to this response, SLT were happy to support use of our logo, on the basis it was made clear that this was not part of our ESFRS uniform and should not be worn as such. This feedback would be shared with the SM accordingly to enable progress.</p> <p><u>Wholetime recruitment – sense check</u> ADoPS provided an update on this aspect, which would form part of the recruitment process. SLT discussed pre-employment checks, (enhanced) DSBs, social media activity and agreed this should be picked up by a number of values and judgment related questions as part of the interview process. It was also recommended seeking advice from other agencies, including SECamb.</p> <p><u>SLT Protocols</u> DCFO provided an overview of the existing protocols as previously shared. It was agreed that a review of the Fire Authority and SLT report template would be timely to ensure consistency across the service and improve standards. The Democratic Services Manager would assist with this piece of work and support and provide training. CMM referenced the GM &amp; Equivalents meetings which took place on a regular basis, as a way to provide an early opportunity to have discussions about future reports. CMM would raise this topic for discussion at the forthcoming meeting on 3 June 2025, in order to feedback into the next SLT meeting or Away Day on 23 June 2025.</p>	<p><b>CFO</b> <b>Jun 25</b></p>
90/25	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting will be held on 18 June 2025</p>	